



الإمام المهدى IMAM MAHDI

The **Awaited Justice**
and The **Eternal**
Responsibility

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2024

IMAM MAHDI

The **Awaited Justice** and The **Eternal** **Responsibility**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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preface

1. The book in your hands, dear reader, is an abridgement of the biography of one of the fourteen infallibles in Shia Islam. Its pages constitute about 25% of the original book, which also bears the same title. With Allah's Grace and Will, the original book will be translated at a later date.
2. This book, and the other books in the same series, are aimed at the young generation of Shia Muslims who do not have a good command of the Arabic language, in which the original book was written. It therefore assumes a basic knowledge of the concepts related to the Infallible and their life, and seeks to analyze and expand on them.

We note that there are very few translated books in English on the lives of the Imams, especially for young English speakers. This is despite the importance of the topic, and it is one of the reasons that prompted this translation project.

3. Since this book and the rest of the series have been translated by multiple individuals and in different ways, it is natural that they will not all be in a consistent style. We would therefore be grateful if the reader would help us by pointing out any errors or observations they may have, so that they can be corrected in future editions.

I ask Allah Almighty to reward the reader, the author of these pages, and the translators with His recompense and blessings, and the intercession of the Infallibles, may peace and blessing be upon them.

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Tarut - Qatif

20/09/1445 H

Imam al-Mahdi in Brief

- **Name:** Imam Muhammad, son of Hasan, peace be upon him.
- **Kunya (Epithets) :** Abu al-Qasim (same as the Prophet's epithet), and within the Shi'a community a popular epithet is Abu Salih.
- **Father and lineage:** Imam al-Hasan al-Askari, son of Ali al-Hadi, son of Muhammad al-Jawad, son of Ali al-Rida, son of Musa al-Kadhim, son of Jafar al-Sadiq, son of Muhammad al-Baqir, son of Ali al-Sajjad, son of Husayn, the martyr, son of Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon them.
- **Maternal grandfather:** The Prophet Muhammad, peace

be upon him, as he is from the ninth generation of the offspring of Husayn and his mother Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet.

- **His Mother:** Lady Narjis from the lineage of Shamoun, the successor of the Prophet Moses, peace be upon him.
- **Date of birth:** His birth was on 15th Sha'ban, 255 AH.
- **His Characteristics:** Numerous characteristics have been mentioned in the prophetic narrations about him:

From the Sunni sources:

- "al-Mahdi is from me, with a broad forehead and a high nose."⁽¹⁾
- "He is a young man from the Quraysh, resembling Adam,⁽²⁾ created with perfection among men."
- "A man with a fair complexion, tinged with a reddish hue,⁽³⁾ a prominent abdomen, broad thighs, wide shoulders, with a mark on his back, resembling the Prophet in the color of his skin and a mark similar to the mark of the Prophet."
- "God has granted him the strength of forty men."
- "Indeed, the Mahdi resembles the Prophet of Allah in appearance and character, and he will appear as a youth under the age of forty."
- "His face is like the shining moon, with an Arab complexion, and his body is of Israelite build."⁽⁴⁾

In Shi'a sources:

- "He has a reddish complexion, penetrating gaze, prominent eyebrows, broad between the shoulders, with a marked head and a trace on his face.⁽⁵⁾ He is a man with a broad forehead, high nose, and a large abdomen,⁽⁶⁾ with separated thighs,⁽⁷⁾ with a space and brightness between the front teeth and on his right thigh there is a mole."⁽⁸⁾
- "White in color,⁽⁹⁾ tinged with a reddish hue, prominent abdomen, broad thighs, wide shoulders, with a significant mark on his back, resembling a mark on the Prophet's skin.
⁽¹⁰⁾ When al-Mahdi emerges, he will be in the age of elders but with the appearance of youth, strong in his physique. If he extends his hand to the tallest tree on Earth, he will pull it out, and if he shouts among the mountains, their rocks will crumble.⁽¹¹⁾ And he will appear in the form of a successful young man, at the age of around thirty-two."

Imam al-Mahdi from Birth to Appearance

1. The Honoured Mother and the Noble Birth:

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Within the Imami references, there is an agreement that Imam Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, also known as the Awaited Mahdi, was born on the fifteenth of the month of Sha'ban⁽¹²⁾ in the year 255 A.H. However, there is a variation in identifying the honourable mother, possibly due to the secrecy and concealment surrounding every aspect of Imam al-Mahdi's life, starting from the moment of his birth, his early childhood, and to the end of his occultation. This secrecy even extended to the prohibition of mentioning his name during certain historical periods. This aspect has also influenced the identification of

his mother's name. Who is she? Is she Narjis, Sawsan, Saqil, Hadeeth, Maleeka, or someone else? The concealment and secrecy were intentional and not typical.

However, what is widely known among the Shi'a community is that the name of his honoured mother is Narjis, and regarding her identity, there are two theories:

- **The first** theory suggests that she was the daughter of the Roman king and that she was taken captive or disappeared from the Roman army that went out to fight the Muslims during that period. When she was offered for sale, Imam al-Hasan al-Askari, peace be upon him, commanded one of his Shi'a, the narrator of this tale whose name is Bishr ibn Sulayman al-Nakhas, who is a descendant of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (a companion of the Prophet), to purchase her. He narrates a lengthy story that concludes with him purchasing this captive. Subsequently, she entered the household of Imam al-Askari, peace be upon him, and as a result, gave birth to his only son, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan (the Mahdi).⁽¹³⁾ ((13))
- **The second theory** concludes that Narjis was a Nubian maidservant in the possession of Hakimah, the daughter of Imam Muhammad al-Jawad and the sister of Imam al-Hadi, peace be upon them. She was born in their household and was raised in Islam. When she reached the age of marriage, Imam al-Hadi, peace be upon him, gifted her to his son, Imam al-Hasan al-Askari, peace be upon him, upon learning of his desire for her. He informed him that she would give birth to the blessed child who would purify the earth from corruption and injustice.⁽¹⁴⁾

Interestingly, Shaykh al-Saduq, may Allah have mercy on him, mentioned both narratives in his book *Kamaluddin*. However, he did not take a position on resolving the difference between the narrations. The first theory speaks of a Roman maidservant who escaped or was captured from the Roman army, eventually being purchased by Bishr al-Nakhas under the order of Imam al-Askari, peace be upon him. The second theory states that she was the maidservant of Lady Hakimah and was gifted to Imam al-Hasan al-Askari, peace be upon him, by Hakimah herself.

Many who mentioned these narratives did not explicitly address the differences between them. The late Shaykh al-Sadr II has views the first narration as weak, stating, "This hadith is weak from a historical perspective, considering it is unknown regarding the narrators; thus, it makes the chain of the hadith weak."⁽¹⁵⁾

Regarding the second narrative, he seemingly accepting it overall, saying, "This narrative agrees with its predecessor on several characteristics, including that Imam al-Mahdi's mother, peace be upon her, was a slave maidservant named Narjis, and that the marriage of Imam al-Askari, peace be upon him, took place during his lifetime and with the consent of his father. Therefore, we can consider their agreement on these points sufficient historical evidence. However, this narrative indicates that the marriage occurred in the last days of Imam al-Hadi's life, and that was not clear in the previous narrative."⁽¹⁶⁾

On the other hand, the late Sayyid Kadhim al-Qazwini saw things differently. After realizing that it was challenging to reconcile the two narratives, he excluded the second narrative and

relied on the first narrative. Therefore, he believed that relying on the first was more accurate and appropriate.⁽¹⁷⁾

I have come across a book by one of the modern researchers, Shaykh Ahmed Salman, titled *Sayyidat al-Ima*, in which he explored this issue extensively. He concluded that the second narrative should be more accurate over the first. He argued that the first narrative, which concludes with the story of Bishr al-Nakhas and the issue of captivity in the Roman army, has a chain containing unknown narrators with discrepancies. Additionally, the main figure in this story, Bishr al-Nakhas, who is claimed to be a descendant of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, has no historical mention. Historians even deny the existence of a descendant of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. Moreover, the direct narrator, Muhammad ibn Bahr al-Shaybani al-Rahni, is described with attributes that lead to exaggeration and unreliability in his reports.

Furthermore, the events mentioned in the narration do not align with historical occurrences.⁽¹⁸⁾

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The second narrative seems stronger and more plausible, as mentioned in the following books, *Tarikh al-Ghaybah al-Sughra* (The History of the Minor Occultation) and *Sayyidat al-Ima* (The Mistress of the Maids). It suggests that the mother of Imam al-Mahdi was a Nubian slave who was raised in the house of Lady Hakimah, the daughter of Imam Muhammad al-Jawad, peace be upon him.

We assume that Imam al-Askari, peace be upon him, married her in the year 254 AH. His noble age at that time would be around 23 years, considering that he was born in the year 231 AH.

2. Exceptional Birth and Exceptional Treatment:

The exceptional treatment surrounding the birth of Imam al-Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, was not limited to the discrete nature of his mother's identity. Additionally, it extended to the announcement of his birth. It is recommended to perform the 'Aqiqah ritual for a newborn by slaughtering a sheep, as reported that Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, performed 'Aqiqah for Imam Hasan, peace be upon him, with a ram and with another for Imam Husayn, peace be upon him. However, the 'Aqiqah of Imam al-Askari, peace be upon him, for his son, the Mahdi, involved hundreds of offerings. Some of these offerings were sent to the homes of the companions and followers in Samarra, along with the news of the Mahdi's birth, clarifying that these were part of his 'Aqiqah. al-Askari, peace be upon him, instructed those who delivered them to share them with the people upon receiving these offerings, emphasising that this was from the 'Aqiqah of his son, the Mahdi.

As much as the matter was kept secret and hidden from the Abbasid Caliphs and their social circle, it was clear among the Shi'a community in Samarra.

Imam al-Hasan al-Askari, peace be upon him, has taken many approaches in verifying the birth of al-Mahdi among the Shi'a. For instance, he told⁽¹⁹⁾ some of them through messages⁽²⁰⁾ and ordered his agents, as well as Bani Hashim to buy sheep and slaughter them as 'Aqiqah on his behalf and distribute it⁽²¹⁾ amongst the Shi'a. He then brought al-Mahdi and revealed him to his companions⁽²²⁾ together and separately⁽²³⁾ in order to witness that they saw him when asked.

In the coming few pages, you will notice that as much as the Imam was keen on revealing the birth of his son to the Shi'a as the following Imam to be, he was as careful in protecting him from the eyes of the Abbasid authorities. The Abbasid authorities hired forces to find out where al-Mahdi was in order to get rid of him. They knew that he was the destroyer of corruption and that they lived in corruption and misconduct.

3. The Abbasid authorities denied the existence of Imam al-Mahdi:

This denial was expected due to his perceived threat to their corruption; furthermore, the rejection by the followers of the Umayyad-leaning caliphs' scholars was noteworthy. Despite their lack of understanding, they attempted to assassinate his character, even though they did not live during his time. They tried to chase him and eliminate him from the thoughts of Muslims.

Let us consider the words of the author of Minhaj al-Sunnah: "al-Hasan ibn Ali al-Askari did not leave behind descendants," as mentioned by Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, Abdul-Baqi ibn Qanai, and others among the knowledgeable scholars of genealogy. They said; "he entered seclusion after his father's death, at the age of two, three, five, or around that. Such an orphan must have his wealth preserved for him until he reaches the age of maturity, and then custody is granted to those among his relatives who deserve it. When he reaches the age of seven, he is ordered to learn cleanliness and prayer. If someone does not perform ablution and prayer while under the guardianship of his appointed guardian, with his wealth clearly established in the Quran, how could he become the Imam of the faithful, es-

pecially when he is absent or missing during such a prolonged occultation?"⁽²⁴⁾

Here we have two points to consider, one in the first paragraph and the second in the second paragraph:

The first was concerning ibn Taymiyyah's approach; he selectively chooses from ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d.310 AH) what suits his narrative and denies what contradicts him. Why this selective approach? He rejects a hadith like, "I am the city of knowledge," although ibn Jarir included it in his works. Moreover, he disregards narratives conflicting with his beliefs, but relies on ibn Jarir's words here. What is the meaning of this selectiveness? How does his statement become authoritative against numerous accounts from genealogists, historians, and relatives of Imam al-Askari, who are part of the Ahlulbayt (the Family of the Holy Prophet)?

As for ibn Qanai (d.351 AH), whom ibn Taymiyyah relies on to deny Imam al-Mahdi's birth, his credibility is compromised by reported errors, confusion, and persistence in his mistaken views.⁽²⁵⁾

The second statement was in ibn Taymiyyah's argument when saying that such an orphan must have his wealth preserved for him until he reaches the age of maturity, and then custody is granted to those among his relatives who deserve it. When he reaches the age of seven, he is ordered to learn cleanliness and prayer. If someone does not perform ablution and prayer while under the guardianship of his appointed guardian, with his wealth clearly established in the Quran, how could he become the Imam of the faithful?

Does this raise questions about its applicability to Imam al-Mahdi alone or does it extend to prophets and messengers before him? How does this logic apply to Jesus when it is mentioned in the Quran, "So she pointed to him. They said, "How can we speak to one who is in the cradle as a child?" [Jesus] said, "Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me prayer and zakat as long as I remain alive." It is the same Jewish logic that denied the prophecy of Jesus since he was a baby in a cradle. How could he deliver the book, pray, or give zakat? Should he also have a guardian according to this logic? Similarly, John (Yahya), son of Zakariya, is mentioned in the Holy Quran, "O Yahya (John)! Hold fast to the Scripture [the Taurat (Torah)]." 'And we gave him wisdom while yet a child.'" The argument thus contradicts core beliefs in the Quran. As one of Imam al-Rida's associates expressed, whether one is born and is a single day in age or a hundred years old, it does not matter if the decree is from God and he is chosen. On the contrary, it is of no benefit if it is not divinely decreed.

Couldn't ibn Taymiyyah have listened to more than two hundred people who saw the Imam physically on many occasions? They are from different areas like Egypt, Yemen, Aldaynor, Qom, Qazween, al-Ahwaz, Baghdad, Isfahan, Kufa, etc. ⁽²⁹⁾ Do all these people conspire to lie?

The irony is that ibn Taymiyyah relies on ibn Jarir and ibn Qanai to deny Imam al-Mahdi's birth, while Zarkashi in turn depends on ibn Taymiyyah. In the case of ibn Hazm, he does not even need anyone to rely on, he is so certain about Imam

Hasan's death without having offspring as if he witnessed it. Furthermore, he asserts that 'al-Mahdi was not created.' Does he know about those created or not created?

4. Announcement by Imam Hasan al-Askari:

Imam al-Askari announced the birth of al-Mahdi to his companions and sent the 'Aqiqah to Samarra; furthermore, he revealed al-Mahdi to his trustworthy companions during the first six years of his life.

Regardless of believers' faith or disbelief in the alignment of Mahdi's characteristics, historical records attest to the birth of Muhammad, the son of Imam Hasan al-Askari. Scholars from the non-Shi'a perspective have confirmed the birth of a child named Muhammad to Imam al-Askari, even if they do not necessarily identify him as the Mahdi. This contrasts with the opposing views, where some anti-Ahlulbayt factions went to the extent of falsely claiming that Hasan al-Askari was sterile. Nevertheless, scholars from the Sunni tradition have provided evidence supporting the fact that Hasan al-Askari indeed had a son named Muhammad, although they may not share the Shi'a belief that he is the Mahdi. The recognition of this birth is a point of agreement despite theological differences.

Indeed, it is interesting to note the diversity of opinions on the birth and existence of Imam al-Mahdi, even among scholars of different sects. The acknowledgment of his birth by a range of scholars, including those from various Sunni traditions, is a point of convergence despite differing theological perspectives. It reflects the complexity and richness of Islamic intellectual history.

Shaykh Mahdi al-Faqeeh published a book by the name *The Awaited Mahdi in Nahj al-Balagha*, in which he mentioned more than a hundred Sunni scholars that admitted the birth of Imam al-Mahdi and confirmed his lineage. They have even agreed on his occultation. Included within his work are the names of the sources that mentioned it.⁽³¹⁾ Moreover, al-Amedi arranged the names of these scholars in his book *al-Anf al-Dhikr*⁽³²⁾ from the fourth century to the fortieth century after Hijra. al-Amedi counted about 128 scholars and their books that confirmed the birth of Imam al-Mahdi.

As for the Shi'a, since the birth of the Imam is part of their faith, we cannot count the large number of people who confirmed it.

Undoubtedly, it is unusual for people to lie about the birth of the Imam after all this.

The acceptance of a person acknowledging the birth of their child, along with the valid testimony of just witnesses, is generally recognized within religious guidelines unless evidence indicates otherwise. These guidelines include a witness of two trustworthy persons as supporting evidence. So, why the hesitation and rejection of these evidentiary standards in the case of Imam al-Mahdi's birth? Questions arise about why they are not given due consideration, especially when considering the Imam's repeated statements and the abundance of supporting witnesses throughout history.

Indeed, all of this constitutes valid evidence for those who reflect with an open heart and attentive ear, as the Quran says, "For those who have a heart or lend an ear, it is profitable."

5. al-Mahdi stands out as an Imam:

In 260 AH Imam Hasan al-Askari, peace be upon him, was martyred and poisoned by the Abbasid authorities, as mentioned in the Biography of Imam Hasan al-Askari. Hence, Imam al-Mahdi undertook the leadership despite the intense pursuit of the Abbasid authorities. In these challenging circumstances he had to disappear from sight; however, this did not stop him from revealing himself on certain occasions to his followers to perform certain tasks before disappearing again. These occasions were either under normal conditions or guided by divine messages to avoid being captured or killed.

Imam al-Mahdi made one of his early appearances during the funeral of his father, Imam Hasan al-Askari. He took charge of leading the prayer and prevented his uncle, Jafar al-Kadib (the liar), from performing it.⁽³⁴⁾

In another instance, the Imam aimed to ruin Jafar's deceitful plans to control the leadership and Imamate after the martyrdom of Imam al-Askari. To achieve this, the Imam met privately with groups, including those who had some funds from Khums (religious tax) and those who had legal inquiries. When they refused to hand over their trusts to Jafar due to his apparent lack of knowledge about the matters of Imamate, the Imam received them, introduced himself, answered their questions, and informed them about the funds and who had sent them, just as his father Imam al-Askari used to do.⁽³⁵⁾

6. The Imamate of Imam al-Mahdi at a young age:

The Imam's young age did not cause any issue for the Shi'a because they had witnessed his grandfather, Imam al-Jawad,

become an Imam at a young age (around 8 or 9 years old). Acknowledging his exceptional understanding of the Quran and legal matters, the Shi'a accepted his leadership despite his young age. Through various gatherings and discussions, Imam al-Jawad demonstrated his knowledge and excellence, persuading even those who were initially reluctant to acknowledge his capabilities. He proved their ignorance so that they fell and accepted him; even Mamun said what he said about Imam al-Jawad.⁽³⁶⁾

This situation mirrored the precedent set by his great-grandfather, Imam al-Hadi, who also took over the Imamate at a similar age (born in 212 AH, became Imam in 220 AH). Consequently, Shi'a Muslims had already addressed this issue around sixty years prior, making the question of a young Imam less of a recurring concern.

However, a new challenge arose with the concept of the Imam's occultation, preventing Shi'a Muslims from meeting him when wished, unlike the accessibility they had with his forefathers. Imam al-Mahdi did not openly and universally declare his Imamate, as mentioned earlier. Instead, he appeared selectively, such as meeting specific groups or participating in his father's funeral prayer. A public and explicit appearance was not present during this time.

This stage was prepared ahead during the days of his father Imam al-Askari or even during the days of his grandfather Imam al-Hadi, peace be upon them, which included:

Confirmation of the role of deputies and representatives during the preparatory period, including the days of Imam

al-Mahdi and his predecessors among the Imams, was part of a religious administrative system. Selecting significant representatives in key regions and delegating authority to them contributed to organizing religious and financial affairs. This system, discussed in my other book, *The System of Religious Administration in Shi'a Imamiyya*, laid the groundwork for future interactions with Imam al-Mahdi.

By emphasizing the role of deputies and representatives, Shi'a Muslims will become accustomed to indirect interaction with the Imam through their dealings with his representatives. This will elevate the Shi'a community and guide it towards dealing with general deputies and religious authorities during the major occultation. It will also prevent attempts to infiltrate and to discover the Imam's whereabouts or cause harm since dealings and meetings occur with the intermediary without direct visibility of the Imam himself.

Among these factors is the absence of Imam al-Askari, and even his father, Imam al-Hadi, peace be upon them, from public view during certain periods. This absence occurred either when the Imam was imprisoned, as happened to both of them, or through surveillance imposed on their residence, making it difficult for people to reach them. This intentional seclusion sometimes extended to selective interaction, where the followers were instructed not to greet the Imam or inquire about important matters if they encountered him.

These practices were implemented during the times of the two previous Imams, and some were in place before the birth of Imam al-Mahdi. Therefore, by the time we reach his era, the system of deputies was well-established and its laws were ef-

fective. Some of these deputies were agents of his father and possibly his grandfather.

The issue of seclusion and occultation was experienced by the Shi'a community during the times of both his father and grandfather. Another notable practice introduced during his era was the extensive use of signatures as a means of guidance. While his predecessors used written correspondence with their followers, in his time, signatures were widely adopted. Through these signatures, he directed his Shi'a community, responding to their personal and religious needs.

Furthermore, the late Shaykh Tajallil Tabrizi documented and tracked around seventy of these signatures in his book *Who is al-Mahdi?* ⁽³⁷⁾

Therefore, we believe that even with the Imam's absence after his father's martyrdom it did not lead to significant disruption in the Shi'a community, even with deviations and false claims from some. There was no tearing of the Shi'a foundation or a cause of a fall in the ideology.

7. The problem of sects and the resolution of Imamate:

Muslims agree on the authenticity of a hadith from the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, indicating the existence of twelve successors or Imams from Quraysh.⁽³⁸⁾ This hadith posed a challenge to fair-minded scholars, and although it did not significantly affect some Islamic schools, it raises the question of the identity of those twelve successors. Indeed, al-Suyuti concluded that there were not twelve Imams universally agreed upon by the Ummah.⁽³⁹⁾

Some scholars argued that the twelve successors mentioned in the hadith include the first four caliphs, Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, some from the Abbasid dynasty, and even the Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdi, according to ibn Kathir.⁽⁴⁰⁾ On the other hand, al-Qadi al-Dimashqi includes the first four caliphs, Muawiya, Yazid, Abdul Malik ibn Marwan, and his four sons, along with Umar ibn Abdul Aziz.⁽⁴¹⁾ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya extends the list to include Muawiya's son Yazid, then Marwan ibn al-Hakam, his son Abdul Malik, and two of Abdul Malik's sons (al-Walid and Suleiman), but not the four initially mentioned.⁽⁴²⁾ The historian al-Maqrizi, however, includes only the first four caliphs and Imam Hasan, without mentioning any from the Umayyads or Abbasids.

My dear readers, you notice this extensive disagreement illustrates the substantial differences in identifying the individuals referred to in the hadith. It also highlights the inconsistency in choosing some of these names. For instance, can it be claimed that Yazid ibn Muawiya, who committed reprehensible acts, is among those who uphold and elevate the principles of religion? Was the Prophet, peace be upon him, highly concerned about this matter, anticipating the coming of Yazid ibn Muawiya, Marwan ibn al-Hakam, or Muawiya? Did he disregard the vision and the cursed tree interpreted as the Umayyads?

Furthermore, these scholars extended the application of this hadith until the end of the Umayyad era. Did the Prophet believe that the Islamic religion would continue until that time and then come to an end? Numerous questions arise that challenge the school of the caliphs, and they struggle to provide satisfactory explanations.

As much as this hadith posed a challenge to the school of the caliphs, the emergence of Imam al-Mahdi after his father al-Askari, taking over the responsibilities of Imamate, followed by his occultation and the continuation of his life until Allah permits, serves as a genuine proof for the legitimacy of the Shi'a belief in Twelve Imams. According to Twelver Shi'a ideology, there are twelve successors to the Prophet in knowledge and role, and these twelve are designated Imams appointed by Allah. The Prophet mentioned them in numerous hadiths,⁽⁴³⁾ providing their names, the names of their fathers, and, in some cases, even the names of their mothers before most of them were born.

The twelfth Imam is Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Askari (al-Mahdi). The Imams have consistently demonstrated the truthfulness of what they were described with, proving their legitimacy to the people. The twelfth Imam, al-Mahdi, is born and continues to live, aligning with the context of this belief. He is the twelfth Imam from the lineage of Fatimah and Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, as unanimously agreed upon by the Twelver Shi'a ideology. The occultation of the Imam is part of this context, indicating that he was born, and is alive, and is the twelfth Imam from the offspring of Fatimah, peace be upon her, and Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful.

8. Can he be seen during his Major Occultation?

According to the information mentioned in the eighth paragraph, it was noted that Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, was seen by some of his father's companions. This was mentioned with the intention of emphasizing the reality of the Imam's birth (and the peculiarity that,

despite all this, some writers and authors have denied his birth, as we mentioned in some of their statements earlier).

In the upcoming topics, there will be a discussion about the role of the Imam, peace be upon him, during the minor occultation, including the mention of his four deputies and people's communication with him through them. During this period of minor occultation, which lasted from the year 260 to 329 AH, the Imam met with some of his Shi'a. Moreover, "those who witnessed al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, during his minor occultation were more significant in proportion to those during his major occultation."⁽⁴⁴⁾

It was natural for those who believe in his birth, peace be upon him, to believe in his meetings with his Shi'a, whether extensive or limited. There is no obstacle to that.

Nevertheless, the question which is raised is: Can he be seen during the major occultation that began in 329 AH and extends to our present days? Has anyone from his Shi'a seen him during this period? Are those who speak of seeing him certain about it, especially since they do not know the Imam personally? What do we know about that person they claim to have seen is the Imam? Saying 'I saw so-and-so' implies prior knowledge of his appearance and person, and these people are supposed to not know the Imam personally! So, we cannot be sure of the claim of the sight of Imam.

The response to this comes in several points:

First of all, Shi'a scholars⁽⁴⁵⁾ have compiled books that include stories of believers and scholars who met with the Imam,

peace be upon him, and recognized him through evidence that we will refer to later as indicating that this person is Imam al-Mahdi. These stories, in their hundreds, cover various regions and multiple eras, and many of them, with their chains of narrators, provide ordinary knowledge of this occurrence.⁽⁴⁶⁾

“In light of the absence of any impediment, the enemies were unable to prevent the Imam, peace be upon him, from managing and guiding as he deems fit. They could not obstruct him from meeting those chosen from his special deputies. These chosen individuals believe in his obedience, assume the following of his commands, and acknowledge his authority over themselves,” as mentioned by Shaykh al-Tusi.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Secondly, a significant portion of those who claimed to have seen the Imam, peace be upon him, were among the elite believers of their times and the privileged during their eras. These individuals are not prone to falsehood. Moreover, they are not susceptible to delusion or imagination given the strength of their intellects and the nobility of their characters. If someone claims to have seen them, it is conceivable that the one making such a claim is of weak intellect or prone to fantasies and hallucinations. In such cases, they might paint an imaginary picture and attribute it to those they claim to have seen. However, when narrations about such encounters come from scholars like Al-lama al-Hilli (d. 728 AH), Mawla Ardabili (d. 993 AH), or Sayyid Bahral Ulum Tabatabai (d. 1212 AH),⁽⁴⁸⁾ we have little reason to doubt, especially considering the supporting evidence.”

Thirdly, the majority of these stories and incidents, which collectively provide knowledge and assurance, achieve a level of moral and overall continuity—sufficient for our discussion.

They resonate with indications that makes the sighting applicable only to the infallible Imam, who, in our time, is the Awaited Mahdi. Among these stories are those associated with the knower's awareness without the need for verbal expression, a capability beyond the ordinary capacity of humans! Some stories are intertwined with the immediate fulfilment of requests without the intervention of tools or processes. In such cases, what is realized surpasses the constraints of the possible, achievable only by the unseen hand authorized by Allah, and none but Imam al-Mahdi possesses such authority.

If one were to suggest that such a person could be a guardian from the ranks of the saints or a substitute who got replaced, the response is: How can this become a common and natural occurrence with that guardian while being extraordinary and exceptional with the master of saints and the seal of successors (the Imam)?

The fourth point is that some of these stories are linked to the visible person being informed that he is the Imam, and within the heart of the observer, there occurs complete belief and submission to this information. It is known that the heart's belief and acceptance often serve the same purpose as knowledge in terms of reassurance and tranquillity, especially given what these individuals have known of the mentioned attributes of Imam, peace be upon him, in the narrations. Nothing remains but to apply these attributes to the person before them. We see this as a rational way to recognize personalities, and the more accurate and detailed the descriptions, the easier and quicker the recognition of the personality, especially in regions and times where there are no images. Perhaps this method is

common: a person takes the description of the intended person he is supposed to meet, then goes and applies it to the one he encounters, thus recognizing him.

Furthermore, the issue raised at the beginning of this section – that these observers do not know the Imam beforehand, so how do they prove that it is indeed him – is also applicable to prophets and successors! How did the Jews ⁽⁴⁹⁾ know that Muhammad ibn Abdullah was the sent prophet? If not for reading his attributes in the books and applying them, they would not have found them to be applicable except to him, may Allah's blessings be upon him.

The same reasoning applies to the period after the reappearance, as most people have not seen him before. How do they recognize him? It is achieved by applying the known attributes and the guidance of the heart.

Finally, there might be a conception of evidence that is preventing the sighting of the Imam during the major occultation before the final emergence, based on his sign to his fourth ambassador that 'someone from my Shi'a will claim to have seen me. So, whoever claims to have seen me before the appearance of al-Sufyani and the shout is a lying fabricator.'⁽⁵⁰⁾

However, this established signature⁽⁵¹⁾ was given with careful observation to the indicators that surround him, especially the temporal aspect, when claims of the embassy and special representatives flourished and many coveted it. Indeed, they contested real ambassadors with their fabrications, and these claimants continue to increase, reproducing like amoebas through division. We mentioned a little about them in the sec-

tion on false Mahdist claims.

This signature does not include the sight of the pious, scholars, and worshippers who seek his blessings and the fulfilment of needs. Instead, it is directed towards those who claim to mediate between the Mahdi and the people, asserting special representation on his behalf, fabricating that what they bring is based on seeing the Imam. This is a deception to the people and a quest for leadership and authority.

Otherwise, what is the problem if a virtuous scholar or devout worshipper sees him? What advantage did the people at the minor occultation have, as many saw him, while the people at the major occultation were deprived of it?

It should especially be considered that his occultation is not the concealment of the person but the concealment of the title, and we will discuss this further later. This sighting, fulfilling needs, and sharing it among people, even after the death of the witnesser, strengthens the believers' faith in Him, providing them with more hope, and establishing their belief in him. This may be a form of kindness to his followers and Shi'a.

One of the indicators for this is the use of the terms "lying fabricator." If the matter were related to someone who had doubts and saw a person he thought was the Imam al-Mahdi but was not, then reported this vision, usually he would not be addressed as a lying fabricator. Instead, he might be described as mistaken or suspicious. However, when combined with the claim of special representation and private embassy, it implies intentional lying and fabricating about the Imam, seeking material benefits from people while deliberately lying, deserving

such characterization.

9. Why hasn't he appeared yet, and when do you think he will appear?

Believers ask this question with burning anticipation and longing, feeling the pain of witnessing disasters that surround humanity. They ache and inquire about the reason for the delay in the Imam's appearance and the timing of it. Are they in the era of his reappearance?

The believers are full of pain and the lovers are full of eagerness to meet their Imam; a profound sense of tragedy engulfs humanity due to his delay. On the contrary, the sceptics dance with joy and revel (at his absence). If he were to appear, what would be their reactions? If he were real, he would have emerged! Thus, they deny the well-established prophetic narrations about him.

To answer this, we point to the following:

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To start with, the first element of faith is to believe in the unseen.⁽⁵²⁾ It is not a coincidence that the first quality mentioned for the righteous, to which the Quran is a guide, is that they believe in the unseen.⁽⁵³⁾ Without this quality, a person cannot believe in Allah, who is the Unseen of the Unseen, nor in heaven and hell, both unseen. One would not believe in death, an unseen event, or in their sustenance for the next day. Humans live immersed in the unseen, interacting with it, unable to be separated from it, even if they deny it outwardly.

The case of Imam al-Mahdi is one of those unseen matters

that should be dealt with according to its specific laws. While some hidden ordinary matters can be directly and tangibly known, it is challenging to do so in matters of the unseen.

The issue of Imam al-Mahdi, his occultation, appearance, and other related matters, has been mentioned even before his birth, approximately a century and a half prior, as conveyed by the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, and the infallible Imams from his descendants, as mentioned in other parts of this book.

However, the questions that remained unanswered were that of when and why? Even when some would ask these questions, the response was that believers must submit to it and that whoever timed it was never accurate or honest about it.

For instance, the previous Imams set an example of how to handle such inquiries. Shaykh al-Saduq narrates in his books *Kamaluddin* (Completeness of the Religion) and *Uyun Akhbar al-Rida* (Choice Narratives of al-Rida) from al-Harawi who said, "I heard Di'bil ibn Ali al-Khuza'i say, 'when I mentioned my poem to Imam al-Rida...'"

His poem was:

"An Imam will undoubtedly emerge;

He will stand by the name of Allah and blessings.

He will distinguish between every truth and falsehood

And will reward for blessings and retribution for afflictions."

Imam al-Rida, peace be upon him, wept intensely upon hearing these verses. Then, he lifted his head towards me and asked, "O Khuza'i, the Spirit of Holiness spoke through your tongue with these two verses. Do you know who this Imam is and when he will rise?"

I replied, "No, my master, except that I have heard about the emergence of an Imam from your lineage who will purify the earth from corruption and fill it with justice." He said, "O Di'bil, the Imam after me is my son Muhammad, and after Muhammad, his son Ali, and after Ali, his son Hasan, and after Hasan, his son al-Hujjah, al-Qa'im, the awaited one. In his reappearance, he will fill the earth with justice as it was filled with injustice."

Regarding when he will rise, my father narrated from his forefathers, from Ali, peace be upon him, that people asked the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, when the Qa'im (Imam al-Mahdi) from his descendants would appear. The Prophet replied, "His case is like that of the Hour; 'None knows except my Lord. He alone will reveal it at the appointed time. It is heavy in the heavens and earth. It will not come to you but suddenly.'" ⁽⁵⁴⁾

In this notable hadith, we observe that the belief in Imam al-Mahdi was widespread. Di'bil mentioned hearing about the emergence of an Imam who would purify the earth. It is noteworthy that discussions about the appearance of the Qa'im from the progeny of the Prophet were present during the Prophet's time, centuries before the birth of Imam al-Mahdi.

This concept is evident in the chain of Imams, with each Imam transmitting this belief to the next. It demonstrates a profound interest in the issue of Imam al-Mahdi. The Imam emphasized that the emergence of Mahdi is a divine matter, beyond human knowledge.

Furthermore, some narrations and ethical guidance suggest possible reasons for the delay in Mahdi's appearance, such as increased sins, dispersion among his followers, or the incomplete readiness of his supporters. While these points hold ethical significance, they do not provide a conclusive answer to when he will appear.

This resembles what Prophet Muhammad did when someone asked about the timing of the Hour. The Prophet redirected the question with a moral perspective, asking, "What have you prepared for it?" The man responded, "Love for Allah and His Messenger." The Prophet then said, "You will be with whom you love."⁽⁵⁶⁾

Indeed, the genuine answer, as stated by Imam al-Rida, peace be upon him, to Di'bil, is that the timing, like that of the Hour, is known only to Allah, emphasizing that it is beyond human determination.

Attempting to specify a particular time contradicts the wisdom apparent in the matter. If, for example, the Prophet had designated the emergence of Imam al-Mahdi in the year 2000 after Hijra, it would lead to undesirable consequences. The oppressors would relax and enjoy tranquillity until that date, while the believers would lose hope in the imminent arrival of justice and relief. Therefore, it is believed that providing concrete an-

swers to the questions of when and why may not be genuine. They may be intended for moral guidance. The real answer is that it is an unseen matter.

Instead of seeking answers that may not be present in a tangible sense, believers are encouraged to strengthen their connection with Imam al-Mahdi. Pursuing a strong bond with him is more meaningful than anxiously awaiting his appearance. As mentioned in various narrations from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, peace be upon him, "One who dies not knowing his Imam has died the death of the days of ignorance. Believers who die with knowledge of their Imam are not harmed by the timing of his appearance. Moreover, the one who dies knowing his Imam will be as standing side to side with the Imam."⁽⁵⁷⁾

To strengthen this relationship, one can follow the steps outlined by the Imams of guidance. It is noteworthy that these steps were emphasized even before the birth of Imam al-Mahdi.⁽⁵⁸⁾

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- Reading supplications that hold the status of allegiance to Imam al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, such as the Covenant Supplication (Dua al-Ahd). It is recommended to recite it after the Fajr prayer, and it is mentioned that whoever recites it for forty mornings will be recorded among the supporters of the Imam. It may be named the Covenant Supplication because it concludes with: "O Allah, I renew for him in the morning of this day and all the days of my life a covenant, contract, and allegiance upon my neck."⁽⁵⁹⁾
- Similarly, the Lamentation Supplication (Dua al-Nudba), serves as a comprehensive educational cycle, reviewing

prophecies, prophets, and their struggles. It addresses the Islamic nation's deviation from the path of the Prophet and the program for the leadership of Imam Ali, peace be upon him. The supplication incorporates numerous authentic traditions from the Prophet about the virtues of the chosen successor and the sacrifices made by his pure progeny. It culminates in the burning yearning and tears for the deprivation of seeing Imam al-Mahdi, expressing hopes to witness the divine appearance and triumph in the presence of the Imam.

- Praying for Imam al-Mahdi, may Allah hasten his noble reappearance, with divine protection and care. One of the renowned recommended supplications for this purpose is recited on the 23rd night of Ramadan, one of the anticipated nights of Laylat al-Qadr.⁽⁶⁰⁾ It is advised to recite this supplication throughout the night, whether standing or sitting, which begins: "O Allah, be for Your Wali, al-Hujjah ibn al-Hasan, blessings be upon him and his fathers, in this hour and in every hour, a guardian, a protector, a leader, a helper, a guide, and an eye, until You make him dwell in Your land willingly and enjoy him therein for a long time."
- Seeking protection for Imam al-Mahdi includes reciting the supplication of Imam al-Sajjad, peace be upon him. It is recommended to recite it on the Night of Arafat.⁽⁶¹⁾ Notably, Imam al-Sajjad, whose testimony predates the birth of Imam al-Mahdi by a century and a half, prays to Allah in detail for the well-being, protection, and assistance of the Imam against his enemies.

- Increasing prayers upon Imam al-Mahdi and his pure ancestors is emphasized. There is a specific prayer transmitted from his father, Imam al-Askari, guiding the believers on how to invoke blessings upon him. It includes the phrase: "O Allah, bless Your Wali, the son of Your Wali, the awaited Imam, al-Hujjah ibn al-Hasan, peace be upon him. O Allah, bless Your Wali, the son of Your Wali, those whose obedience you have made obligatory."⁽⁶²⁾
- Almsgiving on behalf of Imam al-Mahdi is encouraged. Some narrations suggest that when planning to travel, one should give charity on behalf of the Imam, asking Allah to protect the traveller. Additionally, dedicating righteous deeds such as recommended prayers, Umrah, Quranic recitation, and other acts of worship on behalf of the Imam is considered a commendable practice.
- Demonstrating respect for the remembrance of Imam al-Mahdi is essential. It goes beyond internal sentiments and extends to physical gestures. Shiite communities, as a sign of reverence, are known to place their hands on their heads as a form of greeting when mentioning the Imam's name. In some places, individuals rise in respect when the name "al-Qa'im"⁽⁶³⁾ is mentioned.

These practices aim to strengthen the connection with Imam al-Mahdi and express devotion and loyalty to his cause. Perhaps these practices are derived from traditions that tell of the Imams showing respect when mentioning Imam al-Hujjah, may Allah hasten his reappearance, by placing their hands on their heads. For example, it is said that Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, indicated his service to Imam al-Hujjah if he were alive.⁽⁶⁴⁾

Imam Rida, peace be upon him, kept his hand on his head when the name of Imam al-Hujjah was mentioned before him as a sign of respect to him. Regardless of whether or not it was truly narrated, the tradition demonstrates great respect and devotion for the Imam.

10. Essential Points in Mahdi's Victory:

Below are concise points about the Mahdi's victory; we advise those who want to read further to refer to the finest book in explaining this topic, *After the Appearance*, by Shaheed Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr, may Allah have mercy on him.

Foremost, we note that the appearance of Imam al-Mahdi, for which we do not know the date, may coincide with unseen cosmic phenomena witnessed by humanity. This would serve as clear evidence of the divine nature of his movement and leadership. This is to correct misunderstandings and shed light on his reality, distinguishing him from false claims that precede him.

Maybe some of them used to practise these false claims about the appearance of the Mahdi in order to weaken the faith of people. When the true Mahdi appears, it will be a clear sign of the authenticity of his advent and people will witness his leadership and divine authority.

So, to resist this scepticism and the indifference that may happen due to what we mentioned, explicit and numerous narrations arose regarding inevitable signs, which are purely unseen. One example is the occurrence of 'Khosoo'f' (lunar eclipse) and 'Kossoof' (solar eclipse), but in an unusual manner. Instead of the lunar eclipse occurring at the beginning of

the month and the solar eclipse in the middle, as is customary, it will happen the opposite way: the lunar eclipse in the middle of the month and the solar eclipse at the beginning, in a way unprecedented since the dawn of humanity.

Undoubtedly, this is purely a hidden matter because, if it were according to regular standards, scientists could easily predict the timing of these phenomena hundreds of years before they occur. However, the timing of his emergence is entirely unknown.

Secondly, we should pause and contemplate the details of his movement and what it represented in terms of depth and the meaning it served. For instance, it is mentioned that he will appear in Mecca and set out from there, near the corner and the station of the Kaaba. This aspect is a similarity to his grandfather, the Chosen One, whose call originated from Mecca, where the Kaaba and the Abrahamic house of monotheism are located. It signifies a unified journey from the patriarch Abraham through the Seal of the Prophets, the Chosen One, to the last of the virtuous successors. Their goals and starting points are similar. The narrations state that he will stand between the Yemeni Corner (the part of Kaaba facing Yemen) and the Station of Ibrahim (where he started the construction of Kaaba) specifically on the day of Ashura. He honours the Prophets, prioritizing them, and calls people to follow him.

Here, we observe the presence of mentioning the prophets and prioritizing them over others, with a reference to the time of Allah's vengeance and the martyrdom of the leader of Islam, Abu Abdullah al-Husayn, peace be upon him.

The mention of the prophets should not be understood as mere pride but rather a unity of approach. Through this we can disprove some narrations that seem contradictory to the prophets' approach. If a narration attributes to him the acts of killing, slaughtering, not seeking evidence, causing harm to pregnant women, or killing Shi'a scholars and shedding the blood of thousands of them, we must reject such narrations! They do not align with the prophets' conduct, especially that of his grandfather, the Chosen One, who came as a mercy to all mankind! They also contradict the narrations describing his movement, especially that he will fill the earth with justice as it was filled with oppression. Some narratives may reflect an unjust and oppressive lens; how could he carry out such acts?

Thirdly, what the narrations mention are "signs" and a sign differs from a cause or rationale in various ways. A sign must indicate something existing, and its association is arbitrary, like a mountain indicating a particular city. Thus, the mountain is not the cause of the city's existence. Similarly, these signs indicate the certainty of the existence of the one with the sign, showing that he is a reality, and his existence is not due to those signs. Thus, when he appears people will need a sign to recognize him, especially with the abundance of false claims. These signs come as confirmation from Allah, guiding His creation to His representative, and as a mercy from Him to prevent them from straying away!

Moreover, beyond the general signs, there is a declaration in his name that reaches the entire world, where "a caller will call out with an Arabic language, audible to all in the heavens and the earth, saying, 'O people, here is the Mahdi descendant from

the family of Muhammad; he has emerged, so follow him and do not disobey his command."⁽⁶⁶⁾

Scholars have categorized narrations about the signs of the reappearance into those with reliable chains and those with unverified chains. The former includes that the declaration is heard by people, and its occurrence informs everyone that the truth is with the family of Muhammad, and this is the awaited Mahdi. This has been mentioned in reliable narrations, such as the one from Abu Abdullah Jafar al-Sadiq, where he states that a caller will announce the name of the Mahdi publicly, and people will hear it universally and that no one could disobey except that Satan will not let the people until he put doubts inside their heart.⁽⁶⁷⁾

Similarly, the emergence of al-Sufyani is highlighted in these narrations. Besides the widespread mention of his role in the narrations about the signs, there is a reliable narration where Imam al-Sadiq confirms that al-Sufyani's emergence is inevitable when he asked his father al-Baqir about it, stating, 'Yes.'

I have compiled the narrations of Umar ibn Hanthala about the inevitable signs, scattered throughout trustworthy narrations. He said, 'I heard Abu Abdullah saying, "Before the rise of al-Qa'im, there are five inevitable signs: al-Yamani, al-Sufyani, the scream, the killing of the pure soul, and the sinking of the desert."⁽⁶⁸⁾

Fourthly; the text emphasizes the symbolic interpretation of figures related to the anticipated appearance of Imam al-Mahdi, regardless of whether they are supportive or antagonistic. It suggests that the focus should be on opposing corrupt

ideologies rather than delving into specific details of names and lineage, particularly concerning figures like “al-Dajjal” or “al-Sufyani.” The purpose is to direct believers towards countering false doctrines and historical deviations associated with the Umayyad lineage.⁽⁶⁹⁾ It draws parallels between the ongoing line of righteousness from Prophet Muhammad to Imam al-Mahdi and the continuity of corruption from Abu Sufyan to al-Sufyani, cautioning believers to be vigilant against betrayal, tyranny, and injustice and following the part of al-Sufyani.⁽⁷⁰⁾

Fifthly: How would he fight his enemies?

Would he use sophisticated developed weapons and armour? Or would he fight with a sword like some narrations mentioned? Could a sword face the cannons, or then what is the case?

- The researchers presented various answers regarding how Imam al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, would fight his enemies. Some suggested that he would use more advanced weapons than those possessed by his opponents, employing natural means for victory. However, the question of how he obtains such weapons naturally remains unanswered. Some researchers shifted to supernatural means, attributing the acquisition of advanced weapons to miraculous and divine interventions. Additionally, it was proposed that the mention of fighting with a sword in the narrations is symbolic, representing strength rather than a literal use of a specific weapon.

Some argue that Imam al-Mahdi will descend in Kufa as

mentioned in certain narrations indicates his symbolic presence in seven white domes, with the specific location remaining unknown.⁽⁷¹⁾ Additionally, descriptions of the weapons of his companions, such as swords capable of cleaving mountains, are cited.⁽⁷²⁾

- On the other hand, there is an interpretation emphasizing the literal use of a sword, dismissing modern weaponry.⁽⁷³⁾ The proponents of this view argue that the Mahdi's occultation in its origin and timing allows for the weaponry in his movement to also be hidden. In this perspective, human strength will not hold, regardless of the advanced weaponry they own. It would be insufficient against a force rooted in divine support and the concept of guardianship held by Imam al-Mahdi.
- The narrations supporting the hidden reinforcement of Imam al-Mahdi, including divine assistance and angelic support, reinforce the belief in his supernatural backing during his emergence. When the Qa'im appears Allah will support him with angels; Gabriel is in front of him, Michael is on his right, and Israfil on the left.⁽⁷⁴⁾ These narrations describe that Allah will send a formidable alliance with angels, believers, and awe-inspiring forces contributing to his victory.⁽⁷⁵⁾
- It is said that the mentioning of the sword in the narrations is not an absolute sword; rather, it is a specific sword known as 'Zulfiqar,' which the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, bestowed upon his successor Ali al-Murtada, peace be upon him. Thus, it was inherited by his descendants successively as one of the legacies of

prophethood. Those who claim to be closer to the Prophet and more deserving can be countered with these legacies.

After that, these individuals may cling to what is mentioned in the narrations that the enemies of the Mahdi will perish by sinking in the desert, which is a completely hidden fact, and the horror that Allah casts into the hearts when the previous paragraph mentioned the presence of angels before him.

Narrations about Imam al-Mahdi by the Infallibles (al-Ma'sumin)

This multitude of narrations regarding Imam al-Mahdi, may Allah hasten his noble reappearance, is extensive, surpassing frequent recurrence with various meanings, both in wording and predominantly in substance.⁽⁷⁶⁾

Some researchers have mentioned a number of these narrations without encompassing them entirely. Notably, Shaykh Lutfullah Safi cited around 1300 hadiths in his book *Muntakhab al-Athar fi al-Imam al-Thani Ashar*, drawing from the sources of both the school of the caliphs and the Shi'a sources of the Ahlulbayt. On the other hand, the esteemed researcher Najm al-Din al-Askari mentioned around 400 hadiths in his book on

Imam al-Mahdi, deriving from the school of the caliphs.

This vast number of groups of hadiths highlights significant aspects of the matter of Imam al-Mahdi, may Allah hasten his noble reappearance:

1. The importance of the multitude and recurrence of these hadiths concerning Imam al-Mahdi, indicating their diverse meanings. It is not a Shi'a matter alone, indeed it is a matter for humanity and Muslims.
2. The existence of diversity in the sources of these hadiths, signifying their variety between the school of the caliphs and the sources of the Shi'a of the Ahlulbayt, as well as narrations transmitted by scholars from various schools of thought, including Imami, Sunni, Madani, Makki, Kufi, Baghdadi, Mu'tazili, Ash'ari, and Ahl al-Hadith, spanning the first and second centuries and beyond.
3. In addition to that, there are multiple contents in the hadiths and their meanings. Some narrations talk about the lineage of Imam al-Mahdi, others about his characteristics, some about his occultation, his appearance, his enemies and even about the characteristics and numbers of his supporters and helpers.

This substantial diversity affirms that the matter of Imam al-Mahdi is neither transient nor partial. There is no other issue in Islam, aside from the oneness of God, that has received such

an extensive amount of attention and narration from various sources.

It is noteworthy that these narrations appear in principle and fundamental sources within the school of the caliphs, such as Musnad Ahmad, Sunan Abi Dawood, ibn Majah, Sunan at-Tirmidhi, Sunan an-Nasa'i, al-Bayhaqi, at-Tabarani, ad-Daraqutni, and others who documented the narrations about Imam al-Mahdi.⁽⁷⁸⁾

Let us mention a few of those narrations:

1. Mentioned in the Sunan of Abu Dawood⁽⁷⁹⁾ and Ibn Majah,⁽⁸⁰⁾ as well as al-Hakim's Mustadrak, is a narration attributed to Umm al-Mu'minin Salama, where the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, said: "The Mahdi is from my progeny, from the descendants of Fatimah."

This statement is significant to unequivocally refute any claims of Mahdism from someone not born to Fatimah. It also contradicts the Abbasids' assertion in a fabricated hadith that al-Mahdi is from the offspring of their uncle al-Abbas. In light of this, Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, whose name was Abdullah, attempted to name his son Muhammad al-Mahdi, aligning with the inauthentic narrations that state, "Al-Mahdi is my name and the name of my father is my father's name," to create a resemblance with ibn al-Mansur, claiming him to be al-Mahdi. However, the earlier prophetic hadith refutes such claims, making it clear that the true Mahdi cannot be from those tainted by impurity.

2. Narrated by Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, in Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal,⁽⁸¹⁾ the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, said: "al-Mahdi is from us, the Ahlulbayt. Allah will arrange his affairs in a single night," indicating divine intervention in orchestrating and preparing his affairs in one night.
3. A narration from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, as reported by the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, is, "al-Mahdi will have a broad forehead and a prominent nose. He will fill the earth with equity and justice as it was filled with oppression and tyranny."

These are some of the narrations from the school of the caliphs. As for what came in the sources of the Ahlulbayt, there are abundant narrations. Shaykh al-Saduq mentioned in his book *Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah* more than 140 hadiths from the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, and the infallible Imams after him, addressing the confirmation of the belief in the Mahdi as the twelfth Imam from the family of the Prophet. He covered some of his qualities, matters related to his occultation, people's attitudes toward him, and other topics related to him, peace be upon him. These hadith are directly mentioned, and as for the indirect references in various chapters of the book, they are many times this number. Here is a narration about each infallible from what is mentioned in that book:

1. Narrated from the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family: "If there remained only one day in the world, it would lengthen until a man from my progeny, carrying my name, and his epithet is the same as mine, fills

the earth with justice and fairness as it was filled with oppression and tyranny.”⁽⁸²⁾

Here, it is noticeable in the hadith that the matter is inevitable and does not accept hesitation or doubt to the extent that if the end of the world was envisioned, and only an hour remained, that hour after its prolongation would be the time of his appearance and the spread of justice under his leadership. This man is not just any man, but he is ‘from my progeny.’ This is very important because it is possible for someone to be named after the Prophet, but not everyone can be from the progeny of the Prophet. This hadith, by its nature, negates all claimants of Mahdism who are not known to be from the Prophet’s lineage, and his lineage will only be from the descendants of Fatimah al-Zahra, peace be upon her.

2. In a narration from Amir al-Mu’minin, peace be upon him: “For the absent one from us, his occultation is a prolonged absence, as if I see the Shi’a wandering like camels searching for pasture during his occultation, seeking sustenance but not finding it. Indeed, whoever remains steadfast in his religion and does not doubt due to the prolonged duration of his occultation, he will be with me in my rank on the Day of Judgment.”⁽⁸³⁾

Note the expression: “They wander like camels in his occultation, seeking pasture but not finding it.” It is a metaphor for the situation of searching for the truth, which is inherent for humans to recognize their leader and seek him. The relationship of these people with

their leader and their need for him is as necessary as is food for living beings and cattle.

What is remarkable in this hadith is the confirmation of the fundamental issue of Mahdism, the origin of his existence, his prolonged occultation, and the stance of the believers. This reinforces the Imamiyyah belief that the Mahdi was born to al-Hasan al-Askari, then went into a long occultation, and will only reappear at the end of time, as believed by the scholars of the caliphs' school.

The significant point is that the absence is only confirmed for someone who was initially present and then became absent for a reason. As for someone who never existed and then appears, it is not accurate to say he is absent because absence is a branch of presence in time before it. The long occultation, accompanied by the perplexity of a portion of the people, does not align with the theory presented by the followers of the caliphs, which suggests that Imam al-Mahdi will be born at the end of time from the family of the Prophet.

This hadith speaks about a prolonged occultation and a state of questioning and searching for divine leadership. It sheds light on the condition of the Shi'a at that time. Some harden their hearts due to the extended occultation, skepticism, and being distant from their leadership, leading them to abandon this leadership. On the other hand, there is another group that remains steadfast and persists in their belief until they meet their Lord.

3. The Book of Fatimah al-Zahra narrated from Imam Abu Jafar al-Baqir, peace be upon him, by Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari, who said: "I entered upon Fatimah, peace be upon her, and before her was a book containing the names of the successors. I counted twelve names, the last of them being al-Qa'im. Three of them were named Muhammad, and four of them were named Ali, may Allah's blessings be upon them."

In this distinctive hadith, the number of successors is specified as 12 names, serving as a detailed and explicit reference to what the Prophet mentioned: "The Imams after me are twelve." It also reveals seven of their names and indicates that the last one is Al-Qa'im, the Mahdi. This hadith holds a unique feature as it identifies Jabir ibn Abdullah, who is widely accepted by both groups, as a trustworthy and highly regarded narrator.

4. In a hadith from Imam al-Hasan addressing his companions, he says: "Have you not known that each one of us has a pledge of allegiance to the tyrant of his time, except for al-Qa'im, who will lead the prayer with Jesus son of Mary, behind him. Indeed, Allah, the Glorified and Exalted, conceals his birth and hides his person so that no one has a pledge of allegiance upon his emergence. When that ninth one from the progeny of my brother al-Husayn appears, Allah will prolong his life in his occultation. Then, He will manifest him with His power in the form of a young man under forty years old."

This hadith presents multiple important aspects. Firstly, it provides justification for the occultation, emphasizing that the Imam should not be subservient to an unjust ruler. This distinguishes him from any of the infallible Imams among his ancestors. Additionally, the hadith specifies that he was appointed before his birth more than two hundred years ago as the ninth one from the progeny of al-Husayn, making the description exclusive to Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Askari, peace be upon them.

Moreover, the hadith narrows down the criteria, starting with being from Quraysh, then from the lineage of the Prophet, further narrowing it to the descendants of Fatimah and ultimately to the sons of al-Husayn. Even among them, the specific reference is to the ninth one, which aligns only with Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Askari. The hadith also addresses the belief that the Prophet foretold the Imam's coming through the reference, "How will you be when Jesus, the son of Mary, descends among you, and your Imam is from you?"

Finally, the hadith resolves any concerns about age by asserting that Allah will extend the life of the Mahdi during his occultation and then reveal him in a youthful form.

5. In a hadith from Imam al-Husayn, peace be upon him, he said: "In the ninth of my descendants, there is a Sunnah from Joseph and a Sunnah from Moses, son of Imran,⁽⁸⁹⁾ peace be upon them. He is our Qa'im whom Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, will rectify his affairs in

one night.”

The emphasis in this hadith on the Imam being the ninth from his descendants, as previously highlighted, underscores two Sunnahs resembling those of the prophets. This clarification aims to show that these characteristics are not unique to the Imam and should not be rejected or criticized. The prophets had precedents in their lives, whether it be hiding the birth from a tyrant, occultation from people (geographically or for a period, as in the case of Prophet Moses), or specific symbolic occultation, as with Prophet Joseph.

6. An illuminating perspective on these Sunnah, similar to those of the prophets, is found in a hadith reported by Sa'id ibn Jubayr from Imam Zayn al-Abidin, Ali ibn Al-Husayn, who explains these Sunnah. He says: “In our Qa'im, there are Sunnah from the prophets: a Sunnah from our father Adam and a Sunnah from Noah, a Sunnah from Abraham, a Sunnah from Moses, a Sunnah from Jesus, a Sunnah from Job, and a Sunnah from Muhammad, peace be upon them. From Adam and Noah, it is the length of life. From Abraham, it is concealing the birth and seclusion from people. From Moses, it is fear and occultation. From Jesus, there is disagreement among people regarding him. From Job, it is relief after affliction. And from Muhammad, peace be upon him, it is emerging with the sword.”
7. Imam Abu Jafar al-Baqir, peace be upon him, mentioned regarding the Qa'im: “The Qa'im from us, victorious with terror, supported by triumph, the earth folds

for him, treasures appear to him. His authority reaches the east and the west, and Allah will bless him with the religion, even if the polytheists dislike it. There will be no ruin left on the earth that he has not fixed. The Spirit of Allah, Jesus son of Mary, peace be upon him, will descend and pray behind him."⁽⁸⁷⁾

Imam Abu Jafar, peace be upon him, clearly outlines some of his attributes. He is "from us," emphasizing his lineage, not from others. Similar to his grandfather, the Prophet, he is victorious with terror, obliterating the need for destructive firepower after instilling fear in the hearts of his enemies and disrupting their decision making centre psychologically. Supported by his Lord with triumph, there is no need to question how he prevails over nuclear and atomic weapons when terror has already undermined the wills of his foes. The earth folds for him; whether this implies swift movement and transition or actual folding is left open to interpretation. Being supported by Allah's authority, treasures manifest for him, harmonizing with the will of his divine Lord. He utilises material and spiritual forces, benefiting from divine harnessing, ensuring that no ruin remains on earth without being developed under his rule. This is not limited to the realm of Muslims in the familiar religious classification; even Christ, descending to witness the divine triumph, will pray behind the Mahdi.

8. Imam Jafar al-Sadiq's narrations regarding the matters of Imam al-Mahdi have been compiled by Shaykh

al-Sadiq in the same book and chapter (57), featuring 57 hadiths. We select one that addresses the concept of occultation and draws a parallel between Imam al-Mahdi and Joseph, even though the former interacts with people and lives among them. This hadith clarifies the expressions used in other narrations about the nature of occultation, indicating that he has two occultations—one short and one long. He is absent from both his Shi'a and the general populace. Imam al-Sadiq explains the meaning of occultation to Sadeer al-Seerefi, saying, "Indeed, Joseph's brothers were the descendants of prophets. They traded with Joseph, pledged allegiance to him, and they were his brothers, yet they did not recognize him until he revealed himself to them. Does this community deny that Allah, the Almighty, might act similarly with His proof at certain times, just as He did with Joseph?"

The noteworthy aspect is that Imam al-Sadiq (who died of poisoning in the year 148 AH) is speaking in this narration approximately a century before the birth of the awaited Imam. Despite this, he prepares and imparts the necessary knowledge for those who will live in his time and beyond.

It is well-known that Prophet Joseph was concealed from his family and remained alive despite the conspiracy against him. He was hidden in a well which was intended for his demise, but Allah preserved him there. It will be similar for the Mahdi.

Imam al-Sadiq thus questions in a reproachful manner

why does the community reject this analogy between the successor of the Seal of the Prophets and the Prophet of Allah, Joseph? The brothers of Joseph did not recognize him by his identity, as he was concealed from them despite their interactions.

The Imam infers thus and confirms, why does this nation deny that he is also the one who has authority with the people, sits with them, trades with them, attends Hajj with them (in days of Hajj) and in other seasons; perhaps his shoulder is close your shoulder, but you do not know that it is him?

Imam al-Sadiq was the one who initiated the idea of the occultation of Imam al-Mahdi and that it was not a geographical disappearance.

9. As for Imam Musa ibn Jafar al-Kadhim, peace be upon him, he pointed out what the school of the caliphs and their followers would hold, which is that the Mahdi, even if it is a true belief, is not born, but rather will be born at the end of time, and this is a direct or indirect denial of him being the ninth of the descendants of al-Husayn. In this hadith Imam al-Kadhim, peace be upon him, pointed to those who will adopt this wrong opinion. He said: "The owner of this matter is someone about whom people will say, 'He has not been born yet!'"
10. It appears from the narration recounting the incident of Imam al-Rida, peace be upon him, listening to the poem of Di'bil (the poet), that the concept of belief

in the Mahdi being from the progeny of Muhammad was widespread among the people. Imam al-Rida endorsed what Di'bil had composed in his poem and added further details. According to the narration by Di'bil ibn Ali al-Khuza'i, he said, "My master al-Rida, Ali ibn Musa, peace be upon them, listened to my poem that begins with:

In the schools of verses, devoid of recitation,

Revelation's abode, on desolate plains.

As I concluded with these words in my creation:

"An Imam will undoubtedly emerge;

He will stand by the name of Allah and blessings.

He will distinguish between every truth and falsehood

And will reward for blessings and retribution for afflictions."

Imam al-Rida, peace be upon him, wept intensely and then lifted his head, saying to me, "O Khuza'i, the Spirit of Holiness has spoken through your tongue with these two verses. Do you know about this Imam, and when will he rise?"

I replied, "O my master, I only heard that an Imam from your progeny will purify the earth from corruption and fill it with justice, as it was filled with injustice."

He said, "O Di'bil, the Imam after me is my son Muhammad, and after Muhammad, his son Ali, and after

Ali, his son al-Hasan, and after al-Hasan, his son al-Hujjah, al-Qa'im, the Awaited during his occultation, obedient in his appearance. If there were only one day left in the world, Allah, the Glorified and Exalted, would prolong that day until he emerges to fill the earth with justice as it was filled with injustice. As for 'when,' information about the time, my father told me, from his father, from his forefathers, peace be upon them, that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, was asked, "O Messenger of Allah, when will the Qa'im from your progeny emerge?" He, peace be upon him, said, "His case is like the Hour, which comes suddenly. It holds heaviness in the heavens and the earth. It will only come to you unexpectedly."⁽⁹⁰⁾

11. According to Imam Muhammad al-Jawad, peace be upon him, as narrated by Sayyid Abdul Azim al-Hasani: "Indeed, the Qa'im is from us, the Mahdi, whom one must await during his occultation and obey during his appearance. He is the third of my sons. If only one day were left in the world, Allah would prolong that day until he emerges, filling the earth with justice as it was filled with oppression. Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, will rectify his affairs in one night, just as He rectified the affairs of His Prophet Moses when he went to fetch fire for his family and returned as a prophet," and then he said, "The best deeds of our Shi'a are awaiting the relief."

This hadith provides additional details, emphasizing that the Mahdi is the third son of Imam al-Jawad. It

underscores Allah's role in rectifying the Imam's affairs and orchestrating matters for his rise and reform, aligning with divine logic where all this rectification occurs in one night. This mirrors the experience of the Prophet Moses when he left to gather fire for his family and returned as a prophet. Additionally, the hadith emphasizes the importance of the deeds of the Shi'a, particularly their patience in waiting for his reappearance, even in the face of the oppressors and deviation.

12. During the time of Imam Ali al-Hadi, peace be upon him, the circumstances of surveillance and scrutiny by the Abbasids intensified on him and his Shi'a and the search for Imam al-Mahdi began, considering that his birth was imminent with only one intermediary, his father al-Askari, peace be upon him. The Abbasids intensified their efforts to search and inquire about the awaited birth. The days echoed the saga of Pharaoh searching for the Prophet Moses. The Imams were caught in a dilemma: the necessity of informing about him for people to recognize Allah's Hujjah upon them and the fear of the Abbasid monitoring, discovering him at birth, and knowing his whereabouts to eliminate him. For this purpose, a directive was issued by the Imams not to mention his name, to conceal his identity, and to refer to him using indirect expressions. In this context, Abu Hashim Dawood al-Jafari reports: "I heard Abu al-Hasan, the son of al-Askari, peace be upon him, saying: 'The successor after me is my son Hasan. How will it be for you with the successor after the successor?' I asked, 'May I be sacrificed for you!

Why did Allah make me in this situation?' He replied, 'Because you do not see his person, and it is not permissible for you to mention him by his name.' I asked, 'So how should we mention him?' He said, 'Say: The Hujjah from the family of Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family.'⁽⁹¹⁾

13. Imam Hasan ibn Ali al-Askari, the father of Imam al-Mahdi, peace be upon them, not only describes his characteristics, although he introduces the individual to the people, but he also acquaints them with his actual existence after he is born. This serves to refute the claims of those who assert that he will be born in the latter days with no tangible evidence. Ahmad ibn Ishaq ibn Sa'd al-Ash'ari narrates: "I entered upon Abu Muhammad al-Hasan ibn Ali, peace be upon them, wanting to ask him about his successor. He initiated the conversation and said, 'O Ahmad ibn Ishaq, surely Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has not left the earth without a Hujjah for Him over His creation since the creation of Adam, peace be upon him. He will not leave it until the Hour is established. Through him, Allah averts calamities from the people of the earth, causes the rain to fall, and brings forth the blessings of the earth.'

He replied, So I said to him, 'O the son of the Messenger of Allah, who is the Imam and Caliph after you?' He quickly stood up, entered the house, and then came out carrying a young boy whose face was radiant like the full moon, a child of about three years. He said, 'O Ahmad ibn Ishaq, were it not for your

honour with Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, and your status as a proof for Him, I would not have presented my son to you. He is named after the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, and he is the one who will fill the earth with justice and equity, just as it was filled with oppression and injustice.'"⁽⁹²⁾

References:

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1. al-Fitan by Naeem ibn Hammad vol. 1 p. 225. It is narrated from Abu Saeed al-Khudri that the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, has been described as having a wide forehead. In the book Subul al-Huda wa al-Rishad fi Sirat Khair al-Ibaad, vol. 2 p. 21, it is also stated in the description of the Prophet that he had a hooked nose, vol. 1 p. 12
 2. Adam means brown-skinned, he was lean, which may be described as neither fat nor slim, intelligent from men Tahdhib al-Athar Musnad Ibn Abbas vol. 1 p. 463. Sometimes it can be the equivalent of the current expression 'an athlete', of medium build, neither fat nor slim, like Prophet Musa has been described, "He is thin among men," like it has been mentioned in Taj al-Uroos, vol. 3 p. 243
 3. To separate him from pure white, just like milk, so his skin is supposed to be like Arabs (brownish), except that brown people are not the same as white.
 4. al-Sawa'i'q al-Muhraqaa, vol. 2 p. 475 narrated from al-Tabarani that what was authenticated from al-Albani was fabricated in his book Silsalat al-Ahadith al-Dhaifaa, vol. 10 p. 211

5. From Imam Muhammad ibn Ali al-Baqir, peace be upon him, al-Ghaybah by Nu'mani, p. 224
6. The description here is different from what the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, has been described as, that his abdomen and chest were the same (implying that his abdomen did not protrude out). This description is reemphasised in another source which says that he had a large abdomen.
7. Separated thighs: the distance between them, narration by Gharreb al-Hadith of Ibn Qutaiba vol. 2 p. 117. This description is close to what we see in the physiques of athletes who have muscular thighs. This corresponds to what has been narrated in another tradition that he has wide thighs. "His teeth are white and have a gap between them." Both these descriptions are also reported about the Messenger of God."
8. al-Ghaybah by Nu'mani p. 221
9. Kamaluddin, vol. 1 p. 681. However, the one who wrote the footnotes has written that his abdomen was broad; this is inconsistent with what has been said in other narrations that both his chest and his abdomen are the same. I have not found a proper meaning for the word here. This expression is also quoted by Shaykh Saduq in Kamaluddin, vol. 1 p. 164 about Prophet Saleh and his occultation, and in the same account it has also come as hollow of the abdomen! They appear to be inconsistent, and despite the attempt to raise the contradiction between the two terms by the one who wrote the footnotes on the book the attempt has not been successful.
10. Kamaluddin, p. 681, from the Commander of the Faithful.
11. Kamaluddin, p. 385, from Imam Ali al-Rida.
12. The Shi'a of the Ahlulbayt see the night of fifteenth Shaban as a great night, due to what has been reported from their Imams. In fact, they see it as the second Laylat al-Qadr. They stay up during this night and revive it through acts of worship, prayer and visitation to holy sites, as it has been detailed in their prayer books.

The followers of the school of the caliphs, with the exception of the Salafi orientation, especially the Hanbali, and those who are generally affected by them, and those who do not see any

importance for this night, see it as innovation to devote it to worship. The followers of all other schools report special importance for the eve of the fifteenth and narrate from the Prophet traditions reporting that Allah gives special attention to the people of the earth on this night and forgives them except for certain groups of sinful people. They reject the weakening of some of these traditions, because some of those traditions strengthen other ones, especially since they are reflected in the virtues of the acts of worship. Such traditions do not require the conditions in authentication, which is required by other traditions. Some of their jurists have compiled books on the merits of this night and its recommended acts of worship. For those who want more details, review their statements.

13. al-Saduq, Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Babawayh: *Kamaluddin wa Tammam al-Nima*, p. 423 and Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabri (Shiite) *Dalaal al-Imama*, p. 496.
14. The same source, p. 427.
15. Al-Sadr, al-Sayyid Muhammed: *al-Ghaybah al-Sughra* vol. 1, p. 256.
16. The same source, p. 260.
17. Al-Qazwini, Sayyid Muhammad Kadhimi: *al-Imam al-Mahdi from the Cradle to the Reappearance*, p. 134; "After this, this second tradition is reported from Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Muthari or al-Tahwei, who is unknown, meaning that this report is weak, and relying on the first tradition is better and more appropriate.
18. Ahmed Salman, Sayyid al-Emaa from p. 32 to p. 48
19. al-Saduq, *Kamaluddin* p. 462 narrated from Hamza ibn Abu al-Fath: "He came one day and said: The good news was born yesterday in the house, which was born to Abu Muhammad [al-Askari]."
20. al-Hur al-Aamili, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan in his book *Ithbat al-Hudaat bi-al-Nusus wa-al-Mu'jizat*, vol. 5, p. 101, Ahmad ibn al-Hasan ibn al-Ishaq al-Qummi said: "When the good successor was born, peace be upon him, a letter came from Abu Muhammad al-Hasan ibn Ali, peace be upon them, in the hands of Ahmed ibn Ishaq, it was written in his handwriting, peace be

upon him, in which his letters were received. The letter stated: "The child is born. Let him be hidden with you and concealed for all the people. We have shown him only to the nearest of his kin and the loyal to his office. We were yearning to let you know so that God makes you pleased as we have been and farewell."

21. al-Saduq, Kamaluddin, p. 462: Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Kufi said that Abu Muhammad, peace be upon him, sent to some of the people a slaughtered goat and said: This is from 'Aqiqah of my son Muhammad, peace be upon him.
22. al-Hur al-Alami, Ithbaat al-Huda vol. 5 p. 100 narrated from Abu Ghanem al-Khadem: "A son was born to Abu Muhammad, peace be upon him, and he named him Muhammad, and he revealed him to his companions on the third day. He said: "This is your leader after me and my successor. He is the one who is awaited for and will fill the earth with justice and equity like it will be filled with oppression and injustice."
23. al-Saduq: Kamaluddin p. 462, narrated from Abu Ghanem al-Khadim: "A son was born to Abu Muhammad, peace be upon him, and he named him Muhammad, and he showed him to his followers on the third day. He said: "This is your leader after me and my successor to you, and he is the one for whom everyone awaits, and if the earth is filled with oppression and injustice, he will come and fill it with justice and equity."
24. Ibn Taymayyia; Ahmad ibn Abdulhalim: Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabweyya, vol. 1 p. 122
25. al-Dhabi Muhammad ibn Ahmed ibn Othman: Siyar A'alam al-Nubala'a: In his biography, al-Burqani said: "The Baghdadi people regard him authentic but he is weak to me." al-Daarqutni said: "He used to memorise, but he made mistakes and insisted (he was correct)." Al-Khatib has reported al-Azhari saying Abu al-Hasan ibn al-Furat said: "Ibn Qane' had become forgetful about two years before his death. Therefore, we stopped reporting from him. However, some people continued reporting from him in his forgetfulness.
26. Surah Maryam verses 29-31
27. Surah Maryam verse 12

28. al-Ameedi, Thamer Hashem: Difaa 'an al-Kaafi vol. 1 p. 562: he mentioned the names of the contemporaries of Imams al-'Askari and al-Mahdi, the ones who narrated traditions from them and about those who saw Imam al-Mahdi, peace be upon him. Their number is around seventy-nine persons. Some of them had seen him in a group of forty people, as in some of the reports. In some other reports there were thirty, and in a third category of reports it was some of his followers. Furthermore, he has said in his book from Shaykh Abu Talib al-Tajlil al-Tabrizi that there were over three hundred.
29. al-Allama al-Ameedi traces the names of the people who belong to these areas in his book, Difaa 'an al-Kafi vol. 1 p. 563
30. al-Andlusi al-Dhahiri; Ali ibn Ahmed ibn Hazm: vol. 4 p. 138, A group from them said the fact that his birth never happened in the year 260 of his father's death! I say, "We don't know anyone in history who said the Imam was born in 260 H (as he was born in 255 H)."
31. The Journal Turathuna Aal al-Bayt Foundation, vol. 28 p. 249
32. al-Ameedi: Difaa 'an al-Kafi vol. 1 p. 592
33. Sura Qaaf verse 37
34. al-Saduq, Kamaluddin 505, "We were in the house when the coffin of Hasan ibn Ali, may God's blessings be upon him, was ready. Ja'far ibn Ali came forward to lead the prayers for his brother. When he was about to begin, a boy with a bright face came out and grabbed the robe of Jafar ibn Ali and said, 'Uncle, I am entitled to pray for my father.' Thus, Ja'far went behind.
35. The same source p. 476
36. For details you can review our book: al-A'dham Barakat: Imam Muhammad ibn Ali al-Jawad, peace be upon him.
37. al-Tabrizi Abu Talib al-Tajlil: Man Huwa Al-Mahdi p. 534
38. Ibn Hanbal, Ahmad; Musnad Ahmad: vol. 34 p. 409, it is narrated from Jaber ibn Samra al-Suwai: "I have heard the messenger of God, may the blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, saying in the final Hajj: "This religion will not be revealed to anyone who is against him, nor will it hurt him otherwise, nor will it

be ironic, until my nation has left twelve successors," he said: "He spoke of something that I did not understand, and I said to my father: "What did he say? He said, "They are all from Quraysh."

In some of these conversations, there were arguments and talk, and the last sentence was hidden from some of the people who attended; some of the people who sought justification questioned whether it was the same one that prevented the Prophet from writing a statement that would not mislead after him, especially since the circumstances of this talk were the final Hajj, in which the verse of completion of religion was revealed, and the conclusion of which was the incident of al-Ghadir.

39. al-Suyuti; Jalaluddin: al-Hawi lil-Fatawi vol. 2 p. 102
40. al-Ameedi : Difaa 'an al-Kafi vol. 1 p. 538
41. Same source and page.
42. Same source: p. 539
43. In order to get to know further, check out the book Kifayat al-Athar by al-Kharraz al-Qummi.
44. al-Saduq; Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah: p 305 hadith of Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah from Fatimah al-Zahra, peace be upon her.
45. al-Sadr, Muhammad Sadiq, the History of the major occultation vol. 2 p. 10
46. al-Qazwini, al-Sayyid Muhammad Kadhim, Imam al-Mahdi from the Cradle to the Reappearance pg 303, as well as in the book Bihar al Anwar vol. 52 p. 151 where Shaykh Majlisi, may Allah's mercy be on him, has mentioned the names of a group of people who had the honour of meeting the Imam in the major occultation. Similarly, Shaykh Noori has mentioned in his book al-Najm al-Thaqib one hundred incidents where people had the privilege and the success of meeting him, peace be upon him. Shaykh Noori then selected fifty-eight of those stories and incidents and mentioned them in his book Jannat al-Mawa.

Our scholars of past and present have compiled complete books concerning the people who had the honour of meeting the Imam, peace of upon him, like Tabsirat al-Wali, by Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani. Tazkirat al-Talib and Daar al-Salaam, by

Shaykh Mahmud al-Maythami al-Iraqi. *Badayi' al-Kalaam* by Sayyid Jamal al-Din Muhammad ibn al-Husain al-Yazdi al-Tabatabai. *Al-Bahjat* by Mirza Muhammad Taqi al-Almasi al-Isfahani. *al-'Abqari al-Hisaan fi Tawarikh Sahib al-Zamaan* by Shaykh Ali Akbar al-Nahawandi.

47. al-Safi al-Gulpaigani, Shaykh Lutf Allah in his book *Muntakhab al-Athar Fi Ahwal al-Imam al-Thani 'ashr* vol.2 p. 562. Be aware that what we have mentioned in this chapter are a few incidents from what is mentioned in our authentic books. Additionally, the work and incidents are so large in number that make it impossible to count them. There is no doubt in the authenticity of many of these stories and the chain of narrations due to the speciality of the people reporting them known for their righteousness, honesty, knowledge and piety, which gives us certainty about his presence.
48. al-Tusi, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, al-Ghaybah p. 126
49. We have talked about the characters of these great scholars and others in our book *From the flags of the Imam*; review it.
50. Surah al-Baqarah verse 146
51. al-Tusi al-Ghaybah p. 423
52. al-Shaykh Riyad al-Asadi discussed it, view this page <https://www.m-mahdi.com/main/articl%20s-799>
53. Surah al-Baqarah verse 2 & 3
54. Surah al-Luqman verse 34
55. Surah al-'Araf verse 187
56. al-Tabarani, Sulieman ibn Ahmad, *Dictionary* vol. 1 p. 40
57. al-Nu'mani, ibn Abi Zainab, al-Ghaybah p. 352
58. In order to elaborate on those manners we recommend reading the book of the late Shaykh Husayn al-Kurrani: *The literature of the age of absence*.
59. Ibn Tawus al-Husni, Ali ibn Mousa, *Misbah al-Za'er* p. 455
60. al-Kulayni Muhammad ibn Yaqoub, al-Kaafi vol. 4 p. 162
61. We were exposed to him and explained some of his words in our

book: Sayyid al-Abidin; Imam Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn Ali.

62. al-Kafami, Shaykh Ibrahim, Safe country and shield p. 306
63. al-Khoei, al-Sayyid Abu Qasim, Istiftaat p. 421
64. al-Nu'mani al-Ghaybah, p. 252
65. al-Sadr, Sayyid Mohmmad al-Sadiq, History after the appearance, vol.3 p. 117
66. al-Hali, Hasan ibn Sulieman, Moqtaser Basaer al-Darajat, p.178
67. al-Saduq, Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Babawayh, Kamaluddin Tamam al-Nima, p. 681
68. This is even though this account contains words for the incomprehensibility of relying on Umar ibn Hanthala among some of them.
69. al-Saduq, Kamalalddin, p. 681
70. Of course, this does not mean exonerating the Marwan branch of the illiterates, but rather the tragic injustice of Abbasids from the days of Mansur to the end of their country. The point is, they are all following this symbol that was the basis for confronting the Prophet and Islam.
71. al-Ayyashi, Muhammad ibn Masoud, Tafseer al-Ayyashi vol. 1 p. 110
72. al-Safar, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, Basaer al-Darajat p. 512
73. al-Saduq, Kamaluddin, p. 357
74. al-Nu'mani, al-Ghaybah, p. 239
75. The source itself, p. 204
76. As mentioned by al-Showkani in his book.
77. The writer of the book The Awaited Mahdi counted over 30 men of the companions who mentioned the Mahdi, p. 12
78. The irony that al-Bukhari and Muslim do not mention any narrations of al-Mahdi, nor believe in them, became the excuse of the school of caliphs. However, al-Bukhari mentioned the narrations from Umm Salama.
79. vol.2 p. 310

80. vol.2 p. 1368
81. Masnad Ahmad vol.1 p. 84
82. vol.1 p. 315
83. vol.1 p. 331
84. Kamaluddin, vol. 1 p. 341
85. Kamaluddin, vol. 1 p. 344
86. In all narrations: In the list are the years of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Job, and Muhammad, which are seven prophets, the blessings of God upon them, but also from other than the prophets, such as Dhul Qarnain and al-Khidr.
87. Kamaluddin, vol. 1 p. 359
88. al-Kafi, vol. 1 p. 337
89. Kamaluddin, p. 401
90. Surah al-'Araf verse 187
91. Kamaluddin, p. 409
92. Kamaluddin, p. 412

