



Imam Al Mahdi, The Twelfth Khalifah In The Sahih Sunni Ahadith

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Who is the Mahdi of Islam? According to both Sunni and Shi'i Muslims, the "guided one" will rise during the end times to conquer all nations. With Jesus Christ, he will bring an end to aggression and injustice, and will establish the Kingdom of God on earth. However, Sunnis and Shi'is disagree about the identity of the Mahdi. According to Shi'is, the Mahdi - an extraordinary human being who will perform extraordinary miracles - is Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Husayni. He was born over a thousand years ago, and is still alive on this earth, but living in occultation, and will reappear during the end times. For Sunnis, however, the Mahdi will be an ordinary and mediocre man by the name of Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hasani. In "Imam al-Mahdi: The Twelfth Khalifah in the Sahih Sunni Ahadith", author Toyib Olawuyi argues that the identification of the awaited Mahdi with Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hasani is not established in any reliable Sunni or Shi'i hadith, but is based on only a few unreliable Sunni reports. By contrast, Olawuyi demonstrates, Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Husayni is confirmed as the Mahdi in both authentic and authoritative Shi'i and Sunni sources. "Imam al-Mahdi" is a carefully balanced work of scholarship that will both inform and challenge the views of many Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Miscellaneous Information:

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Dedication

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
طلع النور المبين
من نور خير المرسلين
نور أمن وسلام
نور حق و يقين
جاءنا الهادي البشير
مطرق العاني الأسير
مرشد الساعي إذا
ما أخطأ الساعي المسير
دينه حق صُراح
دينه ملك كبير
هو في الدنيا نعيم
وهو في الأخرى متاع

*This book is dedicated to Prophet Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah,
and to his son, Imam Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Mahdi,
peace be upon them both.*

*Then, it is also dedicated to Shaykh Abubakar Bello Salati, may Allah
protect him and help him.*

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Preface

Has Allah “sent” any new person to this Ummah after the death of His beloved Messenger, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi? Apparently, this question rests on three sub-questions:

- (a) Are there prophets after Muhammad?
- (b) Does Allah “send” non-prophets to Ummahs?
- (c) If yes, are there any such non-prophets “sent” to our Ummah after our Prophet?

Well, there is absolutely no doubt or dispute about the fact that Muhammad is the last and final prophet and messenger from Allah¹. Therefore, none shall ever come after him with new nubuwwah or risalah, or with any new shari’ah or kitab. He has been sent as the sole prophet and messenger of all humanity till the end of the earth². So, Allah does NOT send any new prophets or messengers to our Ummah after him.

However, in the pre-Muhammad era, our Lord did “send” at least one non-prophet to an Ummah. Prof. Ibn Yasin cites this authentic report about him:

قال الضياء المقدسي: أخبرنا أبو المجد زاهر بن أحمد بن حامد بن أحمد الثقفي -بقراءتي عليه بأصبهان- قلت له: أخبركم أبو عبد الله الحسين بن عبد الملك ابن الحسين الخلال - قراءة عليه وأنت تسمع- أنا الإمام أبو الفضل عبد الرحمن ابن أحمد بن الحسن بن بندار الرازي المقرئ، أنا أبو الحسن أحمد بن إبراهيم ابن أحمد بن علي بن فراس، ثنا أبو جعفر محمد بن إبراهيم الديلي، ثنا أبو عبيد الله سعيد بن عبد الرحمن المخزومي، ثنا سفیان ابن عيينة عن ابن أبي حسين، عن أبي الطفيل قال: سمعت ابن الكواء يسأل علي بن أبي طالب - ﷺ - عن ذي القرنين فقال علي: لم يكن نبياً ولا ملك، كان عبداً صالحاً، أحبب الله فأحبه، وناصر الله فناصره الله، بُعث إلى قومه فضربوه على قرنه فمات فبعثه الله، فسمى ذي القرنين.

Al-Dhiya al-Maqdisi said:

Abu al-Majd Zahir b. Ahmad b. Hamid b. Ahmad al-Thaqafi - Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. al-Husayn al-Khalal - Imam Abu al-Fadhl ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Ahmad b. al-Husayn b. Bandar al-Razi al-Muqri - Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. Ibrahim b. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Faras - Abu Ja’far Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Duyali - Abu ‘Ubayd Allah Sa’id b. ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Makhzumi - Sufyan b. ‘Uyaynah - Ibn Abi Husayn - Abu al-Tufayl:

I heard Ibn al-Kawa asking ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, about Dhu al-Qarnayn, and ‘Ali replied, “He was NOT a prophet, and he was not an angel. He was rather a righteous servant. He loved Allah; so, He loved him too. He sought the guidance of Allah; and so, He guided him. HE WAS SENT TO HIS PEOPLE. But, they struck him on his qarn and he died. Then, Allah resurrected him, and he was thereby named Dhu al-Qarnayn.”³

Then, our professor says:

(المختارة 175/2 ح 555) وصححه الحافظ ابن حجر بعد عزوه للمختارة للحافظ الضياء (الفتح 383/6).

(Al-Mukhtarat 2/175, # 555) and al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar declared it sahih after attributing it to al-Mukhtarat of al-Hafiz al-Dhiya (al-Fath 6/383)⁴

The exact words of al-Hafiz in his Fath are these:

أخرجه سفيان بن عيينة في جامعه عن ابن أبي حسين عن أبي الطفيل نحوه وزاد وناصح الله فناصحه وفيه لم يكن نبيا ولا ملكا وسنده صحيح سمعناه في الأحاديث المختارة للحافظ الضياء

Sufyan b. ‘Uyaynah recorded it in his Jami’ from Ibn Abi Husayn from Abu al-Tufayl, and he added: “He sought the guidance of Allah; and so, He guided him” and in it is “He was not a prophet, and he was not an angel”. Its chain is sahih. We heard it in al-Ahadith al-Mukhtarat of al-Hafiz al-Dhiya.⁵

Thus, al-Hafiz authenticates the much shorter chain of Sufyan in his Jami’, but further confirms that what we find in al-Ahadith al-Mukhtarat of al-Dhiya is the same as that which was recorded by Sufyan in his book.

Dhu al-Qarnayn, ‘alaihi al-salam, was not a prophet - and therefore not a messenger as well⁶. Nonetheless, our Lord “sent” him to his people. Interestingly, Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, ‘alaihi al-salam, proclaimed that he was a “likeness” of him. Imam al-Tabari (d. 310 H) records:

حدثنا محمد بن المثنى، قال: ثنا محمد بن جعفر، قال: ثنا شعبة، عن القاسم بن أبي بزة، عن أبي الطفيل، قال: سمعت عليا وسأله عن ذي القرنين أنبيا كان؟ قال: كان عبدا صالحا، أحب الله فأحبه، وناصح الله فنصحته، فبعثه الله إلى قومه، فضربوه ضربتين في رأسه، فسمي ذا القرنين، وفيكم اليوم مثله.

Muhammad b. al-Muthanna - Muhammad b. Ja’far - Shu’bah - al-Qasim b. Abi Bazzah - Abu al-Tufayl:

I heard ‘Ali while they asked him about Dhu al-Qarnayn: “Was he a prophet?” He replied, “He was a righteous servant. He loved Allah and Allah loved him. He sought the guidance of Allah and He guided him. Then, Allah SENT him to his people. But, they struck him twice on his head. As a result, he was named Dhu al-Qarnayn. And among you TODAY is an example of him.⁷

Concerning this athar, Prof. Ibn Yasin states:

وسنده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.⁸

And Imam Ibn Salam (d. 224 H) also explains it in this manner:

وإنما اخترت هذا التفسير على الأول لحديث عن علي نفسه هو عندي مفسر له ولنا وذلك أنه ذكر ذا القرنين فقال: دعا قومه إلى عبادة الله فضربوه على قرنيه ضربتين وفيكم

مثله. فنرى أنه أراد بقوله هذا نفسه - يعني أنني أدعو إلى الحق حتى أضرب على رأسي ضربتين يكون فيهما قتلي.

I have only chosen this explanation instead of the first due to a hadith from ‘Ali himself. It (the hadith), in my view, explains it to us. And that is, he (‘Ali) mentioned Dhu al-Qarnayn and said, “He called his people to the worship of Allah, and they struck him on his qarn twice. And among you is an example of him”. So, we see that he (‘Ali) was referring to himself with this statement of his - he meant: I will call to the Truth until I will be struck on my head twice. My death will be in them.”⁹

The status of ‘Ali as a “likeness” of Dhu al-Qarnayn creates many parallels between them both - especially in terms of al-raj’ah and da’wah. However, here, we are only concerned with the da’wah aspects of their similarities. Therefore:

- i. Dhu al-Qarnayn was not a prophet. So, ‘Ali too was not a prophet.
- ii. Dhu al-Qarnayn sought the guidance of Allah, and He guided him. So, ‘Ali too sought the guidance of Allah, and He guided him too.
- iii. Dhu al-Qarnayn was “sent” to his people by Allah. So, ‘Ali too was “sent” to this Ummah by Allah.

Meanwhile, apart from Amir al-Muminin, several other non-prophets, after Muhammad, have been “sent” to our Ummah. Imam Abu Dawud (d. 275 H) records this clear hadith confirming that:

حدثنا سليمان بن داود المهري أخبرنا ابن وهب أخبرني سعيد بن أبي أيوب عن شراحيل بن يزيد المعافري عن أبي علقمة عن أبي هريرة فيما أعلم عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال " إن الله يبعث لهذه الأمة على رأس كل مائة سنة من يجدد لها دينها"

Sulayman b. Dawud al-Mahri - Ibn Wahb - Sa’id b. Abi Ayub - Sharahil b. Yazid al-Ma’afiri - Abu ‘Alqamah - Abu Hurayrah:

From what I learnt from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, he said, “Verily, Allah APPOINTS FOR this Ummah, at the head of every one hundred years, someone who renews its religion for it.”¹⁰

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) says:

صحيح

Sahih¹¹

Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) also has this one, which is even clearer:

حدثنا أبو العباس مُجَّد بن يعقوب ثنا الربيع بن سليمان بن كامل المرادي ثنا عبد الله بن وهب أخبرني سعيد بن أبي أيوب عن شرحبيل بن يزيد عن أبي علقمة عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه ولا أعلمه إلا عن رسول الله ﷺ قال : إن الله يبعث إلى هذه الأمة على رأس كل مائة سنة من يجدد لها دينها

Abu al-‘Abbas Muhammad b. Ya’qub - al-Rabi’ b. Sulayman b. Kamil al-Muradi - ‘Abd Allah b. Wahb - Sa’id b. Abi Ayub - Sharahil b. Yazid - Abu ‘Alqamah - Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him:

I did not learn it except from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, he said, “Verily, Allah SENDS TO this Ummah, at the head of every one hundred years, someone who renews its religion for it.”¹²

Commenting on this hadith in his Sahihah, al-Albani states:

والسند صحيح رجاله ثقات رجال مسلم

The chain is sahih. Its narrators are thiqah (trustworthy), narrators of (Sahih) Muslim.¹³

Who are all these people that have been “appointed for” and “sent to” this Ummah by Allah? The Ahl al-Sunnah generally are locked in a serious debate over who makes that list and who does not. Without doubt, they will never agree on the names. What we find even more ironic is that none of those candidates put forward by the various Sunni sects - such as Imam al-Ghazali (d. 505 H), Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H), al-Hafiz al-‘Asqalani (d. 852 H) and ‘Allamah al-Albani - ever claimed to have been “appointed” or “sent” by our Lord.

Meanwhile, what does it mean that someone is “sent” every “one hundred years” to cleanse Islam of heresies and misunderstandings? Is it literally every one hundred years? Or, is it only a metaphorical phrase intended to indicate frequency? Besides, what does “the head” of every one hundred years refer to? The beginning of the century? Or, its end? Or, simply its best period? Or, its most appropriate time? Or, its most important? Also, can there be more than one of such people within a single century? What happens when one of them lives for more than one hundred years? Is he decommissioned? Or, forcefully retired? Or, is his mission renewed or extended? What if he dies young or is killed, after doing da’wah for only a few years? When does his replacement come? Can any two of such people ever contradict each other in anything in the Din?

Considering that he is “appointed” and “sent” by Allah, what then happens to those who do not follow him? Do they remain Muslims? Or, do they become disbelievers? These are questions that need clear answers. However, one does not see much discussion of them in the Sunni books (which are the only sources for the hadith). In our view, there can only be one of those people “appointed” and “sent” to the Ummah at a time. The reports have described him using a singular pronoun and a singular verb as well. Moreover, his appointment comes at the “head” of each century, which is its most appropriate time, or its most important period. If his life extends into the next century, then his appointment and mission are renewed and extended. We have drawn these conclusions, in consideration of, and in harmonization of the above riwayat with, Hadith al-Thaqalayn, Hadith al-Khalifatayn and some other relevant sahih Sunni ahadith.

In any case, the Messenger had equally informed us of the coming of a man, at the end of times, who would also be “sent” to our Ummah. His mission would be to completely rid the earth of disbelief, heresy, poverty, aggression and injustice, and to establish the final Kingdom of Allah on it. Imam Abu Dawud documents this hadith about him:

حدثنا عثمان بن أبي شيبة ثنا الفضل بن دكين ثنا فطر عن القاسم بن أبي بزة عن أبي الطفيل عن علي رضي الله تعالى عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال "لو لم يبق من الدهر إلا يوم لبعث الله رجلا من أهل بيتي يملؤها عدلا كما ملئت جورا"

‘Uthman b. Abi Shaybah - al-Fadhli b. Dukayn - Fiṭr - al-Qasim b. Abi Barzah - Abu al-Tufayl - ‘Ali, may Allah the Most High be pleased with him - the Prophet, peace be upon him:

“Even if there remains only one more day left before the end of Time, Allah will surely SEND a man from MY AHL AL-BAYT. He will fill it with justice just as it had been filled with injustice.”¹⁴

‘Allamah al-Albani comments:

صحيح

Sahih¹⁵

Dr. al-Bastawi also states:

إسناده صحيح.

Its chain is sahih.¹⁶

So, who is this man? What is his importance to Islam? What is his name? What is his lineage? Who is his father? What will his achievements be? These are some of the questions we will be thoroughly investigating in this research work. Moreover, there have been a lot of inaccurate claims about the man, especially by extremist Shiaphobic elements within the Ahl al-Sunnah. We will be neutralizing their venom as well. As usual, we will be relying upon only authentic Sunni reports, and reliable Shi’i ahadith wherever required. We, in our utter powerlessness and helplessness, seek Allah’s Help, Support and Assistance for this effort. We also humbly seek His Pleasure through it, and His Forgiveness for our sins generally and for any mistakes we may have made in it in particular. May the salawat and barakat of Allah be upon Muhammad and his purified offspring.

Notes

1. Qur’an 33:40
2. Qur’an 7:158, 34:28 and Qur’an 25:1
3. Prof. Dr. Hikmat b. Bashir b. Yasin, Mawsu’at al-Sahih al-Masbur min al-Tafsir bi al-Mathur (Madinah: Dar al-Mathar li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’ wa al-Taba’at; 1st edition, 1420 H), vol. 3, p. 322
4. Ibid
5. Shihab al-Din Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari (Beirut: Dar al-Ma’rifah li al-Taba’ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 6, p. 271
6. There is ijma’ in this Ummah that to become a messenger, one must first become a prophet. Whoever is not a prophet can never be a messenger. But, not all prophets are messengers. This is why the status of Muhammad as the last prophet also automatically means that he is the last messenger.
7. Abu Ja’far Muhammad b. Jarir b. Yazid b. Kathir b. Ghalib al-Amuli al-Tabari, Jami al-Bayan fi Tawil al-Qur’an (Dar al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: Sidqi Jamil al-‘Atṭar], vol. 16, pp. 12-13
8. Prof. Dr. Hikmat b. Bashir b. Yasin, Mawsu’at al-Sahih al-Masbur min al-Tafsir bi al-Mathur (Madinah: Dar al-Mathar li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’ wa al-Taba’at; 1st edition, 1420 H), vol. 3, p. 322

9. Abu 'Ubayd al-Qasim b. Salam al-Harwi, Gharib al-Hadith (Haydarabad: Majlis Dairah al-Ma'arif al-'Uthmaniyyah; 1st edition, 1385 H), vol. 3, p. 80
10. Abu Dawud Sulayman b. al-Ash'ath al-Sijistani al-Azdi, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 512, # 4291
11. Ibid
12. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Afa], vol. 4, p. 567, # 8592
13. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 2, p. 148, # 599
14. Abu Dawud Sulayman b. al-Ash'ath al-Sijistani al-Azdi, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 509, # 4283
15. Ibid
16. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-'Ulama wa Ara al-Firq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 238

1. The Awaited Mahdi

The Messenger of Allah, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi, predicted that a time would come when oppression, injustice and aggression would become extremely rampant all over the globe. At that period, a man from the offspring of Muhammad would rise to power over the entire earth, and he would successfully make oppression, injustice and aggression very rare on its surface. Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) records the hadith in his Musnad:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي قال الحسن بن موسى قال ثنا حماد بن سلمة عن أبي هارون العبدى ومطر الوراق عن أبي الصديق الناجي عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم تملأ الأرض جوراً وظلماً فيخرج رجل من عترتي يملك سبعاً أو تسعاً فيملاً الأرض قسطاً وعدلاً

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) - my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) - al-Hasan b. Musa - Hammad b. Salamah - Abu Harun al-‘Abdi and Maṭar al-Warraḡ - Abu al-Siddiq al-Naji - Abu Sa’id al-Khudri:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “The earth will be filled with oppression and injustice. Then, a man from my offspring will come out. He will rule by kingdom for seven or nine years. He will fill the earth with equity and justice.”¹

Shaykh al-Arnauṡ states:

حديث صحيح دون قوله " يملك سبعاً أو تسعاً "

It is a sahih hadith, with the exception of his statement: “he will rule by kingdom for seven or nine years.”²

Imam Ibn Hibban (d. 354 H) also documents a mutaba’ah for it:

أخبرنا أحمد بن علي بن المثني قال حدثنا أبو خيثمة قال حدثنا يحيى بن سعيد قال حدثنا عوف قال حدثنا أبو الصديق عن أبي سعيد الخدري عن النبي ﷺ قال لا تقوم الساعة حتى تمتلئ الأرض ظلماً وعدواناً ثم يخرج رجل من أهل بيتي أو عترتي فيملؤها قسطاً وعدلاً كما ملئت ظلماً وعدواناً

Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. al-Muthanna - Abu Khaythamah - Yahya b. Sa’id - ‘Awf - Abu al-Siddiq - Abu Sa’id al-Khudri - the Prophet, peace be upon him:

“The Hour will not occur until the earth is filled with injustice and hostility. Then, a man from my Ahl al-Bayt, or my offspring, will come out. So, he will fill it with equity and justice just as it had been filled with injustice and hostility.”³

Al-Albani (d. 1420 H) says:

صحيح

Sahih⁴

And al-Arnauṡ concurs:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.⁵

This man will be “sent” by Allah Himself, in the same way that He sent His prophets and messengers, to purify His earth. Imam Abu Dawud (d. 275 H) in his Sunan - under the heading: “The Book of al-Mahdi” (Kitab al-Mahdi) records:

حدثنا عثمان بن أبي شيبة ثنا الفضل بن دكين ثنا فطر عن القاسم بن أبي بزة عن أبي الطفيل عن علي رضي الله تعالى عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال "لو لم يبق من الدهر إلا يوم لبعث الله رجلا من أهل بيتي يملؤها عدلا كما ملئت جورا"

‘Uthman b. Abi Shaybah - al-Fadhli b. Dukayn - Fiṭr - al-Qasim b. Abi Barzah - Abu al-Tufayl - ‘Ali, may Allah the Most High be pleased with him - the Prophet, peace be upon him:

“Even if there remains only one more day left before the end of Time, Allah will surely SEND a man from my Ahl al-Bayt. He will fill it with justice just as it had been filled with injustice.”⁶

‘Allamah al-Albani says:

صحيح

Sahih⁷

Dr. al-Bastawi, commenting upon the same hadith, states:

إسناده صحيح.

Its chain is sahih.⁸

The same word has been employed to describe the appointment and mission of the prophets and messengers, ‘alaihim al-salam, as well in the Qur’an:

كان الناس أمة واحدة فبعث الله النبيين مبشرين ومنذرين

Mankind were one community and Allah SENT prophets as givers of glad tidings and warners.⁹

And:

ولقد بعثنا في كل أمة رسولا

Verily, We have SENT within every Ummah a messenger.¹⁰

Of course, this man will not be a prophet or messenger. However, he obviously will occupy a separate divine rank which will certainly be very similar in nature to both. One of the top Imams of the Ahl al-Sunnah from the senior Tabi’in, Ibn Sirrin (d. 110 H), indicated the status of this man in one of his brave pronouncements. Imam al-Maruzi (d. 288 H) records:

حدثنا ضمرة عن ابن شوذب عن محمد بن سيرين أنه ذكر فتنة تكون فقال إذا كان ذلك فاجلسوا في بيوتكم حتى تسمعوا على الناس بخير من أبي بكر وعمر رضي الله عنهما قيل يا أبا بكر خير من أبي بكر وعمر؟ قال قد كان يفضل على بعض الأنبياء.

Dhamrah - Ibn Shawdhab:

Muhammad b. Sirrin mentioned a sedition that would occur. Then he said, “When that occurs, sit in your houses until you hear from the people about the one who is superior to Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased

with them both.” So, it was said, “O Abu Bakr, someone superior to Abu Bakr and ‘Umar?!” He replied, “He is even superior to some prophets.”¹¹

Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) says about the first narrator:

ضمرة بن ربيعة الفلسطيني أبو عبد الله أصله دمشقي صدوق يهيم قليلا

Dhamrah b. Rubay’ah al-Filistini, Abu ‘Abd Allah, his origin was Damascus: Saduq (very truthful), hallucinates a little.¹²

Concerning the second narrator, he equally states:

عبد الله بن شوذب الخراساني أبو عبد الرحمن سكن البصرة ثم الشام صدوق عابد

‘Abd Allah b. Shawdhab al-Khurasani, Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman, he lived in Basra, then Syria: Saduq (very truthful), a devout worshipper of Allah.¹³

So, the sanad is hasan.

Al-Maruzi has included the report under the heading “Way of Life of the Mahdi and His Justice and Length of His Time.”¹⁴ We know from this then that Ibn Sirrin was describing “the Mahdi” - the same man mentioned in the hadith of Abu Dawud above - as being superior to some prophets in rank.

Meanwhile, here is another riwayat about this Mahdi, ‘alaihi al-salam, from the same Abu Dawud:

حدثنا سهل بن تمام بن بزيع ثنا عمران القطان عن قتادة عن أبي نضرة عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم " المهدي مني أجلى الجبهة أفنى الأنف يملأ الأرض قسطا وعدلا كما ملئت جورا وظلما ويملك سبع سنين "

Sahl b. Tammam b. Buzay’ - ‘Imran al-Qatṭan - Qatadah - Abu Nadhrah - Abu Sa’id al-Khudri:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “The Mahdi is from me, with a broad forehead, a curved nose. He will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it had been filled with oppression and injustice, and he will rule by kingdom for seven years.”¹⁵

Al-Albani says:

حسن

Hasan.¹⁶

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) also declares:

الأحاديث التي يحتج بها على خروج المهدي أحاديث صحيحة

The ahadith that are relied upon as hujjah (proof) for the coming out of the Mahdi are sahih ahadith.¹⁷

So, he will be “the Mahdi”, from the blood and flesh of the Messenger, and “will rule by kingdom”. He will be “sent” by Allah to reduce oppression and injustice on the earth to the barest minimum. He will rule the whole planet as a just, righteous and rightly guided royal khalifah, assisted by his Lord.

Interestingly, his personal name will be Muhammad, like that of our Prophet. Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) documents:

حدثنا عبید بن أسباط بن مُجَدِّ القرشي الكوفي قال حدثني أبي حدثنا سفيان الثوري عن
عاصم بن بهدلة عن زر عن عبد الله قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم لا تذهب
الدنيا حتى يملك العرب رجل من أهل بيتي يواطئ اسمه اسمي

‘Ubayd b. Asbat b. Muhammad al-Qurashi al-Kufi - my father - Sufyan
al-Thawri - ‘Asim b. Bahdalah¹⁸ - Zirr - ‘Abd Allah (b. Mas’ud):

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “This world will not
end until a man from my Ahl al-Bayt rules the Arabs by kingdom. His name
will correspond with my name.”¹⁹

Al-Tirmidhi says:

هذا حديث حسن صحيح

This hadith is hasan sahih.²⁰

And al-Albani agrees:

حسن صحيح

Hasan sahih.²¹

His government, obviously, will be that of the House of Muhammad, and
he will bring the supreme glory to Islam all over the universe. He will
achieve the impossible, with divine help, and will fulfill the dreams of all
the prophets and messengers.

Meanwhile, there are certain quick points about the Mahdi that must not
be overlooked. First, belief in his coming in an ‘aqidah of Islam, and has
been so named by ‘ulama of the Ahl al-Sunnah too. For instance, al-Albani
states:

وما مثل هؤلاء إلا كمثل من ينكر عقيدة نزول عيسى عليه السلام في آخر
الزمان التي تواتر ذكرها في الأحاديث الصحيحة، لأن بعض الدجاجة ادعاها، مثل
ميرزا غلام أحمد القادياني، وقد أنكرها بعضهم فعلا صراحة، كالشيخ شلتوت،
وأكد أقطع أن كل من أنكر عقيدة المهدي ينكرها أيضا

These people are only like those who deny the ‘aqidah of the descent of
‘Isa, ‘alaihi al-salam, at the end of Time - whose mention has reached the
level of tawattur in sahih ahadith - simply because some impostors claim it,
such as Mirza Ghulam Ahmad al-Qadiyani. Some of them, like Shaykh al-
Shaltut, have explicitly denied it. Also, I am fairly certain that everyone who
denies the ‘AQIDAH of the Mahdi also denies it too.²²

This means that whoever does not believe in the descent of Prophet ‘Isa,
‘alaihi al-salam, during the End Time or in the coming of the Mahdi and his
mission and activities, has a defective iman (faith). Shaykh Ibn Baz (d. 1420
H) puts the matter forward in an even stronger manner:

وقد صحت وتواترت هذه الأخبار عن رسول الله عليه الصلاة والسلام في نزول المسيح
ابن مريم من السمماء في آخر الزمان، ومن خروج يأجوج ومأجوج وخروج الدجال في آخر
الزمان، ومن مجيء المهدي، كل هذا الأربعة ثابتة: المهدي في آخر الزمان يملأ الأرض قسطاً

بعد أن ملئت جوراً، ونزول المسيح ابن مريم، وخروج الدجال في آخر الزمان، وخروج يأجوج ومأجوج، كل هذا ثابت بالأحاديث الصحيحة المتواترة عن رسول الله ﷺ، فإنكارها كفر وضلال

Sahih and mutawatir reports have been reported from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, concerning the descent of the Masih Ibn Maryam from the sky during the End Time, and concerning the coming out of Yajuj and Majuj and the coming out of the Dajjal during the End Time, and concerning the arrival of the Mahdi. All these four are well-proved - the Mahdi during the End Time who will fill the earth with equity after it had been filled with oppression; the descent of the Masih Ibn Maryam; the coming out of the Dajjal during the End Time, and the coming out of Yajuj and Majuj - each of these is well proved through sahih, mutawatir ahadith from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. THEREFORE, denial of them is kufr (disbelief and apostasy) and dhalal (heresy).²³

We also read this Q&A by the same Shaykh:

يوجد لدينا رجل ينكر المسيح الدجال والمهدي ونزول عيسى عليه السلام ويأجوج ومأجوج ولا يعتقد في شيء منها، ويدعي عدم صحة ما ورد في ذلك من أحاديث... وهو يصلي ويصوم ويأتي بالفرائض. فما حكمه؟....
مثل هذا الرجل يكون كافراً

(Question) There is a man with us who denies the Masih al-Dajjal, THE MAHDI, the descent of 'Isa, 'alaihi al-salam, and Yajuj and Majuj, and does not believe any of it, and rejects the authenticity of the ahadith narrated about (all) that And he performs salat and fasts, and fulfils the obligatory duties (of Islam). So, what is his status?....

(Answer) Anyone like this man is a kafir.²⁴

It is thus absolutely obligatory upon all Muslims to believe in the coming of Muhammad the Mahdi from the offspring and Ahl al-Bayt of the noble Rasul to overturn oppression and injustice in our world. Failure to uphold this belief may kick a Muslim out of Islam.

Another point is that the supplication 'alaihi al-salam (peace be upon him) is added after the name of the Mahdi too, like in the case of prophets and angels. Al-Albani again says about 'Isa b. Maryam:

فيأتي هو بالمهدي عليهما السلام

He ('Isa) himself will be led in salat by the Mahdi, 'alahima al-salam (peace be upon them both).²⁵

And:

كما فعل بعض الفرق قديما حين بادروا إلى إنكار القدر الإلهي إبطالا للجبر، وبعض

العلماء في العصر الحاضر إلى إنكار عقيدة نزول عيسى وخروج المهدي عليهما السلام

It is like how some sects did in the past when they denied the existence of divine destiny in order to invalidate the doctrine of fatalism, and how

some contemporary ‘ulama deny the ‘aqidah of the descent of ‘Isa and the rise of al-Mahdi, ‘alaihima al-salam.²⁶

Imam al-Mubarakfuri (d. 1282 H) submits too:

قال الخطابي ويكون ذلك في زمن المهدي أو عيسى عليهما الصلاة والسلام أو كليهما

Al-Khatṭābi (d. 388 H) said: “That will occur during the time of the Mahdi or ‘Isa, ‘alaihima al-salat wa al-salam (peace and blessings be upon them both), or during the time of both of them.”²⁷

However, we have seen Sunni scholars who prefer to say radhiyallahu ‘anhu and other supplications instead.

Lastly, one of the titles of the Mahdi is al-Muntazar (the Awaited). Imam al-Kattani (d. 1345 H) gives this heading in his book:

خروج المهدي الموعود المنتظر الفاطمي.

The coming out of the Promised Mahdi, the Awaited (al-Muntazar) al-Faṭīmi (i.e. from the offspring of Faṭīmah).²⁸

Al-Mubarakfuri also writes:

وقال القاضي الشوكاني في الفتح الرباني الذي أمكن الوقوف عليه من الأحاديث الواردة

في المهدي المنتظر خمسون حديثا

Al-Qadhi al-Shawkani (d. 1250 H) said in al-Fath al-Rabbani: “What I have been able to study from the ahadith documented about the Awaited Mahdi (al-Mahdi al-Muntazar) are fifty ahadith.”²⁹

The title of one of Dr. al-Bastawi’s books bears the appellation as well:

المهدي المنتظر في ضوء الأحاديث والآثار الصحيحة وأقوال العلماء وآراء الفرق المختلفة

The Awaited Mahdi (al-Mahdi al-Muntazar) in the Light of Sahih Ahadith and Athar and the Statements of the Scholars and the Views of Different Sects.

In that same book, he mentions this book by Imam Ibn Hajar al-Haythami (d. 974 H):

القول المختصر في علامات المهدي المنتظر

A Concise Statement on the Signs of the Awaited Mahdi (al-Mahdi al-Muntazar).³⁰

He further cites a book by Shaykh Mur’i b. Yusuf al-Hanbali (d. 1033 H):

فوائد الفكر في ظهور المهدي المنتظر

The Benefits of Thinking about the Appearance of the Awaited Mahdi (al-Mahdi al-Muntazar).³¹

He gives also the title of a treatise by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Muhsin al-‘Abbad, whom he identifies as a former Vice Chancellor of the Islamic University of al-Madinah al-Munawwarah, published in the journal of the university of Dhu al-Qa’dah 1389 H, pp. 126-164:

عقيدة أهل السنة والأثر في المهدي المنتظر

The ‘Aqidah of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Athar Concerning the Awaited Mahdi (al-Mahdi al-Muntazar).³²

This again reminds that the issue of the Mahdi is a matter of 'aqidah.
'Allamah al-Albani mentions this as well:

فمنهم مثلا من يتبع من ادعى أنه المهدي أو عيسى، كالقاديانيين
الذين اتبعوا ميرزا غلام أحمد القادياني الذي ادعى المهديوية أولا، ثم العيسوية
، ثم النبوة، ومثل جماعة (جهيمان) السعودي الذي قام بفتنة الحرم المكي على
رأس سنة (1400) هجرية، وزعم أن معه المهدي المنتظر، وطلب من الحاضرين في
الحرم أن يبايعوه

Among them, for example, are those who follow someone who calls himself the Mahdi or 'Isa, like the Qadiyanis, who follow Mirza Ghulam Ahmad al-Qadiyani who claimed first that he was the Mahdi, then he claimed that he was 'Isa (b. Maryam), then he claimed prophethood. Another example is that of the Saudi group (Juhayman)³³ that perpetrated the crisis of the Haram of Makkah at the beginning of 1400 Hijri, and claimed that the Awaited Mahdi (al-Mahdi al-Muntazar) was with it, and demanded allegiance for him from those present (in Makkah).³⁴

Notes

1. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurṭubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 3, p. 70, # 11683
2. Ibid
3. Abu Hatim Muhammad b. Hibban b. Ahmad b. Hibban b. Mu'adh b. Ma'bad al-Tamimi al-Darimi al-Busti, Sahih Ibn Hibban bi Tartib Ibn Balban (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risalah; 2nd edition, 1414 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 15, p. 236, # 6823
4. Ibid
5. Ibid
6. Abu Dawud Sulayman b. al-Ash'ath al-Sijistani al-Azdi, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 509, # 4283
7. Ibid
8. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-'Ulama wa Ara al-Firaq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 238
9. Qur'an 2:213
10. Qur'an 16:36
11. Abu 'Abd Allah Na'im b. Hammad al-Maruzi, Kitab al-Fitan (Dar al-Fikr; 1414 H) [annotator: Prof. Dr. Suhayl Zakar], part 5, p. 221
12. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Aṭa], vol. 1, p. 445, # 2999
13. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 501, # 3398
14. Abu 'Abd Allah Na'im b. Hammad al-Maruzi, Kitab al-Fitan (Dar al-Fikr; 1414 H) [annotator: Prof. Dr. Suhayl Zakar], part 5, p. 220
15. Abu Dawud Sulayman b. al-Ash'ath al-Sijistani al-Azdi, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 509, # 4285
16. Ibid
17. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah (Muassasat Qurṭubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, p. 254
18. There are valid objections to the reliability of this 'Asim. We will be examining them later in this book. So, this hadith has a dha'if chain due to this 'Asim. However, its matn is confirmed in sahih Sunni ahadith, as our esteemed reader can see.

19. Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami' al-Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 4, p. 505, # 2230
20. Ibid
21. Ibid
22. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 4, p. 43, # 1529
23. 'Abd al-'Aziz b. 'Abd Allah b. Baz, Fatawa Nurun 'ala al-Darb (Dar al-Waṭan; 1st edition, 1428 H), vol. 1, p. 355
24. Ibid
25. Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Qissat al-Masih al-Dajjal wa Nuzul 'Isa ('Amman: al-Maktabah al-Islamiyyah; 1st edition, 1421 H), p. 54, footnote # 1
26. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1416 H), vol. 6, p. 368, # 2668
27. Abu al-'Ala Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Abd al-Rahim al-Mubarakfuri, Tuhfat al-Ahwazi bi Sharh Jami' al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1410 H), vol. 6, pp. 514-515
28. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ja'far al-Idrisi al-Kattani, Nazam al-Mutanathir min al-Hadith al-Mutawatir (Egypt: Dar al-Kutub al-Salafiyyah; 2nd edition), p. 225, # 289
29. Abu al-'Ala Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Abd al-Rahim al-Mubarakfuri, Tuhfat al-Ahwazi bi Sharh Jami' al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1410 H), vol. 6, p. 402
30. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-'Ulama wa Ara al-Firq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 42, # 7
31. Ibid, p. 42, # 9
32. Ibid, p. 137, # 33
33. This is a reference to Juhayman b. Muhammad b. Sayf al-'Utaybi (September 16, 1936 - January 9, 1980), an ultra-Salafist from Najd in Saudi Arabia, who militarily took control of the Ka'bah in Makkah on November 20, 1979 and held its pilgrims hostage. He was an ex-student of Shaykh Ibn Baz, and had become very dissatisfied with the Salafi credentials of the Saudi monarchy. He led a small militia of 1300-1500 to seize the Haram Mosque, and then announced his son-in-law - Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Qahtani - as the Mahdi. He was eventually defeated, after three weeks, by a combination of the Saudi army, the Pakistani army (who were called upon for help by Saudi authorities), and French commandos (similarly invited) who tactically converted to Islam in order to be able to take part in the military operations. He was publicly beheaded, along with 67 of his fighters, on January 9, 1980.
34. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 5, p. 278, # 2236

2. The Amir Over 'Isa B. Maryam

The Masih, 'alaihi al-salam, obviously, is a member of our Ummah, under the Shari'ah of Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi. This is explicitly indicated in this chapter-heading by Imam Muslim (d. 261 H):

باب نزول عيسى بن مريم حاكما بشريعة نبينا مُحَمَّد صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ

Chapter on the Descent of 'Isa b. Maryam to Judge with the Shari'ah of our Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him.¹

Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) also records this hadith:

حدثنا إسحاق أخبرنا يعقوب بن إبراهيم حدثنا أبي عن صالح عن ابن شهاب أن سعيد بن المسيب سمع أبا هريرة رضي الله عنه قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم والذي نفسي بيده ليوشكن أن ينزل فيكم ابن مريم حكما عدلا

Ishaq - Ya'qub b. Ibrahim - my father - Salih - Ibn Shihab - Sa'id b. al-Musayyab - Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "I swear by Him in Whose Hand my life is, surely the son of Maryam will soon descend amongst you as a just judge."²

Explaining this riwayat, al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states:

والمعنى أنه ينزل حاكما بهذه الشريعة فان هذه الشريعة باقية لا تنسخ بل يكون عيسى حاكما من حكام هذه الأمة

The meaning is that he will descend to judge with this Shari'ah, for this Shari'ah is eternal. It will never be abrogated. In fact, 'Isa will be one of the judges of this Ummah.³

Meanwhile, it is an undisputable fact that whosoever follows the Shari'ah of Muhammad is from his Ummah. This clearly is why al-Hafiz has proceeded to give him an entry in his book on the biographies of the Sahabah:

عيسى المسيح بن مريم الصديقة بنت عمران بن ماهان بن الغار رسول الله وكلمته ألقاها إلى مريم

ذكره الذهبي في التجريد مستدركا على من قبله فقال عيسى بن مريم رسول الله رأى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ليلة الاسراء وسلم عليه فهو نبي وصحابي وهو آخر من يموت من الصحابة وألغزه القاضي تاج الدين السبكي في قصيدته في آخر القواعد له فقال من باتفاق جميع الخلق أفضل من خير الصحاب أبي بكر ومن عمر ومن علي ومن عثمان وهو فتى من أمة المصطفى المختار من مضر

'Isa the Masih b. Maryam the Siddiqah bint 'Imran b. Mahan b. al-Ghar, the messenger of Allah and His Word which He said to Maryam.

Al-Dhahabi mentioned him in al-Tajrid, supporting those before him, and said: "'Isa b. Maryam, the messenger of Allah. He saw the Prophet, peace

be upon him, on the night of al-Isra and said salam to him. Therefore, he is a prophet AND A SAHABI; and he will be the last of the Sahabah to die.”

Al-Qadhi Taj al-Din al-Subki indirectly referred to him in his poem at the end of his al-Qawaid, and said: “He, who by consensus of all creatures, is better than the best of the Sahabah, Abu Bakr; and he is better than ‘Umar, ‘Ali and ‘Uthman. He is a young man from the Ummah of the Chosen Mustafa from Mudhar.”⁴

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) further says in his Siyar:

ولم يسم الله تعالى في كتابه صحابيا باسمه إلا زيد بن حارثة وعيسى بن مريم عليه السلام
الذي ينزل حكما مقسطا

Allah the Most High has not mentioned in His Book any Sahabi by name except Zayd b. Harithah and ‘Isa b. Maryam, ‘alaihi al-salam, who will descend as a just judge.⁵

Basically, ‘Isa b. Maryam is the best of the Sahabah - by Sunni reckoning - and not Abu Bakr (contrary to the popular Sunni myth). He will follow and enforce the Shari’ah of Muhammad, and will be the last of the Sahabah to die. Since the advent of our Prophet, the Masih became a member of our Ummah, and will die as one of our own.

Interestingly, after ‘Isa’s descent, he will not be the supreme leader of the Ummah. Of course, he will be a judge who will enforce our Shari’ah. However, he will, in doing that, be taking orders from a higher authority, the khalifah of his time. Imam al-Bukhari records:

حدثنا ابن بكير حدثنا الليث عن يونس عن ابن شهاب عن نافع مولى أبي قتادة الأنصاري أن أبا هريرة قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم كيف أنتم إذا نزل ابن مريم فيكم وإمامكم منكم.

Ibn Bukayr - al-Layth - Yunus - Ibn Shihab - Nafi’, freed slave of Abu Qatadah al-Ansari - Abu Hurayrah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “How will you be when the son of Maryam descends amongst you while your Imam will be from you?”⁶

Dr. al-Bastawi interprets that in this manner:

"فإمامكم منكم " أي أن الإمام يكون غير عيسى، رجل من أمة مُجَّد صلى الله عليه وسلم.

“while your Imam will be from you”, that is: the Imam will NOT be ‘Isa, he will be a man from the Ummah of Muhammad, peace be upon him.⁷

Of course, ‘Isa too is from this Ummah. However, he is a naturalized member while the Imam will be someone born into it. Well, by divine decree, only people from the Arab tribe of Quraysh can be khalifahs; and this rule will never change till the Hour. Imam Ibn Abi ‘Asim (d. 287 H) confirms:

ثنا أبو صالح هدبة بن عبد الوهاب، حدثنا النضر بن شميل، ثنا شعبة، عن حبيب بن الزبير، عن عبد الله بن أبي الهذيل قال: كنا نجالس عمرو ابن العاص نذاكره الفقه فقال رجل

من بكر لتنتهين قريش أو ليجعلن الله هذا الأمر في جمهور من جماهير العرب فقال عمرو بن العاص: كذبت سمعت رسول الله ﷺ يقول: الخلافة في قريش إلى قيام الساعة.

Abu Salih Hudbah b. ‘Abd al-Wahhab - al-Nadhr b. Shumayl - Shu’bah - Habib b. al-Zubayr - ‘Abd Allah b. Abi al-Hudhayl:

We were sitting with ‘Amr b. al-‘As, discussing al-fiqh. Then, a man from Bakr, said, “If Quraysh do not desist, Allah will place this affair in another group among Arabs.” So, ‘Amr b. al-‘As replied, “You lied! I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying: ‘The khilafah is in Quraysh till the establishment of the Hour.’”⁸

And ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) says:

إسناده جيد

Its chain is good.⁹

Imam Abu Ya’la (d. 307 H) also records:

حدثنا الحسن بن إسماعيل أبو سعيد بالبصرة حدثنا إبراهيم بن سعد عن أبيه عن أنس

ﷺ قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم: الأئمة من قريش

Al-Hasan b. Isma’il Abu Sa’id - Ibrahim b. Sa’d - his father - Anas, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “The Imams are from Quraysh.”¹⁰

Shaykh Dr. Asad says:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih¹¹

Since the Masih is an Israilite, he is automatically disqualified from running the khilafah. He can only pledge allegiance to and take orders from a supreme royal ruler from Quraysh. Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) documents too:

حدثنا أحمد بن منيع حدثنا زيد بن حباب حدثنا معاوية بن صالح حدثنا أبو مریم

الأنصاري عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم الملك في قريش

Ahmad b. Mani’ - Zayd b. Hubbab - Mu’awiyah b. Salih - Abu Maryam al-Ansari - Abu Hurayrah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “The kingdom is in Quraysh.”¹²

Al-Albani comments:

صحيح

Sahih¹³

The descent of ‘Isa will create a huge potential for confusion within the Ummah. Would it be proper for a prophet to take orders from a non-prophet? In order to forestall the possibility of disarray, both the Masih and the khalifah of his time will explain the matter clearly by deeds. Normally, the Imam of the Ummah cannot be led in salat by any of his subjects. Imam al-Nasai (d. 303 H) records:

أخبرنا إبراهيم بن مُحمَّد التيمي قال حدثنا يحيى بن سعيد عن شعبة عن إسماعيل بن رجاء عن أوس بن ضمعج عن أبي مسعود قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم لا يؤم الرجل في سلطانه ولا يجلس على تكرمته إلا بإذنه

Ibrahim b. Muhammad al-Taymi - Yahya b. Sa'id - Shu'bah - Isma'il b. Raja - Aws b. Dham'aj - Abu Mas'ud:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "No one can lead a man in salat in his place of authority, and no one can sit in his place of honour except with his permission."¹⁴

And al-Albani declares:

صحيح

Sahih¹⁵

Knowing this, the then amir of the believers will nonetheless offer leadership of the salat to 'Isa b. Maryam. If the Masih accepts it and leads the amir, then he (the Masih) confirms himself as the overall master of the Ummah. However, if he rejects it, in that case he submits to the authority and leadership of the khalifah. Imam Muslim here presents how this will be resolved:

حدثنا الوليد بن شجاع وهارون بن عبدالله وحجاج بن الشاعر قالوا حدثنا حجاج (وهو ابن مُحمَّد) عن ابن جريج قال أخبرني أبو الزبير أنه سمع جابر بن عبدالله يقول سمعت النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول لا تزال طائفة من أمتي يقاتلون على الحق ظاهرين إلى يوم القيامة قال فينزل عيسى بن مريم صلى الله عليه و سلم فيقول أميرهم تعال صل لنا فيقول لا إن بعضكم على بعض أمراء تكرمه الله هذه الأمة

Al-Walid b. Shuja', Harun b. 'Abd Allah and Hajjaj b. al-Sha'ir - Hajjaj b. Muhammad - Ibn Jurayj - Abu al-Zubayr - Jabir b. 'Abd Allah:

I heard the Prophet, peace be upon him, saying: "There will never cease to be a group within my Ummah who will be fighting upon the Truth, victorious till the Day of al-Qiyamah. Then, 'Isa b. Maryam, sallallahu 'alaihi wa salam, will descend, and their amir will say, 'Come and lead us in salat.' But, he ('Isa) will reply, 'No. Verily, some of you are the amirs of the others. This is the honour of Allah to this Ummah.'"¹⁶

The Masih rejects the offer and performs salat behind the amir. Al-Albani records that the Prophet said:

منا الذي يصلي عيسى بن مريم خلفه

The one behind whom 'Isa b. Maryam will perform salat is from us.¹⁷

Then, he comments:

فالحديث عندي صحيح

The hadith, in my view, is sahih¹⁸

Therefore, the authority of the khalifah over Prophet 'Isa is perfectly established. No one can lead a man in salat in his place of authority; and the

son of Maryam will be led. As such, he will not be the one in overall authority over the Ummah.

Who then will this amir be, who will give commands to 'Isa?

Dr. al-Bastawi has copied a hadith which identifies for us the Imam of the Ummah during 'Isa's Second Coming:

عن جابر قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: ينزل عيسى بن مريم فيقول أميرهم المهدي: تعال صل بنا. فيقول: لا، إن بعضهم أمير بعض. تكرمه الله لهذه الأمة.

Narrated Jabir:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "Isa b. Maryam will descend and their amir, the Mahdi will say, 'Come and lead us in salat.' But, he will reply, 'No. Verily, some of them are the amirs over others. It is the honour of Allah to this Ummah.'"¹⁹

After quoting its sources and extensively examining its narrators, he concludes:

إسناده صحيح.

Its chain is sahih²⁰

He also documents:

عن ابن سيرين قال: المهدي من هذه الأمة وهو الذي يؤم عيسى بن مريم.

Ibn Sirrin said: "The Mahdi is from this Ummah, and he will be the Imam of 'Isa b. Maryam.'"²¹

And he has this verdict on it:

إسناده صحيح. رجاله كلهم ثقات.

Its chain is sahih. Its narrators are trustworthy.²²

So, he will be the Mahdi, 'alaihi al-salam. He will be the amir and Imam of the Ummah, before and after Prophet 'Isa joins it. This fact reveals that the coming out of the Mahdi will occur during the very last part of life on earth, as 'Isa will come at that time. Something to note also is that the Mahdi will actually rule the last section of our Ummah, as Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) documents:

أخبرني أبو العباس محمد بن أحمد المحبوبي بمرو ثنا سعيد بن مسعود ثنا النضر بن شميل ثنا سليمان بن عبيد ثنا أبو الصديق الناجي عن أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه قال: يخرج في آخر أمتي المهدي يسقيه الله الغيث وتخرج الأرض نباتها ويعطي المال صحاحا وتكثر الماشية وتعظم الأمة يعيش سبعا أو ثمانيا يعني حججا

Abu al-'Abbas Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Mahbubi - Sa'id b. Mas'ud - al-Nadhr b. Shumayl - Sulayman b. 'Ubayd - Abu al-Siddiq al-Naji - Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, "The Mahdi will come out at the END of my Ummah. Allah will provide rain to him, and the earth will bring out its vegetation, and he will give wealth correctly. Livestock will become abundant and the Ummah will become great. He will witness seven or eight Hajjs."²³

Al-Hakim comments:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This hadith has a sahih chain²⁴
Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) agrees:

صحيح

Sahih²⁵
Al-Albani also says about the hadith in his Sahihah:

قلت: وهذا سند صحيح

I say: This chain is sahih²⁶
Dr. al-Bastawi has the same verdict on it:

إسناده صحيح.

Its chain is sahih.²⁷

Notes

1. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 1, p. 134, chapter # 71
2. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju'fi, al-Jami' al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1272, # 3264
3. Shihab al-Din Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah li al-Taba'ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 6, p. 356
4. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, al-Isabah fi Tamyiz al-Sahabah (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1415 H) [annotators: Shaykh 'Adil Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Mawjud and Shaykh 'Ali Muhammad Ma'udh], vol. 4, pp. 633-634, # 6164
5. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risalah; 9th edition, 1413 H) [annotators of the first volume: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut and Husayn al-Asad], vol. 1, p. 220, # 36
6. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju'fi, al-Jami' al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1272, # 3265
7. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadiith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-'Ulama wa Ara al-Firqah al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 283
8. Abu Bakr b. Abi 'Asim, Ahmad b. 'Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (al-Maktab al-Islami; 1st edition, 1400 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 527, # 1109
9. Ibid
10. Abu Ya'la Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 6, p. 321, # 3644
11. Ibid
12. Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami' al-Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 5, p. 727 # 3936
13. Ibid
14. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Ahmad b. Shu'ayb al-Nasai, al-Mujtaba min al-Sunan (Halab: Maktab al-Matbu'at al-Islamiyyah; 2nd edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 77, # 783
15. Ibid
16. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 1, p. 137, # 156 (247)

17. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, *Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma’arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 5, p. 371, # 2293
18. Ibid
19. Dr. ‘Abd al-‘Alim ‘Abd al-‘Azim al-Bastawi, *al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-‘Ulama wa Ara al-Firaq al-Mukhtalifah* (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 180, # 6
20. Ibid, p. 182
21. Ibid, p. 219, # 14
22. Ibid, p. 220
23. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, *al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihayn* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Aṭa], vol. 4, p. 601, # 8673
24. Ibid
25. Ibid
26. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, *Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma’arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 2, p. 328, # 711
27. Dr. ‘Abd al-‘Alim ‘Abd al-‘Azim al-Bastawi, *al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-‘Ulama wa Ara al-Firaq al-Mukhtalifah* (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 165

3. Is The Mahdi Superior To The Masih?

The Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi, is that only the best of the Ummah should be their khalifah. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) confirms:

ففي هذا الخبر إخبار عمر بين المهاجرين والأنصار أن أبا بكر سيد المسلمين وخيرهم وأحبهم إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ذلك علة مبايعته فقال بل نبايعك أنت فأنت سيدنا وخيرنا وأحبنا إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ليبين بذلك أن المأمور به تولية الأفضل وأنت أفضلنا فنبايعك

In this report is the declaration of ‘Umar among the Muhajirun and the Ansar that Abu Bakr was the sayyid of the Muslims and the best of them, and the most beloved of them to the Messenger of Allah. This is the reason for pledging allegiance to him. So, he (‘Umar) said, “Rather, we will pledge allegiance to you because you are our sayyid, and the best of us, and the most beloved of us to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him”. He wanted to make clear through it that: WHAT IS ORDAINED IS TO GIVE AUTHORITY TO THE BEST, and you are the best of us. So, we will pledge allegiance to you.¹

‘Umar considered Abu Bakr to have been the best of the Ummah after the Messenger’s death; and on that account, he campaigned the khilafah for him. Whether he was correct in his assessment or not has been answered in detail in our first book ‘Ali: The Best of the Sahabah and in our second, On the Khilafah of ‘Ali over Abu Bakr. What is important here is: why will Prophet ‘Isa, ‘alaihi al-salam, submit to the authority of the Mahdi, ‘alaihi al-salam? After all, the Mahdi will be the Imam of the Ummah while the Masih will be a member of it. The Mahdi will be the amir of the believers; and the Masih will be one of those believers. The Mahdi will rule the earth by kingdom, and ‘Isa b. Maryam will be one of his subjects. Since the Masih is a prophet, why will he submit the authority to the Mahdi, a non-prophet, and take orders from him? Will ‘Isa consider himself better to the Mahdi or vice versa?

It is highly tempting to think that the Masih will be under the Mahdi against his will; that is, he will be the best, but will be disqualified from leadership due to his tribe. Prophet ‘Isa is an Israilite while the amirs of this Ummah can only come from the tribe of Quraysh. However, this would be a very weak excuse. If Allah had wanted, He could have made an exception for the Masih, in view of his special circumstance. For instance, that authentic hadith could have read: “The Imams are from Quraysh, except ‘Isa b. Maryam.” The fact that our Lord has made no such exception shows that there really is no need for it. Islam is not a tribal religion; and Allah will never compromise quality for tribal affiliations. He has fixed the Imamah within the tribe of Quraysh only because He has also placed the best of us amongst them. Therefore, the best of Quraysh at each point in time is also always the best of Allah’s creation at that period. That best of Quraysh, of course, is then the chosen, rightful khalifah, even if people reject his authority. Apparently, Allah has made no exception for Prophet ‘Isa because

the rule of the Mahdi over him does not upset or compromise the requirements of khilafah. Imam al-Mahdi will be the best of Quraysh, and therefore the best of creation. He will thereby be the rightful amir over all humans and non-humans. In simpler words, the Mahdi will be superior to the Masih in rank before Allah.

It is perhaps in recognition of this fact that Ibn Sirrin (d. 110 H), one of the earliest and best Sunni scholars - from the senior Tabi'in - declared that the Mahdi is "superior to some prophets". However, this view of his does not represent that of the mainstream Ahl al-Sunnah, despite his extremely high status among them. The orthodox Sunni position is that 'Isa is vastly superior to the Mahdi. He is a prophet and the Mahdi is not. To them, every prophet is superior to every non-prophet till the Day of al-Qiyamah. Therefore, going by their submission, in the Mahdi-Masih case, quality will be compromised for tribal affiliations.

The primary Sunni evidence for the superiority of all prophets over all non-prophets - as we have confirmed repeatedly from some of their anti-Shi'i debaters - are these verses:

وتلك حجتنا آتيناها إبراهيم على قومه نرفع درجات من نشاء إن ربك حكيم عليم وهبنا له إسحاق ويعقوب كلا هدينا ونوحا هدينا من قبل ومن ذريته داوود وسليمان وأيوب ويوسف وموسى وهارون وكذلك نجزي المحسنين وزكريا ويحيى وعيسى وإلياس كل من الصالحين وإسماعيل واليسع ويونس ولوطا وكلا فضلنا على العالمين

And that was Our Hujjah which We gave Ibrahim against his people. We raise whom We will in ranks. Certainly your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing. And We bestowed upon him Ishaq and Ya'qub, each of them We guided - and We guided Nuh before (him) - and among his offspring were Dawud, Sulayman, Ayub, Yusuf, Musa, and Harun - thus do We reward the good-doers - and Zakariyyah, Yahya, 'ISA and Ilyas - each one of them was of the righteous - and Isma'il, al-Yasa', Yunus and Lut; AND EACH ONE OF THEM WE MADE SUPERIOR ABOVE THE WORLDS.²

This passage gives the names of only eighteen prophets - including 'Isa b. Maryam - and states that Allah "made" each of them superior above the worlds. There is no reference to the other prophets - whether generally or specifically. As such, the verses cannot be used for all prophets. Meanwhile, the last part above also has the same wording as that of this ayah:

ولقد آتينا بني إسرائيل الكتاب والحكم والنبوة ورزقناهم من الطيبات وفضلناهم على العالمين

And indeed, We gave the offspring of Israil the Book, and authority and prophethood, and We provided them with good things, AND WE MADE THEM SUPERIOR ABOVE THE WORLDS.³

So, what are these verses saying? That the eighteen prophets are superior above all creatures, and above Muhammad and the other prophets that are not mentioned, till the Qiyamah? That the Israilites are better than all non-Israilites till the end of time? Perhaps, we should let the Messenger of Allah provide the answers. Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) records:

حدثنا أبو عبد الله مُحَمَّد بن عبد الله الزاهد الأصبهاني ثنا أحمد بن يونس الضبي بأصبهان ثنا أبو بدر شجاع ابن الوليد قال : سمعت زياد بن خيثمة يحدث عن أبيه عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال قال رسول الله ﷺ : إن لله عبادا ليسوا بأنبياء ولا شهداء يغبطهم الشهداء والنبيون يوم القيامة لقرهم من الله تعالى ومجلسهم منه ... هم أولياء الله عز وجل الذين لا خوف عليهم ولا هم يحزنون

Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Zaid al-Isbahani - Ahmad b. Yunus al-Dhabi - Abu Badr Shuja’ b. al-Walid - Ziyad b. Khaythamah - his father - Ibn ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “Verily, there are worshippers of Allah who are neither prophets nor martyrs. The martyrs and the prophets will envy them on the Day of al-Qiyamah DUE TO THEIR CLOSENESS TO ALLAH THE MOST HIGH AND THEIR STATUS TO HIM ... They are the awliya of Allah the Almighty, those upon whom no fear shall come, nor shall they grieve.”⁴

Al-Hakim comments:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد ولم يخرجاه

This hadith has a sahih chain but they (i.e. al-Bukhari and Muslim) both have not recorded it.⁵

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) agrees:

صحيح

Sahih⁶

While analyzing this same hadith, ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) says: أخرجه الحاكم في «المستدرک» ... وقال: «صحيح الإسناد ولم يخرجاه» ، ووافقه

الذهبي. قلت: وهو كما قالوا

Al-Hakim recorded it in al-Mustadrak ... and said: “It has a sahih chain but they both have not recorded it” and al-Dhahabi agreed with him. I say: It is as they both have said (i.e. it truly has a sahih chain).⁷

In other words, the awliya of Allah will have ranks and positions on the Day of al-Qiyamah which even prophets and martyrs will envy.

It must be noted that “envy” in Arabic is of two types: al-hasad and al-ghabt. Imam Ibn al-Athir (d. 606 H), a top Sunni hadith linguist, explains both:

الحسد : ان يرى الرجل لأخيه نعمة فيتمنى أن تزول عنه وتكون له دونه . والغبط : أن يتمنى أن يكون له مثلها ولا يتمنى زوالها عنه.

Al-Hasad: a man sees a blessing of his brother and wishes that he (i.e. his brother) loses it and it becomes his own instead.

Al-Ghabt: to wish to have the like of it (i.e. the blessing of his brother) without wishing that he (i.e. the brother) loses it.⁸

The hadith has adopted the second word to describe the envy of the prophets and martyrs. Therefore, it is the good envy, and not the sinful type.

The prophets and martyrs will wish to also have the like of the ranks of the awliya on the Day of al-Qiyamah, along with them. It is apparent from the hadith that the prophets and martyrs will not be able to reach the level of the awliya - in terms of status and nearness to Allah - and will wish to do so. This confirms absolutely the superiority of these awliya over the prophets and martyrs.

Imam Abu Dawud (d. 275 H) as well documents:

حدثنا زهير بن حرب وعثمان بن أبي شيبة قالنا ثنا جرير عن عمارة بن القعقاع عن أبي زرعة بن عمرو بن جرير أن عمر بن الخطاب قال قال النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم " إن من عباد الله لأناسا ما هم بأنبياء ولا شهداء يغبطهم الأنبياء والشهداء يوم القيامة بمكانهم من الله تعالى " قالوا يارسول الله تخبرنا من هم ؟ قال " هم قوم تحابوا بروح الله على غير أرحام بينهم ولا أموال يتعاطونها فو الله إن وجوههم لنور وإنهم على نور لا يخافون إذا خاف الناس ولا يحزنون إذا حزن الناس وقرأ هذه الآية { ألا إن أولياء الله لا خوف عليهم ولا هم يحزنون } .

Zuhayr b. Harb and 'Uthman b. Abi Shaybah - Jarir - 'Amarah b. al-Qa'qa' - Abu Zur'ah b. 'Amr b. Jarir - 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭab:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "Verily, among the worshippers of Allah are people who are neither prophets nor martyrs. The prophets and the martyrs will envy them on the Day of al-Qiyamah DUE TO THEIR POSITION TO ALLAH THE MOST HIGH." They asked, "O Messenger of Allah, inform us about them?" He replied, "They are a people who love one another with the Spirit of Allah, despite that they are not related by blood and do not give wealth to one another. I swear by Allah, their faces surely will be light, and they will be upon light. They will not fear when the people will fear, and they will not grieve when the people grieve." Then, he recited this verse {No doubt! Verily, the awliya of Allah, no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve}.⁹

And al-Albani declares:

صحيح

Sahih¹⁰

This shows that they will have a "position" to Allah which the prophets and martyrs will lack. Imam Abu Ya'la (d. 307 H) has a similar hadith too:

حدثنا عبد الرحمن بن صالح الأزدي حدثنا محمد بن فضيل عن عمارة عن أبي زرعة عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله - صلى الله عليه و سلم - : إن من عباد الله عبادا يغبطهم الأنبياء والشهداء قيل : من هم لعلنا نجبهم ؟ قال : هم قوم تحابوا بنور الله من غير أرحام ولا أنساب وجوههم نور على منابر من نور لا يخافون إن خاف الناس ولا يحزنون إن حزن الناس

ثم قرأ : { ألا إن أولياء الله لا خوف عليهم ولا هم يحزنون } [يونس : 62]

'Abd al-Rahman b. Salih al-Azdi - Muhammad b. Fudhayl - 'Amarah - Abu Zur'ah - Abu Hurayrah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “Verily, there are certain worshippers of Allah. The prophets and martyrs will envy them.” It was said, “Who are they, so that we may love them?” He replied, “They are a people who love one another with the Light of Allah, despite having no blood relationship. Their faces will be light, and they will be upon pulpits of light. They will not fear if the people fear and they will not grieve if the people grieve.” Then he recited {No doubt! Verily, the awliya of Allah, no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve} [Yunus: 62]¹¹

Dr. Asad says:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih¹²

‘Allamah al-Albani also submits concerning the riwayat:

قلت: وإسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

I say: Its chain is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.¹³

Elsewhere, the ‘Allamah says about this same hadith:

صحيح

Sahih¹⁴

And Shaykh al-Arnauf concurs with him:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih¹⁵

With this, it is clear that the Messenger of Allah declared some awliya to be superior in rank above prophets and martyrs. This means that ‘Isa’s nubuwwah is not sufficient evidence of his alleged superiority over Imam al-Mahdi. Moreover, Allah Himself will “send” the Mahdi to be the Imam and amir - and therefore the best - of some of those same awliya whose status with Allah will make prophets and martyrs envy them on the Day of al-Qiyamah.

Notes

1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, p. 565

2. Qur’an 6:83-86

3. Qur’an 45:16

4. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Aṭa], vol. 4, p. 188, # 7318

5. Ibid

6. Ibid

7. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma’arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’; 1st edition, 1422 H), vol. 7, pp. 1368-1369, # 3464

8. Abu Sa’adat al-Mubarak b. Muhammad, Ibn al-Athir al-Jazari, al-Nihayah fi Gharib al-Hadith wa al-Athar (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1399 AH) [annotator: Tahir Ahmad al-Zawi and Mahmud Muhammad al-Tanahi], vol. 1, p. 383

9. Abu Dawud Sulayman b. al-Ash’ath al-Sijistani al-Azdi, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 310, # 3527

10. Ibid

11. Abu Ya'la Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 10, p. 495, # 6110
12. Ibid
13. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1422 H), vol. 7, p. 1370, # 3464
14. Abu Hatim Muhammad b. Hibban b. Ahmad b. Hibban b. Mu'adh b. Ma'bad al-Tamimi al-Darimi al-Busti, Sahih Ibn Hibban bi Tartib Ibn Balban (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risalah; 2nd edition, 1414 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 2, p. 332, # 573
15. Ibid

4. He Is The Khalifah Of Allah

Imam Ibn al-‘Athir (d. 606 H), an ace Sunni lexicographer, opens this chapter:

الخليفة من يقوم مقام الذاهب ويسد مسده

The khalifah is whoever stands in the position of the one who is physically absent and substitutes for him.¹

The absence may be due to a variety of reasons - such as travel, seclusion, death and others. As such, when Prophet Musa, ‘alaihi al-salam, was leaving his Ummah temporarily for some days, he appointed a khalifah:

وقال موسى لأخيه هارون اخلفني في قومي

Musa said to his brother, Harun: “Be my khalifah over my people.”²

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) also informs us:

فمن المعلوم انه كان لا يخرج من المدينة حتى يستخلف

It is well-known that he (the Prophet) never left Madinah without appointing a khalifah over it.³

Meanwhile, Allah is our King:

قل أعوذ برب الناس ملك الناس إله الناس

Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the God of mankind.⁴

No doubt, His is the kingdom of all the heavens and the earth:

ولله ملك السماوات والأرض والله على كل شيء قدير

And to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and Allah has power over all things.⁵

However, He does not physically rule the kingdom on the earth. He instead appoints certain people to act for Him:

والله يؤتي ملكه من يشاء

And Allah gives His kingdom to whoever He wishes.⁶

Whoever He appoints to run His kingdom on His earth is called His khalifah. Prophet Adam, ‘alaihi al-salam, was the first of such people:

وإذ قال ربك للملائكة إني جاعل في الأرض خليفة

And when your Lord said to the angels, “I will appoint in the earth a khalifah.”⁷

Imam al-Mawardi (d. 450 H) states under this verse:

والثالث : أنه أراد : جاعل في الأرض خليفةً يخلفني في الحكم بين خلقي ، وهو آدم ،

ومن قام مقامه من ولده ، وهذا قول ابن مسعود.

The third opinion: is that He intended “I will appoint in the earth a khalifah WHO WILL SUBSTITUTE FOR ME in giving judgments among My creatures, and he is Adam and whoever stands in his position among his offspring”. This was the opinion of Ibn Mas’ud.⁸

Imam al-Baydhawi (d. 685 H)also submits:

والخليفة من يخلف غيره وينوب منابه والهاء فيه للمبالغة والمراد به آدم عليه الصلاة والسلام لأنه كان خليفة الله في أرضه وكذلك كل نبي استخلفهم الله في عمارة الأرض وسياسة الناس وتكميل نفوسهم وتنفيذ أمره فيهم لا لحاجة به تعالى إلى من ينوبه بل لقصور المستخلف عليه عن قبول فيضه وتلقي أمره بغير وسط

The khalifah is he who substitutes for another and deputizes for him. The ha in it (i.e. the word khalifah) is only for emphasis. The one intended with it is Adam, peace and blessings be upon him, for he was the khalifah of Allah in His earth, and so were all prophets. Allah made them His khalifas in the administration of the earth, the government over the people, the perfection of their (i.e. the people's) souls, and the implementation of His Commands among them. This was NOT due to His dependence on appointing someone to deputize for Him. Rather, it was as a result of the inability of those over whom He appoints the khalifah, to accept His Grace and receive His Command directly.⁹

Imam al-Sharbini (d. 968 H) has the same words as above, almost verbatim, in his Tafsir.¹⁰ Imam al-Nasafi (d. 710 H) agrees with them:

آدم كان خليفة الله في أرضه وكذلك كل نبي، قال الله تعالى: { يا داوود إنا جعلناك خليفة في الأرض } (ص: 26)

Adam was the khalifah of Allah in His earth, and so were all prophets. Allah the Most High says: {O Dawud! We have appointed you a khalifah in the earth} [38:26]¹¹

Imam al-Baghwi (d. 516 H) affirms this too:

والمراد بالخليفة هاهنا آدم سماه خليفة لأنه خلف الجن أي جاء بعدهم وقيل لأنه يخلفه غيره والصحيح أنه خليفة الله في أرضه لإقامة أحكامه وتنفيذ وصاياه

The one intended with the word “khalifah” here (in the verse) is Adam. He was named a khalifah because (according to one opinion) he succeeded the jinns, that is he came after them. It is also said (in another opinion) that it was because he substituted for another. THE CORRECT OPINION is that he was the khalifah of Allah on His earth for the establishment of His Verdicts and the implementation of His Decrees.¹²

Imam Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597 H) says also:

أحدهما انه خليفة عن الله تعالى في إقامة شرعه ودلائل توحيديه والحكم في خلقه وهذا قول ابن مسعود و مجاهد

One of both (opinions) is that he was a khalifah of Allah the Most High in the establishment of His Laws and the proofs of His Oneness and the government of His creatures. This was the opinion of Ibn Mas'ud and Mujahid.¹³

Imam al-Zuhayli has this exegesis of the verse, as well:

اذكر أيها النبي لقومك قصة خلق أبيهم آدم، حين قال الله للملائكة: إني متخذ في الأرض خليفة، يقوم بعمارتهما وسكنهاها، وينفذ أحكامي فيها بين الناس

Mention, O Prophet, to your people the story of the creation of their father Adam, when Allah said to the angels, "I will appoint in the earth a khalifah who will uphold its structure and its residence and will implement my Laws in it among the people."¹⁴

And, al-Mahalli (d. 864 H) and al-Suyuti (d. 911 H) in their Tafsir al-Jalalayn, cap everything:

{و} اذكر يا مُحَمَّد { إذ قال ربك للملائكة إني جاعل في الأرض خليفة } يخلفني في تنفيذ

أحكامي فيها وهو آدم

{And} remember, O Muhammad {when your Lord said to the angels: I will appoint in the earth a khalifah} who will substitute for Me in the implementation of My Laws in it, and he is Adam.¹⁵

Adam and all the other prophets, 'alaihim al-salam, were khulafa of Allah on the earth. Each one of them was His khalifah over his people. Without doubt, Prophet Muhammad is the supreme khalifah of Allah in our Ummah. However, there are others too besides him among us, non-prophets like us, who are his successors in the khilafah. He has specifically named Imam al-Mahdi as one of these khulafa of our Lord in our blessed Ummah. Imam al-Bazzar (d. 292 H) records:

حدثنا أحمد بن منصور، قال: حدثنا عبد الرزاق، قال أخبرنا الثوري، عن خالد الحذاء، عن أبي قلابة عن أبي أسماء عن ثوبان، رضي الله عنه، قال قال رسول الله ﷺ: يقتل عند كنزكم هذا ثلاثة كلهم ابن خليفة، ثم لا يصل إلى واحد منهم، ثم تقبل الرايات السود من قبل المشرق فيقتلونكم قتلاً لم يقتله قوم، ثم ذكر شيئاً فإذا رأيتموه فبايعوه، ولو حبوا على الثلج فإنه خليفة الله المهدي.

Ahmad b. Mansur - 'Abd al-Razzaq - al-Thawri - Khalid al-Hadha - Abu Qilabah - Abu Asma - Thawban, radiyallahu 'anhu:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, "Near this treasure of yours, three people will kill one another. Each of them is a son of a khalifah. But it will not reach any of them. Then the black flags will come from the East, and they will kill you in a way that no nation had ever done been killed." Then he mentioned something (and said): "When you see him, pledge allegiance to him, even if you have to crawl on snow, for verily he is the khalifah of Allah, the Mahdi."¹⁶

Al-Bazzar himself comments:

فإننا اخترنا هذا الحديث لصحته وجلالة ثوبان وإسناده إسناد صحيح.

We have selected this hadith (for our book) due to its authenticity and the greatness of Thawban, and its chain is a sahih chain.¹⁷

Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) also records:

أخبرنا أبو عبد الله الصفار ثنا مُحَمَّد بن إبراهيم بن أرومة ثنا الحسين بن حفص ثنا سفیان عن خالد الحذاء عن أبي قلابة عن أبي أسماء عن ثوبان رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله ﷺ: يقتل عند كنزكم ثلاثة كلهم ابن خليفة ثم لا يصير إلى واحد منهم ثم تطلع الرايات السود قبل المشرق فيقاتلونكم قتالا لم يقاتله قوم ثم ذكر شيئا فقال: إذا رأيتموه فبايعوه ولو حبوا على الثلج فإنه خليفة الله المهدي

Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Saffar - Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. Urumah - al-Husayn b. Hafs - Sufyan - Khalid al-Hadha - Abu Qilabah - Abu Asma - Thawban, radhiyallahu ‘anhu:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “Near your treasure, three people will kill one another. Each of them will be a son of a khalifah. But it will not get to any of them. Then the black flags will come from the East, and they will fight you in a way that no nation had ever been fought.” Then he mentioned something and he [the Prophet] said: “When you see him, pledge allegiance to him, even if you have to crawl on snow, for verily he is the khalifah of Allah, the Mahdi.”¹⁸

Al-Hakim declares:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This hadith is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.¹⁹
And Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) agrees:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

Upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim.²⁰

Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) further documents:

وقال ابن ماجه: حدثنا مُحَمَّد بن يحيى وأحمد بن يوسف قالوا، حدثنا عبد الرزاق عن سفیان الثوري عن خالد الحذاء عن أبي قلابة عن أبي أسماء الرحي عن ثوبان قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: يقتل عند كنزكم ثلاثة كلهم ابن خليفة لا يصير إلى واحد منهم ثم تطلع الرايات السود من قبل المشرق فيقتلونكم قتلاً لم يقتله قوم، ثم ذكر شيئا لا أحفظه قال فإذا رأيتموه فبايعوه ولو حبوا على الثلج فإنه خليفة الله المهدي.

Ibn Majah - Muhammad b. Yahya (al-Dhahli) and Ahmad b. Yusuf - ‘Abd al-Razzaq - Sufyan al-Thawri - Khalid al-Hadha - Abu Qilabah - Abu Asma al-Rahbi - Thawban:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “Near your treasure, three people will kill one another. Each of them will be a son of a khalifah. But it will not get to any of them. Then the black flags will come from the East, and they will kill you in a way that no nation had ever been killed.” Then he mentioned something which I cannot recall. (Then) he said: “When you see him, pledge allegiance to him, even if you have to crawl on snow, for verily he is the khalifah of Allah, the Mahdi.”²¹

Ibn Kathir says:

وهذا إسناد قوي صحيح، والظاهر أن المراد بالكنز المذكور في هذا السياق كنز الكعبة يقتتل عنده ليأخذه ثلاثة من أولاد الخلفاء حتى يكون آخر الزمان فيخرج المهدي ويكون ظهوره من بلاد المشرق

This chain is strong and sahih. The apparent is that what is intended with the mentioned treasure in this context is the treasure of the Ka'bah. Three children of the khalifahs will kill one another near it, (aiming) to take it, until the End Time and the Mahdi will come out and his appearance will be from the Eastern towns.²²

Dr. al-Bastawi also comments about this riwayah of Ibn Majah, copied above by Ibn Kathir:

إسناده صحيح.

Its chain is sahih.²³

Strangely, however, al-Albani (d. 1420 H) attacks the sanad of the hadith:

وقد ذهل من صححه عن علته، وهي عنعنة أبي قلابة، فإنه من المدلسين

Those who declared it sahih have overlooked its defect, and that is the 'an-'an report of Abu Qilabah, for verily he was from the mudalisin.²⁴

Meanwhile, Dr. al-Bastawi has provided a devastating rebuttal to al-Albani and the other deniers:

فأما اختلاط عبد الرزاق فلا يضر في صحة هذا الإسناد. فقد كان اختلاطه بعد سنة مائتين والظاهر أن سماع الذهلي وأحمد بن يوسف السلمى كان قبل الاختلاط، فقد قال ابن حجر: "احتج به) عبد الرزاق (الشيخان في جملة من حديث من سمع منه قبل الاختلاط. ولذلك أخرج البخاري لمحمد بن يحيى الذهلي عن عبد الرزاق وأخرج مسلم لأحمد بن يوسف السلمى عن عبد الرزاق..."

وأما عنعنة أبي قلابة وسفيان الثوري وهما من المدلسين، فلا تضر في صحة الإسناد أيضا لأن المدلسين ليس كلهم على حد سواء عند المحققين. وقد رتبهم الحافظ ابن حجر في كتابه طبقات المدلسين على خمس مراتب. الأولى: من لم يوصف بذلك إلا نادرا. والثانية: من احتتمل الأئمة تدليسه وأخرجوا له في الصحيح لإمامته وقلة تدليسه في جنب ما روى كالثوري أو كان لا يدللس إلا عن ثقة كابن عيينة وذكر أبا قلابة في المرتبة الأولى وسفيان الثوري في المرتبة

As for the confusion of 'Abd al-Razzaq, this does not hurt the authenticity of this chain. He became confused after 200 H, and it is apparent that the hearing of (Muhammad b. Yahya) al-Dhuhli and Ahmad b. Yusuf al-Sulami (from him) was before the confusion, for Ibn Hajar had said: "He ('Abd al-Razzaq) is relied upon as a hujjah by the two Shaykhs (i.e. al-Bukhari and Muslim) in a number of ahadith by those who heard

from him before the confusion.” Due to that, al-Bukhari has narrated from Muhammad b. Yahya al-Dhuhli from ‘Abd al-Razzaq while Muslim narrated from Ahmad b. Yusuf al-Sulami from ‘Abd al-Razzaq”....

As for the ‘an-‘an report of Abu Qilabah and Sufyan al-Thawri, and both of them are from the mudalisin, that does not hurt the authenticity of the chain either. This is because mudalisin are not at a single level in the view of the researchers. Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar has categorized them in his book, *Tabaqat al-Mudalisin* into five categories. The first: he who is rarely described with that (i.e. *tadlis*); and the second: he whose *tadlis* is tolerated by the Imams and they narrated from him in the *Sahih* books due to his excellence and the rarity of his *tadlis* in his reports like al-Thawri or he who never did *tadlis* except from *thiqah* (trustworthy) narrators like Ibn ‘Uyaynah. He mentioned Abu Qilabah in the first category and Sufyan al-Thawri in the second category.²⁵

So, al-Albani and others like him are simply desperate in their efforts against the hadith. It is perfectly *sahih*; and their excuses are only due to poor research.

The following points are undeniable from the above *sahih* reports:

1. Three sons of three khalifahs will be fighting over the treasure in the Ka’bah. It is not clear if all three khalifahs would have died before the conflict. Instead, what seems apparent is that there will be some three separate khalifahs ruling different regions at the same time while their sons kill one another over the treasure. None of the three khalifahs is identified as a khalifah of Allah or of His Messenger.

2. It must be noted that the word “khalifah” is synonymous with “amir” - spelt “emir” in English - and “imam”. Moreover, “khilafah” is interchanged with “kingdom” in authentic Sunni ahadith. So, the word “khalifah” may be a reference to a “king” or an “emir”. Also, on Sunday, June 29, 2014, some Salafi militants under the command of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi established a new “caliphate” and awarded the title “Caliph Ibrahim” to their leader. Then, a week after that, in early July, 2014, another group of Salafi militants, under Abu Muhammad al-Julani announced the birth of an independent “emirate” - basically, another word for a separate “caliphate”. Yet, a third Salafi militant group, Boko Haram, also proclaimed another “caliphate” on August 24, 2014. This may be the start of a race for Sunni caliphates, which may spring up in Arabia and elsewhere in the future.

3. The original army of Imam al-Mahdi will be from the Eastern towns, and he will accompany them. They will be carrying black flags. This army will be extremely powerful, and their first battles will be with Muslims.

4. Al-Mahdi will be the khalifah of Allah on the earth. His legitimacy as the amir of the believers hinges entirely upon this fact.

A moral of all this is that none is entitled to the *bay’ah* (pledge of allegiance of Muslims) except he who can prove to be a khalifah of Allah (i.e. “When you see him, pledge allegiance to him, even if you have to crawl on snow, FOR verily he is the khalifah of Allah, the Mahdi”). Rather, it is one’s status as the khalifah of Allah which creates the right to receive the *bay’ah* of Muslims and to command them and their armies. This is obvious

anyway, since the bay'ah in Islam is given to none but Allah Alone - being a direct, personal covenant with Him - and NOT even to His Messenger:

إن الذين يبايعونك إنما يبايعون الله يد الله فوق أيديهم فمن نكث فإنما ينكث على نفسه

ومن أوفى بما عاهد عليه الله فسيؤتيه أجرا عظيما

Verily, those who give their ba'yah to you, they are only giving their ba'yah TO ALLAH. The Hand of Allah is over their hands. So, whosoever breaks his pledge, breaks only to his own harm, and whosoever fulfils what he has covenanted WITH ALLAH, He will bestow on him a great reward.²⁶

As such, Prophet Muhammad was only receiving the bay'ah solely on behalf of, and for, his Creator. Obviously, anyone who wants the ba'yah of the Muslims must prove to them that he has the authority from Allah to act as His representative on His planet, or authority from His legitimate representative to do that on his behalf for Him. The legitimate representative of Allah on the earth, of course, is none other than His khalifah therein. Meanwhile, the cases of Adam, Dawud and the Mahdi have established, beyond doubt, a clear pattern of how the khalifahs of Allah attain their office: they are explicitly and directly appointed by Him through wahy. Therefore, whosoever asks for your ba'yah must also show you evidence that our Creator specifically sent down a revelation from the heavens appointing him His khalifah. If he cannot do that, then he is an impostor; and every ba'yah to an impostor - or to anyone else other than Allah - is a ba'yah against Him. Alternatively, the ba'yah-seeker must firmly establish that he is a designated representative of the legitimate khalifah of Allah, receiving the ba'yah on his behalf for Him.

The ahadith also teach that it is NOT the bay'ah that creates the khilafah. The Mahdi will be the khalifah already even before the generality of Muslims pledge their allegiance to Allah through him. Whether or not they give or refuse their bay'ah to him, he will be their only legitimate amir whom they must obey: he will be their true khalifah - the one imposed upon them by their Lord - with or without their allegiance. This is why it is an obligation upon them to pledge their bay'ah to him at all costs, in the first place. Otherwise, they will be rebels to the khalifah of Allah, and - by extension - to Allah Himself!

Notes

1. Ibn al-Athir, Abu Sa'adat al-Mubarak b. Muhammad al-Jazari, al-Nihayah fi Gharib al-Hadith wa al-Athar (Qum: Muasassat Isma'iliyyan) [annotator: Mahmud Muhammad al-Tanahi and Tahir Ahmad al-Zawi], vol. 2, p. 69

2. Qur'an 7:142

3. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, p. 327

4. Qur'an 114:1-3

5. Qur'an 3:189

6. Qur'an 2:247

7. Qur'an 2:30

8. Abu al-Hasan 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Habib al-Mawardi al-Basri, al-Nakat wa al-'Uyun (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Ibn 'Abd al-Maqsud b. 'Abd al-Rahim], vol. 1, p. 95

9. 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar al-Baydhawi, Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Tawil (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr), vol. 1, p. 280
10. Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Sharbini, Tafsir al-Siraj al-Munir (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah), vol. 1, p. 52
11. Abu al-Barakat 'Abd Allah b. Ahmad b. Mahmud al-Nasafi, Tafsir al-Nasafi (Beirut: Dar al-Nafais; 2005 CE) [annotator: Shaykh Marwan Muhammad al-Shi'ar], vol. 1, p. 78
12. Abu Muhammad al-Husayn b. Mas'ud al-Baghwi, Mu'alim al-Tanzil (Dar al-Taybah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 4th edition, 1417 H), vol. 1, p. 79
13. Abu al-Faraj Jamal al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Jawzi al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi, Zad al-Masir fi 'Ilm al-Tafsir (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 3rd edition, 1404 H), vol. 1, p. 60
14. Wabbah b. Mustafa al-Zuhayli, al-Tafsir al-Wasit (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1422 H), vol. 1, p. 22
15. Jalal al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Mahalli and Jalal al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abu Bakr al-Suyuti, Tafsir al-Jalalayn (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith; 1st edition), p. 7, # 30
16. Abu Bakr Ahmad b. 'Amr b. 'Abd al-Khaliq al-Bazzar, Musnad al-Bazzar (Madinah al-Munawwarah: Maktabah al-'Ulum wa al-Hukm; 1st edition) [annotator: 'Adil b. Sa'd], vol. 10, p. 100, # 4163
17. Ibid
18. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 4, p. 510, # 8432
19. Ibid
20. Ibid
21. Abu al-Fida Ibn Kathir al-Dimashqi, al-Nihayah fi al-Fitan wa al-Malahim (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1408 H) [annotator: Prof. 'Abduh al-Shafi'i], vol. 1, pp. 25-26
22. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 26
23. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-'Ulama wa Ara al-Firq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 192
24. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Dha'ifah wa al-Mawdu'ah wa Athariyah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma'arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 1, p. 197, # 85
25. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-'Ulama wa Ara al-Firq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), pp. 191-192
26. Qur'an 48:10

5. The Black Flags From Khurasan

In the last chapter, we analyzed the sahih Sunni hadith of Thawban which establishes that the army of the Mahdi, ‘alaihi al-salam, will march from “the Eastern towns” (as explained by Ibn Kathir), and will fight and kill other Muslims in a way no nation had ever done to them. So, what are these Eastern towns? Dr. al-Bastawi copies a hadith that gives their name:

عن عبد الله قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: إذا أقبلت الرايات السود من خراسان فأتوها فإن فيها خليفة الله المهدي"

Narrated ‘Abd Allah (b. Mas’ud):

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “When the black flags come from Khurasan, go to them, for among them is the khalifah of Allah, the Mahdi.”¹

After thoroughly examining the narrators of its isnad, he concludes:

وعلى هذا فهذا الإسناد صالح للاستشهاد ولا سيما وأن متنه قد ورد من طريق آخر عن

ثوبان رضي الله عنه بسند حسن. وبذلك يصبح هذا الحديث حسنا لغيره

Based upon this, then this chain is fit to be used as a shahid (support), especially since its text has been narrated through another chain from Thawban, may Allah be pleased with him, with a hasan chain. With that, this hadith becomes hasan li ghayrihi.²

The Sahabi, Thawban, also confirmed this exact identity of the Eastern towns in one of his personal statements. Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) documents:

أخبرنا الحسين بن يعقوب بن يوسف العدل ثنا يحيى بن أبي طالب ثنا عبد الوهاب بن عطاء أنبا خالد الحذاء عن أبي قلابة عن أبي أسماء عن ثوبان رضي الله عنه قال إذا رأيتم الرايات السود خرجت من قبل خراسان فأتوها ولو حبوا فإن فيها خليفة الله المهدي

Al-Hasan b. Ya’qub b. Yusuf - Yahya b. Abi Talib - ‘Abd al-Wahhab b. ‘Aṭa - Khalid al-Hadha - Abu Qilabah - Abu Asma - Thawban, may Allah be pleased with him:

“When you see the black flags coming out from the direction of Khurasan, then go to them even if you have to crawl, for verily among them is the khalifah of Allah, the Mahdi.”³

Al-Hakim then says:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This hadith is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.⁴

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H), on his part, keeps silent on the riwayah. This hadith, although mawquf, has the status (hukm) of a marfu’ report. This is because it mentions a matter of the unseen (al-ghayb), which the Sahabi could have gotten only from the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi.

Imam al-Maruzi (d. 229 H) has recorded the same narration:

حدثنا أبو نصر الخفاف عن خالد عن أبي قلابة عن ثوبان قال إذا رأيتم الرايات السود خرجت من قبل خراسان فائتوها ولو حبوا على الثلج فإن فيها خليفة الله المهدي.

Abu Nasr al-Khaffaf - Khalid - Abu Qilabah - Thawban:

“When you see the black flags coming out from the direction of Khurasan, then go to them even if you have to crawl on snow, for verily among them is the khalifah of Allah, the Mahdi.”⁵

We already know about Khalid, Abu Qilabah and Thawban from the last chapter. Their isnad is sahih. The only new name here is Abu Nasr al-Khaffaf. His name is ‘Abd al-Wahhab b. ‘Aṭa. We see al-Hakim above declaring his hadith to be sahih too. Meanwhile, this is what al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) also says about him:

عبد الوهاب بن عطاء الخفاف أبو نصر العجلي مولاهم البصري نزيل بغداد صدوق ربما

أخطأ

‘Abd al-Wahhab b. ‘Aṭa al-Khaffaf, Abu Nasr al-‘Ijli, their freed slave, al-Basri, a resident of Baghdad: Saduq (very truthful), maybe he made mistakes.⁶

Moreover, we also know, from the riwayat of al-Hakim, that there actually was a link between Abu Qilabah and Thawban, and he was Abu Asma. As such, the sanad is hasan. Therefore, “the East” and “the Eastern towns” in the ahadith on the black flags are, again, only references to Khurasan.

In that case, where is Khurasan? The researcher easily notices that on the world map today, all the places called Khurasan are in the Islamic Republic of Iran. There used to be the Khurasan province until 2004, when it was divided into South Khurasan, North Khurasan and Razavi Khurasan. However, in ancient times, the word “Khurasan” covered a vast territory now lying in northeastern Iran, southern Turkmenistan and northern Afghanistan. So, the original army of Imam al-Mahdi will be made up of non-Arabs: Iranians, Turkmen and Afghans.

Notes

1. Dr. ‘Abd al-‘Alim ‘Abd al-‘Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-‘Ulama wa Ara al-Firaq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 158, # 2

2. Ibid, p. 162

3. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Aṭa], vol. 4, p. 547, # 8531

4. Ibid

5. Abu ‘Abd Allah Na’im b. Hammad al-Maruzi, Kitab al-Fitan (Dar al-Fikr; 1414 H) [annotator: Prof. Dr. Suhayl Zakar], part 4, p. 188

6. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Aṭa], vol. 1, pp. 626-627, # 4276

6. His Holy Companions

The Mahdi, ‘alaihi al-salam, will have some 313 companions, who will be of the best of Allah’s entire creation, since Adam, ‘alaihi wa alihi, till the Trumpet. Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) documents a beautiful hadith about these noble companions:

حدثنا أبو العباس محمد بن يعقوب ثنا الحسن بن علي بن عفان العامري ثنا عمرو بن محمد العنقري ثنا يونس بن أبي إسحاق أخبرني عمار الدهني عن أبي الطفيل عن محمد بن الحنفية قال كنا عند علي رضي الله عنه فسأله رجل عن المهدي فقال علي رضي الله عنه : هيهات ثم عقد بيده سبعا فقال : ذاك يخرج في آخر الزمان إذا قال الرجل الله الله قتل فيجمع الله تعالى له قوما فزع كقزع السحاب يؤلف الله بين قلوبهم لا يستوحشون إلى أحد ولا يفرحون بأحد يدخل فيهم على عدة أصحاب بدر لم يسبقهم الأولون ولا يدركهم الآخرون وعلى عدد أصحاب طالوت الذين جاؤا معه النهر قال أبو الطفيل : قال ابن الحنفية : أتريده ؟ قلت : نعم قال : إنه يخرج من بين هذين الخشبين قلت : لا جرم والله لا أريهما حتى أموت فمات بما يعني مكة حرسها الله تعالى

Abu al-‘Abbas Muhammad b. Ya’qub - al-Hasan b. ‘Ali b. ‘Affan al-‘Amiri - ‘Amr b. Muhammad al-‘Anqazi - Yunus b. Abi Ishaq - ‘Ammar al-Dahni - Abu al-Tufayl - Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyyah:

We were with ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him and a man asked him about the Mahdi. So, ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said: “How impossible!” Then, he counted seven on his hand and said, “That one will come out at the End of Time. (At that time) if a man said, ‘Allah! Allah!’ he will be killed. Then, Allah the Most High will gather together a group around him, just as the separate pieces of cloud are joined together. Allah will unite their hearts. They will not fear anyone and they do not celebrate about anyone joining them. Their number is that of the Companions of Badr. THE PAST GENERATIONS WILL NOT SURPASS THEM AND THE LATTER GENERATIONS WILL NOT REACH UP TO THEM. Their number will be that of the Companions of Talut who crossed the river with him.”

Abu al-Tufayl said: Ibn al-Hanafiyyah asked (me), “Do you want to meet him?” I (Abu al-Tufayl) answered, “Yes.” He said, “He will come out between these two pillars.” I said, “Surely, I swear by Allah, I will never leave them both till I die.” Therefore, he died there, that is Makkah. May Allah the Most High protect it.¹

Al-Hakim says:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This hadith is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.²

And Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) agrees with him:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

Upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim.³

Dr. al-Bastawi also has this verdict on the hadith:

إسناده حسن.

Its chain is hasan.⁴

This athar, which has the hukm of a marfu' hadith due to its nature, reveals two primary facts about the close companions of Imam al-Mahdi. First, their number will be 313, the universally accepted number of the Badr warriors as well as that of the soldiers of Talut, 'alaihi al-salam, who crossed the river with him. And, also, they will be from the best of Allah's creation since the start of existence.

Notes

1. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Aṭa], vol. 4, p. 596, # 8659
2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-'Ulama wa Ara al-Firaq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 208, # 10

7. Birth Of A Little Paradise

It is impossible to completely eradicate oppression and injustice from the face of the earth. There will always be some people who are oppressing and unjustly treating others till the Day of al-Qiyamah. However, incidences of oppression, aggression and injustice can be reduced to the barest minimum, to the extent they are hardly heard of anywhere on the globe. This is what Imam al-Mahdi, ‘alaihi al-salam, will achieve, with Allah’s Help, through his worldwide revolution. This is also what the ahadith say: that just as cases of equity and justice are existent but unusual today, incidences of oppression, aggression and injustice will also occur at his time, though very rarely. Imam Abu Dawud (d. 275 H) records:

حدثنا سهل بن تمام بن بزيع ثنا عمران القطان عن قتادة عن أبي نضرة عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم " المهدي مني أجلي الجبهة أفنى الأنف يملأ الأرض قسطا وعدلا كما ملئت جورا وظلما ويملك سبع سنين"

Sahl b. Tammam b. Buzay’ - ‘Imran al-Qattan - Qatadah - Abu Nadhras - Abu Sa’id al-Khudri:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “The Mahdi is from me, with a broad forehead, a curved nose. He will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it had been filled with oppression and injustice, and he will rule by kingdom for seven years.”¹

Al-Albani says:

حسن

Hasan.²

Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) also documents:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا محمد بن جعفر ثنا عوف عن أبي الصديق الناجي عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم لا تقوم الساعة حتى تمتلي الأرض ظلما وعدوانا قال ثم يخرج رجل من عترتي أو من أهل بيتي يملؤها قسطا وعدلا كما ملئت ظلما وعدوانا

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) - my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) - Muhammad b. Ja’far - ‘Awf - Abu al-Siddiq al-Naji - Abu Sa’id al-Khudri:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “The Hour will not be established until the earth is filled with injustice and aggression. Then, a man from my offspring or my Ahl al-Bayt will come out. He will fill it with equity and justice just as it had been filled with injustice and aggression.”³

Shaykh al-Arnauf comments:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.⁴

A world with almost no oppression and injustice is only a wild dream today; and certainly, it will take a great miracle to achieve. This is why it is clearly one of the miracles of the Mahdi that he will successfully create a

earth which is nothing but a little paradise. The earth will become virtually crimeless and overwhelming peaceful, once Allah grants victory to him.

Another major miracle which Imam al-Mahdi will achieve is that he will completely end poverty in our planet. Literally every single human being on the earth will become very rich and wealthy. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) records how this will occur:

حدثنا زهير بن حرب وعلي بن حجر (واللفظ لزهير) قالوا حدثنا إسماعيل بن إبراهيم عن
الجريري عن أبي نضرة قال كنا عند جابر بن عبد الله فقال... قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و
سلم يكون في آخر أمتي خليفة يثني المال حثيا لا يعده عددا

Zuhayr b. Harb and 'Ali b. Hajar - Isma'il b. Ibrahim - al-Jariri - Abu Nadhrah:

We were with Jabir b. 'Abd Allah and he said...: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "There will be a khalifah at the END of my Ummah who will distribute wealth without ever counting it."⁵

This khalifah is named in this hadith of Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H):

أخبرني أبو العباس محمد بن أحمد المحبوبي بمرورنا ثنا سعيد بن مسعود ثنا النضر بن شميل ثنا
سليمان بن عبيد ثنا أبو الصديق الناجي عن أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال :
يخرج في آخر أمتي المهدي

Abu al-'Abbas Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Mahbubi - Sa'id b. Mas'ud - al-Nadhr b. Shumayl - Sulayman b. 'Ubayd - Abu al-Siddiq al-Naji - Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, "The Mahdi will come out at the END of my Ummah..⁶

Al-Hakim comments:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This hadith has a sahih chain⁷

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) agrees:

صحيح

Sahih⁸

He will be Imam al-Mahdi, and he will distribute wealth to his subjects without measure. Muslim again records:

وحدثني زهير بن حرب حدثنا عبد الصمد بن عبد الوارث حدثنا أبي حدثنا داود عن أبي
نضرة عن أبي سعيد وجابر بن عبد الله قالوا قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يكون في
آخر الزمان خليفة يقسم المال ولا يعده

Zuhayr b. Harb - 'Abd al-Samad b. 'Abd al-Warith - my father - Dawud - Abu Nadhrah - Abu Sa'id and Jabir b. 'Abd Allah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "There will be a khalifah at the End of Time, who will distribute wealth and will not count it."⁹

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) too has copied this hadith of the Prophet, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi:

من خلفائكم خليفة يثو المال حثيا لا يعده عدا

Among your khulafa will be a khalifah who will distribute wealth without ever counting it.¹⁰

He then comments:

صحيح

Sahih¹¹

In the footnote to the report, al-Albani further says:

وهو المهدي المبشر بخروجه بين يدي نزول عيسى عليه الصلاة والسلام، ويصلي عيسى عليه الصلاة والسلام خلفه.

He is the Mahdi, whose advent is promised to occur before the descent of ‘Isa, ‘alaihi al-salat wa al-salam, and ‘Isa, ‘alaihi al-salat wa al-salam, behind him.¹²

With such a leader in charge of world affairs, it is no surprise that the earth will be transformed into the promised land for mankind, which flows with milk and honey. Imam al-Hakim records about some other benefits of the Mahdi’s rule for humanity:

أخبرني أبو العباس مُجد بن أحمد المحبوبي بمرورنا سعيدي بن مسعود ثنا النضر بن شميل ثنا سليمان بن عبيد ثنا أبو الصديق الناجي عن أبي سعيد الخدري رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ أن رسول الله ﷺ قال : يخرج في آخر أمتي المهدي يسقيه الله الغيث وتخرج الأرض نباتها ويعطي المال صحاحا وتكثر المشية وتعظم الأمة يعيش سعا أو ثمانيا يعني حججا

Abu al-‘Abbas Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Mahbubi - Sa’id b. Mas’ud - al-Nadhr b. Shumayl - Sulayman b. ‘Ubayd - Abu al-Siddiq al-Naji - Abu Sa’id al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “The Mahdi will come out at the end of my Ummah. Allah will provide rain to him, and the earth will bring out its vegetation, and he will give wealth correctly. Livestock will become abundant and the Ummah will become great. He will witness seven or eight Hajjs.¹³

Al-Hakim comments:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This hadith has a sahih chain¹⁴

Imam al-Dhahabi agrees:

صحيح

Sahih¹⁵

‘Allamah al-Albani also says about the hadith in his Sahihah:

قلت: وهذا سند صحيح

I say: This chain is sahih¹⁶

Dr. al-Bastawi has the same verdict on it:

إسناده صحيح.

Its chain is sahih.¹⁷

Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah (d. 235 H) too has this report:

عبد الله بن نمير قال حدثنا موسى الجهني قال حدثني عمر بن قيس الماصر قال: حدثني مجاهد قال: حدثني فلان رجل من أصحاب النبي: أن المهدي لا يخرج حتى تقتل النفس الزكية، فإذا قتلت النفس الزكية، غضب عليهم من في السماء ومن في الأرض، فأتى الناس المهدي، فزفوه كما تزف العروس إلى زوجها ليلة عرسها، وهو يملأ الأرض قسطاً وعدلاً وتخرج الأرض نباتها وتمطر السماء مطرها، وتنعم أمتي في ولايته نعمة لم تنعمها قط.

‘Abd Allah b. Numayr - Musa al-Juhani - ‘Umar b. Qays al-Masir - Mujahid:

Someone, a man from the Sahabah of the Prophet, narrated to me (from the Prophet): “Verily, the Mahdi will not come out until the Pure Soul is murdered. When he (the Pure Soul) is murdered, those in the heavens and those on the earth will become angry against them. So, the people will go to the Mahdi, and they will accompany him in a procession, just as the bride is accompanied in a procession to her groom on the night of her wedding. He will fill the earth with equity and justice, and the earth will bring out its vegetation, and the sky will bring down its rains. My Ummah will enjoy a comfort during his rule, which it never enjoined before.”¹⁸

Dr. al-Bastawi says about this hadith:

إسناده صحيح. رجاله كلهم ثقات. ومجاهد لم يصرح هنا باسم الصحابي، ولكنه سمع من

جماعة من الصحابة رضي الله عنهم.

Its chain is sahih. Its narrators are trustworthy. Mujahid has not explicitly stated the name of the Sahabi. However, he did hear from a group of the Sahabah, may Allah be pleased with them.¹⁹

The unnamed Sahabi was clearly narrating from the Messenger of Allah. This is why the phrase “my Ummah” is used in his report. Moreover, all Sahabah are trustworthy in Sunni rijal. Therefore, the fact that the Sahabi is not named does not hurt the authenticity of the hadith. It is perfectly sahih.

Notes

1. Abu Dawud Sulayman b. al-Ash’ath al-Sijistani al-Azdi, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 509, # 4285

2. Ibid

3. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 3, p. 36, # 11331

4. Ibid

5. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 2234, # 2913 (67)

6. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Aṭa], vol. 4, p. 601, # 8673

7. Ibid

8. Ibid

9. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 2235, # 2913/2914 (69)
10. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Sahih al-Jami' al-Saghir wa Ziyadatuhu (al-Maktab al-Islami), vol. 2, p. 1027, # 5913
11. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 1028, # 5913
12. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 1027, # 5913
13. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 4, p. 601, # 8673
14. Ibid
15. Ibid
16. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 2, p. 328, # 711
17. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-'Ulama wa Ara al-Firq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 165
18. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Shaybah Ibrahim b. 'Uthman b. Abi Bakr b. Abi Shaybah al-Kufi al-'Ubsi, Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1409 H) [annotator: Prof. Sa'id al-Laham], vol. 8, p. 679, # 199
19. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-'Ulama wa Ara al-Firq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 214, # 12

8. The Mahdi Claimants

So, who is this Mahdi, ‘alaihi al-salam, who will transform our cursed earth into a land of unprecedented purity and comfort? We only know, at this point, that he is from the offspring of the Prophet, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi, from his Ahl al-Bayt, ‘alaihim al-salam. We are also aware that he has a broad forehead and a curved nose, and will be the leader and ruler over ‘Isa b. Maryam, the Masih, ‘alaihi al-salam. We know as well that his name is Muhammad, the name of the Messenger of Allah. We are yet to look into the other authentic ahadith on the lineage and physical characteristics of our mawla, the saviour of mankind. Nonetheless, what we have so far is a good guide in identifying the true Mahdi of this Ummah, the last khalifah of al-Rahman on His earth.

Meanwhile, a lot of people have claimed to be this Mahdi throughout Islamic history; and a lot of people have similarly been called “the Mahdi”, even without or against their approval¹. For instance, this is a list of people who were respectively identified - without their sanction - as the Promised Mahdi by some sections of the Ummah:

1. ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (d. 40 H), ‘alaihi al-salam.
2. Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (d. 93 H).
3. Sulayman b. ‘Abd al-Malik (d. 99 H).
4. ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz (d. 101 H).
5. Musa b. Talhah b. ‘Ubayd Allah (d. 103 H).
6. Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Baqir (d. 110 H), ‘alaihi al-salam.
7. Isma’il b. Ja’far b. Muhammad (d. 138H).
8. Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah (d. 145 H).
9. Ja’far b. Muhammad al-Sadiq (d. 148 H), ‘alaihi al-salam.
10. Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ja’far (d. 193 H).
11. Musa b. Ja’far al-Kazim (d.182 H), ‘alaihi al-salam.
12. Yahya b. ‘Umar b. Yahya b. al-Husayn b. Zayd b. ‘Ali b. Husayn b. ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (d. 250 H).
13. Sayyid Ahmad b. ‘Irfan (d. 1246 H)
14. Muhammad b. Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Sunusi (d. 1320 H)
15. Muhammad b. al-Qasim b. ‘Ali.
16. Yahya b. Abi Shumayt.
17. ‘Abd Allah b. Mu’awiyah b. ‘Abd Allah b. Ja’far b. Abi Talib.
18. The Masih ‘Isa b. Maryam.

As it can be clearly seen, only six of them were named “Muhammad”. So, naturally, all the others are ruled out. Interestingly, even the Masih and other people who were not from the Prophet’s offspring were identified as the Mahdi by some Muslims! What exactly has happened to this Ummah?

Meanwhile, there were equally a number of others, who each declared himself the Mahdi. Some of their names are these:

- i. Al-Harith b. al-Shurayh (d. 116 H).
- ii. Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Mahdi al-‘Abbasi (d. 169 H).
- iii. Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Maghribi (d. 524 H).
- iv. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd Allah b. Hashim (d. 740 H).
- v. Sayyid Muhammad Nurbakhsh al-Sufi (d. 869 H).
- vi. Sayyid Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Jawunburi (d. 910 H)

- vii. ‘Ali Muhammad al-Shirazi (d. 1850 CE).
- viii. Muhammad Ahmad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hasani al-Sudani (d. 1899 CE)
- ix. Ghulam Ahmad al-Qadiyani (d. 1908 CE)
- x. Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Qahtani al-Salafi (d. 1980 CE)

Most of them truly had the name “Muhammad” and some of them were indeed from the Messenger’s offspring. However, only one - or none - of them could have been the prophesied Mahdi. Therefore, it is apparent that even those two criteria are not enough to fully identify the Awaited Imam.

Something that comes to the mind of the researcher is: why would people identify ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, for instance, as the Mahdi, knowing fully that he died long ago, long before the end of the world? After all, the Mahdi is expected to come out during the last generation of our Ummah. A lot of those who have been called the Mahdi - such as al-Baqir, al-Sadiq and al-Kazim - died more than a thousand years ago! Perhaps, more puzzling is the fact that these various sects who attributed mahdawiyyah (i.e. office of the Mahdi) to people like ‘Ali and al-Baqir continued to do so even after witnessing their deaths! How can a Mahdi die before fulfilling his mission? Worse still, how can a dead person be the Mahdi who will purify our earth and rule over it with equity and justice?!

As noted by Dr. al-Bastawi, those ancient sects of Islam had their solution to the huge puzzle. Each of them believed in the concepts of al-ghaybah concerning its chosen saviour: that it he had not really died, but had only disappeared from human view to “reappear” at the end of the Ummah as the Awaited “Mahdi”. So, his death and burial were mere illusions - none of them was real - like in the case of ‘Isa b. Maryam² too. For instance, the Sabaiyyah supposedly claimed that Imam ‘Ali is alive, and will reappear during the End Times to rule the world³. Some of the Kaysaniyyah also made the same claims about Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Abi Talib⁴ while some others among them attribute the ghaybah and mahdawiyyah to ‘Abd Allah b. Mu’awiyah b. ‘Abd Allah b. Ja’far b. Abi Talib instead⁵. Some of the Jarudiyyah believed too that Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah never died, but only disappeared and would reappear at the end of the world as the Mahdi⁶. Others among the Jarudiyyah awarded the ghaybah and mahdawiyyah to Yahya b. ‘Umar⁷ while lots of other Jarudis declared both for Muhammad b. al-Qasim b. ‘Ali⁸. The Nawusiyyah announced too that Imam al-Sadiq never died, but only went into ghaybah and would return as the Awaited Mahdi⁹. The Isma’liyyah also attributed the ghaybah and mahdawiyyah to Isma’il b. Ja’far al-Sadiq¹⁰ while the Mubarakkiyyah instead gave both to his son, Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ja’far¹¹. Of course, the Musawiyyah - better known as the Waqifiyyah - affirmed as well that Imam Musa b. Ja’far al-Kazim never died, and would return as the Awaited Mahdi¹².

But, how did they develop this concept of al-ghaybah to explain and excuse the apparent deaths of their saviours? Was it only a tactical invention created by them to address the contradictions within their claims, following the unexpected deaths of their Mahdis? Or, was it their misapplication of a genuine teaching of the Messenger of Allah? These and others are questions

we will be investigating in this book of ours. Meanwhile, we must quickly mention that ‘Umar too, the second Sunni khalifah, proclaimed the ghaybah of Muhammad al-Mustafa - although there is not sufficient evidence that he believed in the latter’s mahdawiyyah. Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) ends this chapter with the report:

حدثنا إسماعيل بن عبد الله حدثنا سليمان بن بلال عن هشام ابن عروة عن عروة بن الزبير عن عائشة رضي الله عنها زوج النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم: أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم مات وأبو بكر بالسنح - قال إسماعيل يعني بالعالية - فقام عمر يقول والله ما مات رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قالت وقال عمر والله ما كان يقع في نفسي إلا ذاك وليبعثه الله فليقطعن أيدي رجال وأرجلهم.

Isma’il b. ‘Abd Allah - Sulayman b. Bilal - Hisham b. ‘Urwah - ‘Urwah b. al-Zubayr - ‘Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, the wife of the Prophet, peace be upon him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, died while Abu Bakr was at a place called al-Sunah (i.e. al-‘Aliyah). ‘Umar stood up, saying, “I swear by Allah! The Messenger of Allah is not dead!” She (‘Aishah) narrated: ‘Umar said, “I swear by Allah! Nothing occurred to my mind except that. Verily! Allah will RESURRECT him and he will cut the hands and legs of some men.”¹³

Notes

1. See generally Dr. ‘Abd al-‘Alim ‘Abd al-‘Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-‘Ulama wa Ara al-Firaq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 60-118 for the full list and discussions of those who have been called Mahdi - with or without their knowledge or approval - and those who have called themselves the Mahdi.

2. See Qur’an 4:157

3. Dr. ‘Abd al-‘Alim ‘Abd al-‘Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-‘Ulama wa Ara al-Firaq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 64

4. Ibid, p. 67

5. Ibid, p. 68

6. Ibid, p. 71

7. Ibid, p. 72

8. Ibid

9. Ibid, p. 74

10. Ibid, p. 75

11. Ibid

12. Ibid, p. 76

13. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju’fi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1341, # 3467. ‘Umar’s claims are contradictory. If the Prophet was not dead, how come then that Allah would “resurrect” him later? Are living people ever “resurrected”? But then, a look into the Sunni ahadith establishes that ‘Umar was later convinced of the Messenger’s death by Abu Bakr. However, this author was unable to locate any proof - Sunni or otherwise - that ‘Umar ever abandoned his belief that Allah would resurrect Muhammad from death before the end of time.

9. Finding The True Mahdi: He Is A Sinless Fatimid Imam

It is without question that the Mahdi, ‘alaihi al-salam, is from the House of Muhammad, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi. Imam Ibn Majah (d. 273 H) records:

حدثنا عثمان بن أبي شيبة ثنا أبو داود الحفري ثنا ياسين عن إبراهيم ابن محمد بن الحنفية، عن أبيه، عن علي، قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ "المهدى منا، أهل البيت، يصلحه الله في ليلة." "Uthman b. Abi Shaybah - Abu Dawud al-Hafari - Yasin - Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyyah - his father - 'Ali:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "The Mahdi is from us, the Ahl al-Bayt. Allah will make him fit within a night."¹

Commenting on this riwayat, ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) declares:

صحيح

Sahih²

Obviously, the phrase "Ahl al-Bayt" in the hadith is a reference to that of the Prophet himself. Imam Abu Dawud (d. 275 H) also documents a witness, in this report about the Mahdi:

حدثنا عثمان بن أبي شيبة ثنا الفضل بن دكين ثنا فطر عن القاسم بن أبي بزة عن أبي الطفيل عن علي رضي الله تعالى عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال "لو لم يبق من الدهر إلا يوم لبعث الله رجلا من أهل بيتي يملؤها عدلا كما ملئت جورا"

‘Uthman b. Abi Shaybah - al-Fadhl b. Dukayn - Fitr - al-Qasim b. Abi Barzah - Abu al-Tufayl - ‘Ali, may Allah the Most High be pleased with him - the Prophet, peace be upon him:

"Even if there remains only one more day left before the end of Time, Allah will surely SEND a man from MY AHL AL-BAYT. He will fill it with justice just as it had been filled with injustice."³

‘Allamah al-Albani says:

صحيح

Sahih⁴

Dr. al-Bastawi, commenting upon the same hadith, also states:

إسناده صحيح.

Its chain is sahih.⁵

Therefore, the Mahdi’s membership of the Ahl al-Bayt of the Messenger is undisputable. As such, we can only look for him within the Prophetic Family of our Ummah, and nowhere else. With that, one can confidently declare that whosoever is not from the House of Muhammad is automatically disqualified from being the Awaited Imam.

Moreover, the Imam - being from the Ahl al-Bayt - is apparently one of those intended in this noble ayah:

إنما يريد الله ليذهب عنكم الرجس أهل البيت ويطهركم تطهيرا

Allah intends but only to keep impurity away from you, O Ahl al-Bayt, and to purify you absolutely.⁶

The above revelation - better known as the “Verse of Purification” - is part of the thirty-third ayah of Surah al-Ahzab. However, its history must be understood, in order to truly understand its meaning. That statement was revealed as an independent verse, with no connection whatsoever to the surrounding verses and sentences. This fact is extremely crucial, since the mainstream Sunni tafsir of it is based entirely upon reading the neighbouring verses into it⁷. This approach, however, is both very incorrect and very misleading, in view of its history. Unfortunately, this failure to take the history of the ayah into consideration in its interpretation has led to unnecessary tensions and divisions within our blessed Ummah.

Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) has documented how the verse descended:

حدثنا قتيبة حدثنا محمد بن سليمان بن الأصبهاني عن يحيى بن عبيد عن عطاء بن أبي رباح عن عمر بن أبي سلمة ربيب النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال لما نزلت هذه الآية على النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم { إنما يريد الله ليذهب عنكم الرجس أهل البيت ويطهركم تطهيرا } في بيت أم سلمة فدعا فاطمة و حسنا و حسيناً فجعلهم بكساء و علي خلف ظهره فجعلهم بكساء ثم قال اللهم هؤلاء أهل بيتي فأذهب عنهم الرجس وطهرهم تطهيرا قالت أم سلمة وأنا معهم يا نبي الله؟ قال أنت على مكانك وأنت على خير

Qutaybah - Muhammad b. Sulayman b. al-Asbahani - Yahya b. ‘Ubayd - ‘Aṭa b. Abi Rabah - ‘Umar b. Abi Salamah, the dependent of the Prophet, peace be upon him:

When THIS VERSE {Allah intends but only to keep impurity away all from you, O Ahl al-Bayt, and to purify you absolutely} was revealed upon the Prophet, peace be upon him, in the house of Umm Salamah, he called Faṭimah, Hasan and Husayn and spread a cloak over them while ‘Ali was behind him. Then, he covered them with a cloak. Then, he said, “O Allah! These are my Ahl al-Bayt. So, keep impurity away from them and purify them absolutely”. Umm Salamah said, “Am I with them, O Prophet of Allah?” He replied, “You are upon your place and you are upon a good thing.”⁸

‘Allamah al-Albani comments:

صحيح

Sahih⁹

Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) also records:

حدثنا أبو بكر أحمد بن سلمان الفقيه وأبو العباس محمد بن يعقوب قالوا : ثنا الحسن بن مكرم البزار ثنا عثمان بن عمر ثنا عبد الرحمن بن عبد الله بن دينار عن شريك بن أبي نمر عن عطاء بن يسار عن أم سلمة قالت : في بيتي نزلت { إنما يريد الله ليذهب عنكم الرجس

أهل البيت { قالت فأرسل رسول الله ﷺ إلى علي وفاطمة والحسن والحسين فقال : هؤلاء
أهل بيتي

Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Salman al-Faqih and Abu al-‘Abbas Muhammad b. Ya’qub - al-Hasan b. Mukram al-Bazzar - ‘Uthman b. ‘Umar - ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Abd Allah b. Dinar - Sharik b. Abi Nimr - ‘Aṭa b. Yasar - Umm Salamah:

In my house, it was revealed {Allah intends but only to keep impurity away all from you, O Ahl al-Bayt, and to purify you absolutely}. Then, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, sent for ‘Ali, Faṭimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn and said: “O Allah! These are my Ahl al-Bayt.”¹⁰

Al-Hakim says:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط البخاري

This hadith is sahih upon the standard of al-Bukhari.¹¹

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) agrees with him:

على شرط البخاري

Upon the standard of al-Bukhari.¹²

It is clear that the statement was revealed as an independent “verse” in the house of Umm Salamah. We also see that the “Ahl al-Bayt” in it are only those of Muhammad, according to his own tafsir. The Prophet equally went ahead to physically identify his “Ahl al-Bayt” as ‘Ali, Faṭimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn, ‘alaihim al-salam. Our righteous mother, Umm Salamah, radiyallahu ‘anha, understood from his declaration “O Allah! These are my Ahl al-Bayt” that he was excluding everyone else alive. ‘Ali, Faṭimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn alone were being identified as the “Ahl al-Bayt” in the ayah. So, she asked, to clarify:

وأنا معهم يا نبي الله ؟

Am I with them, O Prophet of Allah?

In the literal sense, the word “Ahl al-Bayt” customarily includes the wives of the master of the house. This obviously was Umm Salamah’s understanding too, until when she saw that the Messenger of Allah was giving the term - as used in the verse - a special, restricted meaning. Her blessed husband gave her a beautiful reply:

أنت على مكانك وأنت على خير

You are upon your place and you are upon a good thing.

She was right there and then standing upon her own place outside the cloak, and her place too was good. However, she did not belong under the cloak with those covered with it. Their place was under the cloak of the Messenger, and her place was outside of it. So, she was not with them, and they were the Ahl al-Bayt¹³.

Even after the descent of the ayah in the room of our blessed mother, Umm Salamah, the Prophet, on some other occasions, made sure to publicly display that the phrase “O Ahl al-Bayt” in it referred to none but ‘Ali, his wife and his sons. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) has documented one of those instances:

حدثنا أبو بكر بن أبي شيبة ومُحمَّد بن عبدالله بن نمير (واللفظ لأبي بكر) قالوا حدثنا مُحمَّد بن بشر عن زكرياء عن مصعب بن شيبة عن صفية بنت شيبة قالت قالت عائشة خرج النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم غداة وعليه مرط مرحل من شعر أسود فجاء الحسن بن علي فأدخله ثم جاء الحسين فدخل معه ثم جاءت فاطمة فأدخلها ثم جاء علي فأدخله ثم قال إنما يريد الله ليذهب عنكم الرجس أهل البيت ويطهركم تطهيرا [33/الأحزاب/33]

Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah and Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah b. Numayr - Muhammad b. Bishr - Zakariya - Mu’sab b. Shaybah - Safiyyah bint Shaybah - ‘Aishah:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, went outside one morning wearing a striped cloak, made from the black (camel’s) hair. Then, al-Hasan b. ‘Ali came, and he (the Prophet) entered him (under the cloak). Then, al-Husayn came, and he (the Prophet) entered him (i.e. al-Husayn) with him (i.e. al-Hasan). Then, Faṭimah came and he entered her; then, ‘Ali came and he entered him. Then he said, “Allah intends but only to keep impurity away all from you, O Ahl al-Bayt, and to purify you absolutely.” [Al-Ahzab 33:33]¹⁴

So, the matter is settled. Here is the Prophet himself addressing ‘Ali, his wife and his sons with the verse - and with the phrase “O Ahl al-Bayt” in the verse. This shows that it was revealed for them, and that they were the ones meant by the address “O Ahl al-Bayt” from Allah, the Lord of the Mighty Throne.

Meanwhile, Prof. Ibn Yasin has for us the fahm (understanding) of one of the “righteous” Salaf concerning the purpose of this blessed verse:

أخرج الطبري بسنده الحسن عن قتادة قوله: (إنما يريد الله ليذهب عنكم الرجس أهل البيت ويطهركم تطهيرا) فهم أهل بيت طهرهم الله من السوء، وخصهم لرحمة منه.

Al-Tabari recorded with his hasan chain from Qatadah, concerning His Statement (Allah intends but only to keep impurity away all from you, O Ahl al-Bayt, and to purify you absolutely): They are an Ahl al-Bayt. ALLAH PURIFIED THEM FROM EVIL, and He gave them a special mercy from Himself.”¹⁵

As such, Allah purified ‘Ali, Faṭimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn absolutely from impurity, from evil. So, they were absolutely pure. Of course, the master of the Bayt (the House) in the ayah was the Prophet himself. Therefore, he was naturally covered by it. That “Ahl al-Bayt” had a merit that Allah never gave to any other among His creatures: absolute purity from anything impure or anything evil. He never, and has never, qualified anyone else - apart from the Ahl al-Bayt of Muhammad - with absolute purity. They are the only absolutely pure creatures of the Lord of the worlds.

But then, the Messenger - in some other ahadith of his - included some other persons under the verse. Those were not alive during his lifetime. So, it was impossible for him to have entered them too under his cloak. However, he indicated in his statements that the verse was revealed about them too. Therefore, had they been alive, he would have joined them with

the other four under the cloak. One of such ahadith is this (which we quoted above):

المهدى منا، أهل البيت

The Mahdi is from us, the Ahl al-Bayt.

Being one of them - the Ahl al-Bayt - he naturally is also absolutely pure from all impurities and evil, like the other members. What further strengthens this submission, is this hadith of Imam al-Tabarani (d. 360 H):

حدثنا علي بن عبد العزيز ثنا عمرو بن عون الواسطي ثنا خالد بن عبد الله عن الحسن بن عبيد الله عن أبي الضحى عن زيد بن أرقم قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إني تارك فيكم الثقلين كتاب الله وعترتي أهل بيتي وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض

‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz - ‘Amr b. ‘Awn al-Wasiti - Khalid b. ‘Abd Allah - al-Hasan b. ‘Ubayd Allah - Abu al-Dhuha - Zayd b. Arqam:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "I am leaving behind over you the Two Weighty Things (al-thaqalayn): the Book of Allah and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount."¹⁶

Shaykh al-Arnauf says about this hadith:

وهو صحيح

It is sahih¹⁷

Of course, whosoever never separates from the Qur'an for even a single millisecond in any situation or circumstance - in his thoughts, words, feelings and actions - is certainly an absolutely pure creature of Allah. In fact, purity means adherence to the Qur'an; and, the purer we are, the more inseparable we become to the Book of our Lord. Therefore, from the last part of the hadith above, we know that the "Ahl al-Bayt" mentioned in it are equally included in the Verse of Purification. Interestingly, these "Ahl al-Bayt" are only from the "offspring" of Muhammad, and they exist continuously on the earth till al-Qiyamah.

The Mahdi, without any doubt, is from these "pure" offspring of the Prophet. Imam Abu Dawud documents the confirmation:

حدثنا أحمد بن إبراهيم ثنا عبد الله بن جعفر الرقي ثنا أبو المليح الحسن بن عمر عن زياد بن بيان عن علي بن نفيل عن سعيد بن المسيب عن أم سلمة قالت سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول "المهدي من عترتي من ولد فاطمة"

Ahmad b. Ibrahim - ‘Abd Allah b. Ja'far al-Raqqi - Abu al-Mulayh al-Hasan b. ‘Umar - Ziyad b. Bayan - ‘Ali b. Nufayl - Sa'id b. al-Musayyab - Umm Salamah:

I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying: "The Mahdi is from my offspring, from the descendants of Faṭimah."¹⁸

Al-Albani declares:

صحيح

Sahih¹⁹

Obviously, our Imam, al-Mahdi, is a Faṭimid too - from the descendants of our mistress, Faṭimah, ‘alaiha al-salam. This is equally crucial in determining the true Mahdi from the huge list of claimants and sponsored candidates. Whoever is not a Faṭimid is not the Mahdi, even if he claims the title for himself.

We must note too that Imam al-Mahdi is - without question - a khalifah from the offspring, the Ahl al-Bayt of our Prophet. Therefore, this hadith copied by ‘Allamah al-Albani definitely covers him:

إني تارك فيكم خليفتين: كتاب الله حبل ممدود ما بين السماء والأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي

وإنهما لن ينفردا حتى يرده علي الحوض

I am leaving behind over you two khalifahs: the Book of Allah - a rope stretching between the heaven and the earth - and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Font.²⁰

Then, the ‘Allamah comments:

صحيح

Sahih²¹

This then strengthens the conviction that the Mahdi is absolutely pure too, like Muhammad, ‘Ali, Faṭimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn. He is included in the divine purification mentioned in the Verse of Purification; and he is from the pure offspring who never separate from the Book of Allah in absolutely any instance, circumstance, situation or millisecond - in their thoughts, feelings, deeds and words. Anyone who cannot meet all these criteria is not the Awaited Mahdi.

Notes

1. Ibn Majah Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Yazid al-Qazwini, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 2, p. 1367, # 4085

2. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Sahih al-Jami’ al-Saghir wa Ziyadatuhu (al-Maktab al-Islami), vol. 2, p. 1140, # 6735

3. Abu Dawud Sulayman b. al-Ash’ath al-Sijistani al-Azdi, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 509, # 4283

4. Ibid

5. Dr. ‘Abd al-‘Alim ‘Abd al-‘Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-‘Ulama wa Ara al-Firaq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 238

6. Qur’an 33:33

7. For the purpose of qirat (recitation), this independent verse is recited together with the surrounding sentences and verses. This obviously was the arrangement made by the Prophet for its recitation. Its case is similar to that of the Verse of Perfection, which - though revealed independently according to the sahih Sunni ahadith - is now inserted and recited within the middle of another in Qur’an 5:3. However, in both cases, it is their history that determines their meaning, and not their surroundings.

8. Abu ‘Isa Muhammad b. ‘Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 5, p. 351, # 3205

9. Ibid

10. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Aṭa], vol. 3, p. 158, # 4705

11. Ibid

12. Ibid

13. There is no doubt that the wives of the Prophet were part of his “Ahl al-Bayt” in the literal sense; and they were part of his “Ahl al-Bayt” in several cases. The issue here is whether the term “Ahl al-Bayt” has been used in its literal sense in the ayah, or in a special, restricted sense. Various terms have been used with both their literal and special, restricted meanings in the Qur’an, e.g. salat, imam, rasul, zakat, hajj and so on. Without doubt, judging from the ahadith, the Messenger understood “Ahl al-Bayt” in the verse to have had a special, restricted meaning, rather than its customary connotations. This was why he was limiting its membership to ‘Ali, his wife and their two sons only.

14. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 1883, # 2424 (61)

15. Prof. Dr. Hikmat b. Bashir b. Yasin, Mawsu’at al-Sahih al-Masbur min al-Tafsir bi al-Mathur (Madinah: Dar al-Mathar li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’ wa al-Taba’at; 1st edition, 1420 H), vol. 4, p. 126

16. Abu al-Qasim Sulayman b. Ahmad b. Ayub al-Tabarani, Mu’jam al-Kabir (Mosul: Maktabah al-‘Ulum wa al-Hukm; 2nd edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Hamadi b. ‘Abd al-Majid al-Salafi], vol. 5, p.169, # 4980

17. Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Wazir al-Yamani, al-‘Awasim wa al-Qawasim fi al-Dhabb ‘an Sunnah Abi al-Qasim (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 2nd edition, 1416 H) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 178, footnote # 1

18. Abu Dawud Sulayman b. al-Ash’ath al-Sijistani al-Azdi, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 509, # 4284

19. Ibid

20. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Sahih al-Jami’ al-Saghir wa Ziyadatuhu (Al-Maktab al-Islami), vol. 1, p. 482, # 2457

21. Ibid

10. Finding The True Mahdi: He Is The Twelfth Of A Sinless Dynasty (Part 1)

The prescribed system of governance in Islam is the khilafah. It is led by a khalifah - who is also alternatively called an Imam or an amir. He rules for life, and represents Allah and His Messenger, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi, on the earth. He is equally an heir of Prophet Ibrahim al-Khalil from his pure offspring. The khilafah is irrevocable, and shall continue uninterrupted till the Hour.

Allah has stated concerning the khilafah:

وإذ ابتلى إبراهيم ربه بكلمات فأتمهن قال إني جاعلك للناس إماما قال ومن ذريتي قال

لا ينال عهدي الظالمين

And when Ibrahim was tried by his Lord with some statements, and he fulfilled them, He said, “I will appoint you an Imam of mankind.” He (Ibrahim) asked, “And of my offspring?” He (Allah) replied, “My Covenant shall not reach the wrongdoers.”

Explaining this ayah, al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) states:

قال الله تعالى { :وإذ ابتلى إبراهيم ربه بكلمات فأتمهن، قال إني جاعلك للناس إماما، قال ومن ذريتي؟ قال لا ينال عهدي الظالمين } لما وفى ما أمره به ربه من التكاليف العظيمة، جعله للناس إماما يقتدون به ويأتمون بهديه .وسأل الله أن تكون هذه الإمامة متصلة بسببه، وباقية في نسبه، وخالدة في عقبه فأجيب إلى ما سأل وسلمت إليه الإمامة بزمام، واستثنى من نيلها الظالمون، واختص بها من ذريته العلماء العاملون.

Allah the Most High says: {And when Ibrahim was tried by his Lord with some statements, and he fulfilled them, He said, “I will appoint you an Imam of mankind.” He (Ibrahim) asked, “And of my offspring?” He (Allah) replied, “My Covenant shall not reach the wrong-doers.”} When he fulfilled the huge obligations which his Lord commanded him with, he appointed him the Imam of mankind, whom they must follow, and whose guidance they must copy. He requested Allah that this Imamah be connected with his lineage, and be uninterrupted within his offspring, and be perpetual forever among his offspring. So, what he asked WAS GRANTED, and he was granted full authority of Imamah, and the wrong-doers were excluded from its reach, and it was made exclusive to the righteous scholars among his offspring.¹

Our Lord made His dear prophet, Ibrahim, ‘alaihi al-salam, a khalifah over all mankind of his time. Ibrahim then made a du’a to him to make it uninterrupted and eternally perpetual within his offspring after him. The supplication was answered, but with a condition: the khilafah would never reach any wrong-doer among his descendants. Prof. Ibn Yasin also records in this regard:

أخرج الطبري بسنده الصحيح عن مجاهد (قال لاينال عهدي الظالمين) قال: لا يكون

إماما ظالما.

Al-Tabari records with his sahih chain from Mujahid that he said: “(My Covenant shall not reach the wrongdoers) There will never be an Imam who does wrong.”²

Of course, every sinner is a wrong-doer:

ومن يتعد حدود الله فقد ظلم نفسه

And whosoever transgresses the set limits of Allah, then indeed he has wronged himself.³

And:

ومن يتعد حدود الله فأولئك هم الظالمون

And whosoever transgresses the set limits of Allah, then such are the wrongdoers.⁴

Therefore, the khilafah - which is a Covenant of Allah (and therefore His exclusive affair) - will never reach any sinner. Whosoever claims the Imamah but is a sinner, he is only an impostor.

Interestingly, even though he was the khalifah of the earth, Ibrahim had no political or military power. This is a crucial point about Imamah. Whether the people recognize their khalifah and give him their allegiance or not, he remains the only legitimate Imam on the face of the earth. His authority does not come from the people, nor is he appointed by them. Rather, he holds the “Covenant of Allah” which He bestows upon some of His pure servants from the offspring of Ibrahim.

Some other khalifahs after Ibrahim also lacked political and military power, and were nonetheless the true Imams of mankind:

ووهبنا له إسحاق ويعقوب نافلة وكلا جعلنا صالحين وجعلناهم أئمة يهدون بأمرنا

And We bestowed upon him (i.e. Ibrahim) Ishaq and Ya’qub. Each one We made righteous. And We appointed them IMAMS, guiding by Our Command.⁵

Neither Ishaq nor Ya’qub was ever allowed to rule, even though they were both khalifahs.

In line with the du’a of Ibrahim, which was answered by Allah, the khilafah remains eternally perpetual and uninterrupted within his sinless offspring. Naturally, it exists in our Ummah too, till the Day of al-Qiyamah. However, amongst us, it has been limited to the descendants of Ibrahim from the tribe of Quraysh only, as Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) documents:

حدثنا أبو الوليد حدثنا عاصم بن مُجَّد قال سمعت أبي عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما: عن

النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال لا يزال هذا الأمر في قريش ما بقي منهم اثنان

Abu al-Walid - ‘Asim b. Muhammad - my father - Ibn ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “THIS AUTHORITY shall never cease to be in Quraysh, as long as (at least) two of them are alive.”⁶

Apparently, the Quraysh - who are in their millions today - will continue to exist in multitudes till the Hour. Therefore, the khilafah will always be in them till the Day of al-Qiyamah. Meanwhile, the nature of “this authority” - the Imamah - is mentioned in this sahih hadith of Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H):

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي حدثنا زيد بن الحباب حدثنا معاوية بن صالح قال حدثني أبو مريم انه سمع أبا هريرة يقول قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم الملك في قريش
'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) - my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) - Zayd b. al-Hubbab - Mu'awiyah b. Salih - Abu Maryam - Abu Hurayrah:
The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "THE KINGDOM is in Quraysh."⁷
Assessing the sanad, al-Albani (d. 1420 H) says:

وهذا إسناد صحيح

This chain is sahih.⁸

Then, he adds:

قلت: زيد ثقة صدوق كما في "الميزان" وقد رفعه، وهي زيادة يجب قبولها كما تقرر في المصطلح.

I say: Zayd is thiqah (trustworthy), saduq (very truthful) as stated in al-Mizan, and he has narrated it in a marfu' manner. It is a ziyadah which must be accepted as it has been repeatedly mentioned in al-Mustalah.⁹

It is royalty. It is monarchy. It is dynasty. Each khalifah is a king, who is appointed by Allah and awarded His Covenant, from the sinless offspring of Prophet Ibrahim.

We also read this hadith of Imam Ahmad:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا يونس بن مُجَدِّ ثنا حماد يعني بن زيد ثنا مجالد عن الشعبي عن جابر بن سمرة قال خطبنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم بعرفات فقال لن يزال هذا الأمر عزيزا منيعا ظاهرا على من ناوأه حتى يملك اثنا عشر كلهم قال فلم أفهم ما بعد قال فقلت لأبي ما بعد كلهم قال كلهم من قريش

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) - my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) - Yunus b. Muhammad - Hammad b. Zayd - Mujalid - al-Sha'bi - Jabir b. Samurah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, delivered a sermon to us at 'Arafat and said, "This affair will never cease to be strong, invincible and victorious over whoever opposes it as long as twelve (people) RULE BY KINGDOM. All of them...."

(Jabir said): I did not understand what was said after that. So, I said to my father, "What did he say after 'all of them...'?". He replied, "All of them will be from Quraysh."¹⁰

Al-Arnauf says:

حديث صحيح

A sahih hadith¹¹

Of course, these twelve men are the only twelve khalifahs of this Ummah till the end of the world. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) records in this regard:

حدثنا قتيبة بن سعيد وأبو بكر بن أبي شيبة قالوا حدثنا حاتم (وهو ابن إسماعيل) عن المهاجر بن مسمار عن عامر بن سعد بن أبي وقاص قال كتبت إلى جابر بن مرة مع غلامي

نافع أن أخبرني بشيء سمعته من رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال فكتب لي سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يوم جمعة عشية رجم الأسلمي يقول (لا يزال الدين قائما حتى تقوم الساعة أو يكون عليكم اثنا عشر خليفة كلهم من قريش)

Qutaybah b. Sa'id and Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah - Hatim b. Isma'il - al-Muhajir b. Musmar - 'Amir b. Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas:

I sent a letter to Jabir b. Samurah through my servant, Nafi', to inform me of something he heard from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. So, he wrote in reply back to me: "I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying on a Friday, on the eve of the stoning of al-Aslami, saying: 'The religion will never cease to stand until the establishment of the Hour or as long as there are twelve khalifahs over you, all of them from Quraysh.'"¹²

The hadith is explicit: Islam will remain standing throughout the khilafah of the twelve kings, and this will be until the Day of al-Qiyamah. So, the twelve khalifahs will rule, uninterrupted, till the Hour.

We further read this hadith of Ahmad:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا مؤمل بن إسماعيل ثنا حماد بن سلمة حدثنا داود بن هند عن الشعبي عن جابر بن سمرة قال سمعت النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول يكون لهذه الأمة اثنا عشر خليفة

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) - my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) - Mumal b. Isma'il - Hammad b. Salamah - Dawud b. Hind - al-Shu'bi - Jabir b. Samurah:

I heard the Prophet, peace be upon him, saying: "There will be for this Ummah TWELVE KHALIFAHS."¹³

Shaykh al-Arnauf says:

حديث صحيح

A sahih hadith.¹⁴

Therefore, any other khalifah apart from these twelve is NOT "for" this Ummah. He is only an impostor.

Meanwhile, one of these twelve royal khalifahs is our beloved Mahdi. Imam Abu Dawud (d. 275 H) records:

حدثنا سهل بن تمام بن بزيع ثنا عمران القطان عن قتادة عن أبي نضرة عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم " المهدي مني أجلى الجبهة أفنى الأنف بمأ الأرض قسطا وعدلا كما ملئت جورا وظلما ويملك سبع سنين "

Sahl b. Tammam b. Buzay' - 'Imran al-Qatṭan - Qatadah - Abu Nadhrah - Abu Sa'id al-Khudri:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "The Mahdi is from me, with a broad forehead, a curved nose. He will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it had been filled with oppression and injustice, and he will RULE BY KINGDOM for seven years."¹⁵

Al-Albani says:

حسن

Hasan.¹⁶

Obviously, Imam al-Mahdi is the twelfth and last of these royal khalifahs, since he will rule over the last generation of our Ummah. Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) documents this relevant hadith:

أخبرني أبو العباس مُجَّد بن أحمد المحبوبي بمرو ثنا سعيد بن مسعود ثنا النضر بن شميل ثنا سليمان بن عبيد ثنا أبو الصديق الناجي عن أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال : يخرج في آخر أمتي المهدي

Abu al-‘Abbas Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Mahbubi - Sa’id b. Mas’ud - al-Nadhr b. Shumayl - Sulayman b. ‘Ubayd - Abu al-Siddiq al-Naji - Abu Sa’id al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “The Mahdi will come out at the END of my Ummah.”¹⁷

Al-Hakim comments:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This hadith has a sahih chain¹⁸

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) agrees:

صحيح

Sahih¹⁹

‘Allamah al-Albani also says about the hadith in his Sahihah:

قلت: وهذا سند صحيح

I say: This chain is sahih²⁰

Dr. al-Bastawi has the same verdict on it:

إسناده صحيح.

Its chain is sahih.²¹

The grand Salafi scholar, Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymin (d. 1421 H), declares the same thing in his commentary of al-‘Aqidah al-Safariniyyah:

قوله : (منها) : أي من أشراتها ،

قوله : (الإمام الخاتم الفصيح) : أي من أشرط الساعة الإمام ، الإمام يعني الذي يؤم

الناس لا في الصلاة ولكن في القيادة ، يكون إماماً لهم أعظم ، كالخليفة هذا الإمام

يقول أنه (الخاتم) ، الخاتم لمن ؟ الخاتم للأئمة لأنه لا إمام بعده فهو خاتم الأئمة واسمه

يقول : (مُجَّد) ، ولقبه (المهدي) يعني الذي هداه الله عز وجل ، هذا المهدي يُبعث في

آخر الزمان إذا مُلئت الأرض ظلماً وجوراً وتُسي في الحق وصار المظلوم لقمة للظالم

وانتشرت الفوضى فحينئذ يبعث الله هذا الرجل رجلاً إماماً مصلحاً للخلق مبيئاً للحق

His statement (among them): that is, among its signs.

His statement (the Last, Eloquent Imam): that is, from the signs of the Hour is the Imam. “The Imam” (here) refers to the one who leads mankind,

not (just) in salat but in government. This Imam will be their supreme Imam, as the khalifah.

He says that he (the Mahdi) is the last, the last of whom? The last of the Imams, because there will be NO Imam after him. As such, he is the LAST of the Imams. His name is Muhammad, and his title is “the Mahdi”, meaning the one who has been guided by Allah the Almighty. This is the Mahdi who will be SENT during the End of Time, when the earth will have been filled with injustice and oppression, and the truth will have been forgotten, and the oppressed will have become a morsel to the oppressor, and chaos will have become widespread. At that period, Allah the Almighty will SEND this man as a male Imam to reform THE CREATION and to restore the truth.²²

He will be sent by Allah to “the creation”, and will be the last of the lines of royal Imams on this earth. These Imams are twelve for this Ummah. So, the Mahdi is the twelfth Imam.

Notes

1. Abu al-Fida Isma'il b. Kathir, Qisas al-Anbiya (Dar al-Kutub al-Hadithah; 1st edition, 1388 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Wahid], vol. 1, p. 232; Abu al-Fida Isma'il b. Kathir al-Dimashqi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah (Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1408 H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. 1, p. 191
2. Prof. Dr. Hikmat b. Bashir b. Yasin, Mawsu'at al-Sahih al-Masbur min al-Tafsir bi al-Mathur (Madinah: Dar al-Mathar li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi' wa al-Taba'at; 1st edition, 1420 H), vol. 1, p. 229
3. Qur'an 65:1
4. Qur'an 2:229
5. Qur'an 21:72-73
6. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju'fi, al-Jami' al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1290, # 3310 and vol. 6, p. 2612, # 6721
7. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurṭubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnauf], vol. 2, p. 364, # 8746
8. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhiyah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 3, p. 72, # 1084
9. Ibid
10. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurṭubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnauf], vol. 5, p. 96, # 20944
11. Ibid
12. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1453, # 1822 (10)
13. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurṭubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnauf], vol. 5, p. 106, # 21051
14. Ibid
15. Abu Dawud Sulayman b. al-Ash'ath al-Sijistani al-Azdi, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 509, # 4285
16. Ibid
17. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 4, p. 601, # 8673
18. Ibid
19. Ibid

20. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, *Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma’arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 2, p. 328, # 711
21. Dr. ‘Abd al-‘Alim ‘Abd al-‘Azim al-Bastawi, *al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-‘Ulama wa Ara al-Firqah al-Mukhtalifah* (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 165
22. Muhammad b. Salih al-‘Uthaymin, *Sharh al-‘Aqidah al-Safariniyyah* (Riyadh: Dar al-Waṭan li al-Nashr; 1st edition, 1426 H), pp. 450-451

11. Finding The True Mahdi: He Is The Twelfth Of A Sinless Dynasty (Part 2)

Imamah is from Allah, and He bestows it only to those descendants of Ibrahim, ‘alaihi al-salam, who never commit wrongdoing. Sin, of course, is a form of wrongdoing, as explained by Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 606 H):

قوله تعالى: { لا ينال عهدي الظالمين } فكل من أقدم على الذنب كان ظالما لنفسه لقوله

تعالى: { فمنهم ظالم لنفسه }

His Statement {My Covenant shall not reach the wrongdoers}: So, whosoever commits a sin, he is a wrongdoer to himself due to His, the Most High’s Statement: {And of them are those who wrong themselves} [35:32]¹

This is confirmed by the Book of Allah too:

ومن يتعد حدود الله فأولئك هم الظالمون

And whosoever transgresses the set limits of Allah, then such are the wrongdoers.²

Therefore, Allah grants His Covenant of Imamah to those among the offspring of Ibrahim who never commit sin, to the absolute exclusion of all else. This process shall continue interrupted till the Hour.

Imamah is also a “kingdom”. Therefore, on account of their khilafah, Ibrahim and his offspring were kings too, appointed by Allah:

فقد آتينا آل إبراهيم الكتاب والحكمة وآتيناهم ملكا عظيما

We have granted the Book and the Hikmah to the family of Ibrahim, and We gave them A GREAT KINGDOM.³

Shaykh al-Kulayni (d. 329 H) reports this authentic riwayat about the verse:

علي بن إبراهيم، عن أبيه، عن مُحَمَّد بن أبي عمير، عن عمر بن أذينة، عن بريد العجلي عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام في قول الله تبارك وتعالى: { فقد آتينا آل إبراهيم الكتاب والحكمة وآتيناهم ملكا عظيما } قال: جعل منهم الرسل والأنبياء والأئمة فكيف يقرون في آل إبراهيم عليه السلام وينكرونه في آل مُحَمَّد صلى الله عليه وآله؟! قال: قلت: { وآتيناهم ملكا عظيما؟! } قال: الملك العظيم أن جعل فيهم أئمة، من أطاعهم أطاع الله، ومن عصاهم عصى الله، فهو الملك العظيم.

‘Ali b. Ibrahim - his father - Muhammad b. Abi ‘Umayr - ‘Umar b. Uzaynah - Burayd al-‘Ijli:

Abu Ja’far, peace be upon him, said concerning the Statement of Allah the Most Blessed the Most High {We have granted the Book and the Hikmah to the family of Ibrahim, and We gave them a great kingdom}: “He appointed messengers, prophets and Imams from them. So, how can they accept concerning the family of Ibrahim, peace be upon him, while denying it in the case of the family of Muhammad?!”

I said: {and We gave them a great kingdom}?

He (Abu Ja'far) said: "The great kingdom is to appoint Imams among them. Whosoever obeys them has obeyed Allah, and whosoever disobeys them has disobeyed Allah. So, that is the great kingdom."⁴

'Allamah al-Majlisi says about the hadith:

حسن

Hasan.⁵

'Allamah al-Ruhani, on his part, states:

صحيح

Sahih.⁶

Then, he adds:

الملك بالضم هو المملكة، فجعل الأئمة من جهة الأمر بإطاعتهم وجعلها قرين إطاعة الله تعالى صاحب الملك العظيم عبارة أخرى عن الحكومة المطلقة كما هو واضح.

The kingdom is the royal power. So, He appointed the Imams and, in terms of the command to obey them, He made it equivalent to obedience to Allah the Most High. Obviously, "the possessor of the great kingdom" is another terminology for the absolute government.⁷

The Qur'an has further given the specific example of Dawud, 'alaihi al-salam, who was one of the Imams from the family of Ibrahim:

يا داوود إنا جعلناك خليفة في الأرض فاحكم بين الناس بالحق

O Dawud! We have appointed you A KHALIFAH over the earth. Therefore, judge between mankind with the truth.⁸

Meanwhile, while referring to his khilafah elsewhere, Allah emphasizes its royal nature:

وشددنا ملكه وآتيناه الحكمة وفصل الخطاب

We made HIS KINGDOM strong and gave him wisdom and sound judgment.⁹

So, he was - as in the case of all the other Imams too - a royal khalifah. More importantly, his khilafah was also hereditary in nature:

وورث سليمان داوود

And Sulayman INHERITED Dawud.¹⁰

Imam al-Tabari (d. 310 H) says in his exegesis of the ayah:

يقول تعالى ذكره: وورث سليمان أباه داود العلم الذي كان آتاه الله في حياته، والملك

الذي كان خصه به على سائر قومه

He, the Most High, says: Sulayman INHERITED the knowledge which Allah gave his father during his lifetime and the kingdom which He specially bestowed upon him above all of his people.¹¹

Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) also states:

قال الله تعالى: { وورث سليمان داود } { ..النمل: ١٦ } (أي ورثه في النبوة والملك

Allah the Most High said: { And Sulayman inherited Dawud... } [27:16], that is, INHERITANCE of prophethood and kingdom.¹²

And Imam Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597 H) has these words too:

قوله تعالى: {وورث سليمان داود} أي: ورث نبوته وعلمه ومملكه

Allah the Most High says {And Sulayman inherited Dawud}, that is: he INHERITED his prophethood, knowledge and kingdom.¹³

The moral of all this, simply, is that the khilafah is clearly a hereditary royal system. The khalifah is an absolute monarch, and he rules over the earth by kingdom. His authority, by its nature, is equally hereditary. Therefore, Allah places His chosen khalifahs in the loins of the reigning Imam, except in extraordinary cases.

At this point, it is imperative to clear a slightly common misconception within the Ummah: that monarchy is an inherently illegitimate system of government. This wrong notion, interestingly, is held among many Sunnis and Shi'is alike. In fact, the opposition of some brothers from the Ahl al-Sunnah - including the Salafiyyah - to the regime in Saudi Arabia hinges primarily upon its royal nature¹⁴. However, kingdom is a legitimate, Islamic mode of governance. In fact, it is Allah's Own style of government:

فتعالى الله الملك الحق لا إله إلا هو رب العرش الكريم

So Exalted be Allah, the True King. There is no god but He, the Lord of the Honourable Throne.¹⁵

This was equally His chosen form of government for many of His prophets, messengers and Imams:

وقال لهم نبيهم إن الله قد بعث لكم طالوت ملكا

And their prophet said to them, "Indeed, Allah has appointed Talut as a king over you."¹⁶

And:

وقتل داوود جالوت وآتاه الله الملك

And Dawud killed Jalut, and Allah gave him the kingdom.¹⁷

Of course, as we mentioned, his son, Sulayman, 'alaihi al-salam, inherited the kingdom from him.

Even in Paradise, the system of government there will be monarchy:

وإذا رأيت ثم رأيت نعيما وملكا كبيرا

And when you look there, you will see delight, and a magnificent kingdom.¹⁸

And:

متكئين على سرر مصفوفة

They will recline on thrones arranged in ranks.¹⁹

Looking at these verses, one may even say that kingdom is the best form of government. Allah never chooses for Himself except the best, and He never chooses for His prophets, messengers and awliya and the people of Paradise except the best.

Meanwhile, it must be re-emphasized that Allah gave "a great kingdom" to the "family of Ibrahim." This made them a royal family, from which the sinless kings were appointed by our Lord. Interestingly, He has bestowed the same blessing upon the family of Muhammad too, sallallahu 'alaihi wa 'alahim, in line with this hadith of Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H):

حدثنا قيس بن حفص وموسى بن إسماعيل قالا حدثنا عبد الواحد بن زياد حدثنا أبو قرّة مسلم بن سالم الهمداني قال حدثني عبد الله ابن عيسى سمع عبد الرحمن بن أبي ليلى قال : لقيني كعب بن عجرة فقال ألا أهدي لك هدية سمعتها من النبي صلى الله عليه و سل؟ فقلت بلى فأهدها لي فقال سألنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فقلنا يا رسول الله كيف الصلاة عليكم أهل البيت فإن الله قد علمنا كيف نسلم عليكم؟ قال قولوا اللهم صل على مُحَمَّد وعلى آل مُحَمَّد كما صليت على إبراهيم وعلى آل إبراهيم إنك حميد مجي اللهم بارك على مُحَمَّد وعلى آل مُحَمَّد كما باركت على إبراهيم وعلى آل إبراهيم إنك حميد مجيد

Qays b. Hafsa and Musa b. Isma'il - 'Abd al-Wahid b. Ziyad - Abu Qurrah Muslim b. Salim al-Hamdani - 'Abd Allah b. 'Isa - 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Layli:

Ka'b b. 'Ujrah met me and said, "Shall I not give you a present I got from the Prophet, peace be upon him?" I said, "Yes, give it to me." He said, "We asked the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! What is the manner of the salat upon you, Ahl al-Bayt, for Allah has taught us how to send salam you (Ahl al-Bayt)?' He replied, 'Say: O Allah! Send salat upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, in exactly the same manner as You sent salat upon Ibrahim and upon the family of Ibrahim. You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious. O Allah! Bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, in exactly the same manner as You blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious.'"²⁰

So, the family of Muhammad are a royal family as well, to which "a great kingdom" has been granted by Allah. They have been blessed in exactly the same manner as the family of Ibrahim. Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah (d. 235 H) also records a hadith which leaves no doubt about the matter:

أبو داود عمر بن سعد عن شريك عن الركين عن القاسم بن حسان عن زيد بن ثابت يرفعه قال : إني تركت فيكم الخليفتين كاملتين : كتاب الله وعترتي، وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض.

Abu Dawud 'Umar b. Sa'd - Sharik - al-Rukayn - al-Qasim b. Hassan - Zayd b. Thabit - the Prophet:

"I have left behind over you the two all-comprehensive KHALIFAHs: the Book of Allah and MY OFFSPRING. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount."²¹

The two annotators say:

والحديث صحيح، له شواهد

The hadith is sahih. It has witnesses (shawahid).²²

The word khalifah, of course, is both singular and plural. Therefore, it can refer to only one khalifah or to many, as submitted by Imam al-Raghib al-Isfahani (d. 501 H):

والخليفة يقال للواحد والجمع

The word khalifah is used to refer to a single person or to a group.²³

As such, we know from the above sahih hadith that the offspring of Muhammad are the khalifahs of this Ummah. They are the twelve Qurayshi khalifahs who rule by kingdom till the Day of al-Qiyamah. In particular, the hadith has emphasized upon their sinlessness - a fundamental requirement in Imamah:

وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض.

Verily, both shall NEVER separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.

Therefore, those offspring of Muhammad meant in the riwayat never separate from the Qur'an for even a millisecond in any situation or circumstance - in their thoughts, sayings, actions and omissions. Their number is only twelve, as indicated in other authentic Sunni narrations. They are the living Qur'ans, just like their father - Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah the Messenger of Allah. Everything they think, say or do is a fulfilment of the Qur'an - absolutely everything! Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) records the same situation for the Prophet:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا عبد الرزاق عن معمر عن قتادة عن زرارة عن سعد بن هشام قال سألت عائشة فقلت أخبريني عن خلق رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فقالت كان خلقه القرآن

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) - my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) - 'Abd al-Razzaq - Ma'mar - Qatadah - Zurarah - Sa'd b. Hisham:

I asked 'Aishah, saying: "Tell me about the behaviour of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him." She replied, "His behaviour was the Qur'an".²⁴

Shaykh al-Arnauf comments:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs²⁵

Muhammad gave the same description for the twelve khalifahs from his offspring too. They never separate from the Qur'an.

The first of these royal khalifahs was Amir al-Muminin 'Ali b. Abi Talib, 'alaihi al-salam, according to the Prophet himself. Imam Ibn Abi 'Asim (d. 287 H) documents:

ثنا محمد بن المثني، حدثنا يحيى بن حماد، عن أبي عوانة، عن يحيى بن سليم أبي بلج عن عمرو بن ميمون، عن ابن عباس قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ لعلي: أنت مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلا أنك لست نبيا وأنت خليفتي في كل مؤمن من بعدي.

Muhammad b. al-Muthanna - Yahya b. Hammad - Abu 'Awanah - Yahya b. Sulaym Abu Balj - 'Amr b. Maymun - Ibn 'Abbas: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said to 'Ali: "You are to me of the status of Harun to Musa, with the exception that you are not a prophet. And you are MY KHALIFAH over every believer after me."²⁶

Dr. al-Jawabirah says:

إسناده حسن. رجاله رجال الشيخين غير أبي بلج واسمه يحيى بن سليم بن بلج، قال الحافظ: صدوق ربما أخطأ. وله شواهد

Its chain is hasan.²⁷

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) also comments on the sanad:

إسناده حسن. ورجاله ثقات رجال الشيخين غير أبي بلج واسمه يحيى بن سليم بن بلج قال الحافظ: "صدوق ربما أخطأ."

Its chain is hasan.²⁸

Grading the same chain, Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) declares:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This hadith has a sahih chain.²⁹

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) concurs with him:

صحيح

Sahih.³⁰

‘Allamah Ahmad Shakir (d. 1377 H) too says on the same sanad:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.³¹

Imam al-Busiri (d. 840 H) does not hold a different opinion either about the isnad:

سند صحيح

A sahih chain.³²

This authentic hadith establishes, among other things, that ‘Ali was - for the purpose of the khilafah - counted among the offspring of Muhammad. This was similar to how Iblis was numbered among the angels by Allah in His Order to them to prostrate to Prophet Adam, ‘alaihi al-salam³³, even though he was only a jinn³⁴. Such instances exist in Islam.

The last of the twelve Imams, of course, is the Mahdi. So, to find the true Mahdi, we must look for a man with the following qualities:

1. He is the twelfth Imam from the Ahl al-Bayt, and his name is Muhammad.
2. He is the last khalifah of this Ummah.
3. He is a royal khalifah who will rule by kingdom.
4. He is part of the sinless dynasty of Muhammad. He never does wrong, and never separates from the Qur’an for even a single millisecond in his thoughts, sayings, actions and omissions.
5. All the previous eleven Imams before him were from the offspring of the Messenger, starting with ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, and none of them ever separated from the Book of Allah in any situation and circumstance.
6. None of the eleven Imams before him ever did wrong.
7. All the eleven Imams belong to the royal family of Muhammad - to whom Allah bestowed “a great kingdom”; and all of them ruled by kingdom.

8. Succession of their khilafah was by inheritance, subject to the choice of Allah.

9. The rule of the twelve khalifahs lasts uninterrupted till the establishment of the Hour.

10. Each of the eleven Imams before him held the Covenant of Allah and His Command, never committed any wrongdoing, and was the supreme guide of humanity during his reign.

Whichever “Mahdi” fails any of the above realities is a fake, an impostor, a dajjal. So, which of the numerous “Mahdis” matches the description?

Notes

1. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, ‘Ismat al-Anbiya (1406 H), p. 14
2. Qur’an 2:229
3. Qur’an 4:54
4. Abu Ja’far Muhammad b. Ya’qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-Kafi (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: ‘Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, p. 206, # 5
5. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-‘Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 2, p. 412
6. Muhammad Sadiq al-Husayni al-Ruhani, Fiqh al-Sadiq (Qum: Muassasat Dar al-Kitab; 3rd edition, 1413 H), vol. 16, p. 157
7. Ibid, vol. 16, p. 158
8. Qur’an 38:26. Prophet Dawud was both a prophet and a khalifah. In the above verse, Allah is clearly making reference to his khilafah, and not to his nubuwwah.
9. Qur’an 38:20
10. Qur’an 27:16
11. Abu Ja’far Muhammad b. Jarir b. Yazid b. Kathir b. Ghalib al-Amuli al-Tabari, Jami al-Bayan fi Tawil al-Qur’an (Dar al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: Sidqi Jamil al-‘Attar], vol. 19, p. 172
12. Abu al-Fida Isma’il b. Kathir al-Dimashqi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah (Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi; 1st edition, 1408 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Shiri], vol. 2, p. 22
13. Abu al-Faraj Jamal al-Din ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Ali b. Muhammad al-Jawzi al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi, Zad al-Masir fi ‘Ilm al-Tafsir (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Abd Allah], vol. 6, p. 60
14. A clarification is needed here. Well, even though kingdom is itself not an inherently illegitimate system of government, there are certain conditions that can make it invalid, from an Islamic point of view, in some situations. We know from Qur’an 4:54 and the hadith of al-Kulayni that it was Allah Himself Who explicitly appointed the family of Ibrahim, and the family of Muhammad, royal families by wahy. Therefore, the legitimacy of every monarchy rests entirely upon this fact. Did Allah name the concerned ruling family with kingdom in any revelation sent down from the heavens? If the answer is “no”, then their kingdom has zero Islamic legitimacy. Moreover, even if the answer is “yes”, what about the reigning king specifically? There has to be a separate wahy from Allah declaring him the king, amir, khalifah or Imam, before his rule can be valid, Islamically. The case of Talut (Qur’an 2:247) is particularly instructive on this point. This has been Allah’s practice with the kings from the families of Ibrahim and Muhammad, ‘alaihima al-salam: “That was the Sunnah of Allah in the case of those passed away of old, and you will not find any change in the Sunnah of Allah” (Qur’an 33:62).
15. Qur’an 23:116
16. Qur’an 2:247
17. Qur’an 2:251
18. Qur’an 76:20
19. Qur’an 52:20
20. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju’fi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1233, # 3190

21. Abu Bakr ‘Abd Allah b. Abi Shaybah, Musnad Ibn Abi Shaybah (Riyadh: Dar al-Waṭan; 1st edition, 1418 H) [annotators: ‘Adil b. Yusuf al-‘Azazi and Ahmad b. Farid al-Mazidi], vol. 1, p. 108
22. Ibid
23. Abu al-Qasim al-Husayn b. Muhammad b. al-Mufadhhal al-Raghib al-Isfahani, Tafsir al-Raghib al-Isfahani wa Muqadimmatuh (Kulliyat al-Adab, Jami’ah Tanta; 1st edition, 1412 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Basyuni], vol. 1, p. 139
24. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurṭubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 6, p. 163, # 25341
25. Ibid
26. Abu Bakr b. Abi ‘Asim, Ahmad b. ‘Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (Dar al-Sami’i li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’) [annotator: Dr. Basim b. Faysal al-Jawabirah], vol. 1, pp. 799-800, # 1222
27. Ibid
28. Abu Bakr b. Abi ‘Asim, Ahmad b. ‘Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (al-Maktab al-Islami; 1st edition, 1400 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 565, # 1188
29. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Aṭa], vol. 3, p. 143, # 4652
30. Ibid
31. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith; 1st edition, 1416 H) [annotator: Ahmad Muhammad Shakir], vol. 1, p. 331, # 3062
32. Ahmad b. Abi Bakr b. Isma’il al-Busiri, Itihaf al-Khiyarah al-Maharah bi Zawaid al-Masanid al-‘Ashara (Riyadh: Dar al-Waṭan; 1st edition, 1420 H), vol. 7, p. 184, # 6630
33. See Qur’an 2:34, 7:11, 17:61, 18:50, 20:116, 38:71-74,
34. Qur’an 18:50

12. The Sunni Chase Of Shadows: Is There Really A Man In The Cellar?

It is without question that the only “Mahdi” in Islam who fulfils all the descriptions of the true Mahdi is the twelfth Imam of the Ahl al-Bayt, Imam Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Askari, ‘alaihi wa ‘alahim al-salam. All the other “Mahdi” candidates or claimants either fail all the conditions, or almost all. By contrast, the Twelfth Imam is a perfect match for the Mahdi described in the ahadith. Perhaps, this is why we see some Sunni ‘ulama constantly launching the most vicious attacks on him. Our observation is that they seek to discredit him in order to promote the orthodox Sunni “Mahdi” - Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hasani. This tactic is often noted in Sunni-Shi’i debates. However, it is only a logical fallacy. The fact that A is wrong does not necessarily prove that B is correct. Therefore, even if the “Shi’i Mahdi” - as they like to call him - were a fake as they claim, they still need to bring irrefutable evidences to prove that their “Sunni Mahdi” meets all the criteria in the sahih ahadith! Obviously, the Ahl al-Sunnah can never prove the authenticity of their Mahdi without turning a blind eye to their own reliable reports on the Awaited Imam.

The two primary Sunni objections to the Twelfth Imam are mentioned by Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) in this submission:

قد ذكر مُحَمَّدُ بن جرير الطبري وعبد الباقي بن قانع وغيرهما من أهل العلم بالأنساب والتواريخ أن الحسن بن علي العسكري لم يكن له نسل ولا عقب والإمامية الذين يزعمون أنه كان له ولد يدعون أنه دخل السرداب بسامرا وهو صغير منهم من قال عمره سنتان ومنهم من قال ثلاث ومنهم من قال خمس سنين

Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari, ‘Abd al-Baqi b. Qani’ and others from the scholars of geneology and history had stated that al-Hasan b. ‘Ali al-‘Askari did not have any children or offspring. The Imamiyyah who claim that he had a son say that he (the son) entered the cellar in Samara while he was still young. Among them are those who say that his age (at that time) was two. Among them are also those who say it was three. And among them are those who say it was five years.¹

So, first, he is non-existent. His father had died childless. Then, his followers claim that he entered the “cellar” in the city of Samara, near Baghdad at the age of two, three or five.

As evidence for his first claim, Ibn Taymiyyah mentions only Imam al-Tabari and Ibn Qani’ by name. Then, he makes a vague reference to some other Sunni scholars of geneology and history. Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) quotes something to this effect too:

قلت: ويزعمون أن مُحَمَّدًا دخل سردابا في بيت أبيه، وأمه تنظر إليه، فلم يخرج إلى الساعة منه، وكان ابن تسع سنين. وقيل دون ذلك... وأنه حي نعوذ بالله من زوال العقل... وممن قال: إن الحسن العسكري لم يعقب: مُحَمَّدُ بن جرير الطبري، ويحيى بن صاعد، وناهيك بهما معرفة وثقة.

I (al-Dhahabi) say: They (the Shi'ah) claim that Muhammad entered a cellar in the house of his father while his mother was looking at him, and has not come out from it up till this moment, and he was nine years old. It is said that his age was other than that ... And that he is alive. We seek the refuge of Allah from the dysfunction of the intellect... Among those who said that al-Hasan al-Askari did not have a child were Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari and Yahya b. Sa'id, and they are sufficient for you in knowledge and trustworthiness.²

However, it seems that al-Dhahabi himself did not attach much weight to the submissions of al-Tabari, Ibn al-Qani', Yahya b. Sa'id, Ibn Taymiyyah (who was his contemporary) and probably others. In his Tarikh al-Islam, he claims instead:

(أحداث سنة خمس وستين)

توفي فيها: أحمد بن منصور الرمادي، وإبراهيم بن الحارث البغدادي، وإبراهيم بن هانيء النيسابوري، وسعدان بن نصر، وصالح بن أحمد بن حنبل، وعبد الله بن محمد بن أيوب المخزومي، وعلي بن حرب الطائي، وأبو حفص النيسابوري الزاهد عمرو بن سلم، ومحمد بن الحسن العسكري من الإثني عشر، ومحمد بن هارون الفلاس، وهارون بن سليمان الإصبهاني.

(Events of 265 H)

The following DIED in it (i.e. that year):

Ahmad b. Mansur al-Ramadi, Ibrahim b. al-Harith al-Baghdadi, Ibrahim b. Hani al-Naysaburi, Sa'dan b. Nasr, Salih b. Ahmad b. Hanbal, 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Ayub al-Mukhrami, 'Ali b. Harb al-Tai, Abu Hafis al-Naysaburi al-Zaid 'Umar b. Salam, Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-'Askari from the Twelve (Imams), Muhammad b. Harun al-Falas, and Harun b. Sulayman al-Isbahani.³

So, al-Dhahabi personally believed that Imam al-Askari had a son named Muhammad, but who allegedly "died" in 265 H. He did not accept the apparently hearsay testimonies of al-Tabari and similar Sunni scholars, despite affirming their scholarship and trustworthiness. The reason, perhaps, is that none of them was an eye-witness to the alleged incidents, and none of them ever mentioned any source for his information. As such, the origin of their claims about the son of al-Askari is unknown. Evidences like that are never accepted in critical matters like this one.

The first person to make that claim - from all indications - was only Ja'far The Liar, the brother of Imam al-Askari, 'alaihi al-salam. Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413 H), the great Shi'i scholar, has some further information for us concerning this:

وحاز جعفر ظاهر تركة أبي محمد عليه السلام واجتهد في القيام عند الشيعة مقامه، فلم يقبل أحد منهم ذلك ولا اعتقده فيه، فصار إلى سلطان الوقت يلتمس مرتبة أخيه، وبذل مالا جليلا، وتقرب بكل ما ظن أنه يتقرب به فلم ينتفع بشيء من ذلك. ولجعفر أخبار كثيرة

في هذا المعنى، رأيت الإعراض عن ذكرها لأسباب لا يحتمل الكتاب شرحها، وهي مشهورة عند الإمامية ومن عرف أخبار الناس من العامة، وبالله استعين.

Ja'far seized the apparent legacy of Abu Muhammad (i.e. Imam al-Hasan al-Askari), peace be upon him, and he strove hard to take his place in the eyes of the Shi'ah. But, none of them accepted that, and none of them believed him in it. So, he went to the authorities of the time seeking the position of his brother. He spent a lot of money, and did everything that he thought could advance him. But, none of that was of any benefit to him.

There are A LOT of reports concerning Ja'far to this effect. It is my opinion to avoid quoting them for reasons whose explanation does not concern the book. They are well-known among the Imamiyyah and those who know the reports of the people from non-Shi'is. And from Allah we seek help.⁴

Ja'far The Liar sought to declare himself the Imam after al-Askari, and he usurped the estate of the latter. He also made every effort to validate his illegal steps, including seeking the help and interference of the Sunni authorities of that time. But, nothing worked for him. In particular, he proclaimed the non-existence of the Twelfth Imam and persecuted the Shi'ah in order to "ease" things for himself, as al-Mufid confirms:

وتولى جعفر بن علي أخو أبي محمد عليه السلام أخذ تركته، وسعى في حبس جواري أبي محمد عليه السلام واعتقال حلاله، وشنع على أصحابه بانتظارهم ولده وقطعهم بوجوده والقول بإمامته، وأغرى بالقوم حتى أخافهم وشردهم، وجرى على مخلفي أبي محمد عليه السلام بسبب ذلك كل عزيمة، من اعتقال وحبس وتهديد وتصغير واستخفاف وذل.

Ja'far b. 'Ali, the brother of Abu Muhammad, peace be upon him, seized his legacy and sought to imprison the women slaves of Abu Muhammad, peace be upon him, and to put the latter's wives in confinement. He reviled his (i.e. al-Askari's) companions for awaiting his son, and for their certainty concerning his (i.e. the son's) existence, and for their belief in his (i.e. the son's) Imamah. He tempted the people so much that he made them fearful and scared them away. The survivors of Abu Muhammad, peace be upon him, underwent a terrible experience on account of that - including confinement, imprisonment, threats, slander, degradation and humiliation.⁵

Obviously, the first source of this rumour was none other than a liar - Ja'far The Liar. He created it to support his claim to the properties of his brother and to seize his rank among the Imamiyyah. He equally went to extreme lengths to ensure his success. However, he failed woefully. Meanwhile, his rumour was picked by some elements within the Ahl al-Sunnah, and has been exploited for sectarian purposes - especially on the question of al-mahdawiyyah.

We quoted above the word of Imam al-Dhahabi, who did not buy into the claims of some of the heavyweights of his sect. He opposed them by affirming that Imam al-Askari actually had a son, but that he (the son) died a few years after him. Does he then have any proof for the alleged death of

Imam al-Hujjah? Of course, he does not, as he himself indirectly admits in another of his books:

الحسن بن علي بن مُحمَّد بن علي الرضا بن موسى بن جعفر الصادق. أبو مُحمَّد الهاشمي الحسيني أحد أئمة الشيعة الذين تدعي الشيعة عصمتهم. ويقال له الحسن العسكري لكونه سكن سامراء، فإنها يقال لها العسكر. وهو والد منتظر الرافضة. توفي إلى رضوان الله بسامراء في ثامن ربيع الأول سنة ستين، وله تسع وعشرون سنة. ودفن إلى جانب والده. وأمه أمة. وأما ابنه مُحمَّد بن الحسن الذي يدعوه الرافضة القائم الخلف الحجة، فولد سنة ثمان وخمسين، وقيل: سنة ست وخمسين. عاش بعد أبيه سنتين ثم عدم، ولم يعلم كيف مات. وأمه أم ولد.

Al-Hasan b. ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Ridha b. Musa b. Ja’far al-Sadiq, Abu Muhammad al-Hashimi al-Husayni, one of the Imams of the Shi’ah whose ‘isma (sinlessness) they proclaim. He is called al-Hasan al-‘Askari because he lived in Samara, for it was called al-Askar. He was the father of the Awaited One of the Rafidhah. He passed unto the Pleasure of Allah at Samara in 8th Rabi’ al-Awwal 260 H, and he was 29 years old. He was buried near his father, and his mother was a slave-woman.

As for his son, Muhammad b. al-Hasan, whom the Rafidhah call al-Qaim, al-Khalaf, al-Hujjah, he was born in 258 H. It is said that it was 256 H. He lived for two years after his father. Then, he became nonexistent, AND IT IS NOT KNOWN HOW HE DIED. His mother was a slave-woman.⁶

So, none knows how he “died”. They just know that he was no longer seen, and thereby assumed that he had become “nonexistent”. But, how did his “death” happen? None knows. Of course, this indicates clearly that none has evidence of his death! The claim of his death is without proof. It is only an assumption, a guess.

In any case, Imam al-Askari - whose truthfulness is universally accepted - did testify to the existence of his son during his lifetime. Shaykh al-Kulayni (d. 328 H), the ace Shi’i hadith compiler, documents:

مُحمَّد بن يحيى، عن أحمد بن إسحاق، عن أبي هاشم الجعفري قال: قلت لأبي مُحمَّد عليه السلام: جلالتك تمنعني من مسألتك، فتأذن لي أن أسألك؟ فقال: سل، قلت: يا سيدي هل لك ولد؟ فقال: نعم، فقلت: فإن بك حدث فأين أسأله؟ فقال: بالمدينة.

Muhammad b. Yahya - Ahmad b. Ishaq - Abu Hashim al-Ja’fari:

I said to Abu Muhammad (i.e. Imam al-Askari), “Your majestic status prevents me from asking you questions. So, may I ask you a question?” He replied, “Ask”. I said, “O my master, do you have any son?” He answered, “Yes.” Then, I asked, “If something happened to you, where should I ask about him?” He said, “In Madinah.”⁷

Al-Majlisi (d. 1111 H) says:

صحيح

Sahih.⁸

Al-Haj Muhammad Zakariya agrees:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.⁹

This is a truthful testimony: he fathered a son, who was in the city of the Prophet, al-Madinah. Moreover, it was not just the truthful claim: he did also show the blessed son to some of his most trusted companions. Shaykh al-Saduq (d. 381 H), another primary Shi'i hadith scientist, records about one of such occasions:

حدثنا علي بن عبد الله الوراق قال: حدثنا سعد بن عبد الله، عن أحمد بن إسحاق بن سعد الأشعري قال: دخلت على أبي محمد الحسن بن علي عليهما السلام وأنا أريد أن أسأله عن الخلف [من] بعده، فقال لي مبتدئاً: يا أحمد بن إسحاق إن الله تبارك وتعالى لم يخل الأرض منذ خلق آدم عليه السلام ولا يخليها إلى أن تقوم الساعة من حجة الله على خلقه، به يدفع البلاء عن أهل الأرض، وبه ينزل الغيث، وبه يخرج بركات الأرض. قال: فقلت له: يا ابن رسول الله فمن الامام والخليفة بعدك؟ فنهض عليه السلام مسرعاً فدخل البيت، ثم خرج وعلى عاتقه غلام كان وجهه القمر ليلة البدر من أبناء الثلاث سنين، فقال: يا أحمد بن إسحاق لولا كرامتك على الله عز وجل وعلى حججه ما عرضت عليك ابني هذا، إنه سمي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وكنيته، الذي يملأ الأرض قسطاً وعدلاً كما ملئت جوراً وظلماً.

'Ali b. 'Abd Allah al-Warraaq - Sa'd b. 'Abd Allah - Ahmad b. Ishaq b. Sa'd al-Ash'ari:

I went to Abu Muhammad al-Hasan b. 'Ali, peace be upon them both, and I intended to ask him about his successor. But, he said to me before I said anything, "O Ahmad b. Ishaq! Verily, Allah the Most Blessed, the Most High never leaves the earth since the creation of Adam, peace be upon him, and He will never leave it till establishment of the Hour, without an Hujjah of Allah over His creation. Through him, calamity is averted from the people of the earth; through him, rain descends; and through him, the blessings of the earth come out." I said to him, "O son of the Messenger of Allah? So, who is the Imam and the khalifah after you?"

Then, he, peace be upon him, rose hurriedly and entered the house. Then, he came out and on his shoulder was a young boy whose face was like the full moon, from the three-year-olds. Then, he said, "O Ahmad b. Ishaq! If not for your honour before Allah the Almighty and before His Hujjahs, I would not have shown you THIS SON OF MINE. Verily, he is the namesake of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and also shares his agnomen. He will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it had been filled with oppression and injustice."¹⁰

Al-Haj Muhammad Zakariya again comments:

إسناده معتبر

Its chain is reliable.¹¹

As such, the matter is without any doubt. Moreover, it must be noted that Imam al-Askari is “one of the Imams of the Shi’ah” as al-Dhahabi describes him. Therefore, the Shi’ah are the best authorities concerning him and his affairs, just as Muslims generally are the best references on Prophet Muhammad, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi. Meanwhile, Ja’far The Liar had only exploited the situation of things at that time. Imam Hasan al-Askari had hidden his only child in Madinah, far away from Iraq where he himself lived, because of these words he said:

يا أحمد بن إسحاق لولا كرامتك على الله عز وجل وعلى حججه ما عرضت عليك ابني هذا، إنه سمي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وكنيته، الذي يملأ الأرض قسطاً وعدلاً كما ملئت جوراً وظلماً.

O Ahmad b. Ishaq! If not for your honour before Allah the Almighty and before His Hujjahs, I would not have shown you this son of mine. Verily, he is the namesake of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and also shares his agnomen. He will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it had been filled with oppression and injustice.

Being the eleventh Imam, there certainly were some knowledgeable Shi’is who were expecting his son to be the Awaited Mahdi, the Twelfth Imam. The previous Imams before al-Askari had indicated this in their various statements to some of their followers. For instance, Shaykh al-Saduq has this authentic hadith:

حدثنا أحمد بن مُحَمَّد بن يحيى العطار قال: حدثنا أبي عن مُحَمَّد بن عبد الجبار عن أبي أحمد مُحَمَّد بن زياد الأزدي عن أبان بن عثمان عن ثابت بن دينار عن سيد العابدين علي بن الحسين عن سيد الشهداء الحسين بن علي عن سيد الأوصياء أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب عليه السلام قال: قال لي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله الأئمة من بعدي اثنا عشر ولهم أنت يا علي وآخرهم القائم الذي يفتح الله تبارك وتعالى ذكره على يديه مشارق الأرض ومغاربها.

Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Yahya al-‘Aṭṭar - my father - Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Jabbar - Abu Ahmad Muhammad b. Ziyad al-Azdi - Aban b. ‘Uthman - Thabit b. Dinar - master of the worshippers, ‘Ali b. al-Husayn - master of the martyrs, al-Husayn b. ‘Ali - master of the successors and commander of the believers, ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be upon him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, said to me: “The Imams after me are twelve in number. The first of them is you, O ‘Ali, and the last of them will be the Qaim through whose hands Allah, blessed and exalted be His Mention, will conquer the east of the earth and its west.”¹²

Al-Haj Muhammad Zakariya says:

إسناده معتبر

Its chain is reliable.¹³

This is established in the sahih Sunni ahadith as well, as we have already proved in this book and in others.

Shaykh al-Saduq documents again:

حدثنا أحمد بن زياد بن جعفر الهمداني قال: حدثنا علي بن إبراهيم بن هاشم عن أبيه عن محمد بن أبي عمير عن غياث بن إبراهيم عن الصادق جعفر بن محمد عن أبيه محمد بن علي عن أبيه علي بن الحسين عن أبيه الحسين بن علي عليه السلام قال: سئل أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام عن معنى قول رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله اني مخلف فيكم الثقلين كتاب الله وعترتي من العترة؟ فقال: انا والحسن والحسين والأئمة التسعة من ولد الحسين تاسعهم مهديهم وقائمهم لا يفارقون كتاب الله ولا يفارقهم حتى يردوا على رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله حوضه.

Ahmad b. Ziyad b. Ja'far al-Hamdani - 'Ali b. Ibrahim b. Hashim - his father - Muhammad b. Abi 'Umayr - Ghayath b. Ibrahim - al-Sadiq Ja'far b. Muhammad - his father, Muhammad b. 'Ali - his father, 'Ali b. al-Husayn - his father, al-Husayn b. 'Ali, peace be upon him:

Amir al-Muminin ('Ali b. Abi Talib) was asked about the meaning of the statement of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family: "I am leaving behind over you the Two Weighty Things (al-thaqalayn): the Book of Allah and my offspring". He was asked, "Who are the offspring?" So, he ('Ali) answered, "I, al-Hasan, al-Husayn and the nine Imams from the offspring of al-Husayn. The ninth of them is their Mahdi and their Qaim. They will never separate from the Book of Allah the Almighty and it will never separate from them until they meet the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, at his Lake-Fount."¹⁴

Al-Haj Muhammad Zakariya comments on it:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.¹⁵

Although these ahadith were not widespread - neither among Sunnis nor among Shi'is - due to the political climate of that time, there nonetheless were certainly those who knew it within both sects. They were expecting the twelfth Imam from the offspring of the Prophet to be the true Mahdi. Moreover, it is extremely likely that this information got to the Sunni authorities of that time. Even if they did not believe in it, they still would have been forced by curiosity and political considerations to develop interest in it. Afterall, the ahadith could potentially rally people around the twelfth Imam for a huge rebellion against their rule. So, the best way to nib the threat in the bud was to cut off its head - and that was, to kill the son of Imam al-Askari. These realities understandably forced him to hide his son - whom he believed to be the Awaited Mahdi - from everyone except a tiny, trusted few. Shaykh al-Mufid explains it better:

وخلف ابنه المنتظر لدولة الحق. وكان قد أخفى مولده وستر أمره، لصعوبة الوقت، وشدة طلب سلطان الزمان له، واجتهاده في البحث عن أمره، ولما شاع من مذهب الشيعة الإمامية فيه، وعرف من انتظارهم له، فلم يظهر ولده عليه السلام في حياته، ولا عرفه الجمهور بعد وفاته.

He (i.e. al-Askari) left behind his son, the Awaited One, for the true government. He had hidden his birth and concealed his affair, due to the difficulty of the time and the severity of the search for him by the ruler of the time, and his hard efforts in investigating his affair. When it (i.e. information) spread concerning him from the madhhab of the Shi'ah Imamiyyah, and he (al-Askari) realized their wait for him, then he did not expose his birth, peace be upon him, during his lifetime, and the majority did not know him (i.e. his son) after his death.¹⁶

Ja'far The Liar capitalized on this unfavourable situation to seek the Imamah for himself and to seize the inheritance of his brother. He did not succeed at all in his efforts to crown himself the Imam. However, he was able to throw confusion into the ranks of some Shi'is by his insistence that his brother died heirless. Those trustworthy companions of Abu Muhammad who had seen his son during his lifetime, or had heard about him (i.e. the son) from him (i.e. Abu Muhammad), preserved the true Imami Shi'ism after him through their speeches, narrations and other efforts. A lot of others, however, were blown away by the wind of doubt in the long, heated confusion that ensued.

Thus, as things stand, there is no unified Sunni position of the birth of Imam al-Hujjah. Some of them affirmed that he was truly born while others deny this fact. Meanwhile, it is documented in authentic Shi'i riwayat that Imam al-Hasan al-Askari did testify to the birth of his son before some trusted companions, and also showed him to some of them. Unfavourable conditions at the time prevented him from disclosing his son's birth or whereabouts to the general public. His dishonest brother, Ja'far The Liar, exploited the situation to create the false theory that he (al-Askari) died without a child, in order to usurp properties and positions. A number of Sunni 'ulama seized on this to feed their rejection of the Twelfth Imam; and this trend has continued since the first lie. But, Allah protects His religion and gives it resilience and strength.

The second Sunni objection - which is even more ridiculous than the first - is this claim of Ibn Taymiyyah:

والإمامية الذين يزعمون أنه كان له ولد يدعون أنه دخل السرداب بسامرا وهو صغير

منهم من قال عمره سنتان ومنهم من قال ثلاث ومنهم من قال خمس سنين

The Imamiyyah who claim that he had a son say that he (the son) entered the cellar in Samara while he was still young. Among them are those who say that his age (at that time) was two. Among them are also those who say it was three. And among them are those who say it was five years.

Is it true that the Shi'ah Imamiyyah make any such statement, that their last Imam entered a cellar in Samara near Baghdad (or anywhere else) while

he was still young? This, indeed, is a very widespread claim among the Ahl al-Sunnah. It is almost impossible to find any of them who writes about the Twelfth Imam without mentioning it. The correct Shi'i opinion, however, is that none knows the location of the Imam except some special members of his family. Of course, everyone knows that cellar! Al-Kulayni reports:

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَحْيَى، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ، عَنْ ابْنِ مَجْبُوبٍ، عَنْ إِسْحَاقَ بْنِ عَمَّارٍ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: لِلْقَائِمِ غَيْبَتَانِ: إِحْدَاهُمَا قَصِيرَةٌ وَالْأُخْرَى طَوِيلَةٌ، الْغَيْبَةُ الْأُولَى لَا يَعْلَمُ بِمَكَانِهِ فِيهَا إِلَّا خَاصَّةُ مَوَالِيهِ.

Muhammad b. Yahya - Muhammad b. al-Husayn - Ibn Mahbub - Ishaq b. 'Ammar:

Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him, said, "The Qaim will have two disappearances: one of them will be short and the other will be long. In the first disappearance, none will know his location in it except his special Shi'ah; and in the other, none will know his location in it except his special relatives."¹⁷

Al-Majlisi says about it:

موثق

Muwaththaq¹⁸

Al-Haj Muhammad Zakariya also comments:

إسناده صحيح أو موثق

Its chain is sahih or muwaththaq.¹⁹

Explaining the hadith, al-Majlisi states:

(إلا خاصة مواليه) أي خدمه وأهله وأولاده

(except his special relatives) meaning, his servants, family and children.²⁰

Those are the only ones who know his location. Naturally, that CANNOT be the cellar which is known to all and sundry!

Meanwhile, Imam al-Hujjah regularly comes out of his location to attend Hajj rites. Al-Kulayni further documents:

حدثنا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مُوسَى بْنِ الْمُتَوَكَّلِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ جَعْفَرِ الْحَمِيرِيِّ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَثْمَانَ الْعَمْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتَهُ يَقُولُ: وَاللَّهِ إِنْ صَاحَبَ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ لِيَحْضُرَ الْمَوْسِمَ كُلَّ سَنَةٍ فَيَرَى النَّاسَ وَيَعْرِفُهُمْ وَيُرُونَهُ وَلَا يَعْرِفُونَهُ.

Muhammad b. Musa b. al-Mutawakil, may Allah be pleased with him - 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far al-Himyari:

I heard Muhammad b. 'Uthman al-'Umari, may Allah pleased with him, saying: "By Allah, the Master of this Affair surely attends the pilgrimage every year. So, he sees the people and recognizes them. They too see him but do not recognize him."²¹

Al-Haj Muhammad Zakariya also comments:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.²²

Our opponents claim that our Imam entered their imaginary cellar as a child, and never came out of it, and will only come out of it upon his reappearance. But, how is that reconcilable with the sahih Shi'i hadith - which is believed by the Shi'ah - above? Besides, if the Shi'ah had truly believed that the Mahdi was in a cellar, would they not have always massed together at its entrance near every Hajj season to witness him come out of it? "What then is the matter with you; how do you judge?"²³

Notes

1. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah (Muasassat Qurṭubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 4, pp. 87-88
2. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 9th edition, 1413 H) [annotators of the thirteenth volume: Shu'ayb al-Arnaṭ and 'Ali Abu Zayd], vol. 13, pp. 121-122, # 60
3. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Tarikh al-Islam wa Wafiyat al-Mashahir wa al-A'lam (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salam Tadmuri], vol. 20, p. 15
4. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Muhammad b. al-Nu'man al-'Ikbari al-Baghdadi, al-Irshad fi Ma'rifat Hujjaj Allah 'ala al-'Ibad (Beirut: Dar al-Mufid; 2nd edition, 1414 H), vol. 2, pp. 336-337
5. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 336
6. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Tarikh al-Islam wa Wafiyat al-Mashahir wa al-A'lam (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salam Tadmuri], vol. 19, p. 113
7. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-Kafi (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah; 3rd edition, 1388 H) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, p. 328, # 2
8. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 4, p. 2
9. Muhammad Zakariya, al-Sahih wa al-Mu'tabar min Akhbar al-Hujjah al-Muntazar (Majmu'at al-Rasid; 1st edition, 1434 H), p. 24, # 14
10. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah (Qum: Muasassat al-Nashr al-Islami li Jama'at al-Mudarisin; 1405 H) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], p. 384, Ch. 38, # 1
11. Muhammad Zakariya, al-Sahih wa al-Mu'tabar min Akhbar al-Hujjah al-Muntazar (Majmu'at al-Rasid; 1st edition, 1434 H), pp. 27-29, # 19
12. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (Beirut: Muasassat al-A'lami li al-Matbu'at; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Husayn al-A'lami], vol. 2, pp. 66-67, # 34
13. Muhammad Zakariya, al-Sahih wa al-Mu'tabar min Akhbar al-Hujjah al-Muntazar (Majmu'at al-Rasid; 1st edition, 1434 H), p. 17, # 7
14. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (Beirut: Muasassat al-A'lami li al-Matbu'at; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Husayn al-A'lami], vol. 2, p. 60, # 25
15. Muhammad Zakariya, al-Sahih wa al-Mu'tabar min Akhbar al-Hujjah al-Muntazar (Majmu'at al-Rasid; 1st edition, 1434 H), p. 18, # 8
16. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Muhammad b. al-Nu'man al-'Ikbari al-Baghdadi, al-Irshad fi Ma'rifat Hujjaj Allah 'ala al-'Ibad (Beirut: Dar al-Mufid; 2nd edition, 1414 H), vol. 2, p. 336
17. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-Kafi (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah; 3rd edition, 1388 H) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, p. 340, # 19
18. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 4, p. 52
19. Muhammad Zakariya, al-Sahih wa al-Mu'tabar min Akhbar al-Hujjah al-Muntazar (Majmu'at al-Rasid; 1st edition, 1434 H), p. 16, # 5

20. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, *Mir-at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul* (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 4, p. 52
21. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, *Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah* (Qum: Muasassat al-Nashr al-Islami li Jama'at al-Mudarisin; 1405 H) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], p. 440, Ch. 43, # 8
22. Muhammad Zakariya, *al-Sahih wa al-Mu'tabar min Akhbar al-Hujjah al-Muntazar* (Majmu'at al-Rasid; 1st edition, 1434 H), pp. 31-32, # 22
23. Qur'an 10:35

13. The Sunni Chase Of Shadows: Is The Mahdi Really From Imam Hasan?

There is a dispute between the Shi'ah Imamiyyah and some of the Ahl al-Sunnah about the identity of the Mahdi's father. There are some Sunnis who agree with Shi'is that the true Mahdi is none other than Imam Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Askari, a descendant of Imam al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib, 'alaihim al-salam.¹ By contrast, there are others from the majority of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah who claim that the Awaited Imam is none other than one Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hasani. So, to most Sunnis, the progenitor of the Mahdi was Imam al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib, 'alaihim al-salam, and the name of his immediate father is 'Abd Allah. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) is very emphatic on this point:

فالمهدي الذي أخبر به النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم اسمه مُحَمَّد بن عبد الله لا مُحَمَّد بن الحسن

وقد روى عن علي رضي الله عنه أنه قال هو من ولد الحسن بن علي لا من ولد الحسين بن علي

So, the Mahdi who was prophesied by the Prophet, peace be upon him, his name is Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah, NOT Muhammad b. al-Hasan. Moreover, it has been narrated that 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said that he (the Mahdi) would be from the descendants of al-Hasan b. 'Ali, NOT from the descendants of al-Husayn b. 'Ali.²

Elsewhere, he quotes that athar of 'Ali:

ورواه أبو داود من طريق أبي سعيد وفيه يملك الأرض سبع سنين ورواه عن علي رضي الله عنه أنه

نظر إلى الحسن وقال إن ابني هذا سيد كما سماه رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم وسيخرج

من صلبه رجل يسمى باسم نبيكم يشبهه في الخلق ولا يشبهه في الخلق يملأ الأرض قسطاً

And Abu Dawud narrated it through the route of Abu Sa'id, and in it is: "he will rule the earth by kingdom for seven years." He (Abu Dawud) also narrated it from 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, that he looked at al-Hasan and said, "This son of mine is a master, as he was named by the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. A man, who will be named with the name of your Prophet, will rise from his offspring. He will resemble him (i.e. the Prophet) in character, but will not resemble him in creation. He will fill the earth with equity."³

This riwayat is indeed in the Sunan of Abu Dawud (d. 275 H):

قال أبو داود وحدثت عن هارون بن المغيرة قال ثنا عمرو بن أبي قيس عن شعيب بن

خالد عن أبي إسحاق قال قال علي رضي الله عنه ونظر إلى ابنه الحسن فقال إن ابني هذا سيد كما

سماه النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم وسيخرج من صلبه رجل يسمى باسم نبيكم صلى الله عليه

و سلم يشبهه في الخلق ولا يشبهه في الخلق ثم ذكر قصة يملأ الأرض عدلاً

Abu Dawud - Harun b. al-Mughirah - 'Umar b. Abi Qays - Shu'ayb b. Khalid - Abu Ishaq:

'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, looked at his son al-Hasan and said, "This son of mine is a master, as he was named by the Prophet, peace be upon him. A man, who will be named with the name of your Prophet, peace

be upon him, will rise from his offspring. He will resemble him (i.e. the Prophet) in character, but will not resemble him in creation.” Then he mentioned a story (and added): “He will fill the earth with justice.”⁴

However, it is unreliable evidence, as proclaimed by ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H):

ضعيف

Dha’if.⁵

Meanwhile, the only alternative sanad for the athar is this one, documented by Imam al-Maruzi (d. 229 H):

حدثنا غير واحد عن ابن عياش عن حدثه عن محمد بن جعفر عن علي بن أبي طالب
رضي الله عنه قال سمى النبي ﷺ الحسن سيدا وسيخرج من صلبه رجلا اسمه اسم نبيكم يملأ الأرض
عدلا كما ملئت جورا.

More than one person - Ibn ‘Ayyash - somebody who narrated to him - Muhammad b. Ja’far - ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him:

“The Prophet, peace be upon him, named al-Hasan a master, and from his offspring will rise a man whose name will be the name of your Prophet. He will fill the earth with justice just as it had been filled with oppression.”⁶

Dr. al-Bastawi has these comments about it:

شيوخ نعيم: غير معروفين.

ابن عياش: يعرف بهذه اللقب غير واحد. ولما كان شيخه والراوي عنه غير معروفين فلا
يمكن التحديد بمن هو المراد هنا.

عن حدثه: غير معروف.

شيوخ نعيم: غير معروفين.

ابن عياش: يعرف بهذه اللقب غير واحد. ولما كان شيخه والراوي عنه غير معروفين فلا
يمكن التحديد بمن هو المراد هنا.

عن حدثه: غير معروف.

Shuyukh of Na’im: Not known.

Ibn ‘Ayyash: Many are known with this nickname. Since his shaykh and the narrator from him are unknown, then it is impossible to determine exactly who is meant here.

Somebody who narrated to him: Not known.⁷

Apparently, this chain is dha’if jiddan (very weak).

Therefore, there really is NO proof, upon which to trace the Mahdi, ‘alaihi al-salam, to Imam al-Hasan, ‘alaihi al-salam.

Notes

1. See for instance Shaykh Nazim: Imam Mahdi’s Helpers believe he is the son of Imam Hasan al-Askari - Jan 16th, 2011, <https://ahmedamiruddin.wordpress.com/2011/01/21/shaykh-nazim-al-mahdi-an...> and Re:Naqshbandi luminaries believed Hadrat Mahdi was the son of Imam Hasan al-Askari?, <https://ahmedamiruddin.wordpress.com/2011/07/02/re-naqshbandi-luminaries...>

2. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 4, p. 95
3. Ibid, vol. 8, p. 255
4. Abu Dawud Sulayman b. al-Ash’ath al-Sijistani al-Azdi, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 511, # 4290
5. Ibid
6. Abu ‘Abd Allah Na’im b. Hammad al-Maruzi, Kitab al-Fitan (Dar al-Fikr; 1414 H) [annotator: Prof. Dr. Suhayl Zakar], part 5, p. 231
7. Dr. ‘Abd al-‘Alim ‘Abd al-‘Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mawsu’at fi Ahadith al-Mahdi al-Dha’ifah wa al-Mawdhu’at (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 348

14. The Sunni Chase Of Shadows: The Name Of His Father Is ‘Abd Allah?

The other claim made by Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) is that the name of the Mahdi’s father is Abd Allah, and not al-Hasan. He repeats it again:

أن الاثني عشرية الذين ادعوا أن هذا هو مذهبهم مهديهم اسمه مُحَمَّد بن الحسن والمهدي المنعوت الذي وصفه النبي ﷺ اسمه مُحَمَّد بن عبد الله ولهذا حذفت طائفة ذكر الأب من لفظ الرسول حتى لا يناقض ما كذبت وطائفة حرفته فقالت جده الحسين وكنيته أبو عبد الله فمعناه مُحَمَّد بن أبي عبد الله وجعلت الكنية اسما

وَمَنْ سَلَكَ هَذَا ابْنَ طَلْحَةَ فِي كِتَابِهِ الَّذِي سَمَاهُ غَايَةَ السُّوْلِ فِي مَنَاقِبِ الرَّسُولِ وَمَنْ أَدْنَى نَظَرَ يَعْرِفُ أَنَّ هَذَا تَحْرِيفٌ صَرِيحٌ وَكَذِبٌ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَهَلْ يَفْهَمُ أَحَدٌ مِنْ قَوْلِهِ يَواطِئُ اسْمَهُ اسْمِي وَأَسْمَ أَبِيهِ اسْمَ أَبِي إِلَّا أَنَّ اسْمَ أَبِيهِ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَهَلْ يَدُلُّ هَذَا اللَّفْظُ عَلَى أَنَّ جَدَّهُ كُنِيْتَهُ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ

The Ithna ‘Ashariyyah who claim that this is their madhhab, the name of their Mahdi is Muhammad b. al-Hasan. But the described Mahdi, who was described by the Prophet, peace be upon him, his name is Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah. This is why a group deleted the mention of the father from the statement of the Messenger, so that it does not contradict what it (the group) falsely claims. Another group also distorts it and says, “His ancestor was al-Husayn and his agnomen was Abu ‘Abd Allah.

Therefore, its meaning is that he is Muhammad, son of Abu ‘Abd Allah; and it (the second group) makes the agnomen a name. One of those who did this was Ibn Talhah in his book which he named Ghayat al-Sul fi Manaqib al-Rasul. Whoever has the least observation knows that this is a clear distortion and a lie upon the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. Is there anyone who understands from his statement “his name corresponds with my name and the name of his father is the name of my father” anything other than that the name of his father is ‘Abd Allah? Does this statement indicate that the agnomen of his ancestor is Abu ‘Abd Allah?¹

He still has more words:

الأحاديث التي يحتج بها على خروج المهدي أحاديث صحيحة رواها أبو داود والترمذي وأحمد وغيرهم من حديث ابن مسعود وغيره كقوله صلى الله عليه وسلم في الحديث الذي رواه ابن مسعود لو لم يبق من الدنيا إلا يوم لطول الله ذلك اليوم حتى يخرج فيه رجل مني أو من أهل بيتي يواطئ اسمه اسمي واسم أبيه اسم أبي يملأ الأرض قسطا وعدلا كما ملئت جورا وظلما

The ahadith that are relied upon as hujjah (proof) for the coming out of the Mahdi are sahih ahadith. Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad and others narrated them in the hadith of Ibn Mas’ud and of others, like his statement, peace be upon him, in the hadith which was narrated by Ibn Mas’ud: “If

there remains only one more day left for this world, Allah will elongate that day till a man from me, or from my Ahl al-Bayt, comes out. His name will correspond with my name, and his father's name will be the name of my father. He will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it is filled with oppression and injustice.”²

But, is there really any reliable Sunni hadith establishing that the name of the Mahdi's father is the same as that of the Prophet's father? Let us check the riwayat to find out.

We start with this report of Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H):

أخبرني أبو بكر بن دارم الحافظ بالكوفة ثنا محمد بن عثمان بن سعيد القرشي ثنا يزيد بن محمد الثقفي ثنا حبان بن سدير عن عمرو بن قيس الملائي عن الحكم عن إبراهيم عن علقمة بن قيس وعبيدة السلماني عن عبد الله بن مسعود رضي الله عنه قال أتينا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ... فقال : إنا أهل بيت اختار الله لنا الآخرة على الدنيا وأنه سيلقى أهل بيتي من بعدي تطريدا وتشريدا في البلاد حتى ترتفع رايات سود من المشرق فيسألون الحق فلا يعطونه ثم يسألونه فلا يعطونه فيقتلون فيقتلون فينصرون فمن أدركه منكم أو من أعقابكم فليأت إمام أهل بيتي ولو حبو على الثلج فإنها رايات هدى يدفعونها إلى رجل من أهل بيتي يواطئ اسمه إسمي واسم أبيه اسم أبي فيملك الأرض فيملأهما قسطا وعدلا كما ملئت جورا وظلما

Abu Bakr b. Darim al-Hafiz - Muhammad b. 'Uthman b. Sa'id al-Qurashi - Yazid b. Muhammad al-Thaqafi - Hibban b. Sadir - 'Amr b. Qays al-Malai - al-Hakam - Ibrahim - 'Alqamah b. Qays and 'Ubaydah al-Salmāni - 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud, may Allah pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, came to us ... and said: “We, Ahl al-Bayt, Allah has chosen the Hereafter for us over this world. Verily, my Ahl al-Bayt will, after me, suffer expulsions and fright in the towns, until the black flags rise from the East. So, they will demand the right, but they will not give it. Then, they will demand it, but they will not give it. Then, they will demand it, but they will not give it. As a result, they will fight and will be helped to achieve victory (by Allah). Whosoever amongst you or your descendants meets it (i.e. that time), he must go to the Imam of my Ahl al-Bayt, even if he has to crawl on snow, for they are flags of guidance. They will submit them to a man from my Ahl al-Bayt. His name corresponds with my name, and the name of his father is the name of my father. He will rule the earth by kingdom, and will thereby fill it with equity and justice just as it had been filled with aggression and injustice.”³

Al-Hakim is quiet about this hadith, while Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) declares:

هذا موضوع

This is mawdhu' (a fabrication).⁴

This, obviously, is no evidence.

Imam al-Maruzi (d. 288 H) gives us the second Sunni “proof”:

حدثنا الوليد ورشددين عن ابن لهيعة عن إسرائيل بن عباد عن ميمون القداح عن أبي الطفيل رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال المهدي اسمه اسمي واسم أبيه اسم أبي

Al-Walid and Rishdin - Ibn Luhay'ah - Israil b. 'Ibad - Maymun al-Qidah - Abu al-Tufayl, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "The Mahdi, his name is my name and the name of his father is the name of my father."⁵

Dr. al-Bastawi has a simple verdict too:

إسناده ضعيف

Its chain is dha'if.⁶

Well, the sanad is actually dha'if jiddan (very weak), due to its multiple weaknesses. Al-Bastawi himself gives these details about it:

الوليد بن مسلم وقد عنعن إلا أنه توبع برشددين وهو ضعيف. ولكنهما يرويان عن ابن لهيعة. وهو ضعيف. وميمون القداح. لم أجد له ترجمة.

Al-Walid b. Muslim narrated in an 'an-'an manner. However, he has been seconded by Rishdeen who is dha'if. But, both of them narrated from Ibn Luhay'ah who is (also) dha'if. As for Maymun al-Qidah, I did not find any biographical entry for him (in the rijal books).⁷

In any case, this riwayat is impotent too.

Imam al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (d. 463 H) records the third one:

أخبرنا الحسين بن علي بن الحسين بن بطحا المحتسب أخبرنا أبو سليمان محمد بن الحسين بن علي الحراني حدثنا محمد بن الحسن بن قتيبة حدثنا أحمد بن مسلم الحلبي قال حدثنا عبد الله بن السري المدائني عن أبي عمر البزاز عن مجالد بن سعيد عن الشعبي عن تميم الداري قال قلت يا رسول الله ما رأيت للروم مدينة مثل مدينة يقال لها أنطاكية وما رأيت أكثر مطرا منها فقال النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم نعم وذلك ان فيها التوراة وعصا موسى ورضراض الالواح ومائدة سليمان بن داود في غار من غيراتها ما من سحابة تشرف عليها من وجه من الوجوه الا فرغت ما فيها من البركة في ذلك الوادي ولا تذهب الأيام ولا الليالي حتى يسكنها رجل من عترتي اسمه اسمي واسم أبيه اسم أبي يشبه خلقه خلقى وخلقته خلقى يملاً الدنيا قسطا وعدلا كما ملئت ظلما وجورا

Al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Batha - Abu Sulayman Muhammad b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali al-Harrani - Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Qutaybah - Ahmad b. Muslim al-Halabi - 'Abd Allah b. al-Sarri al-Madaini - Abu 'Umar al-Bazzaz - Mujalid b. Sa'id - al-Sha'bi - Tamim al-Dari:

I said, "O Messenger of Allah! I did not see any Roman city which is like a city called Antioch. And I did not see any with more rains than it." So, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Yes. That is because there are in it al-Tawrah, the staff of Musa, the pieces of the tablets and the table of Sulayman b. Dawud, in one of its caves. There is no cloud which stands above it from any side except that it empties completely all the blessings in

it on that valley. The days and the nights will not end until a man from my offspring resides in it. His name is my name and the name of his father is the name of my father. His creation will resemble mine, and his character will also resemble mine. He will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it had been filled with injustice and aggression.”⁸

Again, Dr. al-Bastawi says about the hadith:

الحديث موضوع

The hadith is mawdhu’ (a fabrication).⁹

With the total collapse of these three ahadith, we are left with only reports of ‘Asim b. Bahdalah, also known as ‘Asim b. Abi al-Najud. Every other hadith which contains the phrase “and the name of his father is the name of my father” has the name of ‘Asim in its chain. For instance, Imam al-Tabarani (d. 360 H) documents:

حدثنا علي بن عبد العزيز ثنا أبو نعيم ثنا فطر بن خليفة عن عاصم بن أبي النجود عن زر بن حبيش عن عبد الله بن مسعود يرفعه إلى النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال : لا يذهب الدنيا حتى يبعث الله رجلا من أهل بيتي يواطى اسمه اسمي واسم أبيه اسم أبي

‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz - Abu Nu’aym - Fiṭr b. Khalifah - ‘Asim b. Abi al-Najud - Zirr b. Hubaysh - ‘Abd Allah b. Mas’ud:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “The world will not end until Allaah sends a man from my Ahl al-Bayt. His name will correspond with my name and the name of his father is the name of my father.”¹⁰

Concerning that ‘Asim, al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states:

عاصم بن مهذلة وهو ابن أبي النجود الأسدي مولا هم الكوفي أبو بكر المقرئ.... قال ابن سعد كان ثقة إلا أنه كان كثير الخطأ في حديثه ... وقال يعقوب بن سفيان في حديثه اضطراب وهو ثقة ... وقال ابن أبي حاتم عن أبيه... محله عندي محل الصدق صالح الحديث وليس محله ان يقال هو ثقة ولم يكن بالحافظ وقد تكلم فيه ابن علية فقال كان كل من اسمه عاصم سئ الحفظ وقال النسائي ليس به بأس وقال ابن خراش في حديثه نكرة وقال العقيلي لم يكن فيه إلا سوء الحفظ وقال الدارقطني في حفظه شيء ... وقال أبو بكر البزار لم يكن بالحافظ ولا نعلم أحدا ترك حديثه على ذلك وهو مشهور وقال ابن قانع قال حماد بن سلمة خلط عاصم في آخره عمره وذكره ابن حبان في الثقات وقال العجلي كان عثمانيا

‘Asim b. Bahdalah, and he was Ibn Abi al-Najud al-Asadi, their freed slave, Abu Bakr al-Muqri....

Ibn Sa’d said: “He was thiqah (trustworthy), except that he made A LOT OF MISTAKES in his hadith” ... Ya’qub b. Sufyan said: “There is muddle in his hadith, and he is thiqah (trustworthy)” ... Ibn Abi Hatim narrated that his father said: “... His status in my opinion is sidq (truthfulness), salih al-hadith (i.e. his standalone reports are weak), and his status is NOT to say he is thiqah (trustworthy). He was not a memorizer.” Ibn ‘Ulayyah talked about him and said, “Everyone whose name was ‘Asim had a defective memory.”

Al-Nasai said, "There is no problem with him." Ibn Kharrash said, "There is repugnancy in his hadith". Al-'Aqili said, "He had no problem except (his) defective memory." Al-Daraqutni said, "There is a problem with his memory"... Abu Bakr al-Bazzar said, "He was not a memorizer, and we do not know anyone who abandoned (narrating) his hadith due to that. He was well-known." Ibn Qani' said: "Hammad b. Salamah said: 'Asim became confused during the last part of his life." Ibn Hibban mentioned him in al-Thiqat, and al-'Ijli said, "He was an 'Uthmani".¹¹

So, his problems are:

1. He made a lot of mistakes in his ahadith.
2. He used to muddle things up in his ahadith.
3. He had a defective memory.
4. There is repugnancy in his ahadith.
5. He became confused during the last part of his lifetime.

Apparently, all his problems - each of which is very serious - resulted mainly from his defective memory. There is obviously no doubt that 'Asim was dha'if, in fact very weak. Narrators with milder conditions are readily thrown out of the windows by Sunni scholars of hadith and rijal. Therefore, the standalone transmissions of 'Asim too are dha'if - all of them! With this, our brothers from the Ahl al-Sunnah lose all possible bases for their claim that the name of the Mahdi's father is 'Abd Allah.

But, there is need to address two more reports. Dr. al-Bastawi quotes the first of them here:

وأخرجه ابن أبي شيبة قال: الفضل بن دكين، قال، ثنا فطر عن زر، عن عبد الله قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: لا تذهب الدنيا حتى يبعث الله رجلا من أهل بيتي يواطئ اسمه اسمي واسم أبيه اسم أبي

Ibn Abi Shaybah has recorded it, saying: al-Fadhil b. Dukayn - Fiṭr - Zirr - 'Abd Allah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "This world will not end until Allah sends a man from my Ahl al-Bayt. His name will correspond with my name and the name of his father is the name of my father."¹²

We do not have any 'Asim here. But, al-Bastawi himself clarifies the situation in the footnote:

الظاهر أن "عاصم" سقط من هذا الإسناد فإني لم أجد لفطر رواية عن زر. وجميع رواة هذا الحديث مجمعون على روايته عن عاصم عن زر. والله أعلم.

Obviously, "Asim" has been dropped in this chain, for I did not find any report by Fiṭr from Zirr. Also, all the narrators of this hadith agree on his (i.e. Fiṭr's) narration of it from 'Asim from Zirr. And Allah knows best.¹³

Therefore, there actually is 'Asim in that sanad. As such, it is dha'if.

Al-Bastawi also gives us what is apparently the strongest Sunni evidence on this matter:

وأخرجه أيضا أبو نعيم في أخبار أصبهان قال: حدثنا أبو محمد بن حيان، ثنا أبو بكر بن الجارود، ثنا محمد بن عيسى الزجاج، ثنا أبو نعيم، ثنا فطر، عن أبي إسحاق وعاصم، عن زر،

عن عبد الله قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: لو لم يبق من الدنيا إلا يوماً واحداً بعث الله عز وجل رجلاً من أهل بيتي يواطئ اسمه اسمي واسم أبيه اسم أبي

Abu Nu'aym recorded it in Akhbar Asbahan: Abu Muhammad b. Hayyan - Abu Bakr b. al-Jarud - Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Zajjaj - Abu Nu'aym - Fiṭr - Abu Ishaq AND 'Asim - Zirr - 'Abd Allah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “Even if there remained only one (more) day for the earth, Allah the Almighty will send a man from my Ahl al-Bayt. His name will correspond with my name and the name of his father is the name of my father.”¹⁴

Here, 'Asim is seconded by Abu Ishaq. In the right circumstances, this corroboration would have neutralized the problem created by 'Asim's defective memory. However, the mutaba'ah of Abu Ishaq is even more useless than the original chain. Concerning him, al-Hafiz states:

عمرو بن عبد الله بن عبید . . . أبو إسحاق السبيعي بفتح المهملة وكسر الموحدة ثقة
مكثر عابد من الثالثة اختلط بأخرة

'Amr b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Ubayd Abu Ishaq al-Sabi'i: Thiqaḥ (trustworthy); narrated a lot (of ahadith), a great worshipper (of Allah), from the third (ṭabaqat). He became confused (in his narrations) during the end part of his lifetime.¹⁵

This then divides his narrations into two: those before his confusion and those after it started. His ahadith before his memory collapse are naturally authentic from him. However, all those reports that he narrated during his confusion were only products of a deranged mind. They are not just dha'if; they are dha'if jiddan! Luckily for us, a list of those who heard from him before his confusion is available. It allows us to know which of his ahadith is reliable, and which is deranged or confused. So, this verdict of Shaykh Dr. Asad about another report of Fiṭr from Abu Ishaq hits the nail right on the head for our own investigation:

إسناده ضعيف فطر بن خليفة لم يذكر فيمن رووا قديما عن أبي إسحاق

Its chain is dha'if. Fiṭr b. Khalifah is NOT mentioned among those who narrated early (i.e. before the confusion) from Abu Ishaq.¹⁶

So, the corroboration of Abu Ishaq is only a deranged, confused riwayat. This makes it completely worthless, whether as a proof or as a support. It must be added further that 'Asim himself - apart from having a defective memory, making “a lot” of mistakes in his narration and muddling up his ahadith - he too became confused later in life. Therefore, the best Sunni evidence is actually nothing but a dha'if, confused report.

Notes

1. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, pp. 256-257

2. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, pp. 254-255

3. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Aṭa], vol. 4, p. 511, # 8434
4. Ibid
5. Abu 'Abd Allah Na'im b. Hammad al-Maruzi, Kitab al-Fitan (Dar al-Fikr; 1414 H) [annotator: Prof. Dr. Suhayl Zakar], part 5, p. 227
6. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mawsu'at fi Ahadith al-Mahdi al-Dha'ifah wa al-Mawdhu'at (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 123, # 36
7. Ibid
8. Abu Bakr Ahmad b. 'Ali al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1417 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Aṭa], vol. 9, p. 477-478, # 5101
9. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mawsu'at fi Ahadith al-Mahdi al-Dha'ifah wa al-Mawdhu'at (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 317, # 225
10. Abu al-Qasim Sulayman b. Ahmad b. Ayub al-Tabarani, Mu'jam al-Kabir (Mosul: Maktabah al-'Ulum wa al-Hikam; 2nd edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Hamadi b. 'Abd al-Majid al-Salafi], vol. 10, p.133, # 10213
11. Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1404 H), vol. 5, pp. 35-36, # 67
12. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-'Ulama wa Ara al-Firaq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 263, # 25
13. Ibid
14. Ibid
15. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Aṭa], vol. 1, p. 739, # 5081
16. Abu Ya'la Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 2, p. 534, # 3362

15. The Sunni Chase Of Shadows: The Mahdi And The Shi'i Communities

We know already that the "Mahdi" being expected by most Sunni Muslims - one Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hasani - will never come. There is no reliable hadith to establish his existence or his coming, even in the Sunni books! As such, he is only a figment of their imagination. By contrast, the birth, existence and mission of the Mahdi, 'alaihi al-salam, that the Shi'ah Imamiyyah and some from the Ahl al-Sunnah await is firmly established by sahih Shi'i ahadith. It is equally our belief that all the authentic Sunni reports on the Mahdi are references to him.

One undeniable fact about the true Mahdi is that he will be upon the religion of the eleven Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, 'alaihim al-salam, before him. There is simply no doubt about that. Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) records:

حدثنا نصر بن عبد الرحمن الكوفي حدثنا زيد بن الحسن هو الأتماطي عن جعفر بن محمد عن أبيه عن جابر بن عبد الله قال رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم في حجته يوم عرفة وهو على ناقته القصواء يخطب فسمعتة يقول يا أيها الناس إني قد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا كتاب الله وعترتي أهل بيتي

Nasr b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Kufi - Zayd b. al-Hasan al-Anmatī - Ja'far b. Muhammad - his father - Jabir b. 'Abd Allah:

I saw the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, during his Hajj on the Day of 'Arafat while he was on his camel, al-Qaswa, delivering a sermon, and I heard him saying: "O mankind! I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah and MY OFFSPRING, my Ahl al-Bayt."¹

Al-Tirmidhi comments:

وهذا حديث حسن غريب من هذا الوجه و زيد بن الحسن قد روى عنه سعيد بن سليمان وغير واحد من أهل العلم

And this hadith is hasan gharib (i.e. has a hasan chain) from this route. As for Zayd b. al-Hasan, Sa'id b. Sulayman and others from the people of knowledge have narrated from him.²

And 'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) also says:

صحيح

Sahih.³

Meanwhile, Imam al-Mahdi himself is only from these same rightly guided offspring. Imam Abu Dawud (d. 275 H) has the hadith:

حدثنا أحمد بن إبراهيم ثنا عبد الله بن جعفر الرقي ثنا أبو المليح الحسن بن عمر عن زياد بن بيان عن علي بن نفيل عن سعيد بن المسيب عن أم سلمة قالت سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول " المهدي من عترتي من ولد فاطمة"

Ahmad b. Ibrahim - 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far al-Raqi - Abu al-Mulayh al-Hasan b. 'Umar - Ziyad b. Bayan - 'Ali b. Nufayl - Sa'id b. al-Musayyab - Umm Salamah:

I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying: "The Mahdi is from MY OFFSPRING, from the descendants of Faṭimah."⁴

Al-Albani declares:

صحيح

Sahih.⁵

So, the Mahdi is from the same blood and madhhab as all the rest of the Ahl al-Bayt, starting with Amir al-Muminin 'Ali, 'alaihi al-salam.

Interestingly, the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah do not follow the offspring of the Prophet, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) confirms this with pride:

قال الرافضي و في الفقه الفقهاء يرجعون إليه

و الجواب أن هذا كذب بين فليس في الأئمة الأربعة و لا غيرهم من أئمة الفقهاء من

يرجع إليه في فقهه

The Rafidhi said: "In fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), the (Sunni) jurists used to reference him (i.e. 'Ali)."

The answer is that this is a plain lie. There was NONE among the four Imams and others from the Imams of the jurists who referenced him (i.e. 'Ali) in his fiqh.⁶

He also adds:

وهذه كتب الحديث والتفسير مملوءة بالآثار عن الصحابة والتابعين والذي فيها عن علي

قليل جدا

These are books of hadith and tafsir, filled with reports from the Sahabah and Tabi'in. What is recorded in them from 'Ali is VERY LITTLE.⁷

He equally proclaims:

قال الرافضي أما المالكية فاخذوا علمهم عنه و عن أولاده

و الجواب أن هنا كذب ظاهر فهذا موطأ مالك ليس فيه عنه و لا عن أحد أولاده إلا

قليل جدا و جمهور ما فيه عن غيرهم فيه عن جعفر تسعة أحاديث و لم يرو مالك عن أحد

من ذريته إلا عن جعفر و كذلك الأحاديث التي في الصحاح و السنن و المساند منها قليل

عن ولده و جمهور ما فيها عن غيرهم

The Rafidhi said: "As for the Malikis, they took their knowledge from him (i.e. 'Ali) and from his (i.e. 'Ali's) offspring."

The answer is that there is an apparent lie here. This is Muwaṭṭa of Malik. What is recorded in it from him (i.e. 'Ali) or any of his offspring is VERY LITTLE. Most of what is in it is from other than them. There are nine ahadith from Ja'far (al-Sadiq) in it, and Malik did not record from ANY of his (i.e. 'Ali's) offspring except from Ja'far. This is also the case with what is recorded in the Sahih books, the Sunan books, and the Musnad

books. What is recorded in them from his (i.e. 'Ali's) offspring is LITTLE. The generality of what is recorded in them is from others.⁸

The mathematics, of course, is straightforward:

1. The Mahdi will follow the path of the Ahl al-Bayt.
2. The Sunnis do NOT follow the path of the Ahl al-Bayt.
3. Therefore, the Mahdi will NOT be on the same path as the Sunnis.

By contrast, at least 99% of the authentic ahadith in the Shi'i sources are from the Messenger of Allah and the Twelve Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt. In reality, however, everything is from the Prophet, since the words of the Imams are only narrations of his Sunnah. As such, it is obvious that:

- i. The Mahdi will follow the path of the Ahl al-Bayt.
- ii. The Shi'is follow the path of the Ahl al-Bayt.
- iii. Therefore, the Mahdi will be on the same part as the Shi'is.

The top linguists of the Ahl al-Sunnah have also admitted that the word "Shi'ah" is only the name of those in this Ummah who follow 'Ali and his offspring from the Ahl al-Bayt. For instance, the chief Sunni lexicographer, Ibn Manzur (d. 711 H), declares:

وقد غلب هذا الاسم على من يتولى عليا وأهل بيته، رضوان الله عليهم أجمعين، حتى صار لهم اسما خاصا فإذا قيل: فلان من الشيعة عرف أنه منهم. وفي مذهب الشيعة كذا أي عندهم. وأصل ذلك من المشايعة، وهي المتابعة والمطاوعة، قال الأزهري: والشيعة قوم يهونون هوى عترة النبي، ﷺ، ويوالونهم.

This name (i.e. "Shi'ah) has become synonymous with those who follow 'Ali and his Ahl al-Bayt, pleasure of Allah be upon them all, such that it has become their exclusive name. Therefore, when it is said "So-and-so is from the Shi'ah", it is known that he is from them; and "it is like that in the madhhab of the Shi'ah" means in their view. The root of that is from adherence, and that is followership and obedience. Al-Azhari said: "The Shi'ah are a group who love what the offspring of the Prophet love, peace be upon him, and also follow them."⁹

Imam Ibn al-'Athir (d. 606 H) is slightly aggressive. Yet, he too is principally of the same opinion:

وقد غلب هذا الاسم على كل من يزعم أنه يتولى عليا رضي الله عنه وأهل بيته حتى صار لهم اسما خاصا فإذا قيل فلان من الشيعة عرف أنه منهم وفي مذهب الشيعة كذا أي عندهم

This name (i.e. "Shi'ah) has become synonymous with those who claim that they follow 'Ali and his Ahl al-Bayt, such that it has become their exclusive name. Therefore, when it is said "So-and-so is from the Shi'ah", it is known that he is from them; and "it is like that in the madhhab of the Shi'ah" means in their view.¹⁰

Imam al-Zubaydi (d. 1205 H) also shares the submission of Ibn Manzur:

وقد غلب هذا الاسم على كل من يتولى عليا وأهل بيته، ﷺ، حتى صار اسما لهم خاصا، فإذا قيل: فلان من الشيعة عرف أنه منهم، وفي مذهب الشيعة كذا، أي عندهم،

أصل ذلك من المشايعة، وهي المطاوعة والمتابعة ... وقال الأزهري: الشيعة: قوم يهون هوى عترة النبي ﷺ، ويوالونهم.

This name (i.e. “Shi’ah) has become synonymous with those who follow ‘Ali and his Ahl al-Bayt, may Allah be pleased with them all, such that it has become their exclusive name. Therefore, when it is said “So-and-so is from the Shi’ah”, it is known that he is from them; and “it is like that in the madhhab of the Shi’ah” means in their view. The root of that is from adherence, and that is followership and obedience ... And al-Azhari said: “The Shi’ah are a group who love what the offspring of the Prophet love, peace be upon him, and also follow them.”¹¹

This then brings our little mathematics exercise to its climax:

1. The Shi’is are the only group in the Ummah who follow ‘Ali and his offspring.
2. The Prophet ordered his entire Ummah and all humanity to follow ‘Ali and his offspring after him.
3. Imam al-Mahdi is from the offspring of ‘Ali, and is also a follower of ‘Ali and his offspring.
4. Therefore, the Mahdi will belong to the path of the Shi’is, and will call humanity to it.

Another point of interest is that Shi’is will be among the primary helpers of Imam al-Mahdi, even according to sahih Sunni ahadith. For instance, we read earlier how his first army will be from Khurasan - a region lying mainly in Iran, but also covering parts of southern Turkmenistan and northern Afghanistan. These areas, overall, contain substantial Shi’i populations in these times of ours; and there is no likelihood of that changing anytime soon. Therefore, should the Imam come out today, his first troops would be substantially or largely Imami Shi’is. Meanwhile, there is every likelihood that Shi’ism will never cease to get stronger in Khurasan and all over the world as it has been rapidly doing since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Perhaps, even more interesting is the fact that the people who will become “the most fortunate” of mankind from the rise of the Mahdi are the Kufans; and they are overwhelmingly Shi’ah Imamiyyah. In the past, they betrayed Imam al-Husayn, ‘alaihi al-salam. But, in the future, they will stand above all humanity in their devotion and loyalty. Obviously, they will earn Allah’s Pleasure more than any others, through their unmatched sacrifices and support for the Awaited Mahdi. Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah (d. 235 H) has the clear athar:

يعلى بن عبيد عن الأجلح عن عمار الدهني عن سالم عن عبد الله بن عمرو قال: يا أهل الكوفة، أنتم أسعد الناس بالمهدي.

Ya’la b. ‘Ubayd - al-Ajlah - ‘Ammar al-Dahni - Salim - ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr, he said:

“O people of Kufa! You are the MOST FORTUNATE of mankind with the Mahdi.”¹²

Dr. al-Bastawi also submits:

وأخرجه أيضا أبو عمرو الداني في سننه، قال: حدثنا عبد الرحمن بن عثمان، حدثنا قاسم، حدثنا أحمد بن زهير، حدثنا عبد الرحمن بن صالح، حدثنا عبد الله بن الأجلح، عن عمار الدهني، عن سالم بن أبي الجعد قال: خرجنا حجاجا، فجئنا إلى عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص، فقال: ممن أنت يا رجل؟ قال: قلت: من أهل العراق. قال: فكن إذا من أهل الكوفة. قال: فقلت: أنا منهم، قال: فإنهم أسعد الناس بالمهدي

Abu ‘Amr al-Dani also recorded it in his Sunan, saying: ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Uthman - Qasim - Ahmad b. Zuhayr - ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Salih - ‘Abd Allah b. al-Ajlah - ‘Ammar al-Dahni - Salim b. Abi al-Ja’d:

We went on a Hajj, and we met ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘As. Then he said, “Where are you from, O man?” I said, “From the people of Iraq.” He said, “In that case, make sure to be from the people of Kufa.” I said, “I am from them.” He said, “For they are the MOST FORTUNATE of mankind with the Mahdi.”¹³

Then, he says after examining the narrators:

وبعد دراسة تراجم رجال الإسناد تبين أن الإسناد الأول فيه الأجلح الكندي وأكثر الأئمة على تضعيفه. ولكن تابعه ولده في الإسناد الثاني وهو صدوق. وعمار الدهني روى عنه الأجلح وابنه عبد الله بن الأجلح كلاهما كما ذكر المزي في تهذيب الكمال في ترجمة عمار الدهني

After research into the biographical entries on the narrators of the chain, it is clear that in the first chain, there is al-Ajlah al-Kindi. The majority of the Imams declared him dha’if. However, he has been seconded by his son in the second chain, and he (the son, ‘Abd Allah) is saduq (very truthful). As for ‘Ammar al-Dahni, both al-Ajlah and his son, ‘Abd Allah b. al-Ajlah, narrated from him, as stated by al-Mizzi in Tahdhib al-Kamal in the biographical entry on ‘Ammar al-Duhni.¹⁴

And he gives the final verdict:

إسناده حسن إلى عبد الله بن عمرو رضي الله عنهما. ولكنه عليه السلام كان ينظر في كتب أهل الكتاب ويروي عنهم. فقد يكون الخبر من الإسرائيليات. والله أعلم.

Its chain is hasan up to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr, may Allah be pleased with them both. However, he, may Allah be pleased with him, used to look into the books of the Ahl al-Kitab and narrated from them. So, it is possible that the report is from the Israiliyat. And Allah knows best.¹⁵

Of course, topics such as the city of Kufa and Imam al-Mahdi are completely unknown in, and absolutely unrelated to, Israiliyyat. As such, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr could only have heard the information from the Messenger of Allah, especially as it affected matters of the ghayb (unseen). With this, it is obvious that the athar has the hukm (status) of a marfu’ hadith.

The people of Kufa, who have been Shi’is for 1400 years, will be the most fortunate of all mankind with the Awaited Imam. That really is an

unequalled merit for them amongst all nations. Note especially how ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘As urged Salim to be from the people of Kufa - which was already a Shi’i stronghold at that period! This highlights the good of being a Kufan even back then, due to the barakah of what unborn Kufans would do with the Mahdi in the distant future.

Notes

1. Abu ‘Isa Muhammad b. ‘Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 5, p. 662 # 3786
2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. Abu Dawud Sulayman b. al-Ash’ath al-Sijistani al-Azdi, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 509, # 4284
5. Ibid
6. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah (Muasassat Qurṭubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, pp. 529
7. Ibid, vol. 8, p. 43
8. Ibid, vol. 7, p. 531
9. Abu al-Fadhl Jamal al-Din Muhammad b. Mukram b. Manzur al-Afriqi al-Misri, Lisan al-‘Arab (Beirut: Dar Sadir; 1st edition), vol. 8, p. 188
10. Abu Sa’adat al-Mubarak b. Muhammad, Ibn al-Athir al-Jazari, al-Nihayah fi Gharib al-Hadith wa al-Athar (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1399 AH) [annotators: Tahir Ahmad al-Zawi and Mahmud Muhammad al-Tanahi], vol. 2, p. 519-520
11. Muhibb al-Din Abu Faydh Sayyid Muhammad Murtadha al-Husayni al-Wasiṭi al-Zubaydi al-Hanafi, Taj al-‘Urus min Jawahir al-Qamus (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1414 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Shirri], vol. 11, p. 257
12. ‘Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Shaybah Ibrahim b. ‘Uthman b. Abi Bakr b. Abi Shaybah al-Kufi al-‘Ubsi, Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1409 H) [annotator: Prof. Sa’id al-Laham], vol. 8, p. 678, # 189
13. Dr. ‘Abd al-‘Alim ‘Abd al-‘Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-‘Ulama wa Ara al-Firaq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), pp. 215-216, # 13
14. Ibid, p. 218, # 13
15. Ibid, pp. 218-219, # 13

16. Issues Of The Ghaybah: Reason For The Disappearance

The disappearance of the Mahdi, ‘alaihi al-salam, is suggested in authentic Sunni ahadith, although the details are not given. A lot of them talk about his “coming out” during the end of time. For instance, Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) records this hadith:

أخبرني أبو العباس مُجَدُّ بن أحمد المحبوبي بمرور ثنا سعيد بن مسعود ثنا النضر بن شمائل ثنا سليمان بن عبيد ثنا أبو الصديق الناجي عن أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال : يخرج في آخر أمتي المهدي

Abu al-‘Abbas Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Mahbubi - Sa’id b. Mas’ud - al-Nadhr b. Shumayl - Sulayman b. ‘Ubayd - Abu al-Siddiq al-Naji - Abu Sa’id al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “The Mahdi will COME OUT at the end of my Ummah.”¹

Al-Hakim comments:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This hadith has a sahih chain²

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) agrees:

صحيح

Sahih³

“Coming out” means that he would have been concealed from public view until then. It must be noted that this same term has been used to describe what al-Masih ‘Isa b. Maryam, ‘alaihi al-salam, the Dajjal and the Yajuj and Majuj will do as well. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) has this:

وحدثني مُجَدُّ بن بشار حدثنا مُجَدُّ بن جعفر حدثنا شعبة عن النعمان بن سالم قال سمعت يعقوب بن عاصم بن عروة بن مسعود قال ... قال عبدالله بن عمرو قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يخرج الدجال في أمتي

Muhammad b. Bashar - Muhammad b. Ja’far - Shu’bah - al-Nu’man b. Salim - Ya’qub b. ‘Asim b. ‘Urwah b. Mas’ud - ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “The Dajjal will COME OUT in my Ummah.”⁴

We all know that, according to sahih Sunni ahadith, the Dajjal was even alive during the lifetime of the Prophet, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi! That means he has been breathing for more than a millennium, or perhaps even several. But, he has been hidden from public view by Allah. He will be freed eventually; and then, he will become visible to everyone. That will be his “coming out”.

We also read this riwayah of Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H):

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا عبد الرحمن بن مهدي ثنا سفيان عن فرات عن أبي الطفيل عن حذيفة بن أسيد الغفاري قال أشرف علينا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من غرفة

ونحن نتذاكر الساعة فقال لا تقوم الساعة حتى ترون عشر آيات طلوع الشمس من مغربها والدخان والدابة وخروج يأجوج ومأجوج وخروج عيسى بن مريم والدجال....

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) - my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) - ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Mahdi - Sufyan - Furat - Abu al-Tufayl - Hudhayfah b. Usayd al-Ghiffari:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, came out to us from a room while we were discussing the Hour. Then, he said, “The Hour will not be established until you have seen ten signs: the appearance of the sun from its west, the smoke, the creature, the COMING OUT of Yajuj and Majuj, the COMING OUT of ‘Isa b. Maryam, the Dajjal....”⁵

Shaykh Shu’ayb al-Arnauf says:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih⁶

The Yajuj and Majuj have been in existence for thousands of years, and are still alive. However, they are concealed from public view. When they “come out” - apparently from concealment, they will become visible to all human beings. The same is the case with Prophet ‘Isa. He has been alive in the heavens for more than 2000 years. So, none can see him today. But, when he “comes out” as well, he will descend from the heavens and will be seen by everyone.

The Mahdi too will “come out”. This raises a very strong possibility that he - like ‘Isa, the Dajjal, and Yajuj and Majuj - would first be alive for a very long period, but concealed from public view. When his coming out occurs, he will then become visible to all human beings. These facts are confirmed in authentic Shi’i riwayat, with the necessary details. Shaykh al-Saduq (d. 381 H) records:

حدثنا محمد بن موسى بن المتوكل عليه السلام قال: حدثنا علي بن إبراهيم، عن أبيه، عن عبد السلام بن صالح الهروي، عن أبي الحسن علي بن موسى الرضا، عن أبيه، عن آبائه، عن علي عليهم السلام قال: قال النبي صلى الله عليه وآله: والذي بعثني بالحق بشيرا ليغيبين القائم من ولدي بعهد معهود إليه مني حتى يقول أكثر الناس: ما لله في آل محمد حاجة، ويشك آخرون في ولادته، فمن أدرك زمانه فليتمسك بدينه، ولا يجعل للشيطان إليه سبيلا بشكته فيزيله عن ملتي ويخرجه من ديني، فقد أخرج أبويكم من الجنة من قبل، وإن الله عز وجل جعل الشياطين أولياء للذين لا يؤمنون.

Muhammad b. Musa b. al-Mutawakil, may Allah be pleased with him - ‘Ali b. Ibrahim - his father - ‘Abd al-Salam b. Salih al-Harwi - Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali b. Musa al-Ridha - his father - his ancestors - ‘Ali, peace be upon him:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “I swear by Him Who sent me with the truth as a bearer of glad tidings, the Qaim from my offspring will surely become concealed from public view on the basis of a covenant that has been entrusted to him from me, such that most of the people will say

“Allah has no need for the family of Muhammad” and the others will doubt in his birth. Whosoever meets his time, let him adhere to his religion, and he should not allow Shayṭan to get to him with his doubt, thereby bringing him down from my path and expelling him from my religion, for he had expelled your father from the Paradise in the past. And Allah has made the devils (shayaṭin) leaders of those who do not believe.”⁷

Al-Haj Muhammad Zakariya says about it:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.⁸

Verily, Allah and His Messenger speak the Truth! Today, we see Sunni brothers and sisters who claim that the Twelfth Imam is “useless”, and we see lots of them denying his birth! This clearly is one of the miracles of the Prophet. Al-Saduq again documents:

حدثنا أحمد بن محمد بن يحيى العطار رضي الله عنه قال: حدثنا أبي، عن إبراهيم بن هاشم، عن محمد بن أبي عمير، عن صفوان بن مهران الجمال قال: قال الصادق جعفر بن محمد عليهما السلام: أما والله ليغيبن عنكم مهديكم حتى يقول الجاهل منكم: ما لله في آل محمد، ثم يقبل كالشهاب الناقب فيملأها عدلاً وقسطاً كما ملئت جوراً وظلماً.

Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Yahya al-‘Aṭṭar, may Allah be pleased with him - my father - Ibrahim b. Hashim - Muhammad b. Abi ‘Umayr - Safwan b. Mahran al-Jamal:

Al-Sadiq Ja’far b. Muhammad, peace be upon them both, said: “I swear by Allah, your Mahdi will become hidden from you, such that the ignorant one among you will say, “Allah has no need for the family of Muhammad.” Then, he will appear like the piercing star. He will fill it with justice and equity just as it had been filled with aggression and injustice.”⁹

Al-Haj Muhammad Zakariya again comments:

إسناده معتبر

Its chain is reliable.¹⁰

Therefore, it is authentically established. The Awaited Mahdi would disappear from public view and would later “come out” of the concealment to liberate the earth from aggression and injustice. The truth of this matter is further strengthened by the fact that several different sects declared ghaybahs for their self-chosen “Mahdis”, long before the advent of the Twelfth Imam. In fact, there was a group which declared Imam ‘Ali, ‘alaihi al-salam, as the Mahdi and described his death as his “ghaybah”! That was less than four decades after the death of the Messenger of Allah. Obviously, these various sects must have learnt that the true Mahdi would go into occultation for a period from the authentic riwayat. However, they applied the right ahadith to the wrong persons, and thereby lost their ways.

But then, why would he need to hide from public view in the first place? After all, he is the Imam. Is he not supposed to be visible and accessible to his followers across the world? What exactly is the benefit of his concealment from the rest?

First and foremost, it must be noted that any human being - in ordinary circumstances - can be killed, including even prophets and messengers:

ذلك بأنهم كانوا يكفرون بآيات الله ويقتلون النبيين بغير الحق

That was because they used to disbelieve in the ayat of Allah, and also used to kill the prophets wrongfully.¹¹

And:

أفكلما جاءكم رسول بما لا تهوى أنفسكم استكبرتم ففريقا كذبتم وفريقا تقتلون

Is it that whenever there came to you a messenger with what your souls did not desire, you grew arrogant? Some, you called liars and some, you killed.¹²

And:

قل قد جاءكم رسل من قبلي بالبينات وبالذي قلتم فلم قتلتموهم إن كنتم صادقين

Say: “Verily, there came to you messengers before me, with clear signs and even with what you speak of. Why then did you kill them, if you are truthful?”¹³

Therefore, the threat to the life of anyone sent by Allah is real and serious.

Moreover, it is permissible for a prophet, messenger or Imam - in certain circumstances - to flee or hide for his life from his enemies and opponents.

وإذ يمكر بك الذين كفروا ليثبتوك أو يقتلوك أو يخرجوك ويمكرون ويمكر الله والله خير

المكركين

And when those who disbelieve plotted against you (O Muhammad) to imprison you, or to kill you, or to drive you out. They plot, but Allah (too) plots (against them); and Allah is the Best of plotters.¹⁴

This was what forced Prophet Muhammad to flee Makkah, on the Order of his Lord. He was in grave danger and his defences were weak. During his flight to al-Madinah, his enemies still tracked him on the way to “take him out”. Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) gives some further details:

عام الهجرة ، لما هم المشركون يقتله أو حبسه أو نفيه ، فخرج منهم هاربا بصحبة صديقه

وصاحبه أبي بكر بن أبي قحافة ، فلجأ إلى غار ثور ثلاثة أيام ليرجع الطلُّب الذين خرجوا في

آثارهم ، ثم يسيرا نحو المدينة

During the year of the Hijrah, the pagans tried to kill, imprison or expel him (i.e the Prophet). So, he ESCAPED with his friend and companion, Abu Bakr b. Abi Quhafah, to the Thawr Cave. They remained in there for THREE DAYS. So the scouts who were sent in their pursuit returned, and they proceeded to Madinah.¹⁵

Here, the Messenger fled from his murderous enemies, and hid in a cave for three days in order to preserve his life. If the scouts in pursuit of his life had not left on the third day, he would have remained there for much longer. He was hiding in the cave for days while his followers in Madinah had no guide to lead them¹⁶. This was his own ghaybah, his disappearance from public view, due to dire security concerns. It was short, and could have been

longer. Yet, its significance is heavy, especially in any discourse on Imam al-Mahdi.

There are circumstances when fleeing is forbidden, especially during a field battle between Muslims and their religious enemies¹⁷. This was not one of such¹⁸. Meanwhile, the case of 'Isa b. Maryam, 'alaihi al-salam, is even more serious than that of Muhammad. The Masih's life got into a true danger of imminent execution. Allah intervened on his behalf, and took him into the heavens to save him¹⁹. Our Lord has certain future plans for 'Isa during the kingdom of the Mahdi. If he was killed - unless a raj'ah by him occurred - the plan would capsize, and Allah is above failure²⁰. That is his own ghaybah too. His true followers were suddenly left without a prophet or messenger!²¹ By the logic of our brothers from the Ahl al-Sunnah, he has been "useless" for thousands of years.

Interestingly, even in our times, the life of the Masih is still not safe at all. If he came today and expressed ideas that agreed with the 'aqidah of any particular sect, the other Muslims would call him an impostor and would have him executed or assassinated as soon as they could. For instance, imagine Prophet 'Isa telling the Ummah: "The offspring of Muhammad, his Ahl al-Bayt, are his only genuine khalifahs, alongside the Book of Allah". Despite the presence of this fact in several sahih Sunni ahadith, most Sunnis would instinctively oppose him, and the extremists amongst them would immediately call for his head. He could even be targeted repeatedly with sniper fire and car bombs, by none other than Muslims!

Meanwhile, it definitely goes without saying that the Mahdi too is in exactly the same, or perhaps an even worse, situation. If he "came out" today, and said things that undermined the legitimacy of certain Muslim sects, he would be rejected instantly by a lot and his life could be terminated violently in no time. The armed drones, warplanes and guided missiles of the powerful Western and Eastern nations, blocs and alliances are also there, to bomb, or perhaps "nuke", him at the slightest opportunity. He will overthrow all juntas, regimes, kingdoms, administrations, and governments all over the earth, and will establish a unified worldwide Kingdom of Allah. Apparently, he will be fiercely targeted by all! This is why the Twelfth Imam has gone into hiding; and this is why he still remains invisible.

'Allamah al-Majlisi (d. 1111 H) copies:

إكمال الدين: ماجيلويه، عن عمه، عن البرقي، عن أيوب بن نوح، عن صفوان عن ابن بكير، عن زرارة، عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: للغلام غيبة قبل قيامه، قلت: ولم؟ قال: يخاف على نفسه الذبح.

Ikmal al-Din: Majiluyah - his uncle - al-Barqi - Ayub b. Nuh - Safwan - Ibn Bukayr - Zurarah:

Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him, said: "The boy will have a disappearance (ghaybah) before his rise." I said, "And for what reason?" He said, "He will fear his being slaughtered."²²

The hadith has a mu'tabar (reliable) chain, according to Ayatullah al-Muhsini.²³ Here, the Twelfth Imam is referred to as "the boy" by his sixth ancestor. This reveals that the Imam was predicted to become invisible very

early, as a child. Moreover, his disappearance is of two stages. This is why it is sometimes also called the two ghaybahs. However, there was no time, since he first disappeared, that he was ever visible to the general public.

Al-Majlisi again records:

إكمال الدين: العطار، عن سعد، عن ابن عيسى، عن خالد بن نجیح، عن زرارة قال: سمعت أبا عبد الله عليه السلام يقول: إن للقائم غيبة قبل أن يقوم قلت: ولم؟ قال: يخاف وأوماً بيده إلى بطنه.

Ikmal al-Din: al-‘Aṭṭar - Sa’d - Ibn ‘Isa - Khalid b. Najih - Zurarah:

I heard Abu ‘Abd Allah, peace be upon him, saying: “Verily, there shall be a disappearance for the Qaim before he rises.” I said, “And for what reason?” He said, “He will fear” and he gestured with his hand towards his stomach.²⁴

Then, he cited six other chains for this hadith²⁵, and Ayatullah al-Muhsini declares its sanad to be mu’tabar (reliable).²⁶ This one probably refers to poisoning. The Imam would be killed violently or could get poisoned if he appeared before the right time.

Shaykh al-Kulayni (d. 329 H) too reports:

وبهذا الاسناد، عن أحمد بن محمد، عن أبيه محمد بن عيسى، عن ابن بكير، عن زرارة قال: سمعت أبا عبد الله عليه السلام يقول: إن للقائم غيبة قبل أن يقوم، إنه يخاف - وأوماً بيده إلى بطنه - يعني القتل.

And with this chain - Ahmad b. Muhammad - his father, Muhammad b. ‘Isa - Ibn Bukayr - Zurarah:

I heard Abu ‘Abd Allah, peace be upon him, saying:

“Verily, there shall be a disappearance for the Qaim before he rises. He will fear” - and he gestured with his hand towards his stomach - meaning (he will fear) being killed.²⁷

Al-Majlisi comments:

موثق كالصحيح

Muwaththaq ka al-Sahih²⁸

But then, will there ever be the right time? Will his life ever be safe? Moreover, will he ever be able to take on all the world superpowers at a time, or even at different times, to topple them and establish the divine kingdom on their lands? We will address these queries soon in the chapter on how the Mahdi will conquer the world.

Notes

1. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Aṭa], vol. 4, p. 601, # 8673

2. Ibid

3. Ibid

4. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 2258, # 2940 (117)

5. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut], vol. 4, p. 7, # 16189
6. Ibid
7. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah (Qum: Muasassat al-Nashr al-Islami li Jama'at al-Mudarisin; 1405 H) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], p. 51
8. Muhammad Zakariya, al-Sahih wa al-Mu'tabar min Akhbar al-Hujjah al-Muntazar (Majmu'at al-Rasid; 1st edition, 1434 H), p. 14, # 1
9. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah (Qum: Muasassat al-Nashr al-Islami li Jama'at al-Mudarisin; 1405 H) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], pp. 341-342, Ch. 33, # 22
10. Muhammad Zakariya, al-Sahih wa al-Mu'tabar min Akhbar al-Hujjah al-Muntazar (Majmu'at al-Rasid; 1st edition, 1434 H), p. 15, # 2
11. Qur'an 2:61. See also 2:91, 3:21, 3:112, 3:181, and 4:155
12. Qur'an 2:87. See also 5:70
13. Qur'an 3:183
14. Qur'an 8:30
15. Abu al-Fida Isma'il b. 'Umar b. Kathir al-Qurashi al-Dimashqi, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim (Dar al-Taybah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 2nd edition, 1420 H) [annotator: Sami b. Muhammad Salamah], vol. 4, p. 155
16. We want to ask our Sunni brothers: was the Prophet "useless" during those three days?
17. Qur'an 8:15-16
18. There is a common mistake among our people who assume that awliya of Allah never have fear or sadness, based upon Qur'an 10:62. However, that ayah applies only to the Hereafter, as the authentic ahadith about it which we have quoted in the chapter "Is the Mahdi Superior to the Masih?" firmly establish.
19. Qur'an 4:157-158
20. This perhaps explains why Allah protected him, but did not protect many of the other prophets from death. He spared him because He had reserved a special job for him at the end of the world. Prophet Ibrahim, 'alaihi al-salam, too was protected by Allah (Qur'an 21:69-70). He too escaped, by Allah's Help, from his oppressors (21:71). Our Lord had placed a blessed lineage of prophets, messengers and Imams in his loins (2:124, 29:27), and his death would have caused a huge disaster over the earth.
21. Qur'an 5:19
22. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-A'ṭhar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 97, Ch. 20, # 18
23. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Maṭbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 221
24. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-A'ṭhar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 146, Ch. 22, # 70
25. Ibid, vol. 52, pp. 146-147, Ch. 22, # 70
26. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Maṭbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 227
27. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-Kafi (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah; 3rd edition) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, p. 340, # 18
28. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 4, p. 52

17. Issues Of The Ghaybah: The Two Roles Of The Imam

One of the major differences between the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah and the Shi'ah Imamiyyah - on the question of al-mahdawiyah - concerns the location of the Awaited Mahdi at this present time. Most Sunnis maintain that he is not born yet, while all Shi'i Ithna 'Ashariyyah believe that he came into this world in 255 H, more than 1000 years ago. If the Shi'is were right, then where is he? What exactly is he doing, assuming he is alive? What use does he have for this Ummah at this very moment?

To address these questions, we will start first with the roles of the Imams sent by Allah to mankind. The Qur'an says:

ووهبنا له إسحاق ويعقوب نافلة وكلا جعلنا صالحين وجعلناهم أئمة يهدون بأمرنا

And We bestowed upon him (i.e. Ibrahim) Ishaq and Ya'qub. Each one We made righteous. And We appointed them Imams, GUIDING BY OUR COMMAND.¹

And:

ولقد آتينا موسى الكتاب فلا تكن في مرية من لقائه وجعلناه هدى لبني إسرائيل وجعلنا

منهم أئمة يهدون بأمرنا لما صبروا وكانوا بآياتنا يوقنون

And indeed We gave Musa the Book. So be not you in doubt of meeting him. And We made it a guide to the Children of Israel. And We appointed from among them Imams GUIDING BY OUR COMMAND, when they (i.e. the Imams) were patient and used to believe with certainty (yaqin) in Our Verses.²

So, the primary role of the Imam is to "guide" by the Command of Allah. The phrase "by Our Command" establishes three things about the Imams:

1. They are appointed and commissioned by explicit Divine Decrees.
2. They guide others in accordance with, and towards, the Command of Allah in every circumstance.
3. The Imams possess the Command of Allah over His creatures.

This is the first role of the Imams: to guide mankind onto, and by, the Command of Allah.

The second type of role is spelt out in this hadith of Shaykh al-Saduq (d. 381 H):

حدثنا علي بن عبد الله الوراق قال: حدثنا سعد بن عبد الله، عن أحمد بن إسحاق بن سعد الأشعري قال: دخلت على أبي محمد الحسن بن علي عليهما السلام وأنا أريد أن أسأله عن الخلف [من] بعده، فقال لي مبتدئا: يا أحمد بن إسحاق إن الله تبارك وتعالى لم يخل الأرض منذ خلق آدم عليه السلام ولا يخليها إلى أن تقوم الساعة من حجة الله على خلقه، به يدفع البلاء عن أهل الأرض، وبه ينزل الغيث، وبه يخرج بركات الأرض.

'Ali b. 'Abd Allah al-Warraaq - Sa'd b. 'Abd Allah - Ahmad b. Ishaq b. Sa'd al-Ash'ari:

I went to Abu Muhammad al-Hasan b. 'Ali, peace be upon them both, and I intended to ask him about his successor. But, he said to me before I

said anything, “O Ahmad b. Ishaq! Verily, Allah the Most Blessed, the Most High never leaves the earth since the creation of Adam, peace be upon him, and He will never leave it till establishment of the Hour, without an Hujjah of Allah over His creation. Through him, calamity is averted from the people of the earth; through him, rain descends; and through him, the blessings of the earth come out.”³

Al-Haj Muhammad Zakariya says:

إسناده معتبر

Its chain is reliable.⁴

‘Allamah al-Majlisi (d. 1111 H) also copies:

التوحيد، معاني الأخبار: أبي عن سعد عن ابن عيسى عن الحسين بن سعيد عن فضالة عن أبان عن محمد بن مسلم قال: سمعت أبا عبد الله عليه السلام يقول: إن الله عز وجل خلقنا خلقهم من نوره ورحمته لرحمته، فهم عين الله الناظرة، واذنه السامعة، ولسانه الناطق في خلقه بإذنه، وامناؤه على ما أنزل من عذر أو نذر أو حجة، فبهم يحو الله السيئات وبهم يدفع الضيم. وبهم ينزل الرحمة، وبهم يحيي ميتا ويميت حيا وبهم يتلى خلقه. وبهم يقضي في خلقه قضية قلت: جعلت فداك من هؤلاء؟ قال: الأوصياء

Al-Tawhid, Ma’ani al-Akhbar: My father - Sa’d - Ibn ‘Isa - al-Husayn b. Sa’id - Fudhalah - Aban - Muhammad b. Muslim:

I heard Abu ‘Abd Allah, peace be upon him, saying: “Verily, Allah the Almighty has some creatures whom He created from His Light and from His Mercy for the sake of His Mercy. Due to this, they are the Eye of Allah which sees, His Ear that hears, His Tongue that speaks to His creation with His Permission, His Safeguards over what was revealed from justifications, warnings and proofs.

And through them, Allah erases the evils; and through them, He wards off grievances; and through them, He sends down mercy; and through them, He enlivens the dead and causes the living to die; and through them, He afflicts His creation; and through them, He judges cases among His creation.”

I said, “May I be sacrificed for you, who are these people?”

He replied, “The awsiya ”.⁵

The hadith has a mu’tabar (reliable) chain, according to Ayatullah al-Muhsini,⁶ and, of course, the word “awsiya” is another terminology for “Imams” (in addition to “amirs” and “khalifahs”). Apparently, the Imams, ‘alaihim al-salam, perform far more functions than most people know.

Meanwhile, some from the Ahl al-Sunnah - especially the Salafiyyah - may feel “appalled” at some of these more advanced roles of the awsiya. They may fear that such descriptions border on shirk (idolatry). Hasn’t Allah said:

يدبر الأمر من السماء إلى الأرض

He (Allah) controls the affairs from the heavens to the earth.⁷

And:

أهم يقسمون رحمت ربك نحن قسمنا بينهم معيشتهم في الحياة الدنيا

Is it they who distribute the mercy of your Lord? We distribute among them their livelihood in the life of this world.⁸

But, these verses do not contradict the above Shi'i hadiths. It is still Allah Who controls and distributes everything. He only controls and distributes through the Imam. The Imam himself is merely an automaton in this affair: he only follows Allah's Orders. He has no personal input, opinion or choice, and cannot decide anything even in his own favour or avert any danger or harm decreed against him⁹. Moreover, since he merely robotically carries out orders, the actions of the khalifah are in essence those of Allah.

The Qur'an too has confirmed that our Lord controls our affairs and distributes His mercy among us through some intermediaries:

فالمدبرات أمرا

And (I swear by) THOSE WHO CONTROL by Command.¹⁰

Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) has this to say under the ayah:

وقوله: {فالمدبرات أمرا} قال علي ، ومجاهد ، وعطاء ، وأبو صالح ، والحسن ، وقتادة ، والربيع بن أنس ، والسدي : هي الملائكة - زاد الحسن : تدبر الأمر من السماء إلى الأرض . يعني : بأمر ربها عز وجل . ولم يختلفوا في هذا

His Statement: {And [I swear by] those who control by Command} 'Ali, Mujahid, 'Aṭa, Abu Salih, al-Hasan, Qatadah. Al-Rabi' b. Anas, and al-Suddi said: "They are the angels". Al-Hasan added: "They control the affairs from the heavens to the earth, that is, by the Command of their Lord, the Almighty." They (i.e. the 'ulama) do NOT disagree on this.¹¹

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751 H) also submits:

والمقصود : أن الله سبحانه وكل بالعالم العلوي والسفلي ملائكة فهي تدبر أمر العالم بإذنه ومشيئته وأمره فلهذا يضيف التدبير إلى الملائكة تارة لكونهم هم المباشرين للتدبير كقوله {فالمدبرات أمرا}

The meaning is: that Allah, Glorified be He, has put angels in charge of the world, the highest and the lowest. So, they control the affairs of the world by His Permission, Wish and Command. This is why control is attributed to the angels at a place because they are those in direct control, like His Statement {And [I swear by] those who control by Command}.¹²

So, it is the angels who control the affairs of the earth by the Command of Allah. However, their actions are also those of our Lord, since they are based strictly upon His Orders.

We also read this verse:

فالمقسمات أمرا

And (I swear by) THOSE WHO DISTRIBUTE by Command.¹³

The two Jalals say:

{فالمقسمات أمرا} الملائكة تقسم الأرزاق والأمطار وغيرها بين البلاد والعباد

{And [I swear by] those who distribute by Command} the angels who distribute the provisions, the rains and others among the towns and creatures.¹⁴

A prominent Salafi authority, Shaykh Abu Bakr al-Jazairi, has the same exegesis:

فالمقسمات أمرا: أي الملائكة تقسم بأمر ربها الأرزاق والأمطار وغيرها بين العباد.

{And [I swear by] those who distribute by Command}: that is the angels. They distribute the provisions, the rains, and others among the servants (of Allah) by the Command of their Lord.¹⁵

Therefore, it would not be shirk (idolatry) at all to state that Allah distributes the provisions, the rains and others of His blessings to his servants through certain other creatures of His. Those who shout “shirk!” when they hear about such matters are clearly in great haste, and in grave error.

It must be added that the angels are responsible for the creation of humans too, as well as some other related functions. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) is one of those Sunni authorities with the relevant hadith:

حدثني أبو الطاهر أحمد بن عمرو بن سرح أخبرنا ابن وهب أخبرني عمرو بن الحارث عن أبي الزبير المكي أن عامر بن وائلة حدثه أنه سمع عبد الله بن مسعود يقول الشقي من شقي في بطن أمه والسعيد من وعظ بغيره فأتى رجلا من أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يقال له حذيفة بن أسيد الغفاري فحدثه بذلك من قول ابن مسعود فقال وكيف يشقى رجل بغير عمل فقال له الرجل أتعجب من ذلك؟ فإني سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول إذا مر بالنطفة ثنتان وأربعون ليلة بعث الله إليها ملكا فصورها وخلق سمعها وبصرها وجلدها ولحمها وعظامها ثم قال يا رب أذكر أم أنثى؟ فيقضي ربك ما شاء ويكتب الملك ثم يقول يا رب رزقه فيقضي ربك ما شاء ويكتب الملك ثم يخرج الملك بالصحيفة في يده فلا يزيد على ما أمر ولا ينقص

Abu al-Tahir Ahmad b. ‘Amr b. Sarh - Ibn Wahb - ‘Amr b. al-Harith - Abu al-Zubayr al-Makki - ‘Amir b. Wathilah:

I heard ‘Abd Allah b. Mas’ud saying, “The doomed person is he who was (made) doomed in the womb of his mother, and the saved person is he who learns from the (fate of the) others.” Then, he (Amir b. Wathilah) went to a man from the Sahabah of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, called Hudhayfah b. Usayd al-Ghiffari, and narrated the statement of Ibn Mas’ud to him and said, “And how can a person be doomed without having done anything?” The man (i.e. Hudhayfah) said to him, “Do you wonder at that? Verily, I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying: ‘When forty nights pass after the semen gets into the womb, Allah sends an angel to it. So, he (the angel) gives it a shape, and creates its hearing, its sight, its skin and its flesh, his bones, and then says, “My Lord, male or

female?” So, your Lord decides whatever He likes, and the angel writes. Then, he says, “My Lord, his lifespan?” Your Lord will say whatever He likes and the angel will write. Then, he will say, “My Lord, his livelihood?” So, your Lord will decide whatever He likes, and the angel will write. Then, the angel gets out with the page in his hand, and nothing is added to it, and nothing is subtracted from it.”¹⁶

He equally has one more hadith in stock:

حدثني مُحَمَّد بن أحمد بن أبي خلف حدثنا يحيى بن أبي بكير حدثنا زهير أبو خيثمة حدثني عبدالله بن عطاء أن عكرمة بن خالد حدثه أن أبا الطفيل حدثه قال دخلت على أبي سريحة حذيفة بن أسيد الغفاري فقال سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم بأذني هاتين يقول إن النطفة تقع في الرحم أربعين ليلة ثم يتصور عليها الملك

Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abi Khalaf - Yahya b. Abi Bukayr - Zuhayr Abu Khaythamah - ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Aṭa - ‘Ikrimah b. Khalid - Abu al-Tufayl:

I went to Abu Sariyah Hudhayfah b. Usayd al-Ghiffari and he said, “I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, with these two ears of mine saying: ‘Verily, the semen stays in the womb for forty nights. Then, the angel gives it a shape.’”¹⁷

There is this hadith of Imam Muslim as well, which seems to contradict the above two in some fundamental ways, especially on the question of what happens immediately after forty days of fertilization:

حدثنا أبو بكر بن أبي شيبة حدثنا أبو معاوية ووكيع ح وحدثنا مُحَمَّد بن عبدالله بن نمير الهمداني (واللفظ له) حدثنا أبي وأبو معاوية ووكيع قالوا حدثنا الأعمش عن زيد بن وهب عن عبدالله قال حدثنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم وهو الصادق المصدوق إن أحدكم يجمع خلقه في بطن أمه أربعين يوما ثم يكون في ذلك علقة مثل ذلك ثم يكون في ذلك مضغة مثل ذلك ثم يرسل الملك فينفخ فيه الروح ويؤمر بأربع كلمات بكتب رزقه وأجله وعمله وشقي أو سعيد

Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah - Abu Mu’awiyah and Waki’: Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah b. Numayr al-Hamdani - my father - Abu Mu’awiyah and Waki’ - al-A’mash - Zayd b. Wahb - ‘Abd Allah:

The Messenger of Allah, the truthful and trusted one, peace be upon him, informed us: “Verily, the material for the creation of each one of you is gathered in the womb of his mother for forty days. Then, it becomes in it a clot of blood for a similar period. Then, it becomes in it a lump of flesh for a similar period. Then, the angel is sent, and he breathes the spirit into it; and he is commanded with four instruction: to write its livelihood, its lifespan, its deeds, and whether it will be doomed or saved.”¹⁸

It nonetheless corroborates the key point: that angels are the creators of human beings with Allah’s Power and Permission, and only under His explicit, strict instructions and directions. So, He is the real Creator, while they are figuratively His Hands. Moreover, these ahadith reveal that some of the angels have a certain level of unseen knowledge (‘ilm al-ghayb), which

our brothers from the Salafiyyah often rigidly restrict to Allah Alone. They knew our statuses in the Hereafter, our livelihoods, our lifespans and our deeds even before we were born.

Meanwhile, certain Sunni ahadith also establish that human beings are among those who control and distribute - and perhaps perform some other functions - by Command. ‘Allamah al-‘Azim Abadi (d. 1329 H), the commentator of Sunan Abu Dawud, has this important submission concerning that:

فمنها ما رواه أحمد في مسنده عن عبادة بن الصامت مرفوعا الأبدال في هذه الأمة ثلاثون رجلا قلوبهم على قلب إبراهيم خليل الرحمن كلما مات رجل أبدل الله مكانه رجلا أورده السيوطي في الجامع الصغير، وقال العزيمي والمناوي في شرحه بإسناد صحيح ومنها ما رواه عبادة بن الصامت " الأبدال في أمتي ثلاثون بهم تقوم الأرض وبهم تمطرون وبهم تنصرون" رواه الطبراني في الكبير أورده السيوطي في الكتاب المذكور وقال العزيمي والمناوي بإسناد صحيح ومنها ما رواه عوف بن مالك " الأبدال في أهل الشام وبهم ينصرون وبهم يرزقون" أخرجه الطبراني في الكبير أورده السيوطي في الكتاب المذكور قال العزيمي والمناوي إسناده حسن ومنها ما رواه علي رضي الله عنه " الأبدال بالشام وهم أربعون رجلا كلما مات رجل أبدل الله مكانه رجلا يسقى بهم الغيث ويتنصر بهم على الأعداء ويصرف عن أهل الشام بهم العذاب " أخرجه أحمد وقال العزيمي والمناوي بإسناد حسن

Among them are what Ahmad recorded in his Musnad from ‘Ubadah b. al-Samit from the Prophet: “The abdal in this Ummah are thirty men. Their hearts are like the heart of Ibrahim, the Beloved Friend of al-Rahman. Whenever a man from them dies, Allah substitutes another man in his place.” Al-Suyuti copied it in al-Jami’ al-Saghir, and al-‘Azizi said, and al-Manawi too said in his Sharh: “Its chain is sahih.”

Among them is what ‘Ubadah b. al-Samit narrated (from the Prophet): “The abdal in my Ummah are thirty. Through them, the earth stands; and through them, you are given rain; and through them, you are granted help and victory.” Al-Tabarani recorded it in al-Kabir, and al-Suyuti copied it in the mentioned book, and al-‘Azizi and al-Manawi said: “Its chain is sahih.”

Among them is what ‘Awf b. Malik narrated (from the Prophet): “The abdal are in Syria. Through them, they are given help and victory; and through them, they are given sustenance.” Al-Tabarani recorded it in al-Kabir, and al-Suyuti copied it in the mentioned book. Al-‘Azizi and al-Manawi said: “Its chain is hasan.”

And among them is what ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him: “The abdal are in Syria, and they are forty men. Whenever a man among them dies, Allah substitutes another in his place. Through them, He provides the rain; and through them, He grants help and victory over the enemies; and

through them, He averts punishment from the people of Syria.” Ahmad recorded it, and al-‘Azizi and al-Manawi said: “Its chain is hasan.”¹⁹

The truth is: ahadith about these abdal are actually mutawatir (absolutely authentic due to mass transmission). This is why Imam al-Kattani (d. 1345 H) has included them in his book on mutawatir reports, saying:

(٢٧٩) وجود الأبدال

له طرق عن (١) أنس بألفاظ مختلفة كلها ضعيفة وورد أيضا عن (٢) عبادة بن الصامت (٣) وابن عمر (٤) وابن مسعود (٥) وأبي سعيد (٦) وعلي (٧) وعوف بن مالك (٨) وأبي هريرة (٩) ومعاذ بن جبل وغيرهم

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It is narrated through chains from (1) Anas with different texts, all of them dha’if, and it is also narrated from (2) ‘Ubadah b. al-Samit, (3) Ibn ‘Umar, (4) Ibn Mas’ud, (5) Abu Sa’id, (6) ‘Ali, (7) ‘Awf b. Malik, (8) Abu Hurayrah, (9) Mu’adh b. Jabal, and others.²⁰

Then he adds:

وقد زعم ابن الجوزي أن أحاديث الأبدال كلها موضوعة ونازعه السيوطي وقال خبر

الأبدال صحيح وإن شئت قلت متواتر

Ibn al-Jawzi claimed that all the ahadith on abdal are fabrications. But, al-Suyuti contended with him, and said, “The report on the abdal is sahih; and if you like, say it is mutawatir.”²¹

Of course, when a hadith has reached the level of tawattur, the strength or weakness of its individual chains becomes irrelevant. The sheer number of the chains and narrators alone - whatever their statuses - establish absolute certainty in its authenticity.

Whatever the case, it is our firm belief - based upon our authentic ahadith - that Allah averts calamity from the people of the earth, sends rain to them, gives them the blessings of the earth, erases the evils from them, wards off grievances from them, sends down His mercy to them, gives life to the dead among them, causes the living among them to die, afflicts them with trials and tests, and judges them through their Imam. How all these happen is a matter of the ghayb, and therefore largely beyond our common understanding. This is also in addition to the role of the khalifah as the guide of humanity during his time.

The bottom-line is: whether the people are able to gain access to the Imam or not, he is always in the service of Allah, performing crucial roles and functions that benefit every single living soul on the earth.

Notes

1. Qur’an 21:72-73

2. Qur’an 32:23-24

3. Abu Ja’far Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni’mah (Qum: Muassasat al-Nashr al-Islami li Jama’at al-Mudarisin; 1405 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], p. 384, Ch. 38, # 1

4. Muhammad Zakariya, al-Sahih wa al-Mu’tabar min Akhbar al-Hujjah al-Muntazar (Majmu’at al-Rasid; 1st edition, 1434 H), pp. 27-29, # 19

5. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Athar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 26, p. 240, Ch. 5, # 2
6. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muassasat al-'Arif li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 1, p. 479
7. Qur'an 32:5
8. Qur'an 43:32
9. Of course, he has the opportunity to pray to Allah on any matter, and He is very likely to accept his request. However, without His sanction, the Imam has no ability to carry out any independent function or task.
10. Qur'an 79:5
11. Abu al-Fida Isma'il b. 'Umar b. Kathir al-Qurashi al-Dimashqi, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim (Dar al-Taybah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 2nd edition, 1420 H) [annotator: Sami b. Muhammad Salamah], vol. 8, p. 313
12. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Abi Bakr Ayub al-Zar'i, Ighathah al-Lahfan min Masaid al-Shaytan (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah; 2nd edition, 1395 H) [annotator: Muhammad Hamid al-Faqqi], vol. 2, p. 130
13. Qur'an 51:4
14. Jalal al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Mahalli and Jalal al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abu Bakr al-Suyuti, Tafsir al-Jalalayn (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith; 1st edition), p. 692
15. Abu Bakr Jabir b. Musa b. 'Abd al-Qadir b. Jabir al-Jazairi, Aysar al-Tafasir li Kalam al-'Aliyy al-Kabir (al-Madinah al-Munawwarah: Maktabah al-'Ulum wa al-Hikam; 5th edition, 1424 H), vol. 5, p. 154
16. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 2037, # 2645 (3)
17. Ibid, vol. 4, p. 2037, # 2645 (4)
18. Ibid, vol. 4, p. 2036, # 2643 (1)
19. Abu al-Tayyib Muhammad Shams al-Haqq al-'Azim Abadi, 'Awn al-Ma'bud Sharh Sunan Abi Dawud (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H), vol. 11, pp. 253-254
20. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ja'far al-Idrisi al-Kattani, Nazam al-Mutanathir min al-Hadith al-Mutawatir (Egypt: Dar al-Kutub al-Salafiyyah; 2nd edition), p. 220, # 279
21. Ibid

18. Issues Of The Ghaybah: Regency Of The Shi'i 'Ahadith And 'Ulama

There is always a divinely "sent" guide on the earth for the Ummah. 'Allamah al-Majlisi (d. 1111 H) documents:

علل الشرائع: أبي، عن علي، عن أبيه، عن يحيى بن أبي عمران الهمداني عن يونس، عن إسحاق بن عمار، عن محمد بن مسلم، عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام قال: إن الله لم يدع الأرض إلا وفيها عالم يعلم الزيادة والنقصان من دين الله عز وجل فإذا زاد المؤمنون شيئاً ردهم، وإذا نقصوا أكمله لهم، ولولا ذلك لالتبس على المسلمين أمرهم

'Ilal al-Sharai': my father - 'Ali - his father - Yahya b. Abi 'Imran al-Hamdani - Yunus - Ishaq b. 'Ammar - Muhammad b. Muslim:

Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, said: "Verily, Allah does not leave the earth to be without a scholar who knows the additions and omissions in the religion of Allah, the Almighty. So, when the believers add something, he returns them (to the original teaching); and when they omit, he completes it for them. If not for that, the Muslims would have become confused in their (religious) affairs."¹

This hadith has a mu'tabar (reliable) chain, according to Ayatullah al-Muhsini.²

There is no doubt that these guides "sent" by Allah are from the offspring of Muhammad, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi. This is on account of Hadith al-Thaqalayn, which names the Ahl al-Bayt, 'alaihim al-salam, as the supreme guides of this Ummah. The Sunni hadith scholar, Sayyid Hasan al-Saqqaf, declares:

ورواه الترمذي (5/663) برقم (3788) بسند صحيح بلفظ إني تارك فيكم ما إن تمسكتم به لن تضلوا بعدي أحدهما أعظم من الآخر كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي ولن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا كيف تخلفوني فيهما

Al-Tirmidhi (5/663, # 3788) recorded it WITH A SAHIH CHAIN, with this wording:

"I am leaving behind over you that which if you adhere to it YOU WILL NEVER GO ASTRAY after me. One of them is greater than the other: the Book of Allah - a rope stretching from the heaven to the earth - and MY OFFSPRING, my Ahl al-Bayt. Both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount. Therefore, watch carefully how you treat them after me."³

The default tradition of the Imams is that they are physically available to the Ummah, in order to renew their religion for them. However, Shi'ism also recognizes the existence of extraordinary situations where the khalifah becomes inaccessible to his subjects. 'Allamah al-Majlisi documents again:

علل الشرائع: أبي، عن الحميري، عن السندي بن محمد، عن العلاء، عن محمد بن أبي جعفر عليه السلام قال: لا تبقى الأرض بغير إمام ظاهر أو باطن

‘Ilal al-Sharai’: my father - al-Himyari - al-Sindi b. Muhammad - al-‘Ala - Muhammad - Abu Ja’far, peace be upon him:

The earth never exists without an Imam, whether visible OR INVISIBLE.⁴

The chain of this hadith is mu’tabar (reliable), according to Ayatullah al-Muhsini.⁵ Al-Haj Muhammad Zakariya also says about it:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.⁶

Al-Majlisi equally copies this report:

إكمال الدين: أبي، عن مُحَمَّد العطار، عن ابن يزيد، عن ابن أبي عمير، عن سعد ابن أبي خلف، عن يعقوب بن شعيب، عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: كان بين عيسى وبين مُحَمَّد صلى الله عليه وآله خمسمائة عام منها مائتان وخمسون عاما ليس فيها نبي ولا عالم ظاهر، قلت: فما كانوا؟ قال: كانوا مستمسكين بدين عيسى عليه السلام، قلت: فما كانوا؟ قال: مؤمنين. ثم قال عليه السلام: ولا تكون الأرض إلا وفيها عالم

Ikmal al-Din: my father - Muhammad al-‘Aṭṭar - Ibn Yazid - Ibn Abi ‘Umayr - Sa’d b. Abi Khalaf - Ya’qub b. Shu’ayb - Abu ‘Abd Allah, peace be upon him:

There were five hundred years between ‘Isa and Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family. For two hundred and fifty years from that period, there was no prophet, and there was no visible scholar”. I asked, “So, what were they (i.e. the people of that period)?” He replied, “They followed the religion of ‘Isa, peace be upon him.” I asked, “So, what were they?” He said, “Believers.” Then, he, peace be upon him, said, “And the earth never exists except that there is a scholar on it.”⁷

The hadith has a mu’tabar (reliable) chain, according to Ayatullah al-Muhsini.⁸ The word “scholar” here, of course, refers only to the Imam, in the light of other authentic ahadith on the matter. ‘Allamah al-Tabatabai (d. 1412 H) confirms this too, saying immediately after quoting the riwayah:

أقول: المراد بالعالم الامام الذي هو الحجة

I say: The one intended as the scholar is the Imam, the one who is the Hujjah.⁹

So, what happens when the Imam is not visible? What are the people supposed to do in order to attain guidance? Some Imams never appear - such as those during the fatrah (i.e. the 500 years between ‘Isa and Muhammad). However, our own Imam will eventually reappear to the world. Meanwhile, before he does that, what exactly are we supposed to be doing in order not to lose his way?

During the ghaybah of the Qaim, we have an obligation to stick strictly with the pure teachings of all the eleven Imams before him, and those of his, that have been authentically transmitted. Shaykh al-Saduq (d. 381 H) records:

حدثنا أبي ﷺ قال: حدثنا عبد الله بن جعفر الحميري، عن أيوب بن نوح، عن محمد بن أبي عمير، عن جميل بن دراج، عن زرارة قال: قال أبو عبد الله عليه السلام: يأتي على الناس زمان يغيب عنهم إمامهم، فقلت له: ما يصنع الناس في ذلك الزمان؟ قال: يتمسكون بالامر الذي هم عليه حتى يتبين لهم.

My father, may Allah be pleased with him - 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far al-Himyari - Ayub b. Nuh - Muhammad b. Abi 'Umayr - Jamil b. Darraj - Zurarah:

Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him, said: "A time will come upon mankind when their Imam will become invisible to them." So, I asked, "What should mankind do during that time?" He replied, "They must adhere to the matter upon which they are until it becomes clear to them."¹⁰

Al-Haj Muhammad Zakariya declares about it:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.¹¹

Al-Saduq further reports:

حدثنا أبي، ومحمد بن الحسن بن أحمد بن الوليد رضي الله عنهما قالا: حدثنا محمد بن الحسن الصفار، عن العباس بن معروف، عن علي بن مهزيار، عن الحسن بن محبوب، عن حماد بن عيسى، عن إسحاق بن جرير، عن عبد الله بن سنان قال: دخلت أنا وأبي على أبي عبد الله عليه السلام فقال: فكيف أنتم إذا صرتم في حال لا ترون فيها إمام هدى، ولا علما يري، ولا ينجو منها إلا من دعا دعاء الغريق، فقال له أبي: إذا وقع هذا ليلا فكيف نصنع؟ فقال: أما أنت فلا تدركه، فإذا كان ذلك فتمسكوا بما في أيديكم حتى يتضح لكم الامر.

My father and Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Ahmad b. al-Walid - Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Saffar - al-'Abbas b. Ma'ruf - 'Ali b. Mahziyar - al-Hasan b. al-Mahbub - Hammad b. 'Isa - Ishaq b. Jarir - 'Abd Allah b. Sinan:

I and my father went to Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him. Then, he asked, "How will you be if you fall into a situation in which you cannot see an Imam of guidance, and you cannot see any guide, and none will be saved in it except those who supplicate with Du'a al-Ghariq?" So, my father said to him, "If that happens overnight, what should we do?" He replied, "As for you personally, you will not meet it (i.e. such a situation). But, when it occurs, you people must adhere to what is in your hands until the matter becomes clear to you."¹²

Al-Haj Muhammad Zakariya declares about it:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.¹³

Shaykh al-Kulayni (d. 329 H) then caps it all:

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَحْيَى، عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدَ بْنِ عَيْسَى، عَنِ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ فَضَالٍ عَنِ ابْنِ بَكِيرٍ،
عَنْ عَيْبِدِ بْنِ زُرَّارَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: احْتَفِظُوا بِكُتُبِكُمْ فَإِنَّكُمْ سَوْفَ
تَحْتَاجُونَ إِلَيْهَا.

Muhammad b. Yahya - Ahmad b. Muhammad b. 'Isa - al-Hasan b. 'Ali
b. Fadhdhal - Ibn Bukayr - 'Ubayd b. Zurarah:

Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him, said, "Preserve your books, for you
will soon need them."¹⁴

Al-Majlisi comments:

موثق كالصحيح

Muwaththaq ka al-Sahih¹⁵

Shaykh Hadi al-Najafi also states:

الرواية معتبرة الإسناد

The report has a reliable chain.¹⁶

So, apparently, the Shi'ah are under a command to strictly follow the authentic ahadith documented in the Shi'i books, throughout the longer disappearance of their Imam. It is these books that take his place until his reappearance to establish the final Kingdom of Allah on the earth. Luckily, there are about 11,500 (eleven thousand and five hundred) ahadith with strictly reliable chains in the Shi'i books, as Ayatullah al-Muhsini has revealed in his Mu'jam al-Ahadith al-Mu'tabarah (Dictionary of Reliable Ahadith), published in Qum in 2013 by Nashr Adyan. That is surely far more than enough for anyone who truly seeks the correct guidance of the Prophet and his pure Ahl al-Bayt, 'alaihim al-salam.

However, there is, sadly, a general lack of interest among the Shi'i laymen in the reliable ahadith of the purified offspring. Many, as far as we can tell, have abandoned the duties of reading, memorizing and studying the authentic ahadith to the 'ulama and those in the Shi'i seminaries only. Yet, this obligation has been imposed upon all Shi'is indiscriminately by Allah and His Messenger, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi. Al-Kulayni says:

أخبرنا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ هَاشِمٍ [عَنِ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ أَبِي
الْحُسَيْنِ الْفَارِسِيِّ، عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ: قَالَ

رَسُولُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ، أَلَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ بَغَاةَ الْعِلْمِ

Muhammad b. Ya'qub - 'Ali b. Ibrahim b. Hashim - his father - al-Hasan
b. Abi al-Husayn al-Farisi - 'Abd al-Rahman b. Zayd - his father - Abu
'Abd Allah, peace be upon him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, "Seeking knowledge
is OBLIGATORY upon EVERY Muslim. Take note: verily, Allah loves the
seekers of knowledge."¹⁷

Ayatullah al-Muhsini mentions that this hadith has several dha'if chains
in the Shi'i books, and that according to 'Allamah al-Suyuti, it has thirty
dha'if chains in the Sunni books. Then, he concludes:

وعلى كل تعدد طرقه عندنا وعندهم يوجب الوثوق بصدوره عن سيدنا رسول الله صلى
الله عليه وآله

And concerning everything that has several chains with us (i.e. Shi'is) and with them (i.e. Sunnis), it becomes necessary to believe that it genuinely came from our master, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family.¹⁸

Therefore, it is sahih on account of its numerous chains in Shi'i and Sunni books, even though all of them are dha'if.

'Allamah Hurr al-'Amili (d. 1104 H) also declares that the hadith has reached the level of tawattur :

وقد ورد في النص المتواتر عنهم عليهم السلام: ان طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم، ألا
وان الله يحب بغاة العلم

And it has been reported in the mutawatir text from them, peace be upon them: "Verily, seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim. Take note: and verily, Allah loves the seekers of knowledge."¹⁹

What is meant by "knowledge" within the proper Islamic context is that which was revealed by Allah to Muhammad, His Messenger, as the Qur'an testifies:

قل إن هدى الله هو الهدى ولئن اتبعت أهواءهم بعد الذي جاءك من العلم ما لك من
الله من ولي ولا نصير

Say: "Verily, the Guidance of Allah is the only guidance". And if you (O Muhammad) were to follow their desire after what has come to you of knowledge, then you would have against Allah neither any wali nor any helper.²⁰

Apparently, "knowledge" is the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The Sunnah, of course, is only that which is authentically transmitted - directly or indirectly - from the Prophet through the Twelve Imams.

Al-Kulayni also transmits:

علي بن إبراهيم، عن محمد بن عيسى، عن يونس، عن جميل، عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام
قال: سمعته يقول يغدوا الناس على ثلاثة أصناف: عالم ومتعلم وغباء، فنحن العلماء وشيعتنا
المتعلمون وسائر الناس غباء

'Ali b. Ibrahim - Muhammad b. 'Isa - Yunus - Jamil - Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him:

"Humanity are upon three categories: a scholar, a student and scum. So, we are the scholars. Our Shi'ah are the students; and the rest of mankind are scum."²¹

Al-Majlisi comments:

صحيح على الأظهر

Sahih upon the most apparent.²²
Shaykh Hadi al-Najafi also says:

الرواية صحيحة الإسناد

The report has a sahih chain.²³

This is explicit. Anyone who is not actively studying the authentic ahadith of the Ahl al-Bayt is part of the scum of mankind, and is not a genuine Shi'i - no matter what they call themselves. This is indeed a grave warning to all of us.

For the avoidance of doubt, what must be studied by the Shi'ah is what came directly from the Ahl al-Bayt themselves. Al-Kulayni reports again:

علي بن إبراهيم بن هاشم، عن محمد بن عيسى، عن يونس، عن ابن مسكان، عن محمد بن مسلم قال: سمعت أبا جعفر عليه السلام يقول: ليس عند أحد من الناس حق ولا صواب ولا أحد من الناس يقضي بقضاء حق إلا ما خرج منا أهل البيت وإذا تشعبت بهم الأمور كان الخطاء منهم والصواب من علي عليه السلام.

'Ali b. Ibrahim b. Hashim - Muhammad b. 'Isa - Yunus - Ibn Muskan - Muhammad b. Muslim:

I heard Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, saying, "There is none among mankind who has any truth, or any correct submission, and there is none among all mankind who judges with any judgment of truth except what comes from us, the Ahl al-Bayt. When the affairs bifurcate through them, the error is from them, and the correct position is from 'Ali, peace be upon him."²⁴

Al-Majlisi declares:

صحيح

Sahih²⁵

Al-Kulayni further documents:

عدة من أصحابنا. عن أحمد بن محمد، عن الوشاء، عن ثعلبة بن ميمون، عن أبي مريم قال قال: أبو جعفر عليه السلام لسلمة بن كهيل والحكم بن عتيبة: شرقا وغربا فلا تجدان علما صحيحا إلا شيئا خرج من عندنا أهل البيت.

A number of our companions - Ahmad b. Muhammad - al-Washa - Tha'labah b. Maymun - Abu Maryam:

Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, said to Salamah b. Kuhayl and al-Hakam b. 'Utaybah: "Go to the East and go to the West. You will not find any authentic knowledge except what comes from us, Ahl al-Bayt."²⁶

Al-Majlisi again says:

صحيح

Sahih²⁷

Al-Kulayni has more:

محمد بن يحيى، عن أحمد بن محمد، عن الحسين بن سعيد، عن النضر بن سويد، عن يحيى الحلبي، عن معلى بن عثمان، عن أي بصير قال: قال لي: إن الحكم بن عتيبة ممن قال الله:

ومن الناس من يقول آمنا بالله وباليوم الآخر وما هم بمؤمنين فليشرق الحكم وليغرب، أما والله لا يصيب العلم إلا من أهل بيت نزل عليهم جبرئيل.

Muhammad b. Yahya - Ahmad b. Muhammad - al-Husayn b. Sa'id - al-Nadhr b. Suwayd - Yahya al-Halabi - Mu'alla b. 'Uthman - Abu Basir:

He (Abu Ja'far) said to me, "Verily, al-Hakam b. 'Utaybah is one of those about whom Allah says {And of mankind are those who say, 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day' while they are not believers} [2:8]. So, let al-Hakam go to the East, and let him go to the West. I swear by Allah, he will not find knowledge except from the people of the house to whom Jibril descended."²⁸

Al-Majlisi states:

صحيح

Sahih²⁹

However, there do occur circumstances when one is unable to study the ahadith on his own. For instance, almost none of our primary hadith books has been translated into English; and there are thousands - perhaps millions - of English-speaking Shi'is who do not speak Arabic at all. Many who know Arabic are also not proficient in the Shi'i hadith sciences. So, they are unable to distinguish the reliable ahadith from the unreliable ones. What then are they to do? In such cases, the Imams have directed that the trustworthy scholars of hadith must be contacted. We go to them to ask the authentic ahadith of the Ahl al-Bayt on specific situations. 'Allamah al-Subhani submits:

روى الكشي بسند صحيح عن علي بن المسيب قال: قلت للرضا عليه السلام: شقتي بعيدة ولست أصل إليك في كل وقت، فعمن آخذ معالم ديني؟ فقال: من زكريا بن آدم القمي، المأمون على الدين والدنيا

Al-Kishi narrated with a sahih chain from 'Ali b. al-Musayyab, who said: I said to al-Ridha, peace be upon him, "My house is far, and I do not have access to you all the time. Therefore, from whom should I take the teachings of my religion?" He said, "From Zakariya b. Adam al-Qummi, the one who is trustworthy over the world and the religion."³⁰

'Allamah al-Khui (d. 1411 H) has this further submission:

ما رواه مُحَمَّد بن يعقوب بسند صحيح، عن أبي علي أحمد بن إسحاق، عن أبي الحسن عليه السلام، قال: سألته، وقلت: من أعامل أو عمّن آخذ؟ ووقول من أقبل؟ فقال له: العمري ثقتي، فما أدى إليك عني فعني يؤدي، وما قال لك عني فعني يقول، فاسمع له وأطع، فإنه الثقة المأمون. وسأل أبو علي أبا مُحَمَّد عليه السلام عن مثل ذلك، فقال له: العمري وابنه ثقّتان، فما أديا إليك عني فعني يؤديان، وما قالوا لك فعني يقولان، فاسمع لهما وأطعهما، فإنهما الثقتان المأمونان.

What Muhammad b. Ya'qub has narrated with a sahih chain, from Abu 'Ali Ahmad b. Ishaq, from Abu al-Hasan, peace be upon him:

I (Abu 'Ali) asked him (i.e. Abu al-Hasan), saying, "Whom should I follow or from whom should I take?" And whose statement should I accept?" He (Abu al-Hasan) said to him, "Al-'Umari is someone I consider thiqah (trustworthy). Therefore, whatsoever he conveys to you from me, is from me, and whatsoever he says to you from me, he is quoting me. As such, listen to him and obey, because he is thiqah (trustworthy), reliable."

Abu 'Ali also asked Abu Muhammad, peace be upon him, a similar thing, and he said to him, "Al-'Umari and his son are thiqah (trustworthy). Therefore, whatsoever they convey to you from me, they are (truly) conveying from me; and whatsoever they say to you, they both are quoting me. As such, listen to them both and obey them, because they both are thiqah (trustworthy), reliable."³¹

This hadith supports the rijali methodology in toto. It also emphasizes that we must consult the more knowledgeable Shi'is only so that they could transmit to us - directly or indirectly - the authentic ahadith of our Imams on specific situations.

Shaykh al-Kashi (d. 370 H) records as well:

مُجَدُّ بْنُ مَسْعُودٍ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي مُجَدُّ بْنُ نَصِيرٍ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا مُجَدُّ بْنُ عَيْسَى، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ بْنِ الْمُهْتَدِيِّ الْقَمِي، قَالَ مُجَدُّ بْنُ نَصِيرٍ: قَالَ مُجَدُّ بْنُ عَيْسَى، وَحَدَّثَ الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَلِيِّ بْنِ يَقْطِينٍ، بِذَلِكَ أَيْضًا، قَالَ، قُلْتُ لِأَبِي الْحَسَنِ الرِّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: جَعَلْتَ فِدَاكَ ابْنِي لَا أَكَادُ أَصِلُ إِلَيْكَ أَسْأَلُكَ عَنْ كُلِّ مَا أَحْتَاجُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ مَعَالِمِ دِينِي، أَفِيونس بن عبد الرحمن ثقة أخذ عنه ما احتاج إليه من معالم ديني؟ فقال: نعم.

Muhammad b. Mas'ud - Muhammad b. Nasir - Muhammad b. 'Isa - 'Abd al-'Aziz b. al-Muhtadi al-Qummi:

Muhammad b. Nasir - Muhammad b. 'Isa - al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Yaqtin:

I said to Abu al-Hasan al-Ridha, peace be upon him, "May I be sacrificed for you. I barely have access to you in order to ask you everything I want concerning the teachings of my religion. Is Yunus b. 'Abd al-Rahman thiqah (trustworthy), so that I could take from him whatever I need from the teachings of my religion?" He said, "Yes."³²

Commenting on this narration, 'Allamah al-Khui says:

أقول: هذه الرواية صحيحة.

I say: This report is sahih.³³

This is like the last in its imports and implications.

Meanwhile, these roles of hadith transmission also extends into judicial matters. Shaykh al-Kulayni documents:

الحسين بن مُجَدُّ، عن معلى بن مُجَدُّ، عن الحسن بن علي، عن أبي خديجة قال: قال لي أبو عبد الله عليه السلام: إياكم أن يحاكم بعضكم بعضا إلى أهل الجور ولكن انظروا إلى رجل منكم يعلم شيئا من قضائنا فاجعلوه بينكم فأبني قد جعلته قاضيا فتحاكموا إليه.

Al-Husayn b. Muhammad - Mu'alla b. Muhammad - al-Hasan b. 'Ali - Abu Khadijah:

Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him, said to me, "Beware of taking one another for judgment to the unjust people. Instead, look unto a man from amongst you who knows something of our judgments and place him between yourselves (to settle your cases), for I have appointed him a judge. Therefore, take your cases to him for judgment."³⁴

Ayatullah Sadiq al-Ruhani declares about this hadith:

صحيح

Sahih³⁵

The required qualification of the judge shows that his job is strictly to apply the judgments of the Ahl al-Bayt in the cases before him. If he does not know the judgments of the Imams - which, incidentally, are found only in the reliable ahadith - then, he cannot legitimately adjudicate between Shi'is.

Al-Kulayni provides a shahid as well:

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَحْيَى، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَيْسَى، عَنْ صَفْوَانَ، عَنْ دَاوُدَ بْنِ الْحَصِينِ، عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ حَنْظَلَةَ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَنْ رَجُلَيْنِ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُمَا مَنَازَعَةٌ فِي دِينٍ أَوْ مِيرَاثٍ فَتَحَاكَمَا إِلَى السُّلْطَانِ أَوْ إِلَى الْقَضَاةِ أَيْجَلُ ذَلِكَ؟ فَقَالَ: مَنْ تَحَاكَمَ إِلَى الطَّاغُوتِ فَحُكِمَ لَهُ فَإِنَّمَا يَأْخُذُ سِحْتَنَا وَإِنْ كَانَ حَقُّهُ ثَابِتًا لِأَنَّهُ أَخَذَ بِحُكْمِ الطَّاغُوتِ وَقَدْ أَمَرَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْفَرَ بِهِ قُلْتُ: كَيْفَ يَصْنَعَانِ قَالَ: انظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ قَدْ رَوَى حَدِيثَنَا وَنَظَرَ فِي حَالِنَا وَحَرَامِنَا وَعَرَفَ أَحْكَامِنَا فَارْضُوا بِهِ حَكْمًا فَإِنِّي قَدْ جَعَلْتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاكِمًا فَإِذَا حُكِمَ بِحُكْمِنَا فَلَمْ يَقْبَلْهُ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّمَا بِحُكْمِ اللَّهِ قَدْ اسْتَخَفَّ وَعَلَيْنَا رَدُّ الرَّادِّ عَلَيْنَا الرَّادِّ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ عَلَى حَدِّ الشَّرْكِ بِاللَّهِ.

Muhammad b. Yahya - Muhammad b. al-Husayn - Muhammad b. 'Isa - Safwan - Dawud b. al-Husayn - 'Umar b. Hanzalah:

I asked Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him, about two men from our companions (i.e. from the Shi'is) who have a dispute between them concerning a debt or an inheritance, and they take their case to the (non-Shi'i) ruler or to the (non-Shi'i) judges. Is this permissible?" He replied, "Whosoever takes his cases to the idol, and he delivers a judgment in his favour, he has only obtained (it) illegally even if it were his established right, because he has taken the judgment of the idol while Allah has commanded him to disbelieve in it."

I said, "What should they both do?" He replied, "Look towards whoever amongst you has narrated our ahadith, has researched our halal and our haram, and knows our rulings; and accede to his jurisdiction, for I have appointed him a judge over you. Whenever he passes a ruling with our rulings, and it is not accepted from him, then verily, it is only the Ruling of Allah that has been belittled, and we would have been rejected (in such a situation). Meanwhile, the rejecter of us is the rejecter of Allah, and it (i.e. the act of rejection) is equivalent to shirk (idolatry) with Allah."³⁶

Al-Majlisi says about it:

موثق

Muwaththaq.³⁷

Hadi al-Najafi also declares:

الرواية مقبولة الإسناد

The report has an acceptable chain³⁸

And Ayatullah Sadiq al-Ruhani has some additional comments about the same riwayah:

وتضعيف الخبر كما عن بعض لا وجه له، لأنه ليس في السند من يتوقف فيه سوى داود بن الحصين وقد وثقه النجاشي فلو ثبت ما عن الشيخ - ره - من وقفه فالخبر موثق. وعمر بن حنظلة وقد وثقه جماعة منهم الشهيد الثاني - ره - وورد في مدحه روايات وكثير من الأجلاء يروون عنه مع أن الراوي عنهما صفوان بن يحيى وهو ممن أجمعت العصابة على تصحيح ما يصح عنهم

The weakening of the report, as done by some, has no basis. This is because there is none in the chain about whom caution is exercised except Dawud b. al-Husayn, and he has been declared thiqah (trustworthy) by al-Najashi. Even if what is stated from Shaykh, may Allah be pleased with him, concerning his Waqifism is proved, then the report would be muwaththaq. As for 'Umar b. Hanzalah, he has been declared thiqah (trustworthy) by a group, among them al-Shahid al-Thani, may Allah be pleased with him. A number of reports praising him have also been documented, and a lot of the important narrators narrated from him. Plus, the narrator from him (in this hadith) is Safwan b. Yahya, and he was from among those whose reports are unanimously accepted by the group as sahih, if the chain up to them is sahih.³⁹

Notes

1. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Athar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 23, p. 26, Ch. 01, # 35
2. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 1, p. 405
3. Hasan b. 'Ali al-Saqqaf al-Qurashi al-Hashimi al-Husayni, Sahih Sharh al-'Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah (Amman: Dar Imam al-Nawawi; 1st edition, 1416 H), p. 654
4. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Athar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 23, p. 23, Ch. 01, # 26
5. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 1, p. 405
6. Muhammad Zakariya, al-Sahih wa al-Mu'tabar min Akhbar al-Hujjah al-Muntazar (Majmu'at al-Rasid; 1st edition, 1434 H), p. 26, # 17
7. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Athar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 23, p. 33, Ch. 01, # 54
8. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 1, p. 405.

9. Muhammad Husayn al-Tabatabaai, al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an (Qum: Manshurat Jama'at al-Mudarisin fi al-Hawzah al-'Ilmiyyah), vol. 19, p. 257
10. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah (Qum: Muasassat al-Nashr al-Islami li Jama'at al-Mudarisin; 1405 H) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], p. 350, Ch. 33, # 44
11. Muhammad Zakariya, al-Sahih wa al-Mu'tabar min Akhbar al-Hujjah al-Muntazar (Majmu'at al-Rasid; 1st edition, 1434 H), p. 16, # 4
12. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah (Qum: Muasassat al-Nashr al-Islami li Jama'at al-Mudarisin; 1405 H) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], p. 348-349, Ch. 33, # 40
13. Muhammad Zakariya, al-Sahih wa al-Mu'tabar min Akhbar al-Hujjah al-Muntazar (Majmu'at al-Rasid; 1st edition, 1434 H), p. 44, # 39
14. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-Kafi (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah; 3rd edition) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, p. 52, # 10
15. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 1, p. 180
16. Hadi al-Najafi, Mawsu'at Ahadith Ahl al-Bayt (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1423 H), vol. 3, p. 77, # 2582
17. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-Kafi (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah; 3rd edition) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, p. 30, # 1
18. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 1, p. 43
19. Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Hurr al-'Amili, Amal al-Amil (Baghdad: Maktabah al-Andalus)[annotator: Sayyid Ahmad al-Husayni], vol. 1, p. 4
20. Qur'an 2:120. See also 2:145, 3:19, 3:61, 10:93, 13:37, 18:65 and 27:15
21. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-Kafi (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah; 3rd edition) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, p. 34, # 4
22. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 1, p. 111
23. Hadi al-Najafi, Mawsu'at Ahadith Ahl al-Bayt (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1423 H), vol. 11, p. 209, # 13897
24. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-Kafi (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah; 3rd edition) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, p. 399, # 1
25. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 4, p. 307
26. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-Kafi (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah; 3rd edition) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, p. 399, # 3
27. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 4, p. 309
28. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-Kafi (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah; 3rd edition) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, pp. 399-400, # 4
29. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 4, p. 309
30. Ja'far al-Subhani, Kulliyat fi 'Ilm al-Rijal (Qum: Muasassat al-Nashr al-Islami; 3rd edition, 1414 H), p. 151
31. Abu al-Qasim al-Musawi al-Khui, Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith wa Tafsir Tabaqat al-Ruwat (5th edition, 1413 H), vol. 12, pp. 123-124, # 7604

32. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Tusi, Ikhtiyar Ma'rifat al-Rijal (Muasassat Al al-Bayt) [annotator: Sayyid Mahdi al-Rajai], vol. 2, p. 784, # 935
33. Abu al-Qasim al-Musawi al-Khui, Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith wa Tafsil Tabaqat al-Ruwat (5th edition, 1413 H), vol. 21, p. 217, # 13863
34. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq, al-Furu min al-Kafi (Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 7, p. 412, # 4
35. Muhammad Sadiq al-Husayni al-Ruhani, Fiqh al-Sadiq (Qum: Muasassat Dar al-Kitab; 3rd edition, 1414 H), vol. 25, p. 18
36. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq, al-Furu min al-Kafi (Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 7, p. 412, # 5
37. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 24, p. 279
38. Hadi al-Najafi, Mawsu'at Ahadith Ahl al-Bayt (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1423 H), vol. 5, p. 323, # 6114
39. Muhammad Sadiq al-Husayni al-Ruhani, Fiqh al-Sadiq (Qum: Muasassat Dar al-Kitab; 3rd edition, 1414 H), vol. 25, pp. 25-26

19. The Mahdi's Conquests: Ordinary Events Or Mammoth Miracles?

'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) summarizes the mainstream Sunni view of the Mahdi, 'alaihi al-salam, for us:

أما المهدي المبشر به في الأحاديث الصحيحة، ومنها قوله عليه الصلاة والسلام: «لا تنقضي الدنيا حتى يبعث الله رجلاً يوافق اسمه اسمي، واسم أبيه اسم أبي - أي مُحَمَّد بن عبد الله - يملأ الأرض قسطاً وعدلاً كما ملئت جوراً وظلماً»، يملأ الأرض قسطاً وعدلاً كما ملئت جوراً وظلماً، «يمكث في الأرض سبع سنوات أو ثمان سنوات.»

فإذن المهدي مُحَمَّد بن عبد الله هو رجل من المجددين، الذين أخبر الرسول عليه السلام عنهم بقوله: «إن الله يبعث لهذه الأمة من يجدد لها دينها على رأس كل مائة سنة». فالمهدي ما هو إلا إنسان عادي عالم مصلح، الناس يتبعونه لعلمه ولصلاحه؛ ولذلك ففي زمانه يرى الناس العدل، ولا يعودون يرون الجور والظلم [كما هو] حال المسلمين اليوم يعيشونه في كل بلاد الإسلام مع الأسف الشديد.

«لا تنقضي الدنيا حتى يبعث الله رجلاً يوافق اسمه اسمي، واسم أبيه اسم أبي، يملأ الأرض قسطاً وعدلاً كما ملئت جوراً وظلماً.»

هذا المهدي إنسان من العلماء المصلحين لم تلد النساء مثله بعد الصحابة والخلفاء الراشدين.

As for the Mahdi whose glad tidings are given in the sahih ahadith, and among them is his statement, peace and blessings be upon him: "The world will not end until Allah SENDS a man whose name will match my name, and the name of his father is the name of my father - that is Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah - he will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it had been filled with aggression and oppression" "He will live on the earth for seven years or eight years".

In that case, the Mahdi is Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah. He is one of the renewers, about whom the Messenger, peace be upon him, informed in his statement: "Verily, Allah appoints for this Ummah, at the head of every one hundred years, someone who renews its religion for it". So, the Mahdi is nothing other than a MEDIOCRE human being, a scholar, a reformer. The people will follow him due to his knowledge and righteousness. This is why during his time, mankind will live in justice; and they will not continue to suffer aggression and injustice, as is the conditions of the Muslims today who suffer it in all the Muslim countries, very unfortunately. "The world will not end until Allah sends a man. His name will match my name, and the name of his father is the name of my father. He will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it had been filled with aggression and injustice".

This is the Mahdi, a person from the reforming scholars. Women have not given birth to anyone like him after the Sahabah and the khulafa al-rashidin.¹

We have already established the severe weakness of the ahadith mentioning the name of the Mahdi's father in the Sunni books. Therefore, al-Albani's pretence that they are "sahih" is deceptive and misleading. There is simply no basis throughout all Sunni books for identifying Imam al-Mahdi's father as one 'Abd Allah. The bottom-line is: the Mahdi which the majority of Sunnis are expecting - one Muhammad, son of one 'Abd Allah - is never coming, and exists only in their wishful thinking. There is ZERO reliable evidence for his existence in the Sunni and Shi'i books. Meanwhile, it is indeed established that the name of the real Mahdi himself is Muhammad. But, what is the name of his father? This is unknown through any authentic report in the Sunni books.

At this point, we must quote again this wild misinformation of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) as well:

فالمهدي الذي أخبر به النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم اسمه مُحَمَّد بن عبد الله لا مُحَمَّد بن الحسن

وقد روى عن علي رضي الله عنه أنه قال هو من ولد الحسن بن علي لا من ولد الحسين بن علي

So, the Mahdi who was prophesied by the Prophet, peace be upon him, his name is Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah, NOT Muhammad b. al-Hasan. Moreover, it has been narrated that 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said that he (the Mahdi) would be from the descendants of al-Hasan b. 'Ali, NOT from the descendants of al-Husayn b. 'Ali.²

But, that athar of 'Ali, 'alaihi al-salam, is dha'if too, as we have proved! Why do the top 'ulama of the Ahl al-Sunnah keep deceiving their followers about the Mahdi of Islam? The situation is so bad that if Allah sends His Mahdi today, and his name is Muhammad, but his father's name is not 'Abd Allah, the majority of Sunnis would revolt against him! Worse still, even if he had been Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah, but from the offspring of al-Husayn, 'alaihi al-salam, our Sunni brothers would still take up arms against the one sent by their Lord. Whereas, there is no shred of acceptable evidence in the Sunni books that the Mahdi would have a father named 'Abd Allah, or that he would be from the offspring of Imam al-Hasan, 'alaihi al-salam! Apparently, the Sunni 'ulama deliberately mislead their unsuspecting followers about the Awaited Imam, perhaps to turn them away from the Twelfth Imam of the Ahl al-Bayt, 'alaihim al-salam. Therefore, due to the unfaithful actions of their scholars, the majority of the Ahl al-Sunnah are extremely likely to take up arms against the true Mahdi the moment he "comes out". This in part, perhaps, explains why his first army will be made up of people from Khurasan.

'Allamah al-Albani also claims that the Mahdi is a "mediocre" person, apparently with no exceptional qualities or abilities. Yet, he too agrees that he is "sent" by Allah to the world. When does our Lord ever send mediocre people?! Whosoever is sent from Him is always equipped with extraordinary personal qualities and always assisted to secure supernatural achievements - few or many. For instance, this Mahdi will bring equity and justice to all the nooks and crannies of this earth, and will have all of

humanity under his unified kingdom. He will also transform our sad planet into a little paradise, and his reign will usher in the happiest phase of human existence ever. Does all that really sound “mediocre”? Can any random human being truly achieve these feats? We believe they are some of the greatest miracles of Allah.

Ask a typical Sunni how the Awaited Imam will conquer the whole world, and he has no clue. His scholars have always told him that the Mahdi is only a “mediocre” human being; and we often see Sunnis parroting this on online forums and social media. So, they expect no real miracle from him. Whatever he can do, any other ordinary Muslim scholar can do it also. Apparently, they either expect the Imam to militarily defeat, occupy and rule the entire earth with rifles, tanks, fighter jets, warplanes, and similar weapons, or, alternatively, to peacefully convert the whole of humanity to Islam and to submission to his kingdom and teachings through powerful sermons. But, which of those two theories is possible, to begin with?! And, which of them can be achieved by mediocre men?

Basically, Sunni Islam has no idea how the Mahdi will successfully carry out his global revolution, and - importantly - without committing atrocities in the process. In fact, by the Sunni “mediocre” view of the Imam, his mission is impossible. However, the Shi’ah have the answer. Shaykh al-Saduq (d. 381 H) documents:

حدثنا أحمد بن زياد بن جعفر الهمداني رضي الله عنه قال: حدثنا علي بن إبراهيم، عن أبيه، عن الريان بن الصلت قال: قلت للرضا عليه السلام: أنت صاحب هذا الامر؟ فقال: أنا صاحب هذا الامر ولكني لست بالذي أملاها عدلا كما ملئت جورا، وكيف أكون ذلك على ما ترى من ضعف بدني، وإن القائم هو الذي إذا خرج كان في سن الشيوخ ومنظر الشبان، قويا في بدنه حتى لو مد يده إلى أعظم شجرة على وجه الأرض لقلعها، ولو صاح بين الجبال لتدكدكت صخورها، يكون معه عصا موسى، وخاتم سليمان عليهما السلام. ذاك الرابع من ولدي، يغيبه الله في ستره ما شاء، ثم يظهره فيملاً [به الأرض قسما وعدلا كما ملئت جورا وظلما

Ahmad b. Ziyad b. Ja’far al-Hamdani, may Allah be pleased with him - ‘Ali b. Ibrahim - his father - al-Rayan b. al-Salt:

I said to al-Ridha, peace be upon him, “Are you the one in charge of this matter?” So, he replied, “I am the one in charge of this matter. But, I am not the one who will fill it with justice just as it had been filled with injustice. How can I be that one with what you see of the weakness of my body? Verily, the Qaim is the one who, when he comes out, will have an old age but the appearance of a young man. He will be so strong physically that if he stretched his hand to the biggest tree on the face of the earth, he would surely uproot it; and if he shouted among the mountains, their rocks would explode. With him will be the staff of Musa and the ring of Sulayman, peace be upon them both. He will be the fourth in line from my offspring. Allah will make him invisible in His concealment for as long as He wishes. Then,

He will make him visible; and He (Allah) will, through him, fill the earth with equity and justice just as it had been filled with oppression and injustice.”³

Al-Haj Muhammad Zakariya says about it:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.⁴

It seems that the al-Ridha, ‘alaihi al-salam, adopted the literary tool of hyperbole (mubalaghah) to emphasize on the extreme physical strength of Imam al-Hujjah⁵. Alternatively, it may be that the Eighth Imam was actually indicating that the physical strength of the Twelfth Imam would be helped with divine miracles whenever he exercised it. Allah knows best. Our primary interest is in the staff of Musa, ‘alaihi al-salam, and the ring of Sulayman, ‘alaihi al-salam, which will be with Imam al-Mahdi when he comes out. The Imam will certainly perform mammoth miracles through them, as the two prophets did. However, the exact nature or form of these miracles are unknown to us through the sahih ahadith.

Meanwhile, the Mahdi will also come with something else, which was never held by any prophet, messenger or Imam before him. Al-Saduq again reports:

حدثنا مُحَمَّد بن الحسن بن أحمد بن الوليد رضي الله عنه قال: حدثنا مُحَمَّد ابن الحسن الصفار، عن يعقوب بن يزيد، عن مُحَمَّد بن أبي عمير، عن أبان بن عثمان عن أبان بن تغلب قال: حدثني أبو حمزة الثمالي قال: قال أبو جعفر عليه السلام: كأني أنظر إلى القائم عليه السلام قد ظهر على نجف الكوفة فإذا ظهر على النجف نشر راية رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله، (و) عمودها من عمد عرش الله تعالى، وسائرهما من نصر الله عز وجل، ولا تحوى بها إلى أحد إلا أهلكه الله تعالى، قال: قلت: أو تكون معه أو يؤتى بها؟ قال: بلي يؤتى بها، يأتيه بها جبرئيل عليه السلام.

Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Ahmad b. al-Walid, may Allah be pleased with him - Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. al-Saffar - Ya'qub b. Yazid - Muhammad b. Abi 'Umair - Aban b. 'Uthman - Aban b. Taghlib - Abu Hamzah al-Thumali:

Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, said: “It is as though I am looking at the Qaim, peace be upon him, after he has appeared upon Najaf al-Kufa. So, when he appears upon al-Najaf, he will unfurl the banner of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family. Its pole will be from the pillars of the Throne of Allah the Most High: and the rest of it will be from the Nasr (Victory) of Allah the Almighty. He will not point with it towards anyone except that Allah the Most High will destroy him (i.e. that person).” I asked, “Will it (always) with him or will it be brought to him?” He replied, “Rather, Jibrail, peace be upon him, will bring it to him.”⁶

Al-Haj Muhammad Zakariya says about it:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.⁷

So, even if an army of millions gather against our saviour, the moment he points towards them with the banner of the Messenger of Allah, 'alaihi al-salam - with its new pole and other new features - all of them will drop dead instantly by the Command of Allah. It then will take only minutes to conquer entire cities, and merely hours to overrun and completely secure whole countries. His soldiers will, in fact, only do minimum fighting - if any at all. But then, he will need them to occupy liberated territories to extend the Kingdom of Allah into them. This way, the Mahdi will be able to conquer even the greatest superpowers with minimum or no resistance, and with no unnecessary loss to innocent lives and no unnecessary infrastructural damage. From the look of it, it is very likely that after his initial victories in the Middle East, a lot of armies across the world will rush to pledge allegiance to him, even before he gets to their countries. Humanity will also witness great powers of Allah through him; and, there is a huge chance that they will thereby troop into his religion en masse.

But, there is an interesting note here. The Mahdi is "sent" by Allah to destroy aggression and injustice on the earth. Yet, a lot of religions and sects are themselves both aggressive and oppressive. So, what does he do? Will he have to ban all those religions and sects? If he does, what about the religious freedoms of the practitioners of such faiths? The truth, however, is that there is really no freedom to inflict aggression or oppression upon others. Therefore, the Awaited Imam will basically outlaw every religion and sect, except the only true one revealed by Allah. It is only the religion of our Lord that is truly free of aggressive and oppressive teachings and doctrines. Unless he does this, he will never fulfil his mission. Al-Majlisi (d. 1111 H) has this hadith on the step he will take:

الكافي: علي، عن أبيه، عن ابن أبي عمير، عن ابن أذينة، عن محمد بن مسلم قال: قلت لأبي جعفر عليه السلام: قول الله عز ذكره وقاتلوهم حتى لا تكون فتنة ويكون الدين كله لله قال: لم يجيء تأويل هذه الآية بعد، إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله رخص لهم لحاجته وحاجة أصحابه، فلو قد جاء تأويلها لم يقبل منهم ولكنهم يقتلون حتى يوحد الله عز وجل وحتى لا يكون شرك.

Al-Kafi: 'Ali - his father - Ibn Abi 'Umayr - Ibn Uzaynah - Muhammad b. Muslim:

I said to Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, "The statement of Allah the Almighty: 'And fight against them until there is no more oppression and all worship is devoted to Allah.' (8:39)" He said, "The tawil (implementation) of this verse has not come yet. Verily, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, permitted them due to his needs and the needs of his Sahabah. But, when its tawil comes, such would not be accepted from them. Rather, they will be killed until Allah the Almighty is declared to be One, and until there is no more shirk (idolatry)."⁸

This hadith has a mu'tabar (reliable) chain, according to Ayatullah al-Muhsini.⁹ Al-Majlisi also says about it in his Mir-at:

حسن

Hasan.¹⁰

It shows how the Mahdi will eradicate all the religions which were founded upon deceit and oppression, or which survive upon both. Meanwhile, this job - apparently - has been assigned to him alone, and none before him is allowed to do it. The tawil of that ayah comes with him only, and with no one else.

The Awaited Imam will also eradicate all oppressive and aggressive cultures, rituals and practices as well, among Muslims and non-Muslims. Al-Majlisi again transmits:

التهديب: الصفار، عن ابن أبي الخطاب، عن جعفر بن بشير ومُحمَّد بن عبد الله بن هلال، عن العلا، عن مُحمَّد قال: سألت أبا جعفر عليه السلام عن القائم إذا قام بأي سيرة يسير في الناس؟ فقال: بسيرة ما سار به رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله حتى يظهر الاسلام قلت: وما كانت سيرة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله؟ قال: أبطل ما كانت في الجاهلية، واستقبل الناس بالعدل، وكذلك القائم عليه السلام إذا قام يبطل ما كان في الهدنة مما كان في أيدي الناس ويستقبل بهم العدل

Al-Tahdhib: al-Saffar - Ibn Abi al-Khatab - Ja'far b. Bashir and Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah b. Hilal - al-'Ala - Muhammad:

I asked Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, concerning the Qaim, "When he rises, which line of action will he adopt with regards to mankind?" He replied, "He will adopt the same line of action which the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, adopted until Islam triumphed". I said, "And what was the line of action of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family?" He said, "He outlawed what was during the Jahiliyyah period, and made mankind incline to justice. The Qaim too, peace be upon him, when he rises, he will outlaw what was during the armistice from what was in the hands of mankind, and will call them to justice."¹¹

Its chain too is mu'tabar (reliable), according to Ayatullah al-Muhsini.¹² Interestingly, the hadith describes the period up to the rise of Imam al-Mahdi as that of "the armistice". Apparently, all Muslim countries and individuals - especially the Shi'ah Imamiyyah - are supposed to be in peace and harmony with all non-Shi'is, including even non-Muslims - except perhaps in cases of strict self-defence - until whenever the Qaim rises.

Meanwhile, from the submissions of 'Allamah al-Albani quoted at the beginning of this chapter, we find these words of his to be really very careless:

«يمكث في الأرض سبع سنوات أو ثمان سنوات.»

<>

In that same book, al-Albani repeats it, with further emphasis:

فلو خرج [المهدي و] وجد التسعمائة مليون مسلم متفرقين شذر مذر حتى يجمعهم على فكرة واحدة، على تصفية وعلى تربية، يحتاج إلى كذا سنين هو، ونص الحديث يمكث في الأرض سبع سنين، ثمان سنين

If he [the Mahdi] came out, and he found 900 million Muslims divided in all directions, in order to unite them upon the same thinking, upon the same spiritual purification, and upon the same moral training, he would need such-and-such number of years, while THE EXPLICIT TEXT of the hadith is: “He will live on the earth for seven years, eight years”.¹³

He has claimed that this is from a “sahih” hadith about the Mahdi. But, that “explicit text” exists in NO Sunni or Shi’i hadith about the Imam! From every indication, it is only a false statement which al-Albani has attributed to the Messenger of Allah. However, did he do it intentionally or by mistake? We do not know. Besides, we are sure that the fallacy of that fake hadith is beyond obvious anyway. It is suggesting that the Mahdi would have liberated and ruled the entire world before he reaches the age of seven, and that he would then die at that age as a kid!

Notes

1. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Mawsu’at al-‘Allamah al-Albani (Sana, Yemen: Markaz al-Nu’man li al-Buhuth wa al-Dirasat al-Islamiyyah wa Tahqiq al-Turath wa al-Tarjamah; 1st edition, 1431 H) [producer: Shadi b. Muhammad b. Salim Al Nu’man], vol. 9, pp. 236-237, # 1581
2. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 4, p. 95
3. Abu Ja’far Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni’mah (Qum: Muasassat al-Nashr al-Islami li Jama’at al-Mudarisin; 1405 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], p. 376, Ch. 35, # 7
4. Muhammad Zakariya, al-Sahih wa al-Mu’tabar min Akhbar al-Hujjah al-Muntazar (Majmu’at al-Rasid; 1st edition, 1434 H), p. 20, # 10
5. The Qur’an too has used hyperbole in a number of verses, such as 7:40 and 33:10
6. Abu Ja’far Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni’mah (Qum: Muasassat al-Nashr al-Islami li Jama’at al-Mudarisin; 1405 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], p. 672, Ch. 58, # 23
7. Muhammad Zakariya, al-Sahih wa al-Mu’tabar min Akhbar al-Hujjah al-Muntazar (Majmu’at al-Rasid; 1st edition, 1434 H), p. 42, # 37
8. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami’ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-A’thar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 378, Ch. 27, # 181
9. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra’ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-‘Arif li al-Matbu’at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233
10. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-‘Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 26, p. 110
11. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami’ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-A’thar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 381, Ch. 27, # 192
12. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra’ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-‘Arif li al-Matbu’at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233
13. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Mawsu’at al-‘Allamah al-Albani (Sana, Yemen: Markaz al-Nu’man li

al-Buhuth wa al-Dirasat al-Islamiyyah wa Tahqiq al-Turath wa al-Tarjamah; 1st edition, 1431 H) [producer: Shadi b. Muhammad b. Salim Al Nu'man], vol. 9, p. 235, # 1580

20. Some Commonly Misused Shi'i Ahadith On The Mahdi

In this chapter, we will be examining the ahadith that are often quoted from Shi'i books by some Sunni elements to "expose the Shi'i Mahdi". These reports are found in almost every anti-Shi'i article or book, as long as the topic is, or is related to, al-mahdawiyyah. What our noble reader will soon notice is that it is extremely rare to find a single reliable hadith among them. Unfortunately, this is the ugly tradition of the Ahl al-Sunnah concerning Shi'i riwayat generally. The chance that a Sunni will, in any situation, quote a reliable hadith from the Shi'i sources to prove any point against the Shi'ah is virtually nil. Even then, those dha'if reports are still often overstretched to "prove" what their texts clearly do not indicate! May Allah save our Ummah from ignorant and dishonest "callers".

So, we strongly advise our brothers and sisters from the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah and the Shi'ah Imamiyyah: whenever anyone - whether Sunni, Shi'i or otherwise - claims to you that a certain hadith exists in the Shi'i sources, demand adamantly that he must produce:

- (i) its full Arabic text with its chain of narration;
- (ii) evidence of the reliability of its sanad;
- (iii) its primary source with the full citation;
- (iv) a declaration that it does not originate from a dha'if source book;
- (v) a declaration that it does not contradict the Qur'an as interpreted in authentic Shi'i ahadith; and
- (vi) a declaration that it does not contradict superior Shi'i ahadith.

When you do this, you have already won 2/3 of the battle to defeat deceit and trickery.

Narration One

'Allamah al-Majlisi (d. 1111 H) records:

الغيبية للنعمانى: ابن عقدة، عن مُحَمَّد بن المفضل بن إبراهيم عن مُحَمَّد بن عبد الله ابن زرارَةَ،
عن الحارث بن المغيرة وذريح الحاربي قالوا: قال أبو عبد الله عليه السلام:
ما بقي بيننا وبين العرب إلا الذبح وأوماً بيده إلى حلقه.

Al-Ghaybah of al-Nu'mani: Ibn 'Uqdah - Muhammad b. al-Mufadhdhal b. Ibrahim - Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah b. Zurarah - al-Harith b. al-Mughirah and Dhurayh al-Muharibi:

Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him, said: "Nothing remains between us and the Arabs except slaughter." And he gestured with his hand to his throat.¹

This hadith is dha'if, according to Ayatullah al-Muhsini,². Therefore, it is not a proof; and it is not entirely honest of anyone to quote it against the Shi'ah.

NOTE: The report was copied by al-Majlisi from al-Ghaybah of al-Nu'mani. For a hadith to be authentic, it must be (i) from an authentic book, (ii) with an authentic chain. If either of these two conditions is missing, then the riwayat collapses. In the present case, the weakness of the report is glaring at the very first glance, even without further look into its sanad. It is

from al-Ghaybah of al-Nu'mani - a dha'if book. The origin and genuineness of the book are not established through reliable means, and the preservation of its texts is in question too³. Other similarly dha'if books are Basair al-Darajat of al-Saffar, Amali of al-Mufid, Amali of al-Tusi, the Tafsir attributed to al-Qummi, Kitab al-Mahasin of al-Barqi, al-Ikhtisas attributed to al-Mufid, Qurb al-Isnad of 'Abd Allah or his son Muhammad, and the Tafsir attributed to Imam al-Hasan al-Askari, 'alaihi al-salam⁴. There are also a few more others, for instance Kitab Sulaym. Therefore, when a riwayah is quoted from any of these and other dha'if books, it is thrown out to the dogs whatever its sanad, unless it is seen that it has been authentically transmitted in one of the established books.

Narration Two

'Allamah al-Majlisi records:

بصائر الدرجات: حمزة بن يعلى، عن مُحَمَّد بن الفضيل، عن الربيعي، عن رفيد مولى ابن هبيرة قال: قلت لأبي عبد الله عليه السلام: جعلت فداك يا ابن رسول الله يسير القائم بسيرة علي بن أبي طالب في أهل السواد؟ فقال: لا، يا رفيد إن علي بن أبي طالب سار في أهل السواد بما في الجفر الأبيض، وإن القائم يسير في العرب بما في الجفر الأحمر، قال: فقلت: جعلت فداك وما الجفر الأحمر؟ قال: فأمر أصبعه على خلقه فقال: هكذا يعني الذبح

Basair al-Darajat: Hamzah b. Ya'la - Muhammad b. al-Fudhayl - al-Rib'i - Rufayd, freed slave of Ibn Hubayrah:

I said to Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him, "May I be sacrificed for you, O son of the Messenger of Allah. Will the Qaim follow the tradition of 'Ali b. Abi Talib concerning the people of the sawad?" He replied, "No, O Rufayd. Verily, 'Ali b. Abi Talib followed concerning the people of the sawad what is in the white scroll, and verily the Qaim will follow concerning the Arabs what is in the red scroll." So, I said, "May I be sacrificed for you, what is the red scroll?" He passed his finger over his throat and said, "It is like that", meaning slaughter.⁵

This same report is narrated through another chain, as quoted by al-Majlisi:

بصائر الدرجات: أحمد بن مُحَمَّد، عن ابن سنان، عن رفيد مولى أبي هبيرة، عن أبي عبد الله

عليه السلام

Basair al-Darajat: Ahmad b. Muhammad - Ibn Sinan - Rufayd, freed slave of Abi Hubayrah - Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him.⁶

Again, this hadith - which is patently from a dha'if book - is dha'if, according to Ayatullah Muhsini⁷. Shaykh 'Ali Al Muhsin also states about the riwayah:

وهو حديث ضعيف

It is a dha'if hadith.⁸

Meanwhile, Shaykh al-Najashi (d. 450 H) further submits about one of its narrators:

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ سِنَانَ ... هُوَ رَجُلٌ ضَعِيفٌ جَدًّا لَا يَعُولُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتُ إِلَى مَا تَفَرَّدَ بِهِ

Muhammad b. Sinan ... he is a man who is dha'if jiddan (very weak). He is not relied upon, and no attention is paid to whatever he narrated without corroboration.⁹

And, Shaykh al-Jawahiri also declares about another - who is variously identified as a freed slave of "Ibn Hubayrah", "Abu Hubayrah" and "Banu Hubayrah":

رَفِيدٌ مَوْلَى بَنِي هُبَيْرَةَ: مَجْهُولٌ

Rufayd, freed slave of Banu Hubayrah: Majhul.¹⁰

So, it is a severely dha'if report. This implication of this, of course, is obvious.

Narration Three

'Allamah al-Majlisi records:

الغيبية للنعماني: علي بن الحسين، عن محمد العطار، عن محمد بن الحسن، عن محمد بن علي الكوفي، عن البزنطي، عن العلاء، عن محمد قال: سمعت أبا جعفر عليه السلام يقول: لو يعلم الناس ما يصنع القائم إذا خرج لأحب أكثرهم أن لا يروه مما يقتل من الناس، أما إنه لا يبدء إلا بقريش، فلا يأخذ منها إلا السيف ولا يعطيها إلا السيف حتى يقول كثير من الناس: ليس هذا من آل محمد، لو كان من آل محمد لرحم.

Al-Ghaybah of al-Nu'mani: 'Ali b. al-Husayn - Muhammad al-'Attar - Muhammad b. al-Hasan - Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Kufi - al-Bazanti - al-'Ala - Muhammad - Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him:

If the people knew what the Qaim will do when he rises, most of them would love not to see him, due to those he will kill from the people. But, he will not start (the killings) except with Quraysh. He will not take from it except the sword, and will not give to it except the sword, until a lot of people will say, "This one is not from the family of Muhammad. If he were from the family of Muhammad, he would have been merciful."¹¹

It is from a dha'if book. It is equally a dha'if report according to Ayatullah Muhsini.¹² Meanwhile, Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Kufi in the chain is majhul, as he has no valid tawthiq.

Narration Four

'Allamah al-Majlisi records:

الإرشاد: روى عبد الله بن المغيرة، عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: إذا قام القائم من آل محمد عليهم السلام أقام خمسمائة من قريش فضرِبَ أعناقهم، ثم أقام خمسمائة أخرى حتى يفعل ذلك ست مرات قلت: ويبلغ عدد هؤلاء هذا؟ قال: نعم منهم ومن مواليتهم.

Al-Irshad: 'Abd Allah b. al-Mughirah narrated that Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him, said:

"When the Qaim from the family of Muhammad, peace be upon him, rises, he will raise up five hundred from Quraysh, and will hit their necks. Then, he will raise up another five hundred until he will do that six times."

I said, "And the number of these people will be up to that?" He said, "Yes, from them and their followers."¹³

The hadith is dha'if according to Ayatullah Muhsini.¹⁴ It is apparently a mursal report, with no chain of narration.

Narration Five

'Allamah al-Majlisi records:

غيبة الشيخ الطوسي: الفضل، عن علي بن أسباط، عن أبيه أسباط بن سالم، عن موسى الأبار، عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام أنه قال: اتق العرب فإن لهم خير سوء أما إنه لم يخرج مع القائم منهم واحد.

Ghaybah of Shaykh al-Tusi: al-Fadhil - 'Ali b. Asbat - his father Asbat b. Salim - Musa al-Abar - Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him:

Fear the Arabs, for there is evil news for them. Verily, not one of them will rise with the Qaim.¹⁵

This hadith is dha'if, according to Ayatullah Muhsini¹⁶. Shaykh 'Ali Al Muhsin also says about it:

وهذه الرواية ضعيفة السند، فإن راوي الرواية موسى الأبار مجهول الحال، لم يثبت توثيقه في كتب الرجال، والراوي عنه أسباط بن سالم، وهو لم يُوثَّق.

This report has a dha'if chain, for the narrator of the report, Musa al-Abar, is majhul in status. His tawthiq is not established in the books of al-rijal. The narrator from him, as well, Asbat b. Salim, he has no tawthiq.¹⁷

Of course, a lot of the helpers of the Mahdi, 'alaihi al-salam, will be from the Arabs.

Narration Six

'Allamah al-Majlisi records:

وروى ابن عياش في المقتضب، عن الحسين بن علي بن سفيان البزوفري عن محمد بن علي بن الحسن البوشنجاني، عن أبيه، عن محمد بن سليمان، عن أبيه، عن النوشجان بن البودمردان، قال: لما جلى الفرس عن القادسية وبلغ يزيدجرد بن شهريار ما كان من رستم وإدالة العرب عليه وظن أن رستم قد هلك والفرس جميعا وجاء مبادر وأخبره بيوم القادسية وانجلائها عن خمسين ألف قتيل، خرج يزيدجرد هاربا في أهل بيته ووقف بباب الإيوان، وقال: السلام عليك أيها الإيوان! ها أنا ذا منصرف عنك وراجع إليك، أنا أو رجل من ولدي لم يدين زمانه ولا آن أو انه. قال سليمان الديلمي: فدخلت على أبي عبد الله عليه السلام فسألته عن ذلك وقلت له: ما قوله: "أنا أو رجل من ولدي" فقال: ذلك صاحبكم القائم بأمر الله عز وجل السادس من ولدي قد ولده يزيدجرد فهو ولده.

Ibn 'Ayyash in al-Muqtadhab: al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Sufyan al-Buzwafri - Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Hasan al-Bushanjani - his father - Muhammad b. Sulayman - his father - al-Nushjan b. al-Budmirdan:

When the Persians were defeated at al-Qadisiyyah and Yazdgerd b. Shahriyar was informed of what happened to Rustum and the victory of the Arabs over him, he thought that Rustum had died and all of Persia had fallen. Then, a fleeing soldier came and informed him of the Day of al-Qadisiyyah and its conclusion with 50,000 death casualties. Yazdgerd went out, fleeing to his family, and he stayed at the gate of al-Iwan and said, “As-Salamu ‘Alaika, O you al-Iwan. This is where I am going to leave you, and I will return to you, I or a man from my offspring. His period has not approached and his time has not come.”

Sulayman al-Daylami said: So, I went to Abu ‘Abd Allah, peace be upon him, and asked him concerning that, saying to him, “What is his statement ‘Or a man from my offspring?’” He replied, “That is your master, the Qaim with the Command of Allah the Almighty, the sixth in line from MY offspring. Yazdgerd was his ancestor. So, he is his descendant.”¹⁸

Strangely, those who “use” this hadith quote it to “prove” that the “Shi’i Mahdi” is from the descendants of Yazdgerd III, the last Persian emperor of the Sassanid dynasty, and not from the Prophet’s offspring! Yet, the same report explicit mentions that the Mahdi is the sixth in line from the offspring of Imam al-Sadiq, ‘alaihi al-salam. Wasn’t al-Sadiq from the descendants of Imam al-Husayn, ‘alaihi al-salam?

In any case, the above hadith is mawdhu’ (fabricated). Al-Bushanjani and his father are muhmal (untraceable). They have no entries in the Shi’i rijal books. Due to this, it is impossible also to determine exactly whom the “Muhammad b. Sulayman” - from whom al-Bushanjani’s father narrated - was. This makes him majhul (unknown) too, along with his “unknown” father. In addition, al-Nushjan, the main narrator, is equally muhmal (untraceable), with zero entry in the Shi’i rijal sources! As for Sulayman al-Daylami, who narrated the last part of the riwayat, this is what the Shi’i hadith scientist, al-Jawahiri says about him:

سليمان بن عبد الله: الديلمي، أبو مُحَمَّد ... غمز عليه، وقيل كان غاليا كذابا، وكذلك

ابنه مُحَمَّد، لا يعمل بما انفردا به

Sulayman b. ‘Abd Allah al-Daylami, Abu Muhammad ... He is condemned, and it is said, “He was a ghali, A LIAR” and so was his son Muhammad. Their uncorroborated reports are not acted upon.¹⁹

Why then exactly do these Sunnis quote the hadith of such people?

Narration Seven

‘Allamah al-Majlisi records:

غيبة الشيخ الطوسي: الفضل، عن عبد الرحمان، عن ابن أبي حمزة، عن أبي بصير، عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: القائم يهدم المسجد الحرام حتى يرده إلى أساسه، ومسجد الرسول صلى الله عليه وآله إلى أساسه ويرد البيت إلى موضعه، وأقامه على أساسه، وقطع أيدي بني شيبه السراق، وعلقها على الكعبة.

Ghaybah of Shaykh al-Tusi: al-Fadhil - ‘Abd al-Rahman - Ibn Abi Hamzah - Abu Basir - Abu ‘Abd Allah, peace be upon him:

The Qaim will demolish the Masjid al-Haram in order to return it to its original foundations, and will demolish the Mosque of the Messenger, peace be upon him and his family, in order to return it to its original foundations; and he will return the House to its correct place and will erect it on its original foundations. He will also cut off the hands of Banu Shaybah The Thieves and will hang them on the Ka'bah.²⁰

Of course, this riwayat too is dha'if according to Ayatullah Muhsini²¹. Shaykh 'Ali Al Muhsin also declares:

والحاصل أن أسانيد هذا الخبر كلها لا تقوم بها الحجة, فلا يصح الاحتجاج به ولا التعويل عليه.

The conclusion is that all the chains of this report are not reliable. Therefore, it is not correct to use it as evidence or to rely upon it.²²

And, al-Jawahiri has some information concerning 'Ali in the chain:

علي بن أبي حمزة: البطائي ... كذاب متهم كما قاله ابن فضال

'Ali b. Abi Hamzah al-Baṭā'ini: ... A LIAR, accused (of fabricating ahadith), as said by Ibn Fadhdhal.²³

Alas, some of our brothers from the Ahl al-Sunnah mischievously or ignorantly quote this dha'if hadith as a "shock" tactic. The aim to make the unsuspecting Sunni scream in disbelief at the "evil" beliefs of the Shi'ah. However, decency requires that reliable riwayat be quoted from the authentic books of any sect, at the least, in establishing any claim against them.

Meanwhile, such matters should be of no "shock" to Sunni Muslims at all. In fact, according to sahih Sunni ahadith, the Ka'bah actually needs demolition and reconstruction. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) records why:

وحدثني محمد بن حاتم حدثني ابن مهدي حدثنا سليم بن حيان عن سعيد (يعني ابن ميناء) قال سمعت عبد الله بن الزبير يقول حدثني خالي (يعني عائشة) قالت قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يا عائشة لولا أن قومك حديثو عهد بشرك لهدمت الكعبة فألزقتها بالأرض وجعلت لها بابين بابا شرقيا وبابا غربيا وزدت فيها ستة أذرع من الحجر فإن قريشا اقتصرتها حيث بنت الكعبة

Muhammad b. Hatim - Ibn Mahdi - Sulaym b. Hayyan - Sa'id b. Mayna - 'Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr - 'Aishah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, "O 'Aishah, if your people had not been recently polytheists, I would have demolished the Ka'bah, and would have razed it to the ground, and would have constructed two doors, one facing the east and the other one to the west, and would have added to it six cubits of area from al-Hijr, for the Quraysh had reduced it when they rebuilt it."²⁴

We read again from the same Sahih Muslim:

حدثنا يحيى بن يحيى أخبرنا أبو معاوية عن هشام بن عروة عن أبيه عن عائشة قالت قال لي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم لولا حداثة عهد قومك بالكفر لنقضت الكعبة ولجعلتها على أساس إبراهيم فإن قريشا حين بنت البيت استقصرت ولجعلت لها خلف

Yahya b. Yahya - Abu Mu'awiyah - Hisham b. 'Urwah - his father - 'Aishah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said to me, "Had your people not been disbelievers until recently, I would have demolished the Ka'bah and would have rebuilt it upon the foundation laid by Ibrahim for when the Quraysh built the House, they reduced (it), and I would have built for it in the rear."²⁵

Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) documents further:

حدثنا عبد الله بن مسلمة عن مالك عن ابن شهاب عن سالم بن عبد الله أن عبد الله بن محمد بن أبي بكر أخبر عبد الله بن عمر عن عائشة رضي الله عنهما زوج النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم : أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال لها ألم تري أن قومك لما بنوا الكعبة اقتصروا عن قواعد إبراهيم. فقلت يا رسول الله ألا تردها على قواعد إبراهيم قال لولا حدثان قومك بالكفر لفعلت.

'Abd Allah b. Maslamah - Malik - Ibn Shihab - Salim b. 'Abd Allah - 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Bakr informed 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar that 'Aishah, may Allah be pleased with them, the wife of the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said to her, "Don't you see that when your people rebuilt the Ka'bah, they decreased from the original foundation laid by Ibrahim?" I said, "O Messenger of Allah, why don't you rebuild it on its original foundation laid by Ibrahim?" He replied, "If not that your people had only recently given up kufr (disbelief), I would have done so."²⁶

The tribe of Quraysh had built the Ka'bah on the wrong foundations. So, it was the desire of the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi, to demolish it completely and reconstruct it upon the correct Ibrahimic foundations. However, he feared that his Sahabah - who had been Muslims for more than thirteen years already - could revolt and possibly apostatize from Islam if he did! That reveals the level of the iman of the Qurayshis among the Sahabah generally.

Interestingly, one of the important Sunni caliphs created a rare opportunity to correct this anomaly when he burnt the Ka'bah in a military onslaught on Makkah. But then, that was quickly reversed soon afterwards. Imam Muslim has the story for us:

حدثنا هناد بن السري حدثنا ابن أبي زائدة أخبرني ابن أبي سليمان عن عطاء قال لما احترق البيت زمن زيد بن معاوية حين غزاها أهل الشام فكان من أمره ما كان تركه ابن الزبير حتى قدم الناس الموسم ... فقال ابن الزبير لو كان أحدكم احترق بيته ما رضي

حتى يجده فكيف بيت ربكم ؟ إني مستخير ربي ثلاثا ثم عازم على أمري فلما مضى الثلاث أجمع رأيه على أن ينقضها فتحاماه الناس أن ينزل بأول الناس يصعد فيه أمر من السماء حتى صعد رجل فألقى منه حجارة فلما لم يره الناس أصابه شيء تتابعوه فنقضوه حتى بلغوا به الأرض

فجعل ابن الزبير أعمدة فستر عليها الستور حتى ارتفع بناؤه وقال ابن الزبير إني سمعت عائشة تقول إن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال لولا أن الناس حديث عهدهم بكفر وليس عندي من النفقة ما يقوى على بنائه لكنت أدخلت فيه من الحجر خمس أذرع ولجعلت لها بابا يدخل الناس منه وبابا يخرجون منه قال فأنا اليوم أجد ما أنفق ولست أخاف الناس قال فزاد فيه خمس أذرع من الحجر حتى أبدى أسا نظر الناس إليه فبنى عليه البناء وكان طول الكعبة ثماني عشرة ذراعا فلما زاد فيه استقصره فزاد في طوله عشر أذرع وجعل له بابين أحدهما يدخل منه والآخر يخرج منه

فلما قتل ابن الزبير كتب الحجاج إلى عبدالمملك بن مروان يخبره بذلك ويخبره أن ابن الزبير قد وضع البناء على أس نظر إليه العدول من أهل مكة فكتب إليه عبدالمملك إنا لسنا من تلطيخ ابن الزبير في شيء أما ما زاد في طوله فأقره وأما ما زاد فيه من الحجر فرده إلى بنائه وسد الباب الذي فتحه فنقضه وأعادته إلى بنائه

Hanad b. al-Sarri - Ibn Abi Zaidah - Ibn Abi Sulayman - 'Aṭa:

When the House was BURNT during the time of Yazid b. Mu'awiyah when the people of Syria attacked it (i.e. Makkah), what occurred was from his (i.e. Yazid's) command. Ibn al-Zubayr abandoned it (i.e. the burnt Ka'bah) until the people arrived (in Makkah) during the Hajj season ... So, Ibn al-Zubayr said: "If the house of any of you were burnt, he would not be contented until he had reconstructed it. How then about the House of your Lord? I will seek guidance from my Lord for three (days). Then, I will make up my mind on my command." After the passing of the three, he decided to demolish it. The people apprehended that heavenly calamity would befall the first person to climb it, till a man climbed and threw down one of its stones. When the people saw that no calamity befell him, they followed him and demolished it and razed it to the ground.

So, Ibn al-Zubayr erected pillars and hanged curtains on them till the walls were raised. Then Ibn al-Zubayr said: I heard 'Aishah saying that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "If the people had not only recently abandoned disbelief and I had the financial means to reconstruct it, I would have included in it five cubits of area from al-Hijr, and would have also constructed an entry door and an exit door." He (Ibn al-Zubayr) said: "Today, I have the financial means and I do not fear the people." So, he added five cubits of area from al-Hijr until the (ancient) foundation (of Ibrahim) appeared, and the people saw it and the wall was raised upon it.

The length of the Ka'bah was eighteen cubits. When addition was made to it, it appeared small. Then, he added ten cubits to its length and constructed two doors for it - one for entry and the other for exit.

When Ibn al-Zubayr was killed, al-Hajjaj wrote to 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwan informing him of that and telling him that Ibn al-Zubayr had made the construction upon the foundation which the reliable people from the Makkans saw. So, 'Abd al-Malik wrote to him, "We are not concerned with the censuring of Ibn al-Zubayr in anything. As for what he added to its length, preserve it. But, whatever he added to it from al-Hijr, revert it to its (previous) construction, and close the door which he opened." So, he (al-Hajjaj) demolished it and REVERTED it to its (previous) construction.²⁷

As such, Ibn al-Zubayr demolished the Ka'bah and reconstructed it upon the Ibrahimic foundations. However, that was reversed after his death, and the Ka'bah has ever since remained upon the incorrect construction of the pre-Islamic pagans. Muhammad had wished to correct this, but was unable to do so. If one of his pure sons and successors fulfils his wish, what blame then should there be in that?

In any case, the Shi'i hadith which they quote in this matter is dha'if. So, the "shock" attempt is only a wild goose chase.

Narration Eight

Shaykh al-Saduq (d. 381 H) states:

وروي عن الأصمغ بن نباتة أنه قال: " بينا نحن ذات يوم حول أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام في مسجد الكوفة إذا قال: يا أهل الكوفة لقد حباكم الله عز وجل بما لم يجب به أحدا من فضل مصلاكم بيت آدم، وبيت نوح، وبيت إدريس، ومصلى إبراهيم الخليل، ومصلى أخي الخضر عليهم السلام، ومصلاي ... ولا تذهب الأيام والليالي حتى ينصب الحجر الأسود فيه، وليأتين عليه زمان يكون مصلى المهدي من ولدي، ومصلى كل مؤمن

It is narrated from al-Asbagh b. Nubatah that he said:

While we were around Amir al-Muminin, peace be upon him, one day, in the mosque of Kufa, he said, "O people of Kufa! Verily, Allah the Almighty has loved you with a superiority with which He has never loved anyone else. Your mosque was the house of Adam, and the house of Nuh, and the house of Idris, and the prayer-ground of Ibrahim the Khalil, and the prayer-ground of my brother al-Khidhr, peace be upon them, and my prayer-ground ... The days and nights will not end before the Black Stone (al-hajar al-aswad) will be installed in it; and there will be a time when it will be the prayer-ground of the Mahdi from my offspring, and the mosque of every believer.²⁸

Those anti-Shi'i elements who quote this hadith seek to prove through it that the "Shi'i Mahdi" will demolish the Ka'bah and then transfer the Black Stone there to the mosque of Kufa. Some of them go as far as suggesting that he will also make that Kufa mosque the new Qiblah of Islam! But, the riwayat mentions nothing about the demolition of the Ka'bah or the change of Qiblah to Kufa. Moreover, it does not mention the one who will fix the

Black Stone in the mosque of Kufa. So, it is only a wild guess to suggest that he or she will be the Mahdi.

In any case, the hadith is dha'if. Shaykh 'Ali Al Muhsin submits:

هذه الرواية ضعيفة السند, فإن الشيخ الصدوق رواها بسنده إلى الأصبع بن نباتة وطريق الصدوق إلى الأصبع بن نباتة ضعيف.

This report has a dha'if chain, for Shaykh al-Saduq narrated it with his chain up to al-Asbagh b. Nubata and the chain of al-Saduq to al-Asbagh b. Nubata is dha'if.²⁹

Then, he concludes:

فالرواية ضعيفة السند, لا يصح الاحتجاج بها في شيء.

So, the report has a dha'if chain. It is not correct to use it as evidence for anything.³⁰

The Shaykh is absolutely right.

Narration Nine

'Allamah al-Majlisi records:

إكمال الدين: بهذا الاسناد, عن أبان بن تغلب قال: قال أبو عبد الله عليه السلام: سيأتي في مسجدكم ثلاثمائة وثلاثة عشر رجلا - يعني مسجد مكة - يعلم أهل مكة أنه لم يلد لهم آباؤهم ولا أجدادهم, عليهم السيوف, مكتوب على كل سيف كلمة تفتح ألف كلمة, فيبعث الله تبارك وتعالى ريحا فتنادي بكل واد: هذا المهدي يقضي بقضاء داود وسليمان عليهما السلام لا يريد عليه بينة.

Ikmal al-Din: Through this chain, from Aban b. Taghlib:

Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him, said: "There will be in your mosque, that is the mosque of Kufa, 313 men. The people of Makkah will know that they (i.e. the 313 men) are not descended from their (i.e. the Makkans') fathers and ancestors. They (i.e. the 313 men) will have swords; on each sword will be inscribed a statement which will open one thousand (other) statements. Then, Allah the Most Blessed and the Most High will send a wind which will call in every valley: 'This is the Mahdi.' He will judge with the judgment of Dawud and Sulayman, peace be upon them both: he will not demand for evidence on it."³¹

Al-Haj Muhammad Zakariya says about it:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.³²

A similar hadith is documented by Shaykh al-Kulayni (d. 329 H):

علي بن إبراهيم, عن أبيه, عن ابن أبي عمير, عن منصور, عن فضل الأعور, عن أبي عبيدة الحذاء قال ... فقلت لأبي عبد الله عليه السلام: إن سالما قال لي كذا وكذا, قال: فقال: يا أبا عبيدة إنه لا يموت منا ميت حتى يخلف من بعده من يعمل بمثل عمله ويسير

بسيرته ويدعو إلى ما دعا إليه، يا أبا عبيدة إنه لم يمنع ما أعطي داود أن أعطي سليمان، ثم قال: يا أبا عبيدة إذا قام قائم آل مُحَمَّد عليه السلام بحكم داود وسليمان لا يسأل بينة.

‘Ali b. Ibrahim - his father - Ibn Abi ‘Umayr - Mansur - Fadhl al-A’war - Abu ‘Ubaydah al-Hadha:

... I said to Abu ‘Abd Allah, peace be upon him, “Verily, Salim said such-and-such to me.” He said, “O Abu ‘Ubaydah. Verily, none of us dies before appointing a khalifah who acts and behaves just as he did, and who calls to what he called to. O Abu ‘Ubaydah, verily, what was given to Dawud did not prevent that Sulayman be given too. O Abu ‘Ubaydah, when the Qaim of the family of Muhammad, peace be upon him, rises, he will judge with the judgment of Dawud and Sulayman: he will not ask for evidence.”³³

Al-Majlisi comments:

حسن أو موثق

Hasan or Muwaththaq³⁴

Al-Kulayni also reports:

مُحَمَّد، عن أحمد بن مُحَمَّد، عن ابن محبوب، عن هشام بن سالم، عن عمار الساباطي قال: قلت لأبي عبد الله عليه السلام: بما تحكمون إذا حكمتم؟ قال: بحكم الله وحكم داود فإذا ورد علينا الشيء الذي ليس عندنا، تلقانا به روح القدس.

Muhammad - Ahmad b. Muhammad - Ibn Mahbub - Hisham b. Salim - ‘Ammar al- Sabati:

I said to Abu ‘Abd Allah, peace be upon him, “With what do you judge when you judge?” He said, “With the Judgment of Allah and the judgment of Dawud, for whenever something is presented to us which is not with us, the Holy Spirit bestows it to us.”³⁵

Al-Majlisi says:

موثق

Muwaththaq³⁶

Those who quote these ahadith seek to prove through them that the “Shi’i Mahdi” will be a Jewish leader since - in their understanding - he will follow the “Shari’ah” of Dawud and Sulayman, ‘alaihima al-salam. So, in that case, following the Shari’ah of both prophets makes one a Jew in the eyes of these opponents of ours.

This is indeed a very dangerous game on their part for several reasons. One, it suggests that the Jews as we know them are truly upon the Shari’ah of Dawud and Sulayman! But, is that really the case? They do not even have possession of the original Zabur any longer. How then are they able to derive rulings and laws from it?! Secondly, the ahadith above do NOT mention the “Shari’ah” of Dawud and Sulayman: they only mention their “judgment”. These are two different things, especially since the reports make sure to explain exactly what “the judgment of Dawud and Sulayman” means: he will not ask for evidence in cases before him, but instead rely only upon inspiration from the Holy Spirit in passing judgments. Therefore,

anyone who judges in that manner is said to be judging with the judgment of Dawud and Sulayman in the terminologies of the Ahl al-Bayt, 'alaihim al-salam. Al-Majlisi confirms this:

واعلم أن الظاهر من هذه الأخبار أن القائم عليه السلام إذا ظهر يحكم بما يعلم في الواقعة لا بالبينة ، وأما من تقدمه من الأئمة عليهم السلام فقد كانوا يحكمون بالظاهر

Know that what is apparent from these reports is that the Qaim, peace be upon him, when he reappears, will judge based upon what he will know of the actual truth, and not with evidence. As for the Imams before him, peace be upon them, they used to give judgments based upon what was apparent.³⁷

Meanwhile, even though this style of adjudication has been named after Dawud and Sulayman, there is evidence that they both in really only applied it occasionally. Al-Majlisi again:

(وحكم داود) أي الحكم بالواقع.

والذي يظهر من الأخبار هو أن داود عليه السلام لم يستمر على هذا بل حكم به في بعض الوقائع

(the judgment of Dawud) MEANING, judgment based the upon actual truth.

What is apparent from the (other) reports is that Dawud, peace be upon him, did NOT always do this. Rather, he (only) judged with it on some occasions.³⁸

This, obviously, was like the case of Prophet Muhammad too. For instance, Imam Muslim has recorded one of those few occasions when he also judged with the judgment of Dawud and Sulayman:

حدثني علي بن حجر السعدي حدثنا علي بن مسهر عن هشام بن عروة عن أبيه عن عائشة قالت دخلت هند بنت عتبة امرأة أبي سفيان على رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فقالت يا رسول الله إن أبا سفيان رجل شحيح لا يعطيني من النفقة ما يكفيني ويكفي بني إلا ما أخذت من ماله بغير علمه فهل علي في ذلك من جناح ؟ فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم خذي من ماله بالمعروف ما يكفيك ويكفي بنيك

'Ali b. Hajar al-Sa'di - 'Ali b. Mushir - Hisham b. 'Urwah - his father - 'Aishah:

Hind bint 'Utba, the wife of Abu Sufyan, came to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and said, "O Messenger of Allah, verily, Abu Sufyan is a miser, and he does not give me money that is sufficient for me and my children, except whatever I took from his wealth without his knowledge. Is there a sin upon me in that?" The Messenger of Allah, eace be upon him, said, "Take reasonably from his wealth what is sufficient for you and your children."³⁹

He gave his judgment straightaway, without bothering at all to ask for any evidence or witnesses, and without calling for any investigation. Like Dawud and Sulayman, he too did not always use this style. However, since those two prophets had adopted it before him, it has been named after them.

The hadith of ‘Ammar al-Sabaṭi also suggests that the Messenger and the eleven Imams after him had it as one of their tools of adjudication. The tone of the report of Aban b. Taghlib and Abu ‘Ubaydah al-Hadha, however, seem to establish that Imam al-Mahdi will be different. He will use “the judgment of Dawud and Sulayman” as his primary, or perhaps his only, style of justice dispensation. This, of course, is based upon the teachings of Muhammad himself, as transmitted by his pure offspring. Therefore, it is part of his Sunnah, and it is a special exception made for the last Imam of mankind by Allah.

Our opponents might ask: how can the Holy Spirit reveal things to your Imam despite that he is not a prophet? Well, it is an established Qur’anic fact that Allah does sometimes send wahy - yes, wahy - to some non-prophets. For instance, we read:

واذكر في الكتاب مريم إذ انتبذت من أهلها مكانا شرقيا فاتخذت من دونهم حجابا فأرسلنا إليها روحنا فتمثل لها بشرا سويا قالت إني أعوذ بالرحمن منك إن كنت تقيا قال إنما أنا رسول ربك لأهب لك غلاما زكيا قالت أنى يكون لي غلام ولم يمسسني بشر ولم أك بغيا قال كذلك قال ربك هو علي هين ولنجعله آية للناس ورحمة منا وكان أمرا مقضيا

And mention in the Book, Maryam, when she withdrew in seclusion from her family to an eastern place. So, she took a veil from them; then We sent to her Our Spirit, and he appeared to her in the form of a perfect man. She said, “Verily! I seek refuge with al-Rahman from you, if you are pious.” He said, “I am only a messenger of your Lord, that I may bestow on you a pure boy.” She said, “How can I have a boy, when no man has touched me, nor have I been unchaste?” He said, “Even so, your Lord said: ‘It is easy for Me, and that We may make him a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us, and it is a matter which has been decreed.’”⁴⁰

Sayyidah Maryam, ‘alaiha al-salam, was NOT a prophetess. There is no doubt about that. Yet, Allah sent His Spirit to her, to convey His wahy to her literally.

Another example is here:

وأوحينا إلى أم موسى أن أرضعيه فإذا خفت عليه فألقيه في اليم ولا تخافي ولا تحزني إنا رادوه إليك وجاعلوه من المرسلين

And We sent wahy to the mother of Musa: “Suckle him, but when you fear for him, then cast him into the river and fear not, nor grieve. Verily! We shall bring him back to you, and shall make him one of the messengers.”⁴¹

There is absolutely no dispute about it either: the mother of Prophet Musa, ‘alaihima al-salam, was also NOT a prophetess. Yet, she received literal wahy from her Lord.

Yet another example is this:

وإذ أوحيت إلى الحواريين أن آمنوا بي وبرسولي قالوا آمنا واشهد بأننا مسلمون

And when I sent wahy to the Hawariyun that: “Believe in Me and in My messenger”. They said, “We believe and bear witness that we are Muslims.”⁴²

These were the disciples of al-Masih, ‘alaihi al-salam, and none of them was a prophet. They too received literal wahy from Allah.

Finally, apart from prophets, messengers, and some other righteous people, our Creator also sends wahy to Imams:

وجعلناهم أئمة يهدون بأمرنا وأوحينا إليهم فعل الخيرات وإقام الصلاة وإيتاء الزكاة وكانوا

لنا عابدين

And We appointed them Imams, guiding by Our Command, and We sent wahy to them to do good deeds, and to keep up al-salat, and to pay al-zakat. And, they were worshippers of Us.⁴³

It is indeed notable that the receipt of the wahy has been explicitly linked with their office of Imamah in this instance. This establishes absolutely that a true Imam too receives some wahy from Allah. Of course, al-Mahdi is an Imam “sent” by Him from the offspring of Ibrahim, Isma’il, Muhammad and ‘Ali, ‘alahim al-salam.

The mission of al-Mahdi will be to virtually eradicate injustice, inequity and aggression upon the face of the earth; and it will commence after our world has become unbearably soaked up in these vices. We believe that Allah will declare an emergency upon them, and will therefore allow the Imam to extensively use the “judgment of Dawud and Sulayman” style in serving justice across the globe. The Mahdi only needs to hear the charges against an accused, and he will pronounce his guilt or acquittal instantly, based upon wahy from Allah, without going into any trial. He will also sentence him appropriately right away in the case of a guilty verdict. So, judicial trials that usually last months, or even years, will only take a few minutes to conclude, and the judgments will be absolutely correct and fair in absolutely all cases. It will be absolutely impossible for anyone to escape full justice during the Mahdi’s kingdom. There will be no lawyers to manipulate the law, and there will be no false testimonies to mislead the judge.

In civil matters, the Mahdi listens to the complaint of the plaintiff and immediately delivers judgment without listening to the defendant, and without requesting for any witnesses or evidences - just as the Prophet did in the case of Hind and Abu Sufyan. Similarly, civil proceedings that normally take months or years will be settled within minutes, and absolutely all judgments will be absolutely accurate. As in criminal trials, there will also be no lawyers, false witnesses, or fake evidences to obscure the course of justice.

Narration Ten

‘Allamah al-Majlisi records:

الغيبة للنعماني: بهذا الاسناد عن البنزطي، عن عاصم بن حميد الحنات، عن أبي بصير قال: قال أبو جعفر عليه السلام: يقوم القائم بأمر جديد، وكتاب جديد، وقضاء جديد على العرب شديد، ليس شأنه إلا بالسيف لا يستتيب أحدا ولا يأخذه في الله لومة لائم.

Al-Ghaybah of al-Nu’mani: Through this chain from al-Bazanti - ‘Asim b. Humayd al-Hanaṭ - Abu Basir:

Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, said: "The Qaim will rise with a new command, a new book, new judgments. He will be harsh towards the Arabs. His affair will be nothing but the sword. He will not ask anyone to repent and he, for the sake of Allah, will not be moved by the criticisms of critics."⁴⁴

It is dha'if according to Ayatullah Muhsini⁴⁵.

It has also been copied with a different chain:

الغيبة للنعماني: ابن عقدة، عن أحمد بن يوسف، عن ابن مهران، عن ابن البطائني عن أبيه، وهيب بن حفص، عن أبي بصير، عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام أنه قال: قال لي أبي عليه السلام ... لكأني أنظر إليه بين الركن والمقام يبائع الناس على كتاب جديد، على العرب شديد. وقال: ويل لطغاة العرب من شر قد اقترب

Al-Ghaybah of al-Nu'mani: Ibn 'Uqdah - Ahmad b. Yusuf - Ibn Mahran - Ibn al-Bata'ini - his father and Wuhayb b. Hafsa - Abu Basir - Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him:

My father, peace be upon him, said to me: "... It is like I am looking at him between al-Rukn and al-Makam, receiving the pledge of allegiance of the people upon a new book. He will be harsh against the Arabs. Woe unto the transgressors among the Arabs from an evil that has become imminent."⁴⁶

This one also is dha'if according to Ayatullah Muhsini.⁴⁷ The most obvious determining defect in this sanad is Ibn al-Bata'ini. Al-Jawahiri says about him:

الحسن بن علي بن أبي حمزة ... البطائني ... كذاب ملعون

Al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Abi Hamzah ... al-Bata'ini ... an accursed liar.⁴⁸

So, it is mawdu' (fabricated). With this same mawduhu chain, al-Majlisi has copied it from the same Ghaybah of al-Nu'mani in Chapter 25, # 96⁴⁹ and # 103⁵⁰ and in Chapter 26, # 42⁵¹. As such, it is a really worthless riwayat.

Narration Eleven

'Allamah al-Majlisi records:

إعلام الوري، الإرشاد: روى المفضل بن عمر، عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: يخرج مع القائم عليه السلام من ظهر الكوفة سبع وعشرون رجلاً خمسة عشر من قوم موسى عليه السلام الذين كانوا يهدون بالحق وبه يعدلون وسبعة من أهل الكهف، ويوشع بن نون، وسلمان، وأبو دجانة الأنصاري، والمقداد، ومالك الأشتر، فيكونون بين يديه أنصاراً وحكاماً.

I'lam al-Wara, al-Irshad: al-Mufadhdhal b. 'Umar narrated from Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him:

The Qaim, peace be upon him, will come out from the back of Kufah with twenty seven men: fifteen from the people of Musa, peace be upon him - those who used to guide with the truth and through it they established

justice - and seven from the Ahl al-Kahf, and Yusha' b. Nun, Salman, Abu Dujanah al-Ansari, al-Miqdad, and Malik al-Ashtari. They will be his helpers and judges.⁵²

This hadith has no known sanad. This is also why al-Majlisi is unable to quote any. This makes it mursal by default, and therefore dha'if.

Those who quote it seek to prove that the main officials and inner circle of the “Shi'i Mahdi” will be Jews. Apparently, they are equating the fifteen men from the people of Musa who used to guide and do justice with the truth - referred to in Qur'an 7:159 - and the Ahl al-Kahf and Yusha' b. Nun, with Judaism. That, clearly, is quite unfortunate on their part. All of those people were Muslims, true believers in Allah and His Books!

Narration Twelve

Al-Kulayni records:

عدة من أصحابنا، عن أحمد بن محمد، عن عبد الله بن الحجال، عن أحمد بن عمر الحلبي، عن أبي بصير قال: دخلت على أبي عبد الله عليه السلام ... ثم قال: وإن عندنا الجفر وما يدريهم ما الجفر؟ قال قلت: وما الجفر؟ قال: وعاء من آدم فيه علم النبيين والوصيين، وعلم العلماء الذين مضوا من بني إسرائيل، قال قلت: إن هذا هو العلم، قال: إنه لعلم وليس بذاك.

A number of our companions - Ahmad b. Muhammad - 'Abd Allah b. al-Hijal - Ahmad b. 'Umar al-Halabi - Abu Basir:

I went to Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him ... then he said, “Verily, there is al-Jafr with us. Do they know what al-Jafr is?” I said, “What is al-Jafr?” He said, “It is a container made of skin. It contains the knowledge of the prophets and the heirs, and the knowledge of the 'ulama in the past from the offspring of Israil.” I said, “Verily, this is knowledge.” He said, “Indeed, it certainly is knowledge. But it is not that (knowledge).”⁵³

Al-Majlisi says:

صحيح

Sahih⁵⁴

This hadith is quoted by anti-Shi'i elements to demonstrate that the “Shi'i Mahdi” has al-Jafr with him, which allegedly contains knowledge of the “Jews”. So, they claim, this makes him a Jewish rabbi. Meanwhile, in order to understand what the “knowledge” in al-Jafr is, we must take into consideration this further report of al-Kulayni:

عدة من أصحابنا، عن أحمد بن محمد، عن علي بن الحكم، عن الحسين ابن أبي العلاء قال: سمعت أبا عبد الله عليه السلام يقول: إن عندي الجفر الأبيض، قال قلت: فأني شيء فيه؟ قال: زبور داود، وتوراة موسى، وإنجيل عيسى، وصحف إبراهيم عليهم السلام والحلال والحرام، ومصحف فاطمة، ما أزعج أن فيه قرآنا، وفيه ما يحتاج الناس إلينا ولا نحتاج إلى أحد حتى فيه الجلدة، ونصف الجلدة، وربع الجلدة وأرش الخدش.

A number of our companions - Ahmad b. Muhammad - ‘Ali b. al-Hakam - al-Husayn b. Abi al-‘Ala:

I heard Abu ‘Abd Allah, peace be upon him, saying: “Verily, there is with me the white Jafr.” I said, “And what is in it?” He said, “The Zabur of Dawud, the Tawrat of Musa, the Injil of ‘Isa, and the Suhuf of Ibrahim, peace be upon them, and (knowledge of) the halal and the haram, and the book of Faṭimah. I do not claim that there is anything of the Qur’an in it. In it is that for which humanity need us, while we do not need anyone, such that in it is the ruling of lashing, half of lashing, one-fourth of lashing and the amount of compensation.”⁵⁵

On this, al-Majlisi proclaims:

حسن

Hasan.⁵⁶

So, al-Jafr is only a compilation of the original copies of the divine scriptures revealed before the Qur’an, the rules of halal and haram in our Shari’ah, and a book containing the knowledge of Faṭimah, ‘alaiha al-salam, the daughter of the Messenger. But, are those really what the Jewish rabbis quote in their works and rulings? Moreover, has the Qur’an itself not come to confirm most of those same scriptures?⁵⁷ Does this make it a Jewish book?

Narration Thirteen

Al-Majlisi records:

الغيبية للنعمانى: ابن عقدة، عن علي بن الحسن التيملي، عن الحسن ومحمد ابني علي بن يوسف، عن سعدان بن مسلم، عن رجل، عن المفضل بن عمر قال: قال أبو عبد الله عليه السلام: إذا اذن الامام دعا الله باسمه العبراني فأتيحت له صحابته الثلاثمائة وثلاثة عشر

Al-Ghaybah of al-Nu’mani: Ibn ‘Uqdah - ‘Ali b. al-Hasan al-Taymali - al-Hasan and Muhammad, sons of ‘Ali b. Yusuf - Sa’dan b. Muslim - a man - al-Mufadhhal b. ‘Umar:

Abu ‘Abd Allah, peace be upon him, said, “When the Imam makes the adhan, he will call Allah with His Hebrew name. So, his three hundred and thirteen companions will rush to him.”⁵⁸

The report is dha’if according to Ayatullah Muhsini⁵⁹. Its weakness is very obvious anyway. For instance, it is from al-Ghaybah of al-Nu’mani, a dha’if book. That alone is sufficient to establish the hadith’s unreliability. Secondly, there is an unknown “man” in its sanad, which makes it mursal - another sufficient reason for its inauthenticity! Meanwhile, Sa’dan b. Muslim is majhul as well, as he has no valid tawthiq in the Shi’i books. So, apparently, the hadith is dha’if jiddan.

The purpose of those who cite this riwayat is to prove that the Shi’i Mahdi will be a Jew, calling Allah through His Hebrew name. However, this, in reality, does not establish any link at all to the Jewish faith. Many Muslims across the world today invoke Allah with His names in their native languages. Does this somehow eradicate their Islamic identities? Or, does Allah have only Arabic names?!

Narration Fourteen

'Allamah al-Majlisi records:

علل الشرائع: ماجيلويه، عن عمه، عن البرقي، عن أبيه، عن مُجَّد بن سليمان عن داود بن النعمان، عن عبد الرحيم القصير، قال: قال لي أبو جعفر عليه السلام: أما لو قام قائمنا لقد ردت إليه الحميراء حتى يجلدوها الحد وحتى ينتقم لابنة مُجَّد فاطمة عليها السلام منها. قلت: جعلت فداك ولم يجلدوها الحد؟ قال: لفريتها على أم إبراهيم صلى الله عليه قلت: فكيف أخره الله للقائم عليه السلام؟ فقال له: إن الله تبارك وتعالى بعث . مُجَّدًا صلى الله عليه وآله رحمة وبعث القائم عليه السلام نقمة

'Ilal al-Sharai'i: Majiluyah - his uncle - al-Barqi - his father - Muhammad b. Sulayman - Dawud b. al-Nu'man - 'Abd al-Rahim al-Qusayr:

Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, said to me, "When our Qaim rises, al-Humayra will be brought to him so that he may punish her with flogging and so that he may exert revenge upon her on behalf of the daughter of Muhammad, Faṭimah, peace be upon him.

I said, "May I be sacrificed for you, why will he flog her?" He replied, "Due to her false allegation against the mother of Ibrahim, peace be upon him." I said, "How is it that Allah has postponed it till the Qaim, peace be upon him?" He said to him, "Verily, Allah the Most Blessed, the Most High sent Muhammad, peace be upon him, as a mercy and will send the Qaim, peace be upon him, as a wrath."⁶⁰

"Al-Humayra" here is thought to be a reference to 'Aishah. So, our opponents quote this riwayat to "shock" their Sunni readers, to make Sunnis hate the "Shi'i Mahdi". Anyway, the report is dha'if according to Ayatullah Muhsini⁶¹. In particular, 'Abd al-Rahim al-Qusayr is majhul, as he has no valid tawthiq in the Shi'i books.

Narration Fifteen

Al-Majlisi records:

تفسير فرات بن إبراهيم: القاسم بن عبيد معننا، عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قوله تعالى الذين يمشون على الأرض هونا إلى قوله: حسنت مستقرا ومقاما ثلاث عشر آيات قال: هم الأوصياء يمشون على الأرض هونا فإذا قام القائم عرضوا كل ناصب عليه فان أقر بالاسلام وهي الولاية وإلا ضربت عنقه أو أقر بالجزية فأداها كما يؤدي أهل الذمة.

Tafsir Furat b. Ibrahim: al-Qasim b. 'Ubayd in an 'an-'an manner, from Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him:

His Statement, the Most High: {And the slaves of al-Rahman are those who walk on the earth in humility}⁶² till His Statement {excellent it is as an abode; and as a place to dwell}⁶³. They are the awsiya. They walk on the earth in humility. So, when the Qaim rises, every Nasibi will be presented before him. If he accepts Islam, and that is al-wilayah; otherwise, he will be

executed. Or, alternatively, if he agrees to pay the jizyah, he will (be required to) pay it as the Dhimmis pay it.”⁶⁴

The hadith is dha’if according to Ayatullah Muhsini⁶⁵. In particular, the author of that tafsir book, Furat b. Ibrahim (d. 352 H) himself, is majhul. So, by default, everything in it is dha’if. Moreover, the sanad of the report is unknown, and its main narrator - this al-Qasim b. ‘Ubayd - is muhmal (untraceable).

The aim of those who quote this worthless riwayat is to “prove” that the “Shi’i Mahdi” will massacre “Sunnis”. To them, the “Nasibis” in the hadith are the Ahl al-Sunnah since they are those who reject the wilayah (authority and guidance) of the Twelve Imams. However, this interpretation is far-fetched. When Imam al-Mahdi rises, there is a very strong possibility that a lot of Muslims will rise in armed war against him. These traitors will be chiefly those who feel uncomfortable with his huge efforts to completely restore Islam to its original self. No doubt, in the process of carrying out his missions, the Imam will be stepping upon countless toes - some of which will be very influential and powerful - from all sects and movements of the Ummah ! Of course, every single Muslim who hates the Mahdi - whether in his heart or through his actions - is a Nasibi; and it is perfectly possible - in fact, extremely likely - that many people who will profess Shi’ism will turn against him upon his reappearance, some even “in the name of Shi’ism”⁶⁶! So, this is NOT about any sect in particular.

Narration Sixteen

Al-Majlisi records:

الغيبة للنعماني: علي بن الحسين، عن مُجَدِّ العطار، عن مُجَدِّ بن الحسن الرازي عن مُجَدِّ بن علي الكوفي، عن البنظطي، عن ابن بكير، عن أبيه، عن زرارة، عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام قال: ... إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله سار في أمته بالدين كان يتألف الناس، والقائم عليه السلام يسير بالقتل، بذلك امر، في الكتاب الذي معه: أن يسير بالقتل ولا يستتيب أحدا، ويل لمن ناواه.

Ghaybah of al-Nu’mani: ‘Ali b. al-Husayn - Muhammad al-‘Atṭar - Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Razi - Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Kufi - al-Bazantī - Ibn Bukayr - his father - Zurarah - Abu Ja’far, peace be upon him, ...:

Verily, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, treated his Ummah gently. He used to get along with the people. However, the Qaim, peace be upon him, will treat with killing. That is the what he has been commanded to do, in the book which is with him: to treat with killing, and not to request repentance from anyone. Woe unto whosoever will oppose him.”⁶⁷

Considering that the hadith is from al-Ghaybah of al-Nu’mani, a dha’if book, then its unreliability is quite obvious. In any case, it is dha’if according to Ayatullah Muhsini⁶⁸. Al-Jawahiri also states about one of the narrators:

مُجَدِّ بن الحسن الرازي: مجهول

Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Razi: Majhul.⁶⁹

And, Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Kufi is also majhul. He has no valid tawthiq in the Shi’i books.

This hadith is quoted by our opponents to highlight the callousness of the “Shi’i Mahdi”, who allegedly will kill people without even giving them the option of repentance. However, since it is dha’if, any claims made upon its basis is either ignorant or dishonest.

Narration Seventeen

Al-Majlisi quotes:

الغبية للنعماني: مُحَمَّد بن علي الكوفي عن عبد الرحمان بن [أبي] هاشم، عن أبي خديجة، عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام أنه قال: إن عليا عليه السلام قال: كان لي أن أقتل المولي وأجهز على الجريح، ولكن تركت ذلك للعاقبة من أصحابي إن جرحوا لم يقتلوا، والقائم له أن يقتل المولي ويجهز على الجريح.

Al-Ghaybah of Nu’man: Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Kufi - ‘Abd al-Rahman b. [Abi] Hashim - Abu Khadijah - Abu ‘Abd Allah, peace be upon him, who said:

Verily, ‘Ali, peace be upon him, said: “I have the right to kill the slave and to finish off the wounded. However, I abandon that in favour of the last from my companions. If they rise, they will not kill. But, the Qaim, he will have the right to kill the slave and to finish off the wounded.”⁷⁰

The status of this report is like that of the immediately previous one. It is also from al-Ghaybah of al-Nu’mani, a dha’if source book. Besides, it has equally been declared dha’if by Ayatullah Muhsini⁷¹. Moreover, there is the infamous Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Kufi in the chain, and he is majhul, with no valid tawthiq in the Shi’i sources.

Those who quote it seek to “prove” through it that the “Shi’i Mahdi” will be a heartless amir who will kill slaves and wounded enemy combatants. But, what if these slaves - whether literal or metaphorical - had taken up arms against him? Is he supposed to allow them to kill his soldiers without response, simply because they are “slaves”? Moreover, what if wounded enemy combatants refuse to surrender and fire shots at the Mahdi’s army? Is he to leave them on account of their injuries?

In the past, there were real slaves who usually followed the wishes of their lords, without any will or choice of their own. But, in our times, there are mostly only metaphorical slaves - free men who blindly and voluntarily obey others for material gains. Also, in the past, wounded combatants were usually unable to inflict any more (serious) harm, since swords and arrows were their primary weapons. However, in our times, automatic weapons are used, and a wounded combatant is still able to kill hundreds with his guns and bombs.

Narration Eighteen

And al-Majlisi documents this final one:

الغيبة للنعماني: أحمد بن مُحَمَّد بن سعيد، عن يحيى بن زكريا، عن يوسف ابن كليب، عن ابن البطائني، عن ابن حميد، عن الثمالي قال: سمعت أبا جعفر [مُحَمَّد بن علي] يقول: لو قد خرج قائم آل مُحَمَّد عليهم السلام لنصره الله بالملائكة المسومين والمردفين والمنزلين والكروبيين يكون جبرائيل أمامه وميكائيل عن يمينه وإسرافيل عن يساره والرعب مسيرة شهر أمامه وخلفه وعن يمينه وعن شماله، والملائكة المقربون حذاه، أول من يتبعه مُحَمَّد صلى الله عليه وآله وعلي عليه السلام الثاني

Al-Ghaybah of al-Nu'mani: Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Sa'id - Yahya b. Zakariya - Yusuf b. Kulayb - Ibn al-Bata'ini - Ibn Humayd - Thumali - Abu Ja'far [Muhammad b. 'Ali], who said:

When the Qaim of the family of Muhammad has come out, Allah will help him with angels. Jibrail will be in front of him, Mikail on the right and Israfil on the left. Awe will precede him about a month's travel before him, behind him, on his right side and on his left side. The close angels will be beside him. The first one who will follow him will be Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, and 'Ali, peace be upon him, will be the second.⁷²

It is dha'if according to Ayatullah al-Muhsini.⁷³ This is readily obvious, anyway. It is from al-Ghaybah of al-Nu'mani, a dha'if book; and that is sufficient to establish its unreliability. Meanwhile, Yusuf b. Kulayb in the sanad is also muhmal (untraceable), while al-Jawahiri says about Ibn al-Bata'ini:

الحسن بن علي بن أبي حمزة ... البطائني ... كذاب ملعون

Al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Abi Hamzah ... al-Bata'ini ... an accursed liar.⁷⁴

So, it is a mawdhu' (fabricated) hadith. Yet, our opponents quote it to "prove" that Prophet Muhammad and Imam 'Ali will be the top followers of the "Shi'i Mahdi" according to Shi'i doctrine! Well, it is completely obvious that this is NOT, and was NEVER, part of Shi'i 'aqidah. The relevant riwayat is even mawdhu', to begin with! How can it be representative of what the Shi'ah believe?! Moreover, the apparent meaning of the hadith is that the Messenger of Allah will return to rule the world immediately after the death of Imam al-Mahdi, and Imam 'Ali will also return to immediately succeed the Prophet. This interpretation is in line with some other dha'if reports on this matter. Whatever the case, the hadith is a fabrication, and therefore constitutes no hujjah, whether for or against the Shi'is.

Notes

1. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-A'ṭhar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 349, Ch. 27, # 101
2. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Maṭbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233
3. See Muhammad 'Asif al-Muhsini, Buhuth fi 'Ilm al-Rijal (Markaz al-Mustafa al-'Alami li Tarjamah wa al-Nashr), p. 431, # 10; Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Maṭbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 1, p. 405

4. See Muhammad 'Asif al-Muhsini, Buhuth fi 'Ilm al-Rijal (Markaz al-Mustafa al-'Alami li Tarjamah wa al-Nashr), pp. 416-437, # 4, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 13 ; Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Maṭbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 1, p. 14, 405 and 478
5. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Aṭhar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 313, Ch. 27, # 7
6. Ibid, vol. 52, p. 318, Ch. 27, # 18
7. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Maṭbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233
8. 'Ali Al Muhsin, Lillah wa li al-Haqiqah (2nd edition, 1425 H), vol. 2, p. 597
9. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Ahmad b. al-'Abbas al-Najashi al-Asadi al-Kufi, Fihrist Asma Musannafay al-Shi'ah (Qum: Muasassat al-Nashr al-Islami; 5th edition, 1416 H) [annotator: Sayyid Musa al-Shubayri al-Zanjani], p. 328, # 888
10. Muhammad al-Jawahiri, al-Mufid min Mu'jam al-Rijal al-Hadith (Qum: Manshurat Maktabah al-Mahalati; 2nd edition, 1424 H), p. 225, # 4613
11. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Aṭhar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 354, Ch. 27, # 113
12. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Maṭbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233
13. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Aṭhar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 338, Ch. 27, # 79
14. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Maṭbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233
15. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Aṭhar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 333, Ch. 27, # 62
16. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Maṭbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233
17. 'Ali Al Muhsin, Lillah wa li al-Haqiqah (2nd edition, 1425 H), vol. 2, p. 599
18. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Aṭhar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 51, pp. 163-164, Ch. 11
19. Muhammad al-Jawahiri, al-Mufid min Mu'jam al-Rijal al-Hadith (Qum: Manshurat Maktabah al-Mahalati; 2nd edition, 1424 H), p. 266, # 5472
20. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Aṭhar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 332, Ch. 27, # 57
21. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Maṭbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233
22. 'Ali Al Muhsin, Lillah wa li al-Haqiqah (2nd edition, 1425 H), vol. 2, p. 602
23. Ibid, p. 381, # 7834
24. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 2, p. 968, # 1333 (401)
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26. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju'fi, al-Jami' al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 2, p. 573, # 1506
27. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 2, p. 968, # 1333 (402)
28. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, Man La Yahduru al-Faqih (Qum: Manshurat Jama'at al-Mudarisin fi al-Hawzah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, p. 231, # 696
29. 'Ali Al Muhsin, Lillah wa li al-Haqiqah (2nd edition, 1425 H), vol. 2, p. 619

30. Ibid
31. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Athar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 286, Ch. 26, # 19
32. Muhammad Zakariya, al-Sahih wa al-Mu'tabar min Akhbar al-Hujjah al-Muntazar (Majmu'at al-Rasid; 1st edition, 1434 H), p. 39, # 34
33. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-Kafi (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah; 3rd edition) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, p. 397, # 1
34. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 4, p. 298
35. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-Kafi (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah; 3rd edition) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, p. 398, # 3
36. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 4, p. 303
37. Ibid, vol. 4, p. 301
38. Ibid, vol. 4, p. 303
39. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1338, # 1714 (7)
40. Qur'an 19:16-21
41. Qur'an 28:7
42. Qur'an 5:111
43. Qur'an 21:73
44. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Athar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 354, Ch. 27, # 114
45. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233
46. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Athar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 135, Ch. 22, # 40
47. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 227
48. Muhammad al-Jawahiri, al-Mufid min Mu'jam al-Rijal al-Hadith (Qum: Manshurat Maktabah al-Mahalati; 2nd edition, 1424 H), p. 145, # 2929
49. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Athar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, pp. 230-231, Ch. 25, # 96
50. Ibid, vol. 52, p. 235, Ch. 25, # 103
51. Ibid, vol. 52, pp. 293-294, Ch. 26, # 42
52. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Athar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 53, pp. 90-91, Ch. 29, # 95
53. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-Kafi (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah; 3rd edition) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, pp. 238-239, # 1
54. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 3, p. 55
55. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-Kafi (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah; 3rd edition) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, p. 240, # 3
56. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 3, p. 58

57. Qur'an 5:48, 2:41, 2:89, 2:91, 2:97, 3:3, 4:47, 6:92, 10:37, 12:111, 35:31, 46:12 and 46:30.

58. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Athar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 368, Ch. 27, # 153

59. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233

60. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Athar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, pp. 314-315, Ch. 27, # 9

61. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233

62. Qur'an 25:63

63. Qur'an 25:76

64. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Athar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 373, Ch. 27, # 167

65. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233

66. There are some cultural doctrines and practices that have been "incorporated" into modern Shi'ism. They are very easy to identify, however. They always lack explicit evidence in the Qur'an and authentic ahadith of the Ahl al-Bayt. In fact, on most - if not on all - occasions, these cultural beliefs and rituals directly contradict the clear texts of the Book of Allah and the reliably transmitted teachings of His Messenger and his purified offspring, 'alaihim al-salam. Sadly, we have seen certain people declaring some of these cultural doctrines and practices to be wajib (obligatory) upon all Muslims! Imagine what such people will do when the Imam contradicts them in their fatwas! A likely scenario would be that they would call the Mahdi an impostor, and then would rise up violently against him.

Some other Shi'i Muslims may rebel also on account of the physical looks of the Imam. They had been expecting someone of certain ethnic looks. Then, he comes and looks differently. This is why it is terribly ill-advised to speculate on the physical appearance of the Mahdi, especially in the absence of explicit mu'tabar reports.

However, Sunnis are the most likely to wage war against the Imam. First, their 'ulama have misled them for more than a millennium till these days of ours, that the name of the Mahdi will be Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah - despite the complete lack of authentic Sunni or Shi'i evidence to back such a claim! So, unless things change, whenever he reappears, a lot of them may call him an impostor, and may launch armed opposition against him. Moreover, in his restoration efforts, he will certainly outlaw huge parts of strictly Sunni doctrines and rituals. They are people who generally do not follow the authentic ahadith of the Ahl al-Bayt in their religion. As a result, their errors are countless. Unfortunately, these errors are what they consider the "original" Islam! So, when the final Imam comes to remove and correct the Sunni errors, he may face violent resistance from many of them.

67. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Athar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 353, Ch. 27, # 109

68. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233

69. Muhammad al-Jawahiri, al-Mufid min Mu'jam al-Rijal al-Hadith (Qum: Manshurat Maktabah al-Mahalati; 2nd edition, 1424 H), p. 516, # 10525

70. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Athar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 353, Ch. 27, # 110

71. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233

72. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Athar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 348, Ch. 27, # 99

73. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, *Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar* (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Maṭbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233
74. Muhammad al-Jawahiri, *al-Mufid min Mu'jam al-Rijal al-Hadith* (Qum: Manshurat Maktabah al-Mahalati; 2nd edition, 1424 H), p. 145, # 2929

21. Will The Mahdi Burn Or Crucify Abu Bakr And ‘Umar?

There are a number of ahadith in the Shi’i books which some Sunni elements often quote to “prove” that the “Shi’i Mahdi” will violate the graves of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, exhume their bodies and then burn or crucify them. In this chapter, we will be investigating the authenticity of those reports.

The first of them is this riwayat which ‘Allamah al-Majlisi (d. 1111 H) has copied:

وباسناده إلى بشير النبال، عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: هل تدري أول ما يبدء به القائم عليه السلام؟ قلت: لا، قال: يخرج هذين رطبين غضين فيحرقهما ويذريهما في الريح

Through his chain to Bashir al-Nabbal, from Abu ‘Abd Allah, peace be upon him:

“Do you know the first thing that the Qaim, peace be upon him, will do?” I said, “No.” He said, “He will resurrect these two into fresh beings and will burn them both, and will blow them away into the air.”¹

The sanad of this report is unknown, and the authenticity of its source book - Kitab al-Fadhl b. Shadhan - is equally unknown! As for its main narrator whose name has been given, Bashir al-Nabbal, Shaykh al-Jawahiri says about him:

مجهول

Majhul²

So, it is indeed dha’if at many levels. In any case, it has also been declared dha’if by Ayatullah Muhsini³. Shaykh ‘Ali Al Muhsin has the same verdict as well:

فالرواية ضعيفة السند، لا يصح الاحتجاج بها

The report has a dha’if chain. It is not correct to use it as evidence.⁴

Certainly, it does not constitute valid evidence, due to its weakness, in this matter.

Shaykh Ibn Jarir al-Tabari has the second hadith:

وأخبرني أبو الحسين مُجَدُّ بن هارون بن موسى، عن أبيه، عن أبي علي مُجَدُّ بن همام، عن أبي عبد الله جعفر بن مُجَدُّ، قال: حدثنا مُجَدُّ ابن حمران المدائني، عن علي بن أسباط، عن الحسن بن بشير، عن أبي الجارود، عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام، قال: ... : ثم يدخل المسجد فينقض الحائط حتى يضعه إلى الأرض، ثم يخرج الأزرق وزريق غضين طريين، يكلمهما فيجيبانه، فيرتاب عند ذلك المبطلون، فيقولون: يكلم الموتى؟! فيقتل منهم خمسمائة مرتاب في جوف المسجد، ثم يحرقهما بالخطب الذي جمعه ليحرقا به عليا وفاطمة والحسن والحسين عليهم السلام، وذلك الخطب عندنا نتوارثه، ويهدم قصر المدينة.

Abu al-Husayn Muhammad b. Harun b. Musa - his father - Abu ‘Ali Muhammad b. Hammam- Abu ‘Abd Allah Ja’far b. Muhammad -

Muhammad b. Humran al-Madaini - 'Ali b. Asbat - al-Hasan b. Bashir - Abu al-Jarud - Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him:

... Then, he (the Mahdi) will enter the mosque, and will destroy the wall until he brings it down to the ground. Then, he will bring out al-Azraq and Zariq and they both will be fresh. He will speak to them both and they will answer him. Then, the doubters will doubt, and they will say, 'He speaks with the dead?!' Then he will kill among them five hundred doubters in the middle of the mosque. Then, he will burn them both with the (same) firewood which they had gathered to burn with it 'Ali, Faṭimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn. That firewood is (still) with us. We inherit it. And he will demolish the palace of al-Madinah.⁵

Concerning the first narrator, al-Jawahiri says:

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ هَارُونَ بْنِ مُوسَى: أَبُو الْحُسَيْنِ ... مَجْهُولٌ

Muhammad b. Harun b. Musa, Abu al-Husayn ... : Majhul.⁶

On another of the narrators, he also states:

الْحَسَنُ بْنُ بَشِيرٍ: مَجْهُولٌ

Al-Hasan b. Bashir: Majhul.⁷

So, the chain is dha'if, with two dha'if narrators in it.

Shaykh al-Saduq (d. 381 H) has the third riwayah:

حدثنا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ إِسْحَاقَ رضي الله عنه قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ هَمَامٍ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ مَابِنْدَاذٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ هِلَالٍ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ أَبِي عَمِيرٍ عَنِ الْمُفْضَلِ بْنِ عَمْرٍ، عَنِ الصَّادِقِ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ آبَائِهِ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ عَنْ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: لَمَّا أُسْرِي بِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ أَوْحَى إِلَيَّ رَبِّي ﷻ فَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ ... هَذَا الْقَائِمُ الَّذِي يَحْلُلُ حَلَالِي وَيَحْرِمُ حَرَامِي وَبِهِ أَنْتَقِمُ مِنْ أَعْدَائِي، وَهُوَ رَاحَةٌ لِأَوْلِيَائِي، وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَشْفِي قُلُوبَ شِيعَتِكَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ وَالْجَاحِدِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ، فَيُخْرِجُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّى طَرِيقِينَ فَيَحْرِقُهُمَا، فَلَفْتَنَةُ النَّاسِ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِهَذَا أَشَدُّ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْعِجْلِ وَالسَّامِرِيِّ.

Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. Ishaq, may Allah be pleased with him - Muhammad b. Hammam - Ahmad b. Mabindadh - Ahmad b. Hilal - Muhammad b. Abi 'Umayr - al-Fadhl b. 'Umar - al-Sadiq Ja'far b. Muhammad - his father - his ancestors, peace be upon them - Amir al-Muminin, peace be upon him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, said, "When I was taken on the night journey to the heaven, my Lord, Glorious be He, sent wahy to me, and said, "O Muhammad! ... This is the Qaim who will permit My halal and forbid My haram. And through him, I will take revenge from My enemies. He is a comfort to My friends, and he is the one who will heal the hearts of your Shi'ah from the unjust people, the deniers and the disbelievers. So, he will exhume al-Lat and al-'Uzza and they both will be fresh, and he will burn them both. So, the fitnah of the people through them both on that day will be more severe than the fitnah of the calf and al-Samiri.⁸

About one of the narrators, al-Jawahiri comments:

أحمد بن مابنداذ ... مجهول

Ahmad b. Mabindadh...: Majhul.⁹

In 'Uyun, this narrator's name is given as:

أحمد بن بندار

Ahmad b. Bundar

However, even this one is dha'if too, as stated by al-Jawahiri:

أبو جعفر أحمد بن بندار: مجهول

Abu Ja'far Ahmad b. Bundar: Majhul.¹⁰

Then, Prof. 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari explains the other defects in the sanad:

أحمد بن هلال العبرتائي متهم في دينه غال. ورواية ابن أبي عمير عن المفضل بدون

الواسطة بعيد

Ahmad b. Hilal al-'Abirtai, he is accused in his religion, a ghali (exaggerator). And the narration of Ibn Abi 'Umayr from al-Fadhil without an intermediary is improbable.¹¹

Shaykh al-Tusi (d. 460 H) also says:

أحمد بن هلال العبرتائي ... ولد سنة ثمانين ومائة، ومات سنة سبع وستين ومائتين،

وكان غاليا متهما في دينه

Ahmad b. Hilal al-'Abirtai ... he was born in 180 H, and he died in 267 H. He was a ghali, accused in his religion.¹²

Al-Sadiq himself also tells us about Ahmad b. Hilal and people like him:

اعتقادنا في الغلاة والمفوضة أنهم كفار بالله تعالى، وأنهم أشر من اليهود والنصارى والمجوس

والقدرية والحرورية ومن جميع أهل البدع والأهواء المضلة

Our belief concerning the ghulat (exaggerators) and the mufawwidhah is that they are DISBELIEVERS (kuffar) in Allah the Most High, and they are worse than the Jews, the Christians, the Majus, the Qadariyyah, the Haruriyyah and all the heretics and deviants.¹³

Of course, we do not take our religion from kuffar! Their disbelief itself is sufficient to kill off their ahadith completely and absolutely. The ghulat commit outward kufr by awarding some attributes of Allah to the Prophet, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi, and the Imams, 'alaihim al-salam, after him.

Al-Tusi further says about him:

أحمد بن هلال وهو ضعيف فاسد المذهب

Ahmad b. Hilal: he is dha'if, and a heretic.¹⁴

Ayatullah Sadiq al-Ruhani concurs:

والاشكال فيه بأن في طريقه أحمد بن هلال وهو ضعيف

Its problem is that in its chain is Ahmad b. Hilal, and he is dha'if.¹⁵

The bottomline here then is, this chain is dha'if as well; in fact it is outrightly mawdh'u' due to the presence of the ghali in it. So, the report is NOT a valid proof.

Shaykh Ahmad al-Tabarsi (d. 548 H) here presents the fourth hadith:

وعن عبد العظيم الحسيني رضي الله عنه قال: قلت لمحمد بن علي بن موسى عليهم السلام: يا مولاي أني لأرجو أن تكون القائم من أهل بيت محمد الذي يملأ الأرض قسطاً وعدلاً كما ملئت ظلماً وجوراً. فقال عليه السلام: ما منا إلا قائم بأمر الله، وهاد إلى دين الله، ولكن القائم الذي يطهر الله به الأرض من أهل الكفر والجحود ويملاً الأرض قسطاً وعدلاً هو: الذي يخفي على الناس ولادته، ويغيب عنهم شخصه، ويجرم عليهم تسميته، وهو سمي رسول الله وكنيه، وهو الذي تطوى له الأرض، ويذل له كل صعب، يجتمع إليه من أصحابه عدة أهل بدر: ثلاثمائة وثلاثة عشر رجلاً من أقاصي الأرض وذلك قول الله { : أينما تكونوا يأت بكم الله جميعاً إن الله على كل شيء قدير } فإذا اجتمعت له هذه العدة من أهل الإخلاص، أظهر الله أمره، فإذا كمل له العقد وهو: عشرة آلاف رجل خرج بإذن الله، فلا يزال يقتل أعداء الله حتى يرضى عز وجل. قال عبد العظيم: فقلت له: يا سيدي فكيف يعلم أن الله قد رضي؟ قال: يلقي في قلبه الرحمة، فإذا دخل المدينة أخرج اللات والعزى فأحرقهما.

And from ‘Abd al-‘Azim al-Hasani, may Allah be pleased with him, who said:

I said to Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Musa, peace be upon them. “O my master, I wish that you be the Qaim from the Ahl al-Bayt of Muhammad, who will fill the earth with equity and justice, just as it had been filled with injustice and aggression.” So, he, peace be upon him, said, “Everyone of us is a Qaim with the Command of Allah, and a guide to the Religion of Allah. However, the Qaim through whom Allah will cleanse the earth of the people of disbelief and denial, and who will fill the earth with equity and justice is: the one whose birth will be hidden from the people, and whose personality will be concealed from them, and the mentioning of his name will be haram upon them, and he has the name and kunya of the Messenger of Allah.

He is the one to whom the earth will fold up, and to whom every difficulty will yield. The number of the people of Badr from his companions will gather together for him: three hundred and thirteen from the remotest parts of the earth. That is the Statement of Allah {Wherever you may be, Allah will bring you together. Truly Allah is able to do all things} [2:148]. When these people have gathered for him, from the people of al-ikhlas (pure monotheism), Allah will make his affair apparent. When the allegiance for him is completed, and that will be ten thousand men, he will rise with the Permission of Allah. So, he will not cease to kill the enemies of Allah until He, Glorified be He, becomes pleased.”

‘Abd al-‘Azim said: I said to him, “O my master, so how will he know that Allah, Glorified be He, has become pleased?” He said, “He will place mercy in his heart. When he enters Madinah, he will exhume al-Lat and al-‘Uzza and will burn them both.”¹⁶

This riwayat is mursal, as it has no chain of transmission. Therefore, it is dha’if.

Ibn Jarir al-Tabari reports the fifth hadith:

وأخبرني أبو الحسين مُجَّد بن هارون بن موسى، قال: حدثنا أبي ﷺ، قال: أخبرني أبو جعفر مُجَّد بن الحسن بن أحمد بن الوليد، قال: حدثنا مُجَّد بن أحمد بن أبي عبد الله البرقي، قال: حدثني زكريا بن آدم، قال: إني لعند الرضا عليه السلام إذ جرى بأبي جعفر عليه السلام، وسنه أقل من أربع سنين، فضرب بيده إلى الأرض، ورفع رأسه إلى السماء فأطال الفكر، فقال له الرضا عليه السلام: بنفسي أنت، لم طال فكرك؟ فقال عليه السلام: فيما صنع بأمي فاطمة عليها السلام، أما والله لأخرجنهما ثم لأحرقنهما، ثم لأذرينهما، ثم لأنسفنهما في اليم نسفا. فاستدناه، وقبل بين عينيه، ثم قال: بأبي أنت وأمي، أنت لها. يعني الإمامة.

Abu al-Husayn Muhammad b. Harun b. Musa - my father, may Allah be pleased with him - Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Ahmad b. al-Walid - Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abi 'Abd Allah al-Barqi - Zakariya b. Adam:

I was with al-Ridha, peace be upon him, when he brought Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, to me, and his age was lower than four years. Then, he hit towards the ground with his hand, and raised his head towards the heaven, and thought for long. So, al-Ridha, peace be upon him, said to him, "May my soul be for sacrificed for you, why are you thinking for so long?" Then, he, peace be upon him, said, "It is about what was done to my mother, peace be upon her. By Allah, I would exhume them both and burn them, and throw them down, and then scatter them both completely in the sea." Then, he kissed between his eyes, and then said, "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you. You are for it". He meant the Imamah.¹⁷

About the first narrator, al-Jawahiri states:

مُجَّد بن هارون بن موسى: أبو الحسين ... مجهول

Muhammad b. Harun b. Musa, Abu al-Husayn ... : Majhul.¹⁸

So, the report is dha'if. Even then, it mentions absolutely nothing about the Mahdi. Therefore, it is grossly irrelevant. It merely claims that Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt had a desire to exhume and burn those two people. It mentions nothing about whether the Mahdi will eventually carry out this wish or not. Anyway, it is an unreliable riwayat. Therefore, it establishes nothing.

Al-Tabari again records the sixth hadith:

وروى أبو عبد الله مُجَّد بن سهل الجلودي، قال: حدثنا أبو الخير أحمد بن مُجَّد بن جعفر الطائي الكوفي في مسجد أبي إبراهيم موسى بن جعفر عليه السلام، قال: حدثنا مُجَّد بن الحسن بن يحيى الحارثي، قال: حدثنا علي بن إبراهيم بن مهزيار الأهوازي، قال: خرجت في بعض السنين حاجا إذ دخلت المدينة وأقمت بها أياما، أسأل واستبحت عن صاحب الزمان عليه السلام... ثم قال: يا ابن المهزيار... يأذن لولي الله، فأخرج بين الصفا والمروة في

وثلاثة في ناحية فقال له جدي جعلت فداك لقد رأيتك صنعت شيئا ما صنعه أحد قط رأيتك رميت الجمرات ثم رميت بخمسة بعد ذلك ثلاثة في ناحية واثنين في ناحية قال نعم انه إذا كان كل موسم أخرجنا الفاسقين الغاصبين ثم يفرق بينهما ههنا لا يراهما الا امام عدل فرميت الأول اثنتين والآخر ثلاثة لان الآخر أخبث من الأول.

Ahmad b. Muhammad - al-Hasan b. 'Ali - Abu al-Sakhr (also spelt Abu Sakhr) - al-Hasan b. 'Ali - 'Ali b. 'Isa b. 'Abd Allah b. Abi Tahir al-'Alawi (later called Abu Tahir) - his father ('Isa b. 'Abd Allah) - his grandfather ('Abd Allah b. Abi Tahir), who said:

I was with Abu Ja'far, Muhammad b. 'Ali, at Mina and I was throwing the pebbles, and Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, too threw the pebbles. He finished them (i.e. the required number to be thrown). Then, there were still five pebbles in his hand. So, he threw two to one side and three to another side. As a result, I said to him, "May I be sacrificed for you. I saw you doing something that no one had ever done. I saw you throwing pebbles. Then, you threw five after that: three to one side and two to another side". He said, "Yes. During every pilgrimage season, the two evil-doers and usurpers are exhumed. Then, they are separated here, and none sees them except a just Imam. So, I stoned the first with two pebbles and the other with three pebbles, because the other was more evil than the first."²¹

The first problem of this report is that its source - Basair al-Darajat - is a dha'if book according to Ayatullah al-Muhsini²². This, in effect, makes it dha'if, without even the need to check the sanad.

Meanwhile, before we examine its narrators, let us quote this other version of the same report, from Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413 H):

أحمد بن مُحَمَّد بن عيسى، عن الحسن بن علي الوشاء، عن أبي الصخر أحمد بن عبد الرحيم، عن الحسن بن علي رجل كان في جباية مأمون قال: دخلت أنا ورجل من أصحابنا على أبي طاهر عيسى بن عبد الله العلوي، قال أبو الصخر: وأظنه من ولد عمر بن علي وكان نازلا في دار الصيدين فدخلنا عليه عند العصر وبين يديه ركوة من ماء وهو يتمسح، فسلمنا عليه فرد علينا السلام، ثم ابتدأنا فقال: معكما أحد؟ فقلنا: لا، ثم التفت يمينا وشمالا هل يرى أحدا ثم قال: أخبرني أبي عن جدي أنه كان مع أبي جعفر مُحَمَّد بن علي عليهما السلام بمنى وهو يرمي الجمرات وأن أبا جعفر رمى الجمرات فاستتمها وبقي في يديه بقية، فعد خمس حصيات فرمى ثنتين في ناحية وثلاثة في ناحية، فقلت له: أخبرني جعلت فداك ما هذا فقد رأيتك صنعت شيئا " ما صنعه أحد قط، إنك رميت بخمس بعد ذلك ثلاثة في ناحية وثلثين في ناحية؟ قال: نعم إنه إذا كان كل موسم أخرجنا الفاسقان غصيين طريين فصلبا ههنا لا يراهما إلا إمام عدل، فرميت الأول ثنتين والآخر بثلاث لأن الآخر أخبث من الأول.

Ahmad b. Muhammad b. ‘Isa - al-Hasan b. ‘Ali al-Washa - Abu al-Sakhr Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Rahim - al-Hasan b. ‘Ali - Abu Tahir ‘Isa b. ‘Abd Allah al-‘Alawi - his father (‘Abd Allah al-‘Alawi) - his grandfather, who said:

I was with Abu Ja’far, Muhammad b. ‘Ali, peace be upon them both, at Muna and I was throwing the pebbles, and Abu Ja’far, peace be upon him, threw the pebbles. He finished them (i.e. the required number to be thrown). Then, there were still some (pebbles) in his hand. So, he counted five pebbles and threw two to one side and three to another side. As a result, I said to him, “May I be sacrificed for you. What is this? I have seen you doing something that no one had ever done. You threw five pebbles after that: three: three to one side and two to another side”. He said, “Yes. During every pilgrimage season, the two evil-doers are exhumed and they are fresh. Then, they are crucified here. None sees them both except a just Imam. So, I stoned the first with two pebbles and the other with three pebbles, because the other was more evil than the first.”²³

There is a fundamental contradiction between both reports, even though they supposedly come from the same person! Meanwhile, like in the case of the first riwayat, this one too has a dha’if source. The book, al-Ikhtisas, is dha’if, and there is even no solid proof that its author was really al-Mufid²⁴! With both sources for both reports being dha’if, then both of them are also dha’if by default.

But, that is not all. Al-Jawahiri has words about one of the narrators in both reports:

أحمد بن عبد الرحيم أبو الصخر: مجهول

Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Rahim Abu al-Sakhr: Majhul.²⁵

The name of one of the narrators is also mixed up. In the first report, it is given as ‘Ali b. ‘Isa b. ‘Abd Allah b. Abi Tahir al-‘Alawi, and in the second as Abu Tahir ‘Isa b. ‘Abd Allah al-‘Alawi. These are two different persons with different fathers and grandfathers! This shows idtirab in the sanad, and reveals a further fatal defect in it. In the matn too, there is confusion over whether the duo are crucified or not. This makes the case of the two reports even more hopeless.

Concerning the narrator in the second riwayat, al-Jawahiri says again:

عيسى بن عبد الله العلوي: مجهول

‘Isa b. ‘Abd Allah al-‘Alawi: Majhul.²⁶

As for ‘Ali b. ‘Isa b. ‘Abd Allah b. Abi Tahir al-‘Alawi, he is muhmal (untraceable). Honestly, we really need not even dig further into the two chains. They are already dha’if jiddan (very weak), and very tragic as they are! Besides, both reports diverge completely from the others, and mention absolutely nothing about how the Mahdi will allegedly crucify the two caliphs.

Then, al-Majlisi has the eighth riwayat on the matter:

وباسناده، عن إسحاق بن عمار، عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: إذا قدم القائم عليه السلام وثب أن يكسر الحائط الذي على القبر فيبعث الله تعالى ريحا شديدة وصواعق ورعودا حتى يقول الناس: إنما ذا لذا، فيتفرق أصحابه عنه حتى لا يبقى معه أحد، فيأخذ المعول

بيده، فيكون أول من يضرب بالمعول ثم يرجع إليه أصحابه إذا رأوه يضرب المعول بيده، فيكون ذلك اليوم فضل بعضهم على بعض بقدر سبقهم إليه، فيهدمون الحائط ثم يخرجهما غضين رطبين فيلعنهما ويتبرا منهما ويصلبهما ثم ينزلهما ويحرقهما ثم يذريهما في الريح.

And with his chain, from Ishaq b. 'Ammar from Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him, said:

When the Qaim, peace be upon him, arrives, he will jump, to crush the wall which is upon the grave. So, Allah the Most High will send a terrible wind and lightnings and will thunder till the people will say, "That is only for that". So, his companions will desert him till there will remain not a single person with him. Then, he will pick the pickaxe with his hand, and will be the first to strike with the pickaxe. Then, his companions will return to him when they see him striking the pickaxe with his hand. So, that day, some of them will become superior to others based upon how earlier they came to him. Then, they will demolish the wall, and he will exhume both of them and they will be fresh and wet; and he will curse them both; and he will dissociate from them both; and he will crucify them both. Then he will bring them down and burn them. Then, he will let them both be ablated in the wind."²⁷

The hadith has no known chain; and the authenticity of its source book - Kitab al-Fadhl b. Shadhan - is also unknown. No wonder, the report is dha'if according to Ayatullah Muhsini²⁸.

So, we move to the final, and the most dramatic, hadith on this matter. 'Allamah al-Majlisi records:

روي في بعض مؤلفات أصحابنا، عن الحسين بن حمدان، عن محمد بن إسماعيل وعلي بن عبد الله الحسيني، عن أبي شعيب محمد بن نصير، عن عمر بن الفرات، عن محمد بن الفضل، عن الفضل بن عمر قال: سألت سيدي الصادق عليه السلام... يا سيدي ثم يسير المهدي إلى أين؟ قال عليه السلام: إلى مدينة جدي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله، فإذا وردها كان له فيها مقام عجيب يظهر فيه سرور المؤمنين وخزي الكافرين. قال الفضل: يا سيدي ما هو ذلك؟ قال: يرد إلى قبر جده صلى الله عليه وآله فيقول: يا معاشر الخلائق، هذا قبر جدي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله؟ فيقولون: نعم يا مهدي آل محمد فيقول: ومن معه في القبر؟ فيقولون: أصحابه وضجيعاه أبو بكر وعمر، فيقول وهو أعلم بهما والخلائق كلهم جميعا يسمعون: من أبو بكر وعمر؟ وكيف دفنا من بين الخلق مع جدي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله، وعسى المدفون غيرهما. فيقول الناس: يا مهدي آل محمد صلى الله عليه وآله ما ههنا غيرهما إنهما دفنا معه لأنهما خليفتا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وأبوا زوجته، فيقول للخلق بعد ثلاث: أخرجوهما من قبريهما، فيخرجان غضين طريين لم يتغير خلقهما، ولم يشحب لونهما فيقول: هل فيكم من يعرفهما؟ فيقولون: نعرفهما بالصفة وليس ضجيعا

جدك غيرهما، فيقول: هل فيكم أحد يقول غير هذا أو يشك فيهما؟ فيقولون: لا فيؤخر اخراجهما ثلاثة أيام، ثم ينتشر الخبر في الناس ويحضر المهدي ويكشف الجدران عن القبرين، ويقول للنقباء: اجثوا عنهما وانبشوهما. فيبحثون بأيديهم حتى يصلون إليهما. فيخرجان غضين طريين كصورتهم فيكشف عنهما أكفانهما ويأمر برفعهما على دوحة يابسة نخرة فيصلبهما عليها... ثم يأمر بانزالهما فينزلان إليه فيحييهما بإذن الله تعالى ويأمر الخلائق بالاجتماع، ثم يقص عليهم قصص فعالهما في كل كور ودور حتى يقص عليهم قتل هابيل بن آدم عليه السلام، وجمع النار لإبراهيم عليه السلام، وطرح يوسف عليه السلام في الجب، وحبس يونس عليه السلام في الحوت، وقتل يحيى عليه السلام، وصلب عيسى عليه السلام وعذاب جرجيس ودانيال عليهما السلام، وضرب سلمان الفارسي، وإشعال النار على باب أمير المؤمنين وفاطمة والحسن والحسين عليهم السلام لاحتراقهم بها، وضرب يد الصديقة الكبرى فاطمة بالسوط، ورفس بطنها وإسقاطها محسنا، وسم الحسن عليه السلام وقتل الحسين عليه السلام، وذبح أطفاله وبني عمه وأنصاره، وسي ذراري رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وإراقة دماء آل محمد صلى الله عليه وآله، وكل دم سفك، وكل فرج نكح حراما، وكل رين وخبث وفاحشة وإثم وظلم وجور وغشم منذ عهد آدم عليه السلام إلى وقت قيام قائمنا عليه السلام كل ذلك يعدده عليه السلام عليهما، ويلزمهما إياه فيعترفان به ثم يأمر بهما فيقتص منهما في ذلك الوقت بمظالم من حضر، ثم يصلبهما على الشجرة و يأمر نارا تخرج من الأرض فتحرقهما والشجرة ثم يأمر ريحا فتتسففهما في اليم نسفا.

It is narrated in some books of our companions from al-Husayn b. Hamdan - Muhammad b. Isma'il and 'Ali b. 'Abd Allah al-Hasani - Abu Shu'ayb Muhammad b. Nusayr - 'Umar b. al-Furat - Muhammad b. al-Mufadhdhal - al-Mufadhdhal b. 'Umar:

I asked my master, al-Sadiq, peace be upon him ...: "O my master, where will the Mahdi go thereafter?"

He, peace be upon him, said, "To the city (Madinah) of my ancestor, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family. When he gets there, he will have a strange status. It will reveal the believers' joy concerning him, and the sorrow of the disbelievers."

Al-Mufadhdhal said, "O my master! What will that be?"

He said, "He will go to the grave of his ancestor, peace be upon him and his family, and will say, 'O creatures! Is this the grave of my ancestor, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family?' They will say, 'Yes, O Mahdi of the family of Muhammad.' Then, he will say, 'And who is with him in the grave?' They will say, 'His two companions and bedfellows, Abu Bakr and 'Umar.' So, he will say - he will know best concerning the two of them - while the entire creation listen, 'Who are Abu Bakr and 'Umar? And how were they - of all the creatures - buried with my

ancestor, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family? Perhaps, others are buried here.' The people will say, 'O Mahdi of the family of Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, there is none else here apart from the two of them. They have only been buried with him because they both were successors of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, and his fathers-in-law.'

So, he will say to the creatures after three days, 'Exhume them both from their grave.' Then, they will be exhumed, and they will be fresh and intact, and their skin colour will not have become pallid. Therefore, he will say, 'Is there anyone among you who recognizes them both?' They will say, 'We recognize them both by description. There are no other bedfellows of your ancestor except them both.' He will say, 'Is there anyone among you who has a different opinion or who doubts concerning them both?' They will say, 'No.' Then, he will delay their exhumation for three days. Then, the news will spread among the people and the Mahdi will come and will remove the two walls from their graves, and will say to the captains, 'Search for them both and exhume them.' So, they will search with their hands until they will reach them both. Then, they will be exhumed and they will be fresh as they originally were. He will remove their shrouds from them, and will order that they both be raised on a lofty, dry, decayed tree. Then, they both will be crucified on it ... Then, he will order that they both be brought down.

So, they will be brought down to him, and he will bring them back to life with the Permission of Allah the Most High and he will order all creatures to gather together. Then, he will narrate to them stories of what both of them did during every age and epoch, till he will narrate to them the murder of Habil b. Adam, peace be upon him; and the gathering of the fire for Ibrahim, peace be upon him; the throwing of Yusuf, peace be upon him, into the well; the confinement of Yunus, peace be upon him, inside the whale; the murder of Yahya, peace be upon him; the crucifixion of 'Isa, peace be upon him; the torture of Jirjis and Daniyal, peace be upon them; the beating of Salman al-Farisi; the torching of the door of Amir al-Muminin, Faṭimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn, peace be upon them, in order to burn them through it; the beating of the hand of al-Siddiqah al-Kubra Faṭimah with the whip, and the kicking of her stomach and the miscarriage of Muhsin; the poisoning of al-Hasan, peace be upon him; the murder of al-Husayn, peace be upon him, and the slaughter of his babies, cousins and helpers; the taking of the offspring of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, as war captives and the shedding of the blood of the family of Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family; and every blood that is spilled unlawfully; and every lady who is illegally married; and every fraud, evil deed, obscenity, sin, injustice, aggression, and every act of wrongdoing since the time of Adam, peace be upon him, till the time of the rise of our Qaim, peace be upon him - he will charge all of that against them both, and will accuse them of everything, and they both will confess to everything. Then, he will order concerning them both, and every victim among those present will retaliate against them. Then, he will crucify them upon the tree and will command a fire which will come out of the earth, and it will burn

them both and the tree. Then, he will order the wind to blow them both completely into the sea.”²⁹

This report is so worthless that one hardly knows where to begin criticizing it. Is it its chain? Or its text, which patently contradicts several verses of the holy Qur’an and authentic history? The reader is also surprised by its weird length: it spans a total of 35 pages!³⁰ A single hadith?! We have only quoted the most relevant part.

Maybe we should just start with verdict of the annotator, ‘Allamah al-Bahbudi, who says about its sanad:

وان نحقق عن حال من أسند عنه فنرى في الحديث مُجَّد بن نصير وهو النميري الكذاب الغال الخبيث المدعى للنيابة على ما في غيبة الشيخ ص ٢٥٠ - وقد مر في ج ٥١ ص ٣٦٧ و ٣٦٨ شطر من ترجمته - يروى عن عمر بن الفرات الكاتب البغدادي الغالي ذو المناكير، عن مُجَّد بن المفضل بن عمر: مهمل أو مجهول، ولكن الظاهر أن الكذب إنما جاء من قبل البغدادي الكاتب ذي المناكير، وهو الذي كتب وصنف هذا الحديث وسردها بطوله، أو الجاعل هو نفس النميري.

If we investigate the status of those who narrated (the hadith) from him (i.e. al-Mufadhhal b. ‘Umar), we see in the hadith Muhammad b. Nusayr, and he is al-Numayri, the LIAR, the GHALI, the evil doer who claimed deputyship (to the chosen Imam), based upon what is in Ghaybah of Shaykh, page 250, and it has passed in Volume 51, page 367 and 368 (of Bihar al-Anwar), a part of his biography. He narrated from ‘Umar b. al-Furat, the Baghdadi scribe, the GHALI, narrator of manakir (repugnant reports), from Muhammad b. al-Mufadhhal b. ‘Umar, who is muhmal (untraceable) or majhul (unknown). What is apparent is that THE LIE (i.e. the hadith) only originated from al-Baghdadi, the scribe, narrator of manakir. He was the one who wrote and scripted this hadith and also narrated it in its entirety. Or, the fabricator was al-Numayri himself.³¹

First and foremost, the hadith is identified as “the lie”. Of course, the existence of two fabricators in its chain leave no doubt about that. Moreover, both fabricators were from the ghulat (exaggerators) - people with outward disbelief in Allah and His Messenger, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi. The ahadith of such people are, by default, of zero value in Islam.

Meanwhile, there is one more of its narrators whom al-Bahbudi inadvertently missed: al-Husayn b. Hamdan. ‘Allamah al-Hilli (d. 726 H) says about him:

الحسين بن حمدان الجنبلاني - بالجيم المضمومة، والنون الساكنة، والباء المنقطة تحتها نقطة - الحضيبي - بالحاء غير المعجمة المضمومة، والضاد المعجمة، والنون بعد الياء وقبلها - أبو عبد الله، كان فاسد المذهب، كذابا، صاحب مقالة ملعون، لا يلتفت إليه.

Al-Husayn b. Hamdan al-Junbulani al-Hadhini, Abu ‘Abd Allah: He was a heretic, A LIAR, maker of an accursed statement. No attention is paid to him.³²

This is the third fabricator in the sanad !

The mawdhu' (fabricated) hadith accuses Abu Bakr and 'Umar of several crimes - including the murder of Habil b. Adam, the gathering of the fire for Ibrahim, the throwing of Yusuf into the well, the confinement of Yunus inside the whale; the murder of Yahya, the crucifixion of 'Isa, and the torture of Jirjis and Daniyal - all of which had taken place before those two Sunni caliphs were even born! Certainly, nothing can be more laughable, and more fallacious, than these blatantly outrageous claims?! Unsurprisingly, this fabricated report also falsely affirms the "crucifixion of 'Isa" - one of its several direct contradictions to the Book of Allah and the authentic Sunnah. Meanwhile, the Qur'an has explicitly stated that no such crucifixion ever took place:

وقولهم إنا قتلنا المسيح عيسى ابن مريم رسول الله وما قتلوه وما صلبوه

And their saying, "Surely, we killed the Masih, 'Isa b. Maryam, the Messenger of Allah." And they did not kill him, AND THEY DID NOT CRUCIFY HIM.³³

Apparently, whoever fabricated that hadith was not very conversant with the Book of our Lord, or with reliable history. This is very evident throughout the report; and, sometimes, he takes his very deep ignorance to very ridiculous extents. Sadly, there are even some extremists among the Shi'ah who quote this hadith - in spite of its extreme weaknesses - as "evidence" in desperate attempts to slight Abu Bakr and 'Umar!

We have examined the riwayat which are normally quoted as "proof" that Imam al-Mahdi will exhume the two Sunni caliphs and burn or crucify them. All the reports are dha'if, and most of them are very unreliable. There are nine reports:

a) The first hadith is dha'if: Imam al-Mahdi will resurrect them both and then burn them only, without crucifying them at all.

b) The second hadith is dha'if: Imam al-Mahdi will resurrect them both and will then burn them with the same firewood which they had allegedly gathered to burn the Ahl al-Bayt, without crucifying them.

c) The third hadith is mawdhu' (a fabrication) due to Ahmad b. Hilal: Imam al-Mahdi will only exhume their corpses and will NOT resurrect them, and he will burn them both.

d) The fourth hadith is dha'if: Imam al-Mahdi will only exhume their corpses and will NOT resurrect them, and will burn them both.

e) The fifth hadith is dha'if: It mentions absolutely nothing about Imam al-Mahdi or his alleged exhumation/resurrection/cremation of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. So, it is grossly irrelevant.

f) The sixth hadith is dha'if jiddan: Imam al-Mahdi will only exhume their corpses and will NOT resurrect them, and will only crucify them on two pieces of wood (and not trees) and will NOT burn them.

g) The seventh hadith is also dha'if jiddan: It mentions absolutely nothing about Imam al-Mahdi or his alleged exhumation/resurrection/cremation of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. So, it is grossly irrelevant as well.

h) The eighth hadith is dha'if: Imam al-Mahdi will only exhume their corpses and will NOT resurrect them, and will crucify them, and then burn them.

i) The ninth hadith is mawdu': It contradicts itself on the exact timing of the alleged exhumation. It also claims that Imam al-Mahdi will crucify the duo on a tree (not on two pieces of wood), and will then burn them with a fire from the earth and the tree on which they will be crucified (and not with the wood which they had allegedly gathered to burn the Ahl al-Bayt).

Two of them are completely irrelevant. Therefore, we are left with seven reports. Two of those are also mawdu'. That leaves five. Of those five, four are dha'if, and one is dha'if jiddan. So, we are left with the four dha'if reports. The four dha'ifah also contradict one another on whether the Qaim will resurrect the two caliphs or not, and on whether he will crucify them or not.

Notes

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2. Muhammad al-Jawahiri, al-Mufid min Mu'jam al-Rijal al-Hadith (Qum: Manshurat Maktabah al-Mahalati; 2nd edition, 1424 H), p. 87, # 1766
3. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 2, p. 233
4. 'Ali Al Muhsin, Lillah wa li al-Haqiqah (2nd edition, 1425 H), vol. 2, p. 605
5. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir b. Rustam al-Tabari al-Saghir, Dalail al-Imamah (Tehran: Muasassat al-Bi'thah; 1st edition, 1413 H), p. 455, # 435 (39)
6. Muhammad al-Jawahiri, al-Mufid min Mu'jam al-Rijal al-Hadith (Qum: Manshurat Maktabah al-Mahalati; 2nd edition, 1424 H), p. 586, # 11947
7. Ibid, p. 136, # 2742
8. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah (Qum: Muasassat al-Nashr al-Islami li Jama'at al-Mudarisin; 1405 H) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], pp. 252-253, Ch. 23, # 2; Abu Ja'far al-Saduq Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (Beirut: Muasassat al-A'lami li al-Matbu'at; 1st edition, 1404 H) [Husayn al-A'lami], vol.2, pp. 60-61, # 27
9. Muhammad al-Jawahiri, al-Mufid min Mu'jam al-Rijal al-Hadith (Qum: Manshurat Maktabah al-Mahalati; 2nd edition, 1424 H), p. 37, # 767
10. Ibid, p. 689, # 14023
11. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah (Qum: Muasassat al-Nashr al-Islami li Jama'at al-Mudarisin; 1405 H) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], p. 252, Ch. 23, # 2, footnote # 2
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13. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Husayn b. Babuyah al-Qummi, al-I'tiqadat (Dar al-Mufid; 2nd edition, 1414 H) [annotator: 'Isam 'Abd al-Sayyid], Ch. 37, p. 97
14. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Tusi, al-Istibsar (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Hasan al-Musawi al-Khurasan], vol. 3, p. 28, # 90 (22)
15. Muhammad Sadiq al-Husayni al-Ruhani, Fiqh al-Sadiq (Qum: Muasassat Dar al-Kitab; 3rd edition, 1412 H), vol. 4, p. 204
16. Abu Mansur Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib al-Tabarsi, al-Ihtijaj (Najaf: Dar al-Nu'man li al-Taba'ah wa al-Nashr; 1386 H) [annotator: Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Khurasan], vol. 2, pp. 249-250
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18. Muhammad al-Jawahiri, al-Mufid min Mu'jam al-Rijal al-Hadith (Qum: Manshurat Maktabah al-Mahalati; 2nd edition, 1424 H), p. 586, # 11947
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21. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Farukh al-Saffar, Basair al-Darajat al-Kubra fi Fadhail Al Muhammad (Tehran: Muasassat al-A'lami; 1404 H), pp. 306-307, Ch. 7, # 8
22. See Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Buhuth fi 'Ilm al-Rijal (Markaz al-Mustafa al-'Alami li Tarjamah wa al-Nashr), pp. 426-427, # 5 ; Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Maṭbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 1, p. 14
23. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. al-Nu'man al-'Ikbari al-Baghdadi, al-Iktisas (Qum: Manshurah Jama'ah al-Mudarisin fi al-Hawzah al-'Ilmiyyah) [annotator: 'Ali Abkar al-Ghiffari], p. 277
24. Muhammad Asif al-Muhsini, Mashra'ah Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut: Muasassat al-'Arif li al-Maṭbu'at; 2nd edition, 1426 H), vol. 1, p. 405
25. Muhammad al-Jawahiri, al-Mufid min Mu'jam al-Rijal al-Hadith (Qum: Manshurat Maktabah al-Mahalati; 2nd edition, 1424 H), p. 30, # 617
26. Ibid, p. 448, # 9199
27. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Aṭhar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H), vol. 52, p. 386, Ch. 27, # 201
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29. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-Aimah al-Aṭhar (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 3rd edition, 1403 H) [annotator: Muhammad al-Baqir al-Bahbudi], vol. 53, pp. 1-14, Ch. 25
30. Ibid, vol. 53, pp. 1-35, Ch. 25
31. Ibid, vol. 53, p. 1, Ch. 25
32. Abu Mansur al-Hasan b. Yusuf b. Muṭahhar al-Asadi, Khulasat al-Aqwal fi Ma'rifat al-Rijal (Muasassat Nashr al-Faqahah; 1st edition, 1417 H) [annotator: Shaykh Jawad al-Qayumi], p. 339, # 10
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