

فَقِيرُ الْعَالَمِ الظُّهُورِ

IMAM AL-MAHDI'S
RETURN

UNDERSTANDING SIGNS OF THE REAPPEARANCE



BY SHAYKH MUHAMMAD AL-SANAD

The English Translation of:

فقه علائم الظهور

Imam al-Mahdi's Return

Understanding Signs of the Reappearance

Written by:

Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sanad

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Supplication In Occultation (*Ghaybah*)

فَصَبِّرْنِي عَلَى ذَلِكَ حَتَّى لَا أَجِبَ تَعْجِيلَ مَا أَخَّرْتَ وَلَا تَأْخِيرَ مَا عَجَّلْتَ

Then, O Allah, make me patient so that I don't desire hastening of the affair that you have delayed, and I don't desire delay for what you have preponed,

وَلَا أَكْشِفَ مَا سَتَرْتَ وَلَا أَبْحَثَ عَمَّا كَتَمْتَ

I don't reveal what you have hidden, and I don't go and dig out what you have concealed,

وَلَا أَنْزِعَكَ فِي تَذْبِيرِكَ

And I don't dispute with you about Your plans,

وَلَا أَقُولَ لِمَ وَكَيْفَ وَمَا بَالُ وَلِيِّ الْأَمْرِ لَا يَطْهَرُ وَقَدْ امْتَلَأَتِ الْأَرْضُ مِنَ
الْجَوْرِ وَأَفْوَضُ أُمُورِي كُلَّهَا إِلَيْكَ

And I don't say what, why and how about why your proof has not reappeared even though the earth is filled with injustice and in that matter, I entrust my affair to you.

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Diacritics Guidelines

Symbol	Arabic Letter	Sound	Example
ʾ	أ \ ع	A (normal a)	Muʾmin
ʿ	ع	A (heavy; middle of throat)	ʿIlm
Ā / ā	ا	aa	Jawāḏ
Ī / ī	ي	ee	Amīr
Ū / ū	و	oo	Mūsā
Ḥ / ḥ	ح / ح	H (heavy; middle of throat)	Ḥasan
Ṣ / ṣ	ص	S (heavier; emphasized)	Ṣādiq
Ṭ / ṭ	ط	T (stronger; emphasized)	Ṭālib
Dh / dh	ذ	Light dh	Dhikr
Ḍ / ḍ	ض	Dh (heavier; emphasized)	Riḍā
Z / z	ظ	Dh (between th and z)	Kāẓim

Terms

Term	Arabic Transliteration	Translation
(s)	<i>Ṣallallāhu 'Alayhi Wa 'Ālih</i>	Blessings of Allah be upon him and his family
(a)	<i>'Alayhi (or 'Alayhā) al-Salām</i>	Peace be upon him (or her)
(as)	<i>'Alayhim al-Salām</i>	Peace be upon them
(atf)	<i>'Ajjal Allāh Ta 'ālā Farajah</i>	May Allah (the Exalted) hasten his reappearance

Formatting Conventions

Book names (in the main text) are underlined.

- Eg. al-Kāfī, Bihār al-Anwār, al-Ghaybah, etc.
- *Italicized* in footnotes.

Ḥadīth Text Arabic is blue and bolded.

- Eg. **إِنَّ الْحَقَّ فِي عَلِيٍّ وَشِيعَتِهِ**

Ḥadīth text translation is blue and italicized.

- Eg. *“Indeed, the truth is with Ali and his Shia”*

Quranic Text is red and bolded.

- Eg. **قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ**

Quran Translation is red and italicized.

- Eg. *“Say, He Allah is One.”* (112:1)

Words of scholars is green and italicized.

Some *Arabic word transliterations* are italicized.

- Eg. *Wilāyah, Niyābah, zuhūr*, etc.

Foreword by the Translator

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muḥammad (s), and his purified progeny, the Ahl al-Bayt (as), especially the Awaited Imam, al-Mahdi (a), who embodies the hope of humanity and stands as the ultimate savior destined to establish justice and equity across the earth.

The discourse surrounding the *Mahdawī* doctrine (*al-'aqīdah al-mahdawīyyah*), encompassing its implications and effects at both individual and societal levels, unfolds as a multifaceted exploration that engages numerous epistemological, theological, psychological, and spiritual dimensions pertinent to all of humanity. This doctrine encapsulates the quintessence of human aspirations, serving as the ultimate beacon of hope for mankind on this terrestrial plane. Far from being a mere historical narration detached from the lived realities of the present and the anticipations of the future, nor an intellectual indulgence divorced from the conscience and yearnings of the Ummah, it constitutes a vibrant and living reality that directly addresses the challenges and tribulations confronting our contemporary era.

In an age characterized by unprecedented trials, pervasive confusion, and the alarming rise of false claimants, the urgency for clarity and guidance has reached a critical juncture. This book, *Imam al-Mahdi's Return: Recognizing the Signs and Avoiding Deception*, emerges as an indispensable resource for believers striving to navigate the intricate complexities of the occultation (*ghaybah*). It furnishes a comprehensive framework designed to distinguish truth from falsehood, offering profound insights into the definitive signs heralding the Imam (a)'s return and the manifold trials that precede this momentous event. Authored by Āyatullāh Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sanad, the work meticulously examines the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) concerning the signs of reappearance, the roles of pivotal figures such as al-Yamānī, al-Khurāsānī, and al-Ḥasanī, and the perils posed by deceptive movements and false claimants like al-Sufyānī and al-Dajjāl. Grounded in an authentic research methodology, this study relies upon the scientific foundations of the jurisprudence of

ḥadīth and its comprehension (*fiqh al-ḥadīth wa dirāyatuh*), ensuring its reliability and enduring relevance.

The critical significance of this book in today's context lies in its resolute emphasis on discernment and vigilance. In a world where misinformation proliferates with alarming rapidity and false leaders exploit the revered name of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) to advance their own agendas, the capacity to recognize deception assumes paramount importance. The author underscores the necessity of adhering to the definitive signs of reappearance—most notably the heavenly cry (*al-ṣayḥah*) and the rise of al-Sufyānī—while issuing stern warnings against the pitfalls of premature allegiances and speculative timelines. This discourse transcends theoretical abstraction; it serves as a practical guide, equipping believers with the wisdom and insight needed to traverse the trials of the occultation with clarity and resolve.

Moreover, the book confronts a pressing issue resonant with our time: the emergence of movements and individuals who profess to represent the cause of Imam al-Mahdi (atf) but, in truth, stand far removed from his divine mission. Whether through distorted interpretations of *wilāyah* or the promotion of diluted versions of Shi'ī identity, these false claimants lead many astray under the seductive guise of progress and inclusivity. The author's meticulous analysis of these phenomena offers a timely reminder of the imperative to remain steadfast in the authentic teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), resisting the allure of deceptive slogans that threaten to undermine true fidelity.

As translators of this work, we have been profoundly moved by its striking relevance to the struggles of our contemporary milieu. Beyond providing a thorough understanding of the signs of reappearance, the book offers a roadmap for believers to maintain steadfast loyalty to Imam al-Mahdi (atf) amidst the chaos of our era. In rendering this translation, we have undertaken specific adaptations to enhance its accessibility and utility for English-speaking readers. Notably, we have recast the text into a rigorous academic format, amplifying its scholarly tone and elaborating key concepts with precision to align with intellectual standards, while preserving the integrity of Āyatullāh Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sanad's original intent.

Additionally, we have enriched the work by incorporating footnotes to elucidate key concepts and to provide context for historical movements mentioned throughout the text, including the roles of figures like al-Sufyānī and al-Ḥasanī. Furthermore, we have included an addendum exploring the Zaydiyyah (Zaydis) and Ḥasaniyyūn (Hasanids), offering a detailed examination of their historical and doctrinal significance in relation to the Mahdawī narrative.

We pray that this translation serves as a valuable resource for English-speaking readers, enabling them to navigate the challenges of the occultation with clarity and conviction. May it inspire us to remain vigilant against deception, steadfast in our loyalty to the Ahl al-Bayt (as), and hopeful for the imminent reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (atf), who will fill the earth with justice and equity as it is now filled with oppression and tyranny. All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. O Allah, this is from You and from Your Messenger and Your last Deputy, Imam al-Mahdi (atf).

The Awaiters Research Group

Chapter 1: Cessation of the Position of Special Deputyship (*al-Niyābah al-Khāṣṣah*)

The question of the status of figures tied to the emergence (*ẓuhūr*) of Imam al-Mahdī (atf) has recently garnered significant attention within Shi'ī theological discourse. These individuals, often referred to as the “stars of the year of *ẓuhūr*,” include figures such as al-Yamānī, al-Khurāsānī (al-Ḥasanī), Shu‘ayb al-Ṣāliḥ, and al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah, whose names appear in narrations detailing the apocalyptic events preceding the Imam (atf)’s return. Amidst this backdrop, occasional impostors have emerged, claiming these titles for themselves, prompting critical inquiries: Do these figures possess an official mandate from the Awaited Imam? Are they designated as his special deputies (*nawwāb khāṣṣūn*)¹ or ambassadors (*sufarā’*), endowed with legally binding authority to represent him?

This issue is particularly pressing given the categorical rejection by the narrations of Ahl al-Bayt (as) of any special deputies or ambassadors during the major occultation (*al-ghaybah al-kubrā*), a position reinforced by the consensus (*ijmā’*) of Imāmī scholars. This chapter seeks to address these questions by exploring the narrations concerning these figures and situating them within the broader framework of Shi'ī eschatology. To lay the groundwork, we first examine the evidence supporting the cessation of special deputation during the major occultation, a cessation that persists

¹ The *nawwāb khāṣṣūn* (special deputies) refer to the four representatives appointed by Imam al-Mahdī (atf) during the Minor Occultation (*al-Ghaybah al-Ṣuġhrā*, 260–329 AH). They served as intermediaries between the Imam and his followers, conveying his directives and resolving religious and social matters. These deputies were: 1) ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd al-‘Amrī, 2) Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān al-‘Amrī, 3) Ḥusayn ibn Rawḥ al-Nawbakhtī, and 4) ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Samurī. After the demise of the fourth deputy in 329 AH, the Major Occultation (*al-Ghaybah al-Kubrā*) began, marking the end of direct appointment of deputies by the Imam.

until the occurrence of the heavenly call (*al-ṣayḥah*) and the rise of al-Sufyānī.

Historical Context and Scholarly Consensus on the Cessation of Special Deputation

The concept of occultation (*al-ghaybah*) has been a central theme in Imāmī scholarship, with discussions spanning from the era of the early A'imma (as) to the present day. Scholars contemporaneous with the minor occultation (*al-ghaybah al-ṣuḡhrā*), such as al-Kulaynī, Ali ibn Bābawayh, Sa'd ibn 'Abdillāh al-Ash'arī, and al-Nawbakhtī, who interacted with the Four Deputies, meticulously documented the transition to the major occultation. This scholarly tradition continued with figures like al-Ṣadūq, Ibn Qūlawayh, al-Nu'mānī, and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Khazzāz in the initial phase of the major occultation, followed by later luminaries such as al-Mufīd, al-Murtaḍā, al-Ṭūsī, and al-Karājīkī. Across generations, these thinkers have drawn upon a rich corpus of narrations from the Holy Prophet (s) and the Infallible A'imma (as) to affirm the cessation of special deputation. Below, we present key pieces of evidence that underpin this consensus.

Al-Nu'mānī narrated from Dāwūd ibn Abī al-Qāsim, who said: *We were with Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ali al-Riḍā (a) when the mention of al-Sufyānī arose, and what the narrations say about how his affair is among the inescapable certainties (al-ḥatm). He said: "al-Sufyānī is among the inescapable certainties." Someone asked: "Is it possible for divine will to alter (yabdu') what is certain?" He replied: "Yes." We said: "We fear then that divine re-determination (al-badā') may occur in the case of al-Qā'im." He (a) said: "The Qā'im is bound by the appointed term (al-mī'ād)." — meaning there can be no badā' in the Qā'im's ultimate emergence itself, unlike the timing of preliminary signs.*¹

First Evidence: The *Tawqī'* of Imam al-Mahdi (atf)

One of the most authoritative proofs is the *tawqī'* (signed decree) issued by Imam al-Mahdi (atf) through his fourth deputy, Ali ibn Muḥammad al-Samarī, six days before the latter's death. This decree, preserved in multiple authoritative sources, states:

¹ al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, V.52 P.250; al-Nu'mānī, *al-Ghaybah*, P.302.

يَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ السَّمَرِيُّ أَعْظَمَ اللَّهُ أَجْرَ إِخْوَانِكَ فِيكَ فَإِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ مَا بَيْنَكَ وَ
بَيْنَ سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ فَاجْمَعْ أَمْرَكَ وَلَا تُوصِ إِلَى أَحَدٍ يَفُومُ مَقَامَكَ بَعْدَ وَفَاتِكَ فَقَدْ
وَقَعَتِ الْعُيُوبَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ فَلَا ظَهْرَ إِلَّا بَعْدَ إِذْنِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَ ذَلِكَ بَعْدَ طُولِ
الْأَمَدِ وَ قَسْوَةِ الْقُلُوبِ وَ امْتِلَاءِ الْأَرْضِ جَوْرًا وَ سَيِّئَاتِي شِيعَتِي مَنْ يَدَّعِي
الْمُشَاهَدَةَ إِلَّا فَمَنْ ادَّعَى الْمُشَاهَدَةَ قَبْلَ خُرُوجِ السُّفْيَانِيِّ وَ الصَّيْحَةِ فَهُوَ كَاذِبٌ
مُفْتَرٍ وَ لَا حَوْلَ وَ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ

*“O Ali ibn Muḥammad al-Samarī! May Allah reward your brothers for your passing. Indeed, you shall die within six days. Prepare yourself and do not appoint anyone as your successor after your death. The complete occultation has now begun. There shall be no appearance except by Allah’s permission, after a prolonged period, when hearts become hardened and the earth is filled with oppression and injustice. Soon, some from my Shia will claim to have seen me. Beware! Whoever claims to have seen me before the emergence of al-Sufyānī and the heavenly call (al-ṣayḥah) is a deceitful liar. There is no power or strength except with Allah, the Most High, the Almighty.”*¹

This *tawqīʿ* is documented by al-Ṣadūq in *Ikmāl al-Dīn*, al-Ṭūsī in *al-Ghaybah*, al-Ṭabasī in *al-Ihtijāj*, and al-Rāwandī in *al-Kharāʿij wa al-Jarāʾih*, with each tracing its transmission back to al-Ṣadūq. Al-Ṭūsī provides a detailed chain of narrators (*isnād*), noting, “*Our teachers narrated to us from Muḥammad ibn Bābawayh (al-Ṣadūq), who said: Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad al-Maktab narrated to me...*” Similarly, al-Ṣadūq attributes the narration to his teacher, Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad al-Maktab, emphasizing its reliability. Al-Ṭūsī further elaborates in *al-Ghaybah*, presenting five distinct narrations with robust chains—including transmitters like al-Mufīd and al-Ghaḍāʾirī, who transmitted the narration from al-Ṣafwānī², as well as a contemporary of

¹ al-Ṭūsī, *al-Ghaybah* P.395; al-ʿĀmilī, *Ithbāt al-Hudāt* V.5 P.321. al-Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-Dīn Wa Tamām al-Niʿmah* V.2 P.156; al-Ṭabasī, *al-Ihtijāj ʿalā Aḥl al-Lajāj* V.2 P.478; Qutb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī, *al-Kharāʿij Wa Jarāʾih* V.3 P.128; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.51 P.361.

² Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ṣafwānī a senior scholar and student of al-Kulaynī. al-Ṭūsī specifically states in the biographical notice of the fourth deputy that five independent chains confirm the severance, including one through Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ṣafwānī—the leading Shaykh of the school (Shaykh al-Ṭāʾifah), a direct contemporary of the fourth deputy—alongside the testimony of Shīʿī witnesses present at the death bed confirming no successor was ever designated. Ḥadīth scholars describe this chain as *ṣaḥīḥ aʿlā*

the fourth deputy, that corroborate the cessation of special deputation. The authenticity of this *tawqī'* is deemed certain (*qaṭ'ī al-ṣudūr*), reflecting its foundational role in Shi'ī doctrine.

The *tawqī'* establishes two critical points. First, the Imam's directive, "*Do not appoint anyone as your successor after your death, for the complete occultation has now begun,*" explicitly prohibits the continuation of special deputies beyond al-Sama'ī, marking the end of the minor occultation—a period characterized by intermediaries—and the onset of the major occultation, where such roles cease. Second, the warning against false claimants who assert contact with the Imam before the emergence of al-Sufyānī and the *ṣayḥah* underscores that no legitimate mediation exists until these eschatological signs manifest. This prolonged period, defined by hardened hearts and widespread injustice, reinforces the absence of authoritative representation.

Moreover, the explicit text of this *tawqī'*, which enjoys unanimous agreement within the Shia community, indicates that the cessation of special deputyship (*al-niyābah al-khāṣṣah*) and mediation (*al-sifārah*) persists until the heavenly cry, proclaimed by the voice of Jibrā'īl. This cry ranks among the definitive signs of the reappearance, occurring in the very year of *ẓuhūr*. Narrations from the A'imma (as) elaborate:

أَلَا إِنَّ الْحَقَّ فِي عَلِيٍّ وَشِيعَتِهِ ثُمَّ يَنَادِي إِبْلِيسُ فِي آخِرِ النَّهَارِ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَلَا
إِنَّ الْحَقَّ فِي عُثْمَانَ وَشِيعَتِهِ فَعِنْدَ ذَلِكَ يَرْتَابُ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

*"Indeed, the truth is with Ali and his Shia. Then, at the end of the day, Iblīs (Satan) will proclaim: 'Indeed, the truth is with 'Uthmān and his Shia.' At that time, those who follow falsehood will be in doubt."*¹

Some narrations specify this cry occurring in the Month of Ramaḍān, others in Rajab², suggesting multiple calls with distinct messages.

This temporal and thematic complexity underscores the *tawqī'*'s implication: any claim of deputyship, connection, or communication with Imam al-Mahdī (atf) prior to the *ṣayḥah* and al-Sufyānī's emergence—

(authentically elevated), reaching the infallible source through the most senior available links, and this convergence of chains makes the *tawqī' qaṭ'ī al-ṣudūr* (conclusively established).

¹ al-Tūsī, *al-Ghaybah* P.435; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.290.

² al-Nu'mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.181 H.28.

interpreted as his establishment of a state in Syria and subsequent military expansion—is false and fabricated, irrespective of the claimant's title or origin.

Second Evidence: Narrations on the Dual Occultations

Further evidence emerges from widely transmitted (*mutawātir*) narrations narrated by al-Ṣadūq in Ikmal al-Dīn, al-Ṭūsī in al-Ghaybah al-Nu'mānī in al-Ghaybah, al-Kulaynī in al-Kāfi, asserting two occultations for the Imam (atf). Al-Ṭūsī narrates from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a):

هَذَا الْأَمْرُ غَيْبَتَيْنِ إِحْدَاهُمَا تَطُولُ إِنَّ لِصَاحِبِ

*"Indeed, the Master of this Affair will have two occultations: one will be short, and the other will be long."*¹

Another narration states:

إِنَّ لِصَاحِبِ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ غَيْبَتَيْنِ إِحْدَاهُمَا تَطُولُ حَتَّى يَقُولَ بَعْضُهُمْ مَاتَ وَ يَقُولُ بَعْضُهُمْ قُتِلَ وَ يَقُولُ بَعْضُهُمْ ذَهَبَ حَتَّى لَا يَبْقَى عَلَى أَمْرِهِ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ إِلَّا نَفَرٌ يَسِيرٌ لَا يَطْلُعُ عَلَى مَوْضِعِهِ أَحَدٌ مِنْ وَلَدِهِ وَلَا غَيْرِهِ إِلَّا الْمَوْلَى الَّذِي يَلِي أَمْرَهُ

*"Indeed, the Master of this Affair will have two occultations. One of them will be so prolonged that some will say, 'He has died,' others will say, 'He has been killed,' and others will say, 'He has gone away.' None of his followers will remain steadfast in his cause except a small group. No one, whether a close associate or otherwise, will know his location except the servant who manages his affairs."*²

Al-Nu'mānī provides a detailed exegesis of these narrations, asserting their authenticity and theological weight:

"These aḥādīth, which mention that the Qā'im (a) will experience two occultations, are authentic according to us—praise be to Allah—and Allah has rendered the statements of the A'imma (as) clear, thereby demonstrating the proof of their truthfulness in this matter. As for the first occultation, it is the period during which the deputies (sufarā') served as intermediaries between the Imam (a) and the people. These deputies were

¹ al-Nu'mānī. P.171 H.5.

² al-Ṭūsī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.162.

appointed and manifest, their persons and identities well-known. Through them, the intricacies of knowledge, the complexities of legal rulings, and responses to every difficult and perplexing question were conveyed to the community. This constitutes the short occultation, a phase whose days have elapsed and whose duration has concluded.

“The second occultation, however, is distinct: it is the period in which the persons of the deputies and intermediaries have been removed, a cessation ordained by Allah, the Exalted, for a purpose He has willed and in accordance with the divine plan He has decreed for creation. This removal also serves to test and purify those who might claim such a position, as Allah, the Mighty and Exalted, has declared in the Quran: ‘Allah would not leave the believers in the state in which you are now, until He separates the evil from the good...’ (Quran 3:179).”

This interpretation underscores the functional distinction between the two phases: the minor occultation facilitated direct mediation, while the major occultation, devoid of such intermediaries, fulfills a divine intent of sifting the faithful amidst prolonged concealment.¹

The duality of these occultations—evident in the contrast between the presence of deputies in the first and their absence in the second—reinforces the cessation of special mediation (*al-sifārah*) in the current era, negating any claims of authoritative representation until the Imam (a)’s reappearance.

Among the narrations illustrative of this duality and the challenges of the major occultation is an authentic report from ‘Abdullāh ibn Sinān, who said:

“My father and I entered upon Abī ‘Abdillāh (al-Ṣādiq) (a):

‘How will you be when you are in a state where you do not see a guiding Imam or any manifest knowledge? None will be saved from that confusion except those who call upon Allah with the supplication of the drowning (Du ‘ā’ al-Gharīq).

“My father exclaimed: ‘By Allah, this is a severe trial! What should we do, may I be sacrificed for you, at that time?’

إِذَا كَانَ ذَلِكَ وَ لَنْ تُذَرَّكَ فَتَمَسَّكُوا بِمَا فِي أَيْدِيكُمْ حَتَّى يَنْصَحَ لَكُمْ الْأَمْرُ.

¹ al-Nu‘mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.173 H.9.

“The Imam replied: ‘When that occurs—and you will not live to see it—hold fast to what is in your hands until the matter becomes clear to you.’¹

This exchange underscores the gravity of a period devoid of direct guidance, emphasizing reliance on steadfast adherence to established teachings amidst uncertainty.

Al-Nu‘mānī offers a detailed exegesis of this ḥadīth, illuminating its implications: *“There is an indication of what has occurred and a testimony to the events surrounding the deputies who served as intermediaries between the Imam (a) and the Shia, concerning the removal of their persons and the disruption of their system. For the deputy (safīr) between the Imam during his occultation and his Shia represents the manifest knowledge. When the trial was completed for the people, the manifest signs were removed, and they will not be seen until Imam al-Mahdī (atf) reappears. The confusion (ḥayrah) that was mentioned has occurred, and the A‘immah (as) have informed us of it. The matter of the second occultation has been clarified, and its explanation and interpretation will come in the subsequent hadiths after this chapter.”²*

This commentary situates the ḥadīth within the broader narrative of the two occultations, highlighting the cessation of intermediaries as a deliberate divine mechanism. The deputy, as the conduit of clear knowledge, is absent in the major occultation, plunging the faithful into a state of *ḥayrah*—a trial that persists until the Imam’s return, as foretold by the A‘immah (as).

Third Evidence: Narrations on Patience, Steadfastness, and Purification

A third strand of evidence comprises widely reported (*mustafīdah*) narrations that enjoin *intiẓār* (actively awaiting), *ṣabr* (patience), *murābaṭah* (steadfastness), and caution against being swayed by every claimant professing to establish truth and justice. Additionally, narrations concerning *tamḥīṣ* (testing) and *imtiḥān* (trials) implicitly affirm the cessation of deputyship and direct communication, a point we will elucidate further. These traditions collectively underscore the challenges

¹ al-Nu‘mānī. P.159 H.4.

² al-Nu‘mānī. P.161.

of the major occultation and the requisite virtues for navigating its uncertainties.

One such narration is relayed by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Kathīr, who recounts an exchange involving Mihzam al-Asadī in the presence of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a). Mihzam implored:

“May I be sacrificed for you, when will this matter that you await come to pass? It has been prolonged for us.” The Imam responded:

يَا مِهْزَمُ كَذَبَ الْمُتَمَنُّونَ وَ هَلَكَ الْمُسْتَعْجِلُونَ وَ نَجَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَ الْيَنَّا
يَصِيرُونَ.

“O Mihzam, those who dwell in wishful thinking have spoken falsely, those who hasten to bring forward the establishment of rule of Ahl al-Bayt (as) have been destroyed, and those who surrender [to Allah’s will] have attained salvation, and to us all matters will ultimately return.”¹

In a related narration, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) declared:

هَلَكَتِ الْمَحَاضِيرُ قَالَتْ قُلْتُ وَ مَا الْمَحَاضِيرُ- قَالَ الْمُسْتَعْجِلُونَ وَ نَجَا الْمُقَرَّبُونَ
وَ ثَبَتَ الْحِصْنُ عَلَى أَوْتَادِهَا كُونُوا أَحْلَاسَ بُيُوتِكُمْ فَإِنَّ الْعَبْرَةَ عَلَى مَنْ أَثَارَهَا
وَ إِنَّهُمْ لَا يُرِيدُونَكُمْ بِجَانِحَةٍ إِلَّا أَنَاهُمْ اللَّهُ بِشَاغِلٍ إِلَّا مَنْ تَعَرَّضَ لَهُمْ

“The ‘maḥāḍīr’ have perished.” When asked, “Who are the ‘maḥāḍīr’?” He clarified, “The Musta’jilūn (those who hasten to bring forward the establishment of the rule of the Ahl al-Bayt). But those who remain close (to righteousness) are saved, and the fortress stands firm on its foundations. Stay in your homes, for the dust (of chaos) is upon those who stir it. Indeed, they do not intend to harm you except that Allah brings them some distraction—unless someone deliberately exposes themselves to them.”²

The explicit meaning of these narrations is clear: those who precipitously seek to expedite the reappearance (*zuhūr*) of Imam al-Mahdī (atf)—whether through reckless haste or speculative timelines—risk destruction and misguidance. This peril extends to those who, indulging in wishful thinking, heedlessly follow every caller claiming to establish a just rule. Such confusion and turmoil stem directly from the cessation of

¹ al-Nu‘mānī. P.198 H.8.

² al-Nu‘mānī. P.196 H.5.

communication and the absence of a direct connection with the Imam and not referring to the explicit guidelines mention in Quran¹ and Ḥadīth; necessitating patience, vigilant awaiting, and resilience. In the absence of intermediaries or manifest guidance, narrations concerning tests, trials, and tribulations gain heightened relevance. The severity of this trial during the occultation, precipitated by the lack of an intermediary, fosters doubt about the Imam's existence, leading many who profess belief in his Imamate to waver, particularly amid pervasive tribulations, trials, and calamities.

Complementing this perspective, Imam al-Bāqir (a) offered a vivid metaphor in a ḥadīth narrated by Abī Baṣīr:

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ شِيعَتِنَا مَثَلُ أُنْدَرٍ يَغْنِي بَيْدَرًا فِيهِ طَعَامٌ فَأَصَابَهُ أَكَلٌ فَفُتِّي ثُمَّ أَصَابَهُ أَكَلٌ فَفُتِّي حَتَّى بَقِيَ مِنْهُ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُ الْأَكَلُ وَكَذَلِكَ شِيعَتُنَا يُمَيِّزُونَ وَ يُمَحِّصُونَ حَتَّى تَبْقَى مِنْهُمْ عَصَابَةٌ لَا تَضُرُّهَا الْفِتْنَةُ

“The example of our Shia is like a granary—meaning a storehouse—that contains food. It is infested by a pest, so it is purified. Then it is infested again and purified until only that which the pest cannot harm remains. Similarly, our Shia will be distinguished and purified until a group remains whom trials and tribulations cannot harm.”²

This imagery illustrates a process of iterative refinement, wherein the faithful are sifted through adversity to isolate a steadfast remnant impervious to corruption.

In another narration, Manṣūr al-Ṣayqal recounts an encounter with Imam al-Bāqir (a) in the company of others:

“I came to see Abī Ja'far al-Bāqir (a) while a group of people were with him. As we were conversing, and he was facing some of his companions, he suddenly turned to us and said:

هَيْهَاتَ هَيْهَاتَ لَا يَكُونُ الَّذِي تَمْدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْنَاقَكُمْ حَتَّى تُمَحِّصُوا هَيْهَاتَ وَلَا يَكُونُ الَّذِي تَمْدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْنَاقَكُمْ حَتَّى تُمَيِّزُوا وَلَا يَكُونُ الَّذِي تَمْدُونُ إِلَيْهِ

¹ The verse “*but pardon and forgive, so that Allah should bring about His command.*” (Sūrah al-Baqarah, Verse 109) urges patience and forgiveness in the face of hostility until “*Allah brings His command.*” i.e. the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (atf), who will establish justice. Thus, enduring oppression with faith and seeking help from Allah and His final deputy is the best recourse, as his emergence will fulfill Allah's promise of justice.

² al-Nu'mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.211 H.18.

أَعْنَقَكُمْ حَتَّى تُغْرَبَلُوا وَ لَا يَكُونُ الَّذِي تَمُدُّونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْنَقَكُمْ إِلَّا بَعْدَ إِيَّاسٍ وَ لَا يَكُونُ الَّذِي تَمُدُّونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْنَقَكُمْ حَتَّى يَشْقَى مَنْ شَقِيَ وَ يَسْعَدَ مَنْ سَعَدَ

*'What are you discussing? Far be it, far be it! What you eagerly await will not occur until you are purified. Far be it! What you eagerly await will not occur until you are distinguished. What you eagerly await will not occur until you are sifted. What you eagerly await will not occur until despair sets in. What you eagerly await will not occur until the wretched are made wretched and the fortunate are made fortunate.'*¹

This emphatic repetition underscores the protracted and rigorous nature of this purification process, culminating in a clear delineation between the doomed and the blessed. These narrations collectively emphasize the imperative of caution against impulsiveness and the danger of being lured by every claimant due to deficient insight, faltering patience, or an inability to remain resolute amid trials. The absence of deputyship amplifies these challenges, reinforcing the need for enduring faith in the face of uncertainty.

Fourth Evidence: Scholarly Consensus and the Cessation of Special Deputation

The consensus (*ijmā'*) among the Imāmiyyah community and their unwavering agreement on the cessation of special deputyship (*al-niyābah al-khāṣṣah*) and mediation (*al-sifārah*) constitute a fundamental principle (*ḍarūrah*) of their theological framework. This position is so deeply entrenched that Imāmī scholars have consistently declared those who assert claims to deputyship (*al-sifārah*) as misguided, accursed, and excommunicated from the community. Such a stance finds its basis in the decrees (*tawqī'āt*) issued by Imam al-Mahdi (atf) addressing specific claimants, reinforcing the doctrinal rejection of unauthorized representation. Below, we present explicit statements from key Imāmī scholars that exemplify this consensus:

1. **Shaykh Sa'd ibn 'Abdillāh al-Ash'arī al-Qummī**, a contemporary of Imam al-'Askarī (a) and a preeminent scholar and jurist, articulated this position in his book al-Maqālāt Wa al-Firq, after expounding the necessity of belief in the Imam's occultation and the cessation of

¹ al-Nu'mānī. P.208 H.16.

communication with him: *"This is the path of Imāmah, the clear methodology, and the obligatory principle upon which the guided Imāmiyyah have unanimously agreed. This has been our consensus until the passing of Imām al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī (a)."* His statement underscores the historical continuity and communal assent to this doctrine up to the eleventh Imam's era.¹

2. **Shaykh al-Ṭūsī**, in his al-Ghaybah, citing Shaykh Abī al-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn Qūlawayh², affirmed: *"We hold that anyone who claims authority after al-Samarī—the fourth deputy—is an apostate, misguided, and leading others astray."*³ This unequivocal condemnation reflects the scholarly resolve to safeguard the community from false assertions of authority following the conclusion of the deputyship lineage.
3. **Shaykh al-Ṣadūq**, in his book Ikṃāl al-Dīn after detailing the birth of al-Qā'im (atf) and the roles of his four deputies, stated: *"The complete occultation is the one that occurred after the passing of al-Samarī."*⁴ He subsequently narrates in the following chapter the *tawqī'* from Imam al-Mahdī (atf) that mandates the cessation of mediation and special deputyship. At the outset of his work, he clarifies his motivation: *"The reason for writing it was the confusion among some Shia due to the occultation and their deviation from the path of submission and adherence to the transmitted narrations, instead turning to personal opinions and analogies."* This reflects his intent to counter doctrinal drift precipitated by the absence of direct guidance.
4. **Shaykh al-Nu'mānī**, author of Kitāb al-Ghaybah, a contemporary of al-Ṣadūq and a disciple of al-Kulaynī, explicitly asserts in several sections of his book the cessation of mediation (*al-sifārah*) during the major occultation. Some of his statements and reliance on narrations

¹ al-Ash'arī al-Qummī, *al-Maqālāt Wal Fīrāq*. A similar statement was made by the theologian and philosopher of the community, al-Nawbakhtī, *Kitāb Firaq al-Shia*. P.109.

² The author of Kāmil al-Ziyārāt and the teacher of Shaykh al-Mufid and a leading figure of the community during his time, who was a contemporary of al-Ṣadūq in the early years of the major occultation.

³ al-Ṭūsī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.412 H.385.

⁴ al-Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-Dīn Wa Tamām al-Ni'mah*. P.423-433.

have been referenced earlier, underscoring his consistent reinforcement of this principle through ḥadīth-based analysis.¹

5. **Shaykh al-Mufīd**, in Kitāb al-Irshād in the chapter on al-Qā'im (atf), declares: *"He will have two occultations before his reappearance: one shorter and the other longer, as reported in the narrations. The shorter one began from the time of his birth until the cessation of mediation between him and his Shia, marked by the death of the deputies. The longer one follows the first and will end with his rise with the sword."*² This delineation of the two phases situates the cessation of mediation as a pivotal transition point.
6. **Shaykh al-Ṭūsī**, in al-Ghaybah, expresses a similar formulation, reiterating the dual occultations and their implications, aligning closely with al-Mufīd's exposition and reinforcing the scholarly unanimity on this matter.³

The statements of Imāmī scholars, voluminous and well-documented in their respective works, attest to the robustness of this consensus. Notably, even Sunni scholars have recognized this Imāmī position, frequently critiquing the absence of Imam al-Mahdi (atf) and his disconnection from his Shia in theological treatises and works on sects and schools of thought, such as al-Milal wa al-Niḥal.⁴ This established principle has been upheld across generations and centuries within the Imāmiyyah community, which has diligently worked to isolate and expel deviant groups and claimants who raise any banner of authority, preserving doctrinal purity.

The implications of this evidence are profound: it invalidates all claims to special deputyship and mediation (*al-sifārah*), categorically rejecting anyone asserting official or special representative status on behalf of the Awaited Imam (atf) until the call and the cry (*al-ṣayḥah*) from the heavens are heard, and al-Sufyānī establishes his dominion over Syria. Only at that juncture will the discourse shift to address potential contradictions regarding the invalidation of mediation (*al-sifārah*) in

¹ al-Nu'mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.158-161.

² al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*. V.2 P.340.

³ al-Ṭūsī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.61 H.60.

⁴ al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal Wal Niḥal*.

relation to certain figures named in narrations about the year of reappearance, a topic reserved for subsequent analysis.

It has become well established among Sunni scholars and the circles of ruling authority that Imāmī scholars affirm the disappearance of the Imām (a) and his severance from his Shia—a position they have cited repeatedly in the form of objections in their theological works and their books on sects and schools of thought (*al-milal wal madhāhib*).

This necessity, firmly established within the Imāmī community, has been transmitted without interruption from generation to generation. The community has consistently expelled and distanced itself from deviant groups and claimants to the deputyship whenever a new pretender raised his banner.

The necessary implication of all the foregoing proofs is therefore: the categorical invalidity of any claim to a specific deputyship officially representing the awaited Imām (a)—and the invalidity of any claim to a specific deputyship or representation (*niyābah khāṣṣah*), under any name or title whatsoever, regardless of whether the claimant asserts that he shall appear from Yemen, Khurāsān, or any other land—until the heavenly Cry is heard and al-Sufyānī consolidates his dominion.

Chapter 2: The Yamānī and the Ḥasanī

Shi'i eschatological traditions abound with references to figures like the Yamānī and the Ḥasanī, whose roles are intricately tied to the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (atf). These narrations, transmitted through the Infallible A'immah (as), delineate the definitive signs (*al-ḥatmiyyah*) heralding this pivotal event, offering insights into the identities, actions, and significance of these figures. This chapter examines these narrations to clarify the status of the Yamānī and the Ḥasanī (often identified with al-Khurāsānī), assessing their roles within the eschatological framework and their relationship to the Awaited Imam, while distinguishing their banners from those of false claimants.

The Yamānī and Ḥasanī in Definitive Signs: A Foundational Narration

A key narration is narrated by al-Nu'mānī with his chain to Abī Baṣīr, from Abī Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ali (al-Bāqir) (a) situates al-Yamānī and al-Ḥasanī among the definitive signs of the reappearance, alongside events like the heavenly cry (*al-ṣayḥah*) of Jibrā'īl in Shahr Ramaḍān, the counter-call of the accursed Satan, and the emergence of al-Sufyānī and al-Khurāsānī. The Imam states:

خُرُوجُ السُّفْيَانِيِّ وَالْيَمَانِيِّ وَالْخُرَاسَانِيِّ فِي سَنَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فِي شَهْرٍ وَاحِدٍ فِي
يَوْمٍ وَاحِدٍ نِظَامٌ كَنِظَامِ الْخُرَزْمِيِّاتِ بَعْضُهُ بَعْضًا فَيَكُونُ النَّاسُ مِنْ كُلِّ وَجْهِ وَيَلْ
لِمَنْ نَافَاؤُهُمْ وَلَيْسَ فِي الرِّايَاتِ رَايَةٌ أَهْدَى مِنْ رَايَةِ الْيَمَانِيِّ هِيَ رَايَةُ هُدًى
لِأَنَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى صَاحِبِكُمْ فَإِذَا خَرَجَ الْيَمَانِيُّ حَرَمَ بَيْعِ السَّلَاحِ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَكُلِّ
مُسْلِمٍ وَإِذَا خَرَجَ الْيَمَانِيُّ فَانْهَضْ إِلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ رَايَتَهُ رَايَةُ هُدًى وَ لَا يَحِلُّ لِمُسْلِمٍ
أَنْ يَلْتَوِي عَلَيْهِ فَمَنْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ لِأَنَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَ إِلَى
طَرِيقِ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

“The emergence of al-Sufyānī, the Yamānī, and al-Khurāsānī will occur in the same year, the same month, and the same day, like beads strung together, one following the other. Woe to the one who confronts

them¹, for there will be calamity from every direction. Among all the banners, none is more guided than the banner of the Yamānī. It is a banner of guidance, for he calls to your master (i.e., the Imam). When the Yamānī emerges, the sale of weapons will become forbidden for all people and every Muslim. When the Yamānī emerges, rush to him, for his banner is a banner of guidance. No Muslim may turn away from him; whoever does so is among the people of Hellfire, for he calls to the truth and to the straight path.”²

This narration yields several critical insights:

1. **Definitive Signs:** It identifies al-Yamānī as a definitive sign alongside the *ṣayḥah*—a universal call from Jibrāʾīl audible in all languages³—al-Sufyānī’s domination of Syria, and al-Khurāsānī’s rise, occasionally termed al-Ḥasanī in other traditions. These events are temporally synchronized, marking the year of reappearance.
2. **Temporal Specification:** This precise timing precludes claimants to these titles before the *ṣayḥah* and al-Sufyānī’s Syrian ascendancy, linking their emergence to eschatological milestones like the sinking of al-Bayḍā’ and the rise of al-Sufyānī.
3. **Banner of Guidance:** The narration identifies the Yamānī’s banner as a “*banner of guidance*” (*rāyat hudā*) due to his clear and steadfast call to “*your master*,” Imam al-Mahdi (atf), reflecting the purity of his mission to herald the Imam’s reappearance without seeking personal authority. This distinguishes it as the most guided among eschatological banners, unlike earlier movements like the Zaydiyyah⁴ and Ḥasaniyyūn⁵. The phrase “*he calls to your master*” signifies a direct and unequivocal alignment with the divinely appointed authority of Imam al-Mahdi (atf), emphasizing al-Yamānī’s role as a herald who prepares the ground for the Imam’s reappearance without claiming personal authority or mediation.
4. **Moral and Practical Imperatives of Supporting al-Yamānī:** The narration provides a robust justification for the prohibition against opposing al-Yamānī, grounding this stance in his unwavering

¹ Anyone militarily confronts them will be decimated.

² al-Nu‘mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.256 H.13; al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.232.

³ al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.221.

⁴ Refer to addendum No. 1 on Zaydiyyah.

⁵ Refer to addendum No. 2 on Ḥasaniyyūn.

commitment to calling people to the truth, the straight path, and Imam al-Mahdi (atf). This triad of principles—truth, the straight path, and allegiance to the Awaited Imam—establishes al-Yamānī's movement as a divinely sanctioned endeavor, rendering resistance to it a grave transgression. Consequently, supporting him is not an unconditional mandate but is explicitly contingent upon adherence to the legal and ethical standards of Islam. This qualification ensures that any backing of al-Yamānī aligns with the broader framework of Islamic jurisprudence and morality, safeguarding his mission from misuse or misinterpretation.

More precisely, the narration delineates the nature of forbidden opposition through the phrase *“turning away from him”*, which connotes active resistance or efforts to undermine his movement, rather than mere passive disengagement or distancing oneself from his cause. This distinction is critical: it prohibits deliberate actions that weaken his banner—such as obstructing his followers or challenging his authority—while allowing for neutrality in cases where active participation is not feasible. Conversely, the command to *“rush to him”* carries a strong implication of active support, particularly directed toward those who possess the capacity and proximity to join him physically or materially. Other narrations encourage heading to Makkah to prepare for pledging allegiance to the Imam in the Masjid al-Ḥarām.

5. **Clarity of Mission:** The narration explicitly highlights the clarity and unambiguous nature of al-Yamānī's call to Imam al-Mahdi (atf), presenting it as a defining feature of his eschatological role. This lucidity is not merely rhetorical but reflects a deliberate and resolute orientation toward the Awaited Imam, devoid of obfuscation or competing agendas. Al-Yamānī's program is articulated as being wholly dedicated to the promotion of Imam al-Mahdi (atf), a mission that manifests in multiple dimensions: he actively invokes the Imam's name, thereby affirming his identity and presence, and tirelessly advocates for his leadership (*wilāyah*), which signifies both spiritual and temporal authority.

Furthermore, his efforts extend to championing the methodology of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), encompassing their teachings, ethical principles, and approach to governance as transmitted through

the Infallible A'imma. This comprehensive focus underscores al-Yamānī's role as a steadfast proponent of the Imāmiyyah vision, aligning his movement with the divine plan for the Mahdī (atf)'s reappearance. Some narrations further refine this specificity, asserting that his rise originates from Ṣan'a', the historic capital of Yemen, thereby offering a precise point of reference for his appearance. This geographical marker enhances the identifiability of al-Yamānī.

6. **No Special Deputyship:** The narration does not designate al-Yamānī as a special deputy (*nā'ib khāṣṣ*) or mediator (*ṣaḥīr*), nor suggest direct communication with the Imam al-Mahdī (atf). His role hinges on adherence to truth and Ahl al-Bayt (as)'s principles, coinciding with the heavenly cry and the call from Jibrā'il (al-ṣayḥah).
7. **Ḥasanī's Regional Origin:** Al-Khurāsānī, emerging from Khurāsān and sometimes called al-Ḥasanī, races toward Kūfah alongside al-Sufyānī, as the narration states: *"Until al-Khurāsānī and al-Sufyānī emerge, one from the East and the other from the West, racing toward Kūfah like competing horses... until the destruction of the descendants of so-and-so is at their hands."*¹

Additional Narrations on Khurāsān and al-Ḥasanī

Further narrations elaborate on these figures. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates in al-Ghaybah with his chain from Jābir, from Abī Ja'far (al-Bāqir), who states:

تَنْزِلُ الرَّايَاتُ السَّوْدُ الَّتِي تَخْرُجُ مِنْ خُرَاسَانَ إِلَى الْكُوفَةِ فَإِذَا ظَهَرَ الْمَهْدِيُّ
بَعَثَ إِلَيْهِ بِالْبَيْعَةِ

*"The black banners that emerge from Khurāsān will descend upon Kūfah. When al-Mahdī appears, they will pledge allegiance to him."*²

And al-Ṣadūq has narrated a narration listing near signs in Ikmal al-Dīn, with his chain from Muḥammad ibn Muslim, from Abī Ja'far (al-Bāqir) (a):

¹ al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.192.

² Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī, *al-Kharā'ij Wal Jarā'ih*. V.3 P.1158; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.217.

الْقَائِمُ مَنْصُورٌ بِالرُّعْبِ مُؤَيَّدٌ بِالنَّصْرِ.... وَ خَرَجَ السُّفْيَانِيُّ مِنَ الشَّامِ وَ
الْيَمَانِيُّ مِنَ الْيَمَنِ وَ خُسِفَ بِالْبَيْدَاءِ وَ قُتِلَ غُلَامٌ مِنْ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ ص بَيْنَ الرُّكْنِ
وَ الْمَقَامِ

“al-Qā'im is supported by awe, and among the near signs of his reappearance are: the emergence of al-Sufyānī from Syria, al-Yamānī from Yemen, the sinking of al-Bayḍā', and the killing of a youth from the family of Muḥammad (s) between the Rukn and the Maqām.”¹

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) adds context in a narration from al-Nu'mānī where 'Ubayd ibn Zurārah meets with the Imam:

أَنَّى يَخْرُجُ ذَلِكَ وَ لَمْ يَخْرُجْ كَاسِرُ عَيْنِهِ بِصَنْعَاءَ.

“How can he emerge when the one who will pierce his (al-Sufyānī) eye in Ṣan'ā' has not yet emerged?”²

Shaykh al-Tūsī narrates in his al-Amālī from Hishām, when Imam al-Ṣādiq was queried about a “seeker of truth” (*tālib al-ḥaqq*), he clarifies:

لَا الْيَمَانِيَّ يَتَوَالَى عَلِيًّا وَ هَذَا يَبْرَأُ مِنْهُ.

“No, al-Yamānī aligns himself with Ali, whereas this one disassociates himself from him,”³

This highlights al-Yamānī's fidelity to Ahl al-Bayt (as) guardianship (*wilāyah*) amid historical claimants.

The interpretation of this narration resonates closely with themes articulated earlier, particularly al-Yamānī's steadfast commitment to the guardianship (*wilāyah*) of the Ahl al-Bayt (sa) and their methodological framework. His adherence to this *wilāyah*—the spiritual and authoritative leadership vested in the Infallible A'imma—alongside his fidelity to their teachings and practices, positions him as a paradigmatic figure within the eschatological narrative. This alignment underscores his role as a proponent of the authentic Imāmiyyah tradition, distinct from competing claims or ideologies. Furthermore, the narration intimates a historical precedent: during the era of the A'imma (as), various movements emerged under leaders who appropriated titles associated with the

¹ al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.192.

² al-Majlisī. V.52 P.245; al-Nu'mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.277 H.60.

³ al-Tūsī, *al-Amālī*. P.661; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.275 H.170.

reappearance, including that of al-Yamānī. Such appropriations reflect a broader historical pattern, analogous to the well-documented phenomenon of individuals falsely proclaiming themselves as the Mahdī. These claimants, driven by ambition or misinterpretation, sought to leverage eschatological expectations for personal gain, a dynamic that contrasts sharply with al-Yamānī's genuine devotion to the Ahl al-Bayt (as)'s cause as delineated in the authentic narrations.

A detailed account of al-Ḥasanī's emergence is found in Bihār al-Anwār with chain to Mufaḍḍal ibn 'Umar from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a):

"Then al-Ḥasanī will emerge—a handsome young man from the region of Daylam. He will cry out in a clear voice: 'O family of Aḥmad, answer the distressed and the caller near the shrine!' The treasures of Allah from Ṭāliqān will respond to him—treasures, and what treasures! They are not of silver or gold, but rather men as strong as iron, mounted on gray steeds, carrying spears. They will continue to kill the oppressors until they reach Kūfah, having cleared most of the land. They will make it their base, and news of the Mahdī (a) will reach them and his companions. They will say: 'O son of the Messenger of Allah, who is this who has descended among us?' He will say: 'Let us go out to him to see who he is and what he wants.' By Allah, he knows that it is the Mahdī and recognizes him, but he intends to inform his companions. Al-Ḥasanī will then say: 'If you are the Mahdī of the family of Muḥammad (s), where is the staff of your grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (s), his ring, his cloak, his superior armour, his cloud-like turban, his horse Yarbū', his she-camel 'Aḍbā', his mule Duldul, his donkey Ya fūr, his steed Burāq, and the codex (muṣḥaf) of Amīr al-Mu'minīn?'

"He (atf) will then bring these items, take the staff, and plant it in solid rock, causing it to sprout leaves. This is only to show his companions the superiority of the Mahdī (a), so they pledge allegiance to him. Al-Ḥasanī will say: 'Allāhu Akbar! Extend your hand, O son of the Messenger of Allah, so that we may pledge allegiance to you.' He will extend his hand, and al-Ḥasanī and his entire army will pledge allegiance, except for forty thousand Zaydiyyah who carry codices (muṣḥaf).

"The Zaydiyyah will say: 'What is this sorcery?' The army will become confused, and the Mahdī (a) will address them, calling them to the truth for three days. However, they will only increase in rebellion and

*disbelief, so he will order their execution, and they will all be killed. He will then say to his companions: 'Do not take their copy of Quran; leave them as a source of regret for them, for they altered, changed, and distorted them, and did not act upon their contents.'"*¹

This narration elucidates several points:

1. **al-Ḥasanī's Call:** al-Ḥasanī's appeal is broad, targeting oppression rather than exclusively the Mahdi, attracting Zaydiyyah—here denoting those favouring leadership through public reform over divine designation.
2. **Partial Insight:** Despite a methodology not fully aligned with truth due to his context, al-Ḥasanī demonstrates discernment in submitting to the Mahdi upon recognition.
3. **Eastern Movement:** al-Nu'mānī narrates in al-Ghaybah, with chain to Abī Khālīd al-Kābulī from Abī Ja'far (al-Bāqir) (a), who states: "*It is as if I see a people emerging from the East seeking the truth but not being granted it... They will not rise, nor will they relinquish their swords except to your master. Their slain will be martyrs. If I were to live to see that time, I would preserve myself for the master of this affair.*"² This advises that it is better to save oneself for the Imam (a)'s support instead of supporting any movement.
4. **General Guidance:** This call to preserve oneself for the Mahdi, emerging from Makkah, highlights the ambiguity in pre-reappearance movements, favouring direct allegiance to the Imam over joining any movement.

Imam al-Bāqir (a) notes in another narration—narrated by Jābir in al-Ghaybah of al-Nu'mānī—about al-Sufyānī's brutality in Kūfah, followed by banners from Khurāsān: "*With them will be a group of the companions of al-Qā'im (a)*"³ indicating that not all members of army of al-Khurāsānī's will on truth.

Several points emerge from this narration that reinforce what has been previously discussed:

¹ al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.53 P.15.

² al-Majlisī. V.52 P.243.

³ al-Nu'mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.280 H.67; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.238.

1. **al-Ḥasanī's Broad Call and its Implications:** The narration reveals that the apparent call of al-Ḥasanī does not center exclusively on summoning the faithful to Imam al-Mahdi (atf). Instead, his rallying cry adopts a more general scope, directed toward the alleviation of oppression and the redress of grievances within the broader societal context. This expansive focus shapes the composition of his followers, drawing in individuals from diverse ideological strands, including those identified as Zaydiyyah. Here, the term "Zaydiyyah" is employed in a descriptive rather than a strictly technical sense, referring to those who hold that leadership (*imāmah*) is legitimately attained through active public engagement in political and social affairs, coupled with efforts to reform them, rather than being contingent upon divine designation (*naṣṣ ilāhī*). This broader appeal underscores al-Ḥasanī's movement as one rooted in a populist ethos, distinct from the singular devotion to Imam al-Mahdi (atf).
2. **Contextual Constraints and Partial Insight:** Although al-Ḥasanī's declared slogan and methodological approach may not fully align with the absolute truth as defined by Imāmiyyah doctrine, this divergence is attributed to the specific environment and circumstances within which he operates. The socio-political milieu, marked by oppression and competing claims, influences his framework, rendering it less precise in its adherence to the Ahl al-Bayt (as)'s methodology. Nevertheless, the narration does not portray him as wholly lacking in discernment; he retains a measure of insight (*baṣīrah*) that manifests in his eventual submission to and willingness to follow Imam al-Mahdi (atf). This partial alignment suggests a complex figure whose intentions, while shaped by his context, still reflect an underlying recognition of the Imam's ultimate authority.
3. **The Eastern Army and Its Eschatological Role:** Refer to the narration in point number 3 ("Eastern Movement") on the previous page.¹

This account portrays a group marked by persistent pursuit of justice, yet repeatedly denied their aspirations until they resolve to wield their weapons. Their refusal to compromise and their ultimate dedication to "*your master*" elevate their fallen to the status of

¹ al-Nu'mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.273 H.50; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.243.

martyrs, highlighting their significance within the broader narrative of the reappearance.

4. **Caution and Preference for the Imam (atf)'s Emergence:** This guidance—to preserve oneself until the appearance of Imam al-Mahdī (atf) and to reserve one's efforts for his support—serves as a broader admonition regarding the various movements and banners that arise prior to the Mahdī's reappearance in the year of his *zuhūr*. It reflects a call for circumspection, urging the faithful to approach these pre-eschatological factions with caution due to their often ambiguous objectives and limited clarity. The narration further emphasizes a lack of full insight among some of these groups, suggesting that their agendas may not wholly align with the divine plan. Consequently, it prioritizes reserving oneself for direct support of the Mahdī (a) upon his emergence from Makkah, presenting this as a preferable course over premature allegiance to figures like al-Yamānī or other banner-bearers, whose roles remain preparatory rather than definitive.
5. **Varied Insight Amidst Khurāsānī Forces:** The narration indicates that not all will possess recognition of Imam al-Mahdī (atf) or the requisite insight, as articulated by Imam al-Bāqir (a) in his description of al-Sufyānī's army ravaging Kūfah: *"While they are in this state, banners will approach from the direction of Khurāsān, swiftly covering the distances. With them will be a group of the companions of al-Qā'im (a)..."*¹ This scenario illustrates the arrival of forces from Khurāsān amidst the chaos inflicted by al-Sufyānī, who kill and brutalize Kūfah's inhabitants. The presence of a select group of al-Qā'im's companions among these banners signifies that some within al-Khurāsānī's army are endowed with true insight (*baṣīrah*), enabling them to recognize and align with the Mahdī (a). However, the broader composition of this force includes others who lack such proper guidance, reflecting a heterogeneity of understanding and commitment within this eschatological movement.

Synthesis: The Yamānī and Ḥasanī Summarized

¹ al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.238; al-Nu'mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.280 H.67.

The Yamānī:

The narrations provide a detailed portrayal of al-Yamānī's role, offering several key insights into his eschatological significance:

1. **Absence of Elevated Status:** The most critical aspect concerning al-Yamānī is that the narrations do not confer upon him the status of a special deputy (*nā'ib khāṣṣ*) of Imam al-Mahdi (atf) or a mediator (*safīr*) representing the sacred authority. Instead, his mission is defined by his call to the truth (*ḥaqq*), which is intrinsically tied to the methodology of the Ahl al-Bayt (as)—their teachings, practices, and ethical framework. This call further encompasses their guardianship (*wilāyah*), the spiritual and temporal leadership vested in the Infallible A'imma, and specifically the guardianship of Imam al-Mahdi (atf), highlighting his role as a herald of the Imam's reappearance rather than an intermediary with direct authority.
2. **Rejection of Personal Leadership:** al-Yamānī does not advocate for a reform program wherein he assumes leadership or establishes an independent governance structure. His efforts are not directed toward personal ascendancy but remain wholly subordinate to the ultimate leadership of Imam al-Mahdi (atf), reinforcing his preparatory function within the eschatological narrative.
3. **Temporal Alignment with Definitive Signs:** His emergence is explicitly synchronized with the definitive signs (*al-ḥatmiyyah*) of the reappearance, including the *ṣayḥah*, a universal proclamation heralding the Mahdi's advent, the domination of al-Sufyānī over Syria, marking a significant geopolitical shift, and the sinking of al-Sufyānī's army in al-Bayḍā' near Madinah as they advance toward Makkah. These events anchor his appearance firmly within the year of *ẓuhūr*, providing a clear temporal framework for his role.
4. **Geographical Trajectory:** al-Yamānī's emergence originates from Yemen, a region that defines his titular identity, and his movement progresses toward Kūfah, a historical center of Shi'i significance. This trajectory underscores his regional specificity and strategic direction within the unfolding eschatological events.
5. **Obligation Against Opposition:** Those who are in a position to encounter al-Yamānī and verify the accompanying signs bear a responsibility not to oppose or undermine him once they confirm the

aforementioned indicators—namely, the clarity of his call to the guardianship of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), his explicit disavowal of their enemies, and his allegiance to Imam al-Mahdi (atf). This directive emphasizes the moral imperative of supporting his guided banner when its authenticity is established.

6. **Permissibility and Preference in Support:** Regarding the act of supporting and joining al-Yamānī, the narrations deem it permissible provided his call aligns with the truth and the methodology of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), reflecting their principles and objectives. However, participation remains optional, as other narrations offer a broader counsel to all Shia: to hasten to Makkah and join the pledge of allegiance (*bay'ah*) to Imam al-Mahdi (atf) and his army. This guidance prioritizes direct loyalty to the Imam at the sacred precincts over immediate engagement with al-Yamānī's movement.

The Ḥasanī (al-Khurāsānī):

The Ḥasanī, emerging from Khurāsān and often identified with al-Khurāsānī, presents a contrasting yet complementary figure within the narrations:

1. **Critique of His Banner's Foundation:** The narrations express a critical perspective on al-Ḥasanī's banner and program, attributing their shortcomings to the popular base from which his army is constituted. This diverse coalition, shaped by broader societal currents, introduces elements that deviate from the pure methodology of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), reflecting a more pragmatic or reformist orientation.
2. **Praiseworthy Elements Amidst Critique:** Despite this critique, some narrations commend certain groups within his movement and acknowledge al-Ḥasanī himself, particularly for his act of relinquishing authority to Imam al-Mahdi (atf) upon the latter's emergence, as well as for his resistance against oppressors. These aspects highlight a redemptive quality in his endeavors, despite their initial misalignment.
3. **Lack of Official Designation:** Nevertheless, the narrations do not endow al-Ḥasanī with any official status as a special deputy (*nā'ib khāṣṣ*) or mediator (*saṭir*) of the sacred authority of Imam al-Mahdi (atf). His role remains distinct from any formalized

representation, defined instead by his actions within the eschatological context.

4. **Synchronization with Eschatological Signs:** His emergence is temporally bound to the same year as the reappearance, marked by its definitive signs, including the *ṣayḥah*, the domination of al-Sufyānī over Syria, and the sinking of a faction of al-Sufyānī's army in al-Bayḍā' near Madinah. This alignment situates him within the same critical timeframe as al-Yamānī, reinforcing his eschatological relevance.

Chapter 3: Dhū al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah, Shu‘ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ, and Others: Eschatological Figures and Their Contextual Roles

Shi‘i eschatological narrations introduce a constellation of figures—Dhū al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah, Shu‘ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ, and others—whose roles intersect with the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (atf). These personalities, embedded within the tapestry of definitive signs (*al-ḥatmiyyah*), serve distinct yet interconnected functions, ranging from martyrdom to military leadership. This chapter explores their portrayals in the traditions, delineating their identities, actions, and significance while addressing the persistent challenge of distinguishing authentic figures from historical and future claimants.

al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah: Dual Identities and Definitive Significance

The term *al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah* (the Pure Soul) emerges in the narrations as a designation applied to two distinct individuals, each marked by a sacrificial role:

1. **The Kufan Martyr:** The first, less frequently cited, is a figure destined to be killed near Kūfah, a city of profound historical resonance for the Shia. This individual’s martyrdom, though sparsely detailed, contributes to the broader narrative of pre-reappearance trials.
2. **The Makkan Martyr:** The second, more prominently featured, is the one slain between the Rukn (the corner of the Ka‘bah) and the Maqām (the Station of Ibrāhīm) in Makkah. This figure’s death in the sacred

precincts garners greater attention in the narrations, underscoring its eschatological weight.

In certain supplications, the honourific *al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah* extends even to Imam al-Mahdi (atf) himself¹, reflecting his purity and sanctity, though the narrations primarily focus on these two martyrs. Shaykh al-Mufid, a foundational scholar of the Imāmiyyah, enumerates among the signs of the reappearance in *al-Irshād*:

قَتْلُ نَفْسٍ زَكِيَّةٍ بَظَهَرِ الْكُوفَةِ فِي سَبْعِينَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ وَ ذَبْحُ رَجُلٍ هَاشِمِيٍّ
بَيْنَ الرُّكْنِ وَالْمَقَامِ

*“The killing of a pure Nafs al-Zakiyyah near Kūfah, along with seventy righteous individuals, and the slaughter of a Hashemite man between the Rukn and the Maqām.”*²

This dual reference affirms the presence of both figures, with the Makkan martyr—identified in subsequent narrations as Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, a descendant of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a)—emerging as the more recurrent focus. His killing between the Rukn and the Maqām is explicitly cited as a definitive sign, positioning him among the special companions of Imam al-Mahdi (atf). The traditions specify a temporal interval of fifteen nights between his emergence in Makkah—where he pledges allegiance at the Rukn—and the Imam’s reappearance, marking a brief yet pivotal prelude.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) delineates, saying: *“There are five signs before the rise of al-Qā’im: 1) the cry (al-ṣayḥah), 2) the emergence of al-Sufyānī, 3) the sinking (al-khaṣf), 4) the killing of the pure soul (al-naḥs al-zakiyyah), 5) and the emergence of al-Yamānī.”* When asked, *“May I be sacrificed for you, if someone from your family emerges before these signs, should we join him?”* he responds, *“No.”* The following day, upon reciting *Quran 26:4*—*“If We will, We could send down to them a sign from the heaven, before which their necks would remain humbled”*—and inquiring, *“Is this the cry (al-ṣayḥah)?”* the Imam affirms: *“Indeed, if it were to occur, the necks of the enemies of Allah would be humbled.”*³

¹ Ibn Tāwūs, *Muhaj al-Da‘awāt Wa Manhaj al-Tbādāt*. P.58; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.98 P.371.

² al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.220; al-Mufid, *Kitāb al-Irshād*. V.2 P.371.

³ al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*. V.8 P.310.

This exchange underscores the *ṣayḥah* as a humbling divine signal and situates the killing of *al-naḥs al-zakiyyah*—specifically the Makkan martyr—among the unassailable markers of *ẓuhūr*. It serves as a stern admonition against premature allegiance to claimants predating these signs, including the *ṣayḥah*, al-Sufyānī's rise, and the sinking of his army near Madinah.

Further, al-Nu'mānī narrates that Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) addresses a query when asked by Abī Baṣīr: *"May I be sacrificed for you, when will al-Qā'im (a) emerge?"* He (a) replied: *"O Abā Muḥammad, we, the Ahl al-Bayt, do not set specific times. Indeed, Holy Prophet Muḥammad (s) said: 'Those who set specific times are liars.' O Abā Muḥammad, before this matter (the reappearance), there are five signs: 1) the call (al-nidā') in the month of Ramaḍān, 2) the emergence of al-Sufyānī, 3) the emergence of al-Khurāsānī, 4) the killing of the pure soul (al-naḥs al-zakiyyah), 5) and the sinking (al-khasf) in al-Bayḍā'."*¹

Imam al-Bāqir (a) elaborates in a narration found in Ikmāl al-Dīn by Shaykh al-Ṣadūq from Muḥammad ibn Muslim. The Imam (a) said: *"al-Qā'im will be supported by awe, aided by victory, and the earth will fold for him..."* When pressed, *"O son of the Messenger of Allah, when will your Qā'im emerge?"* He responded: *"When... al-Sufyānī emerges from Syria, al-Yamānī from Yemen, the sinking (al-khasf) occurs in al-Bayḍā', and a youth from the family of Muḥammad (s) named Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, the pure soul (al-naḥs al-zakiyyah), is killed between the Rukn and the Maqām. Then the cry (al-ṣayḥah) will come from the heavens proclaiming that the truth is with him and his Shia. At that time, our Qā'im will emerge."*²

And al-Ṣadūq also narrates in Ikmāl al-Dīn that Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) specifies: *"Between the rise of the family of Muḥammad and the killing of the al-naḥs al-zakiyyah, there will be fifteen nights."*³ These narrations collectively affirm the Makkan *al-naḥs al-zakiyyah* as a linchpin of the reappearance, his martyrdom heralded by the *ṣayḥah*, a paramount sign.

¹ al-Nu'mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.290 H.6; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 H.119.

² al-Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-Dīn Wa Tamām al-Ni'mah*. P.331 H.16; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.191.

³ al-Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-Dīn Wa Tamām al-Ni'mah*. P.649; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.203.

And Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates in al-Ghaybah from ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir that the Holy Prophet (s) stated: *“The rule of the family of your Prophet (s) will come at the end of time, and it will have signs. When you see them, stay on the ground¹ and restrain yourselves until its signs appear... Then al-Sufyānī, after establishing his control over Syria, will march to Kūfah, killing the supporters of the family of Muḥammad (s). He will kill a man from among them. Then the Mahdi will emerge, under his banner will be Shu‘ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ. When the people of Syria see that their affairs have united under the son of Abī Sufyān, they will head to Makkah. At that time, the al-naḥs al-zakiyyah and his brother will be killed in Makkah. A caller will announce from the heavens: ‘O people, your leader is so-and-so,’ and that will be the Mahdi, who will fill the earth with justice and equity as it was filled with oppression and tyranny.”*²

This narration indicates the dual martyrdom of *al-naḥs al-zakiyyah* and his brother, introducing Shu‘ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ as a key commander in the Mahdi’s army, aligning with the Imam (atf)’s emergence.

Imam al-Mahdi (atf)’s Emergence and the Role of *al-Naḥs al-Zakiyyah*

It is narrated by al-‘Ayyāshī from Jābir, from Imam al-Bāqir (a), who describes: *“...Then he (the Mahdi) will emerge from Makkah with three hundred and thirteen companions, pledging allegiance to him between the Rukn and the Maqām. He will have the covenant of the Prophet (s), his banner, his weapon, and his minister with him. A caller will announce his name and command from the heavens, so that all people on Earth will hear it. His name will be the name of a Prophet. If you are confused, the covenant of the Prophet (s), his banner, and his weapon will clarify it for you.*

“The al-naḥs al-zakiyyah is from the descendants of al-Ḥusayn. If this confuses you, the voice from the heavens announcing his name and command will not confuse you. Beware of the deviated ones (shudhādh) from the family of Muḥammad (as), for indeed the family of Muḥammad and Ali have their flag, and the others have their own. Stick to the ground and do not follow any of them until you see a man from the descendants of

¹ In houses away from social and political disturbances.

² al-Ṭūsī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.463 H.479; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.207-208.

al-Ḥusayn (a) with the covenant of the Holy Prophet, his banner, and his weapon. The covenant of the Prophet (s) was with Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn (a), then with Muḥammad ibn Ali (a), and Allah does as He wills. Stick to these people always. Beware of those I have warned you about. When a man from among them emerges with three hundred and thirteen men, carrying the banner of the Messenger of Allah (s), heading toward Madinah... ”¹

This narration emphasizes the killing of *al-naḥs al-zakiyyah* in Maṣjid al-Ḥarām as a prominent sign, urging vigilance against claimants who exploit reformist or justice-oriented slogans to hasten the reappearance. The *ṣayḥah* and other definitive signs serve as decisive arbiters of authenticity.

Imam al-Bāqir (a) further narrates to Abī Baṣīr: *“The Qā’im (a) will say to his companions: ‘O people, the people of Makkah do not want me, but I am sent to them to present the proof that someone like me should present to them.’ He will call one of his companions and say: ‘Go to the people of Makkah and say: ‘O people of Makkah, I am the messenger of so-and-so to you.’ He says to you: ‘We are the family of mercy, the source of prophethood and caliphate, and the descendants of the Prophets. We have been oppressed, persecuted, and deprived of our rights since the passing of our Prophet (s) until today. We seek your support, so support us.’” When this young man delivers this message, they will come to him and slaughter him between the Rukn and the Maqām. This is al-naḥs al-zakiyyah. When the Imam hears of this, he will say to his companions: ‘Did I not tell you that the people of Makkah do not want us?’ They will not leave him until he emerges, descending from the pass of Ṭuwā with three hundred and thirteen men... ”²*

This narration identifies *Dhā al-Naḥs al-Zakiyyah* (Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan) al-Ḥusaynī as holding a special deputyship (*niyābah khāṣṣah*) from the Ḥujjah (atf) to convey his message to Makkah’s inhabitants. This role unfolds post-*ṣayḥah*, in the initial phase of *ẓuhūr*—variously dated to Rajab or the Month of Ramaḍān—culminating in the Imam’s pledging ceremony at the Rukn, marking the onset of his global dominion.

Shu‘ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ and Preceding Figures

¹ al-‘Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr al-‘Ayyāshī*. V.1 P.117; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.222.

² al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.307.

Al-Ṭūsī narrates in al-Ghaybah from Ḥadhlam ibn Bashīr who asks Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn (al-Sajjād) to clarify a query: “Describe the emergence of the Imam Mahdī (a) and inform me of his signs.” He (a) states: “Before his emergence, a man named ‘Awf al-Sulamī will emerge in the land of al-Jazīrah, with his base in Tikrīt. He will be killed in the mosque of Damascus. Then Shu‘ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ will emerge from Samarqand, followed by the cursed al-Sufyānī from the dry valley (in Jordan-Syria).”¹

This indicates Shu‘ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ’s initial appearance in Samarqand, while ‘Awf al-Sulamī, operating from Tikrīt and meeting his end in Damascus, likely does not align with the Ahl al-Bayt (as)’s loyalties, given his activity in regions historically unsympathetic to their cause.

Al-Nu‘mānī narrates in al-Ghaybah from Abī al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā (a), who states: “Before this matter (the reappearance), there will be al-Sufyānī, al-Yamānī, al-Marwānī, and Shu‘ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ. How can this one claim to be the Qā’im?”²

This refers to a contemporary claimant during the Imam’s era, reinforcing that Shu‘ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ’s movement precedes the Mahdī (atf)’s emergence from Makkah, where Shu‘ayb will serve as a commander in his army.

It is narrated in Mukhtaṣar Baṣā’ir al-Darajāt from Ḥusayn ibn Ḥamdān from Mufaḍḍal ibn ‘Umar, from Abī ‘Abdillāh (al-Ṣādiq) (a), who describes al-Ḥasanī’s rise from Daylam with the “treasures of Allah from Ṭāliqān—men as strong as iron,” he states: “It is as if I see them on gray steeds, carrying spears, howling with eagerness for battle like wolves. Their leader is a man from Banī Tamīm named Shu‘ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ... Then al-Ḥasanī will march with those banners to Kūfah, where most of the people of the Earth will have gathered, making it his base...”³

The narrations trace Shu‘ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ’s movement from Samarqand, advancing toward northern Iran (Daylam), where it merges with the Ḥasanī’s forces, with Shu‘ayb assuming command. However, post-*ṣayḥah* and other definitive signs, Shu‘ayb does not remain with the Ḥasanī long, instead joining the Mahdī (atf)’s army in Makkah, as per the narration of ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir cited earlier. His tribal affiliation with Banī

¹ al-Ṭūsī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.244; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.213.

² al-Nu‘mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.253 H.12; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 H.233.

³ al-Ḥillī, *Mukhtaṣar Baṣā’ir al-Darajāt*. P.177; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.53 H.35.

Tamīm is noted, with possibilities of his birth in Daylam or a distinction between this Shu'ayb and another emerging with the Mahdī (atf).

It is narrated by al-Rāwandī in *al-Kharā'ij Wa al-Jarā'ih*, the Holy Prophet (s) narrates to Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) in Ubayy ibn Ka'b's presence: *"Welcome, O Abā 'Abdillāh, O adornment of the heavens and the earth..."* Then he describes the Mahdī: *"He will emerge with Jibrā'il on his right, Mikā'il on his left, and Shu'ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ at his forefront."*¹

Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī comments: *"As for Shu'ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ, Ibn Bābawayh mentioned in Kitāb al-Nubuwwah from Suhayl ibn Sa'īd, that Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik, an Umayyad ruler, ordered the digging of a well in al-Ruṣāfah. They found the skull of a man wearing white clothes, with a message written on his garment: 'I am Shu'ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ, the messenger of the Messenger of Allah, Shu'ayb the Prophet, to his people. They struck me, harmed me, and threw me into this well.'"*²

And al-Rāwandī narrates a poem by 'Abdullāh ibn Yaḳṭar, foster brother of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), who states: *"And the Banī Layth rose to support the son of Aḥmad, Brandishing the tips of spears and shields. You would recognize them by their disheveled forelocks, led by Shu'ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ from the farthest abode."*³

This narration suggests the Shu'ayb leading the Mahdī (atf)'s army may differ from the Samarqand figure or the Quranic Prophet Shu'ayb (a), who some narrations propose returns alongside al-Khiḍr, Ilyās, and 'Isā ibn Maryam (a), the latter praying behind the Mahdī (atf). Regardless, Shu'ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ holds no official representative status (*niyābah*) pre-*zuhūr*, his role tied to the definitive signs.

Conclusion: Distinguishing Roles and Heeding Warnings

For *Dhū al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah*, the narrations attribute a brief official deputyship lasting no more than fifteen nights, culminating in the Mahdī's pledge at the Rukn. Multiple traditions caution against deception by claimants to titles like al-Yamānī, al-Ḥasanī, and *al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah*, a phenomenon evident even during the Imams' era, such as Hasanid

¹ Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī, *al-Kharā'ij Wal Jarā'ih*. V.2 P.551 H.11.

² Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī. V.2 P.551 H.12.

³ Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī. V.2 P.551.

movements under figures like ‘Abdullāh claiming *al-naḥs al-zakiyyah*, or false Yamānī assertions noted in Imam al-Ṣādiq (a)’s narration via al-Ṭūsī and Hishām. These warnings reinforce the necessity of awaiting the *ṣayḥah* and other definitive signs to discern the true reappearance.

Chapter 4: Six Recommendations for Believers in Ghaybah

The period of occultation (*ghaybah*) of Imam al-Mahdi (atf) presents a profound challenge for the faithful, necessitating a framework of guidance to sustain their loyalty and resilience. This chapter delineates six critical recommendations for believers during this prolonged occultation, emphasizing the recognition of definitive signs such as the heavenly cry (*al-ṣayḥah*) and the rise of al-Sufyānī, while issuing stern warnings against false claimants and premature movements cloaked in reformist or leadership pretenses. It underscores the prohibition of speculating on specific timings for the reappearance (*ẓuhūr*), advocates unwavering commitment to the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), and concludes with an exhortation to eschew deceptive slogans, anchoring believers firmly to the Imam’s path until his triumphant return.

1. Recognizing the True Call: The *Ṣayḥah* and al-Sufyānī as Definitive Signs

The decisive arbiter in dispelling uncertainties surrounding claims to the reappearance lies in the heavenly cry (*al-ṣayḥah*) and the celestial proclamation announcing Imam al-Mahdi (a)’s name and emergence, coupled with the rise of al-Sufyānī and his dominion over Syria. These signs serve as unassailable markers of authenticity.

The Heavenly Cry (*al-Ṣayḥah*): A Divine Announcement

The *ṣayḥah* emerges in the narrations as a momentous and universal phenomenon, audible to all inhabitants of the earth irrespective of

language or locale. Delivered by the angel Jibrā'īl (a), this call from the heavens proclaims the name of Imam al-Mahdī (atf) and his father, affirming his rightful leadership. Its potency is such that it rouses the slumbering, draws people from their dwellings, and compels even the veiled woman to step forth from her seclusion.

This divine declaration, articulated in every tongue, ensures universal comprehension, leaving no ambiguity in its message. Far beyond a mere sign, the *ṣayḥah* constitutes a divine ratification of the Imam's *zuhūr*, a moment of absolute clarity that delineates his true call from the fabrications of impostors. As one of the five definitive signs (*al-ḥatmiyyah*) preceding his rise, it stands impervious to replication or deceit.

The Rise of al-Sufyānī: A Sign of Imminent Reappearance

Parallel to the *ṣayḥah*, the emergence of al-Sufyānī marks another definitive precursor to Imam al-Mahdī (a)'s return. Portrayed as a despotic figure, al-Sufyānī will ascend in the region of Syria (*al-Shām*), establishing a transient yet oppressive reign. The narrations depict his rise as an era of intense turmoil and affliction, during which he dispatches forces to subdue adjacent territories, including Iraq and the Hijaz. Temporally linked to the *ṣayḥah*, his appearance signals the proximity of the Imam's advent. This period tests the believers' resolve amid fear and confusion, yet his ultimate defeat—culminating in the destruction of his army—paves the way for the Mahdī's emergence.

Key Lessons for the Believers:

1. Refrain from impatience or haste regarding the reappearance, trusting its occurrence at the divinely ordained moment.
2. Maintain steadfastness in faith, resisting deception by those claiming to hasten the Imam (a)'s return.
3. Anchor focus on the definitive signs, notably the *ṣayḥah* and al-Sufyānī, as the ultimate indicators of his emergence.
4. Exercise vigilance and discernment, shunning movements or figures misaligned with these signs.
5. Place confidence in the divine plan, assured that the Imam (a)'s *zuhūr* will be heralded by the *ṣayḥah* and al-Sufyānī's rise.

2. The Role of Key Figures

The narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt (as) offer explicit guidance on the roles of pivotal figures preceding Imam al-Mahdi (a)'s reappearance—namely, al-Yamānī, al-Ḥasanī, Shu'ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ, and Dhū al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah. While integral to the eschatological prelude, only Dhū al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah holds a special deputyship (*niyābah khāṣṣah*) for a fleeting fifteen nights, a distinction vital for believers to grasp to avoid misattribution or misguided loyalty.

The Yamānī: The traditions extol al-Yamānī's banner as the most guided, owing to its explicit call for allegiance to Imam al-Mahdi (atf). Yet, he lacks deputyship (*nā'ib*) status or divine authority beyond leading a movement consonant with the Imam (atf)'s cause. Believers may support him if feasible, but must not inflate his role beyond the narrations' stipulations.

The Ḥasanī: Emerging from Daylam in northern Iran, al-Ḥasanī spearheads a campaign against oppression, weakening tyrannical forces pre-*ẓuhūr*. His role, primarily martial, lacks divine appointment or representative authority. The narrations caution against overestimating his significance; while preparatory, his actions do not herald the Imam (atf)'s rise. Believers are advised to await the Imam (atf) in Makkah rather than join his ranks.

Shu'ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ: Originating from Samarqand, Shu'ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ emerges as a military leader combating oppression, facilitating the Imam's global mission. Like al-Yamānī and al-Ḥasanī, he holds no special deputyship or divine mandate, his role confined to strategic contributions in the pre-reappearance tumult.

Dhū al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah: Brief Period of Representation: A descendant of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), Dhū al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah uniquely serves as the Imam's representative post-*ṣayḥah* and al-Sufyānī's rise, within a fifteen-night window. Slain between the Rukn and Maqām in Masjid al-Ḥarām, his martyrdom ranks among the definitive signs, though his authority remains context-specific and temporary.

Key Lessons for the Believers:

1. Refrain from ascribing special authority to al-Yamānī, al-Ḥasanī, or Shu'ayb ibn Ṣāliḥ beyond their delineated roles.

2. It is not necessary to join any of these movements, prioritizing direct allegiance to the Imam (atf) in Makkah.

3. Beware of False Claimants

The Ahl al-Bayt (as) narrations issue a grave admonition against false claimants and deceptive movements preceding Imam al-Mahdi (a)'s *zuhūr*, exploiting titles and symbols—literally or descriptively—to mislead believers. Discernment and steadfastness are paramount amid this confusion.

a. The Danger of False Slogans and Movements:

It is narrated from al-Ṣadūq in Ikmal al-Dīn with his chain to Mufaḍḍal ibn ʿUmar al-Juʿfī, from Abī ʿAbdillāh al-Ṣādiq (a), who delivers a poignant admonition, stating:

إِيَّاكُمْ وَالتَّنْوِيَةَ أَمَا وَاللَّهِ لَيَغِيبَنَّ إِمَامُكُمْ سِنِينَ مِنْ دَهْرِكُمْ وَ لَيَمَحُصَ حَتَّى يُقَالَ مَاتَ أَوْ هَلَكَ بِأَيِّ وَادٍ سَلَكَ وَ لَتَدْمَعَنَّ عَلَيْهِ عَيُونُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ لَتُكَفُونَ كَمَا تُكَفُّ السُّفُنُ فِي أَمْوَاجِ الْبَحْرِ فَلَا يَنْجُو إِلَّا مَنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهَ مِيثَاقَهُ وَ كَتَبَ فِي قَلْبِهِ الْإِيمَانَ وَ أَيْدَهُ بِرُوحٍ مِنْهُ وَ لَتُرْفَعَنَّ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ رَايَةً مُشْتَبِهَةً لَا يُدْرَى أَيُّ مِنْ أَيْ

“Beware of false slogans. By Allah, your Imam will be hidden for many years, and people will be tested until they say he has died or perished, wondering which valley he has entered. The eyes of the believers will weep for him, and they will be tossed like ships in the waves of the sea. Only those whose covenant Allah has taken, whose hearts are filled with faith, and whom He has supported with His spirit will be saved. Twelve banners will be raised, all confusing, and no one will know which is which.”¹

This statement encapsulates the perilous environment of the *ghaybah*, wherein the prolonged absence of the Imam precipitates a state of spiritual and intellectual disarray. The imagery of believers’ tears and their tumultuous state—likened to ships adrift in a stormy sea—vividly conveys the emotional and existential turmoil they will endure. Amid this

¹ al-Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-Dīn*, P.347 H.35; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. P.52 H.281; al-Tūsī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.338; al-Nuʿmānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.152 H.10.

chaos, only those fortified by a divine covenant, steadfast faith, and the sustenance of Allah's spirit will persevere. The mention of *"twelve banners,"* each shrouded in confusion, signifies the proliferation of rival movements and claimants, each asserting legitimacy yet collectively obscuring the truth, leaving the faithful grappling with uncertainty.

This dire prophecy elicits a visceral response from Mufaḍḍal, the narrator of this tradition, who, overwhelmed by its implications, weeps upon hearing the Imam (a)'s words. Sensing his distress, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) inquires: *"Why are you crying, O Abā 'Abdillāh?"* Mufaḍḍal, his voice laden with anguish, replies: *"How can I not cry when you say that twelve confusing banners will be raised, and no one will know which is which? What should we do?"* His question reflects a profound existential quandary—how can the believers navigate such a bewildering landscape where distinguishing truth from falsehood becomes nearly impossible? In response, the Imam employs a striking metaphor, directing Mufaḍḍal's attention to the natural world. He (a) gazes at the sun from within the room and asks:

يَا بَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ تَرَى هَذِهِ الشَّمْسَ قُلْتُ نَعَمْ قَالَ وَ اللَّهُ لَأَمْرُنَا أَبِينُ مِنْ هَذِهِ الشَّمْسِ.

*"O Abā 'Abdillāh, do you see this sun?" Mufaḍḍal affirms: "Yes." The Imam then declares: "By Allah, our matter is clearer than this sun."*¹

This analogy serves as a powerful reassurance: just as the sun's presence is an undeniable and radiant reality in the physical realm, so too is the path of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) an unmistakable beacon of truth in the spiritual domain, discernible despite the obfuscation wrought by false claimants.

b. The Criterion for Recognizing the True Movement:

The A'imma of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) have furnished the believers with a lucid and unambiguous criterion for distinguishing the authentic movement of Imam al-Mahdi (atf) from the myriad false pretenders that will emerge: conformity with the divinely ordained signs. These signs serve as markers of the Imam (a)'s *zuhūr*, providing a standard against

¹ al-Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-Dīn Wa Tamām al-Ni'mah*. P.347 H.35; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.281; al-Ṭūsī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.338; al-Nu'mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.152 H.10.

which all claims must be measured. Among the most prominent of these definitive indicators are the heavenly cry (*al-ṣayḥah*), a celestial proclamation heralding the Imam (a)'s advent, and the sinking of al-Sufyānī's army in al-Bayḍā', a cataclysmic event signaling the collapse of his tyrannical forces near Madinah en route to Makkah. The narrations emphasize that these events are integral to the eschatological sequence, constituting irrefutable evidence of the Imam (a)'s imminent return. Consequently, any movement or individual asserting legitimacy that fails to align with these preordained signs must be categorically dismissed as false, lacking the divine sanction necessary to validate their claims.

In a further elaboration of this peril, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates in *al-Ghaybah* from Abī Khadījah, from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) who issues a sobering warning:

لَا يَخْرُجُ الْقَائِمُ حَتَّى يَخْرُجَ اثْنَا عَشَرَ مِنْ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ كُلُّهُمْ يَدْعُو إِلَى نَفْسِهِ

*"The Qā'im will not emerge until twelve men from Banī Hāshim emerge, each claiming to be the Imam."*¹

The appropriation of Reappearance names takes two distinct forms: (1) the adoption of the proper name (*al-ism al-'alamī*)—a literal claim to the title; and (2) the adoption of the descriptive epithet (*al-ism al-na'ī al-waṣfī*)—claiming the described function without using the literal name. This distinction matters: a claimant may deny being "al-Yamānī" by name while still claiming to fulfill al-Yamānī's described reformist role, thereby deceiving the faithful while technically avoiding the literal claim.

This statement unveils a troubling reality within the eschatological narrative: even those hailing from the noble lineage of Banī Hāshim, a clan revered for its proximity to the prophetic household, will rise and audaciously lay claim to the Imāmah. This prophecy underscores the depth of deception that will characterize the period preceding the *zuhūr*, as the sanctity of their lineage does not guarantee the purity of their intentions. The narration reveals that the true objective of these claimants will not be the establishment of justice—a cornerstone of the Mahdī's mission—but rather the pursuit of power and the advancement of their own self-serving

¹ al-Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*. P.437; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.209; al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*. V.2 P.372.

interests. Their assertions, though cloaked in the prestige of their heritage, are devoid of divine mandate, rendering them hollow and misleading.

This phenomenon finds a historical parallel in the actions of the Banī al-‘Abbās (Abbasids), who exemplify the treacherous misuse of sacred lineage and slogans for political gain. The Banī al-‘Abbās, claiming descent from Banī Hāshim through their progenitor ‘Abbās, the uncle of the Holy Prophet (s), strategically employed the rallying cry:

الرضا من آل محمد عليهم السلام

Support for the Family of Muḥammad (as)

to garner widespread allegiance during their revolt against the Banī Umayyah (Umayyads). This slogan, ostensibly a pledge to uphold the rights of the prophetic household, resonated deeply with those yearning for justice and the restoration of Ahl al-Bayt (as) authority. However, once they secured power, Banī al-‘Abbās swiftly abandoned their professed commitments, revealing the duplicity beneath their rhetoric. Far from championing the cause of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), they turned to oppressing the true followers of the A‘immah, perpetrating acts of tyranny that belied their initial promises. This historical precedent serves as a stark illustration of the narrations’ warning, demonstrating how even those within the broader prophetic family can exploit noble titles and aspirations to deceive the faithful, ultimately pursuing agendas antithetical to the divine mission of Imam al-Mahdi (atf).

c. The Paradox of Manṣūr al-Dawānīqī:

A compelling and striking illustration of this pervasive deception manifests in the figure of Manṣūr al-Dawānīqī, an Abbasid ruler notorious for his ruthless brutality and systematic suppression of the ‘Alawiyyīn (Alids) and the broader Ahl al-Bayt (as) community. Despite his tyrannical reign, marked by oppression and violence against the rightful heirs of the prophetic legacy, Manṣūr cunningly promoted a slogan ostensibly advocating support for Imam al-Mahdi from the family of Muḥammad (as). Furthermore, he took deliberate steps to disseminate narratives concerning the signs of the Imam (a)’s reappearance, crafting an image of allegiance to the eschatological promise central to Shi‘i belief. This paradoxical stance—where a tyrant invokes the sacred cause of the Mahdi

(a)—exemplifies the depths of duplicity that can accompany claims tied to the Ahl al-Bayt (as).

The complexity of Maṣṣūr's deception is vividly captured in a narration transmitted by al-Ṭūsī in *al-Ghaybah*, al-Mufīd in *al-Irshād*, and al-Kulaynī in *al-Kāfi*, from Ismā'īl ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ, who recounts hearing a scholar relay an account from Sayf ibn 'Umayrah. Sayf ibn 'Umayrah narrates that he found himself in the presence of Maṣṣūr on an occasion when the ruler appeared to be speaking introspectively, as if addressing himself, saying: "*O Sayf, there must be a caller who calls out the name of a man from the progeny of Abī Ṭālib from the heavens.*" Intrigued by this unexpected utterance, Sayf, driven by curiosity, inquired whether such a phenomenon had been narrated by anyone within the tradition. Maṣṣūr's response was resolute and emphatic; he swore by the One who holds his soul in His grasp, affirming that he had personally heard with his own ears the statement: "*There must be a caller who calls out the name of a man from the heavens.*" This assertion, delivered with such conviction, left Sayf visibly astonished, prompting him to confess that he had never encountered anything of its kind prior to this moment.

Undeterred by Sayf's surprise, Maṣṣūr pressed further, offering reassurance with a calculated promise: he declared that when such an event—the heavenly call—transpires, they would be among the first to respond, for the individual heralded by this celestial announcement would be none other than one of their own cousins. Sensing the ambiguity in this claim, Sayf sought clarification, asking which cousin Maṣṣūr had in mind. The ruler elucidated that it would be a man descended from the lineage of Fāṭimah (a), the daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) and mother of the A'imma of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). To bolster the credibility of his narrative, Maṣṣūr emphasized the unimpeachable reliability of his source, asserting that had he not heard this directly from Imam al-Bāqir (a)—the fifth Imam renowned for his profound knowledge—he would not have accepted it from any other authority. It was precisely because Imam al-Bāqir (a) had conveyed this prophecy to him that Maṣṣūr held it to be true, lending an air of authenticity to his recounting rooted in the Imam's authoritative testimony.¹

¹ al-Ṭūsī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.433; al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*. V.2 P.370; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*. V.52 P.288.

This narration lays bare the insidious manner in which even a figure as tyrannical as Manṣūr could exploit the sacred concept of Imam al-Mahdi (atf)'s reappearance to buttress his own legitimacy and consolidate his rule. By invoking a narration he claimed to have received from Imam al-Bāqir (a)—a figure revered by the Shia for his sanctity and wisdom—Manṣūr sought to cloak his regime in the garb of eschatological fidelity, presenting himself as a champion of the Mahdi (atf)'s cause despite his actions starkly contradicting such a stance. This account stands as a potent warning to the believers, urging them to exercise unwavering caution and discernment. It highlights the peril of being swayed by those who wield the name and legacy of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) as a tool for personal gain, rather than as a genuine expression of devotion to their divine mission. Manṣūr's example serves as a historical testament to the narrations' broader admonition: the faithful must remain vigilant, lest they fall prey to the seductive rhetoric of those who manipulate sacred symbols for profane ends.

d. The Knowledge of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) and Deception:

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) underscores the unparalleled knowledge exclusively held by the Ahl al-Bayt (as), while simultaneously exposing the futility of false claimants who endeavor to usurp their divinely ordained role. In a profound declaration narrated by al-Kulaynī with his chain from Ḥusayn ibn Abī al-'Alā', the Imam (a) he asserts:

إِنَّ عِنْدِي الْجَفْرَ الْأَبْيَضَ

"I have the white Jafr."

This statement prompts an inquiry from his interlocutor, who seeks to understand the nature of this possession, asking what it contains. The Imam (a) responds with a detailed enumeration:

زُبُورُ دَاوُدَ وَتَوْرَاةُ مُوسَى وَانْجِيلُ عِيسَى وَصُحُفُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَ وَالْحَلَالُ وَالْحَرَامُ وَمُصْحَفُ فَاطِمَةَ مَا أَرَعُمُ أَنْ فِيهِ قُرْآنًا وَفِيهِ مَا يَحْتَاجُ النَّاسُ إِلَيْنَا وَلَا نَحْتَاجُ إِلَى أَحَدٍ حَتَّى فِيهِ الْجِلْدَةُ وَنِصْفُ الْجِلْدَةِ وَرُبْعُ الْجِلْدَةِ وَارْشُ الْخُدَشِ وَعِنْدِي الْجَفْرُ الْأَحْمَرُ

"The Psalms of Dāwūd, the Torah of Mūsā, the Gospel of ʿĪsā, the Scrolls of Ibrāhīm, the rulings of permitted (ḥalāl) and prohibited (ḥarām), and the codex (Muṣḥaf) of Fāṭimah. I do not claim that it contains the

Quran, but it contains what people need from us, and we do not need anyone. It includes rulings on injuries, scratches, and even the compensation for a scratch. I also have the red Jafr."¹

This response unveils the white Jafr as a repository of sacred wisdom encompassing the revelations granted to prior prophets, alongside jurisprudential and ethical guidance derived from the legacy of Lady Fāṭimah (a). The Imam (a) clarifies that it does not replicate the Quran but serves as a comprehensive source addressing the spiritual and practical needs of humanity, rendering the Ahl al-Bayt (as) self-sufficient in knowledge and independent of external authorities. The mention of minute rulings—such as compensation for a scratch—illustrates its exhaustive scope, while the reference to the red Jafr piques further curiosity.

When pressed about the contents of the red Jafr, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) explains:

السِّلَاحُ وَ ذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يُفْتَحُ لِلْدَّمِ يَفْتَحُهُ صَاحِبُ السَّيْفِ لِلْقَتْلِ

*"Weapons, for it is only opened for bloodshed. It is opened by the one who wields the sword for killing."*²

This cryptic yet evocative description portrays the red Jafr as a symbolic arsenal, reserved for times of conflict and entrusted to a designated figure—implicitly the Imam (a) or his rightful successor—who will wield it in defense of justice. The dialogue deepens as the questioner, invoking a supplication, asks: *"May Allah rectify your affairs (establish your rule), do the descendants of Imām al-Ḥasan (a) know this?"* The Imam's reply is both affirmative and incisive:

إِي وَاللَّهِ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ اللَّيْلَ أَنَّهُ لَيْلٌ وَالنَّهَارَ أَنَّهُ نَهَارٌ وَ لَكِنَّهُمْ يَحْمِلُهُمُ الْحَسَدُ وَ طَلَبُ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْجُودِ وَ الْإِنكَارِ وَ لَوْ طَلَبُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْحَقِّ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ

*"Yes, by Allah, just as they know that night is night and day is day. But envy and the pursuit of worldly gains lead them to deny and reject it. If they sought the truth with truth, it would be better for them."*³

This assertion affirms that the Hasanids possess awareness of the Ahl al-Bayt (as)'s esoteric and intellectual supremacy, as evident as the

¹ al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*. V.1 P.240 H.3.

² al-Kulaynī. V.1 P.204 H.3.

³ al-Kulaynī. V.1 P.204 H.3.

distinction between night and day. Yet, it reveals a tragic flaw: driven by envy and the allure of temporal power, they suppress this recognition, choosing denial over submission to the truth—a choice that, if reversed, would align them with a nobler path.

This dynamic extends to historical actors, notably the leaders of movements opposing the Banī Umayyah, such as the Ḥassanids, who were fully cognizant of the spiritual and intellectual pre-eminence of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). Despite this acknowledgment, they deliberately turned away from it, propelled by envy and worldly ambitions in their quest for dominance. These individuals, though tracing their lineage to the Prophet (s) and outwardly affirming the leadership of Imam Ali (a) while seemingly mourning the martyrdom of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), ultimately diverged from the authentic path of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). Rather than upholding the divine guidance and truth embodied by the Imams, they pursued their own agendas, prioritizing personal gain over fidelity to the sacred mission entrusted to the prophetic household.

The questioner's query—“*Do the descendants of Imām al-Ḥasan (a) know this?*”—appears to subtly allude to the recognition that Imam al-Mahdi (atf) stands as the divinely appointed leader of the armed renaissance destined to establish justice and equity across the earth. This prompts a reflective probing: if they are indeed aware of this eschatological truth, why do some among them falsely arrogate the title of the Mahdi, as evidenced in their revolts against Abbasid rule? The narrations recount instances where certain individuals went so far as to proclaim themselves as *Dhū al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah*, seeking to align themselves with the promised reformer prophesied to fill the world with justice. Despite their closer familial proximity to the Ahl al-Bayt (as) compared to the Abbasids, these Ḥassanids strayed from the true course, pursuing reform through erroneous and illegitimate means. In doing so, they usurped the role of the Mahdi (a)—a station reserved exclusively for the divinely designated guide—driven not by a commitment to divine will but by personal ambition and the desire for worldly ascendancy.

This narrative illuminates a poignant and tragic contradiction: while these figures acknowledged the spiritual and intellectual superiority of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), their actions were frequently dictated by envy and a thirst for power, steering them away from the authentic mission of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) and the awaited Mahdi (a). Their awareness of the

A'imma's pre-eminence, akin to an undeniable natural truth, did not translate into adherence; instead, it fueled a rivalry that undermined the very principles they professed to uphold. This historical and eschatological lesson serves as a stark reminder of the perils of deviation, reinforcing the imperative for believers to discern the genuine path amidst the clamour of false claimants.

e. The Rise of False Claimants Before the Reappearance:

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) issues a solemn and far-reaching warning concerning the proliferation of deceptive figures who will emerge prior to the reappearance (*zuhūr*) of Imam al-Mahdī (atf), specifically highlighting the advent of sixty liars and twelve claimants from the esteemed family of Abī Ṭālib (a). It is narrated by al-Ṭūsī in al-Ghaybah and al-Mufīd in al-Irshād that the Imam (a) declares:

خُرُوجُ سِتِّينَ كَذَّابًا كُلُّهُمْ يَدَّعِي النَّبُوَّةَ وَخُرُوجُ اثْنَا عَشَرَ مِنْ آلِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ
كُلُّهُمْ يَدَّعِي الْإِمَامَةَ لِنَفْسِهِ

“Sixty liars will emerge, each claiming prophethood, and twelve from the family of Abī Ṭālib will emerge, each claiming the Imāmah for himself.”¹

This prophecy delineates a dual threat: a broader cadre of sixty individuals who audaciously arrogate the mantle of prophethood—a station reserved for divinely appointed messengers—and a more specific group of twelve from the lineage of Abī Ṭālib (a), the paternal clan of Imam Ali (a), who will falsely assert their right to the Imamate. The gravity of this foretelling lies in its scope, signaling an era of widespread delusion where even the sanctity of prophetic kinship offers no guarantee against deceit.

In a complementary narration narrated by al-Nu'mānī in al-Ghaybah, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) further elaborates:

لَا يَقُومُ الْقَائِمُ حَتَّى يَقُومَ اثْنَا عَشَرَ رَجُلًا كُلُّهُمْ يُجْمَعُ عَلَى قَوْلٍ إِنَّهُمْ قَدْ
رَأَوْهُ فَيَكْذِبُونَهُمْ.

¹ al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*. V.2 P.368; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.220.

"The Qā'im will not rise until twelve men rise, all claiming to have seen him. Then he will expose them as liars (or as per Biḥār al-Anwār, 'the people will expose them as liars')." ¹

This statement intensifies the caution, predicting the emergence of twelve specific figures who will bolster their claims with the audacious assertion of having personally witnessed Imam al-Mahdī (atf), thereby lending an illusion of credibility to their pretensions. The Imam (a) foresees their ultimate unmasking—whether by his own hand or through the collective discernment of the people—as a testament to their falsehood. Together, these narrations paint a vivid picture of the tumultuous prelude to the *ẓuhūr*, wherein false claimants will rise and spearhead reformist movements, brandishing slogans of justice and resistance to oppression as their rallying cries. Yet, beneath this veneer of righteousness, their true intent is laid bare: to mislead the believers and advance their own self-serving interests, exploiting the faithful's longing for the Mahdī (atf)'s advent. The believers are thus admonished to exercise caution and discernment, recognizing that the authentic reappearance will be heralded by unmistakable divine signs and clear guidance, distinguishing it from the cacophony of imposture.

This theme of vigilance is poignantly reinforced in an exchange involving Imam al-Bāqir (a), who is questioned regarding the attributes of Imam al-Mahdī (atf) in. The encounter—as narrated by al-Nu'mānī—begins with the Imam posing a probing query to his interlocutor: *"What do you want, O Abā Khālid?"* To this, Abā Khālid responds with earnest intent: *"I want you to name him for me so that I may recognize him by his name."* The simplicity of this request belies its profound implications, seeking a tangible identifier for the Awaited Imam (atf). Imam al-Bāqir (a), however, meets this plea with a measured and weighty reply:

سَأَلْتَنِي وَاللَّهِ يَا أَبَا خَالِدٍ عَنْ سُؤَالٍ مُجْهِدٍ وَلَقَدْ سَأَلْتَنِي عَنْ أَمْرِ مَا كُنْتُ
مُحَدِّثًا بِهِ أَحَدًا وَلَوْ كُنْتُ مُحَدِّثًا بِهِ أَحَدًا لَحَدَّثْتُكَ وَلَقَدْ سَأَلْتَنِي عَنْ أَمْرِ لَوْ أَنَّ
بَنِي فَاطِمَةَ عَرَفُوهُ حَرَّصُوا عَلَى أَنْ يَقْطَعُوهُ بَضْعَةً بَضْعَةً

"You have asked me a difficult question, O Abā Khālid. I have not spoken of this matter to anyone, and if I had, I would have told you. You

¹ al-Nu'mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.277 H.58; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.244.

have asked me about something that, if the descendants of Fāṭimah were to know it, they would have cut him into pieces.”¹

This response reveals the sensitivity and gravity of the Mahdi's identity, a secret so potent that its premature disclosure could incite violent division even among the progeny of Lady Fāṭimah (a)—the very lineage from which the Imam (a) emerges. The Imam (a)'s reticence underscores the peril of such knowledge falling into the wrong hands, where it might fuel rivalry or betrayal rather than unity.

Consequently, the believers are sternly cautioned against forming premature allegiances to any movement or claimant, even those ostensibly rooted in the progeny of the Holy Prophet (s) or adorned with flashy slogans designed to captivate and persuade. The narrations collectively illuminate the treacherous landscape of the *ghaybah*, where the prestige of prophetic descent or the allure of eloquent rhetoric offers no assurance of authenticity. The risk of deception looms large, as false claimants leverage their lineage or persuasive appeals to ensnare the unwary, diverting them from the true path. This admonition serves as a clarion call to anchor faith in the divine signs—such as the heavenly cry (*al-ṣayḥah*) and other definitive markers (*al-ḥatmiyyah*)—which alone will herald the Mahdi (atf)'s rise, ensuring that believers remain steadfast and discerning amidst the tumult of falsehood.

4. The Liars Who Set Times: A Warning Against Speculation

The narrations pertaining to the reappearance (*ẓuhūr*) of Imam al-Mahdi (atf) place a resolute and unequivocal emphasis on the prohibition against designating specific times for this momentous eschatological event, categorically branding those who venture to do so as liars. The precise timing of the Imam's return is enshrined among the hidden matters (*al-mastūr*), a realm of divine knowledge veiled from human comprehension and reserved exclusively for Allah. Indeed, certain narrations introduce a further layer of complexity, suggesting that even the definitive signs (*al-ḥatmiyyah*)—those unassailable markers heralding the *ẓuhūr*—are subject to the principle of *badā'* (divine alteration). This

¹ al-Nu'mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.289 H.2.

implies that while these signs may manifest, their occurrence does not necessarily pinpoint the exact moment of the reappearance, allowing for divine discretion in their unfolding. However, the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (atf) itself stands apart as an immutable certainty, immune to *badā*, for it constitutes a divine promise destined to be fulfilled without deviation. This distinction serves a dual purpose: it decisively invalidates the assertions of those who audaciously set dates for the *zuhūr*, exposing their falsehood, and it lays bare the deceit of those who illegitimately appropriate the titles associated with this sacred event. The act of setting specific times emerges as a perilous snare, ensnaring the credulous, beguiling the uninformed, and ultimately precipitating the ruin of the claimants themselves through their reckless presumption.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) articulates this prohibition with clarity and authority, stating to Muḥammad ibn Muslim:

يَا مُحَمَّدُ مَنْ أَخْبَرَكَ عَنَّا تَوْفِيئًا فَلَا تَهَابِنَ أَنْ تُكَذِّبَهُ فَإِنَّا لَا نُؤَقِّتُ لِأَحَدٍ وَقْتًا.

“O Muḥammad, whoever informs you of a specific time for our reappearance, do not hesitate to declare them a liar, for we do not set a time for anyone.”¹

This directive leaves no room for ambiguity, commanding the faithful to swiftly denounce any individual who dares to predict the *zuhūr*'s timing, affirming that such knowledge lies beyond the purview of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). Similarly, ‘Abdullāh ibn Sinān narrates from Imam al-Bāqir (a), who reinforces this stance, proclaiming:

أَبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يُخْلِفَ وَقْتِ الْمُؤَقِّتِينَ.

“Allah has decreed that the times set by those who specify them will be invalidated.”²

This assertion underscores a divine ordinance ensuring that human attempts to fix the reappearance's schedule are inevitably thwarted, rendering such claims null and void. In another instance, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) succinctly reiterates: *“We do not set a time for this matter,”³* cementing

¹ al-Nu‘mānī. P.289 H.3.

² al-Nu‘mānī. P.289 H.4.

³ al-Nu‘mānī. P.289 H.5.

the Ahl al-Bayt (as)'s consistent rejection of temporal speculation as a foundational tenet of their teachings.

This principle is vividly illustrated in a detailed exchange between Abī Baṣīr and Imam al-Ṣādiq (a). Abī Baṣīr, with a tone of earnest longing, inquires: "May I be sacrificed for you, when will al-Qā'im (a) emerge?" The Imam responds with measured firmness: "O Abā Muḥammad, we, the Ahl al-Bayt, do not set specific times. Indeed, the Holy Prophet (s) said: 'Those who set specific times are liars.' O Abā Muḥammad, before this matter (the reappearance), there are five signs: the first is the call (al-nidā') in the month of Ramaḍān, the emergence of al-Sufyānī, the emergence of al-Khurāsānī, the killing of al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah, and the sinking (al-khasf) in al-Bayḍā'... al-Qā'im (a) will not emerge until a caller announces his name from the heavens on the twenty-third night of Ramaḍān, a Friday night." Abī Baṣīr, seeking further clarity, asks: "What will the caller say?" The Imam elaborates: "He will call out his name and his father's name: 'O people, so-and-so, the son of so-and-so, is the Qā'im of the family of Muḥammad (s). Listen to him and obey him.'

*"There will be no created being that does not hear this call. It will wake the sleeper, bring people out into their courtyards, and cause the veiled woman to emerge from her chamber. al-Qā'im will emerge in response to what he hears, and this is the call of Jibrā'īl (a)."*¹

This narration not only reaffirms the prohibition against setting times but also vividly depicts the celestial announcement—a universal proclamation by Jibrā'īl (a)—as a definitive sign, leaving no doubt as to its divine origin and transformative power. It establishes, like many other narrations, that within the school of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), fixing specific dates for the reappearance is impermissible, with its timing governed solely by the unfolding of these preordained signs, chief among them the heavenly cry (*al-ṣayḥah*) and al-Sufyānī's emergence in Syria.

The admonition persists in another encounter narrated by al-Nu'mānī from his teacher al-Kulaynī, from 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Kathīr, where Mihzam implores Imam al-Ṣādiq (a): *"May I be sacrificed for you, inform me about this matter (the rising of Imam al-Mahdi) we await. When will it occur?"* The Imam replies with a tripartite counsel:

¹ al-Nu'mānī. P.289 H.6.

يَا مِهْزَمَ كَذَبَ الْوَقَاتُونَ وَ هَٰكَ الْمُسْتَعْجِلُونَ وَ نَجَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ

“O Mihzam, those who set specific times are liars, those who are hasty and show restlessness in getting it are destroyed, and those who submit are saved.”¹

This response delineates a clear moral framework: speculation breeds falsehood, impatience leads to ruin, and submission ensures salvation, urging patience amid the uncertainty of the *ghaybah*.

Likewise, Fuḍayl ibn Yasār poses a similar question to Imam al-Bāqir (a): *“Is there a set time for this matter?”* The Imam answers emphatically:

كَذَبَ الْوَقَاتُونَ كَذَبَ الْوَقَاتُونَ إِنَّ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ لَمَّا خَرَجَ وَافِدًا إِلَى رَبِّهِ
وَاعَدَهُمْ ثَلَاثِينَ يَوْمًا فَلَمَّا زَادَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى الثَّلَاثِينَ عَشْرًا قَالَ قَوْمُهُ قَدْ أَخْلَفَنَا
مُوسَى فَصَنَعُوا مَا صَنَعُوا فَإِذَا حَدَّثْنَاكُمْ بِحَدِيثٍ فَجَاءَ عَلَى مَا حَدَّثْنَاكُمْ بِهِ
فَقُولُوا صَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَإِذَا حَدَّثْنَاكُمْ بِحَدِيثٍ فَجَاءَ عَلَى خِلَافِ مَا حَدَّثْنَاكُمْ بِهِ
فَقُولُوا صَدَقَ اللَّهُ تُوجَرُوا مَرَّتَيْنِ

“Those who set specific times are liars; those who set specific times are liars. When Mūsā (a) went to meet his Lord, he promised his people thirty days. When Allah added ten more days, his people said: ‘Moses has broken his promise,’ and they did what they did. If we narrate something to you and it happens as we said, say: ‘Allah has spoken the truth.’ If we narrate something to you and it happens differently, say: ‘Allah has spoken the truth.’ You will be rewarded twice.”²

This narration invokes the precedent of Prophet Mūsā (a) to illustrate *badā*—divine alteration—highlighting its potential even within definitive signs, and concludes by affirming that believers’ trust in divine truth, irrespective of outcomes, yields double reward.

The concept of *badā* gains further clarity in a dialogue with Imam al-Jawād (a), where a questioner probes: *“Can there be badā in what is inevitable?”* The Imam affirms: *“Yes.”* Pressed further with concern—*“Do we fear that there could be badā regarding al-Qā’im (a)?”*—the Imam reassures: *“The Qā’im is from the divine promise.”* This exchange

¹ al-Nu‘mānī. P.294 H.11.

² al-Nu‘mānī. P.294 H.13.

delineates a critical distinction: while the signs may be subject to divine adjustment, the reappearance itself remains an inviolable certainty, reinforcing the folly of temporal conjecture and the necessity of awaiting the divinely appointed moment signaled by the *ṣayḥah* and other markers.¹

5. The Sifting of Believers: Trials and Tests in the Occultation

The period of occultation (*ghaybah*) emerges within the Shi'i eschatological framework as an epoch replete with profound trials and rigorous tests for the believers, a phase that imposes an unyielding demand for steadfastness, integrity, and unwavering loyalty to the Ahl al-Bayt (as). This extended absence of Imam al-Mahdi (atf) constitutes a crucible wherein the faithful are challenged to preserve their commitment amid adversity, a reality foretold with clarity and emphasis by the A'imma (as). These authoritative voices of guidance have meticulously delineated the obstacles that will arise during this time, underscoring the imperative for true believers to anchor themselves firmly in their faith and uphold the principles espoused by the prophetic household with resolute conviction.

Al-Nu'mānī narrates in his *al-Ghaybah* that Imam al-Bāqir (a) articulates this inevitability with a forceful and evocative declaration to Abī Baṣīr:

وَاللّٰهُ لَتُمَيِّزَنَّ وَاللّٰهُ لَتُمَحَّصَنَّ وَاللّٰهُ لَتُعْرَبَنَّ كَمَا يُعْرَبُ الزُّوَانُ مِنَ الْقَمَحِ

*"By Allah, you will be distinguished, by Allah, you will be tested, by Allah, you will be sifted like wheat is sifted from chaff."*²

This powerful pronouncement, thrice invoking the divine oath, accentuates the certainty and gravity of the trials that will characterize the *ghaybah*. The metaphor of sifting wheat from chaff vividly illustrates a process of separation, wherein true believers—those marked by genuine devotion and sincerity—will be distinguished from those who profess loyalty superficially yet lack the depth of authentic faith. This statement serves as both a warning and a promise, highlighting that the occultation

¹ al-Nu'mānī. P.302 H.10.

² al-Nu'mānī. P.205 H.8.

will not merely be a passive waiting period but an active arena of spiritual refinement.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) offers further insight into the nature of these trials, delivering a foreboding lament: *“Woe to the tyrants of the Arabs for the evil that is approaching.”* This ominous prelude sets the stage for a dialogue that reveals the selective fidelity of the faithful. When a questioner inquires, *“May I be sacrificed for you, how many Arabs will be with al-Qā'im (a)?”* the Imam (a) responds succinctly: *“A small number.”* The questioner, struck by this revelation, counters: *“By Allah, many of them claim to support this cause.”* Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) then elucidates:

وَاللّٰهُ لَتُمَيِّزَنَّ وَاللّٰهُ لَتُمَحِّصَنَّ وَاللّٰهُ لَتُغْرِبَنَّ كَمَا يُغْرِبُ الزُّوْانُ مِنَ الْقَمَحِ

“People must be tested, distinguished, and sifted, and many will fall through the sieve.”¹

This exchange underscores a sobering truth: not all who profess allegiance to the cause of Imam al-Mahdi (atf) will endure the rigours of the *ghaybah*. The imagery of the sieve reinforces the notion of a meticulous winnowing process, wherein the weight of trials will expose the frailty of superficial commitment, allowing many to slip away while only a steadfast few remain.

In another profound narration, the theme of discernment deepens when an observer remarks to Imam al-Ṣādiq (a): *“Your Shia are many.”* The Imam counters with a piercing clarification:

أَمَّا لَوْ كَمَلَتْ الْعِدَّةُ الْمُوصُوفَةُ ثَلَاثِمِائَةً وَبِضْعَةَ عَشَرَ كَانَ الَّذِي تُرِيدُونَ وَ
لَكِنْ شِيعَتُنَا مَنْ لَا يَدْعُو صَوْتَهُ سَمْعَهُ وَلَا شَحَنَاؤُهُ بَدَنَهُ وَلَا يَمْدَحُ بِنَا مُعَلِّناً
وَلَا يُخَاصِمُ بِنَا قَالِياً وَلَا يُجَالِسُ لَنَا غَائِباً وَلَا يُحَدِّثُ لَنَا ثَالِباً وَلَا يُحِبُّ لَنَا
مُبْغِضاً وَلَا يَبْغِضُ لَنَا مُحِبّاً

“If the required number—three hundred and thirteen—were complete, then what you long for (i.e., the rise of Imam al-Mahdi) would come to pass. However, our true Shia are those who speak less than they hear, keep their enmity to themselves without openly expressing it, do not publicly praise us (out of dissimulation), avoid arguing with those who revile us (knowing they will not accept the truth), do not sit with those who

¹ al-Nu'mānī. P.204 H.7.

criticize us, do not befriend those who find fault with us, do not love those who hate us, and do not hate those who love us.”¹

This response decisively delineates the hallmarks of authentic loyalty to the Ahl al-Bayt (as), distinguishing genuine adherents from those who merely claim devotion. The reference to the three hundred and thirteen—those select companions who will stand with the Mahdi (atf) at his *zuhūr*—underscores that numerical abundance does not equate to true fidelity. Instead, the Imam (a) outlines a stringent code of conduct: discretion in speech, concealment of enmity for protective dissimulation (*taqiyyah*), restraint from futile disputes with detractors, and a deliberate distancing from those hostile to the Ahl al-Bayt (as), coupled with an impartial stance toward those who harbour affection for them. This narration warns that not all who identify as Shia embody these principles, predicting that many will drift away under the sway of external influences, personal interests, or societal pressures.

The ḥadīth further foretells a perilous slippage, wherein some will align themselves with the adversaries of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), whether motivated by political expediency, fear, or misunderstanding, thereby compromising the integrity of their faith. More alarmingly, certain individuals will turn against the authentic followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (as)—not through overt confrontation, but under subtle guises such as calls for unity, reform, or so-called intellectual progress. These betrayals will be cloaked in deceptive slogans and ambiguous titles, which, while outwardly appealing, conceal layers of deceit designed to mislead the unwary. This pattern of deviation is not merely speculative; it has been observed throughout history and retains its relevance in contemporary contexts. Numerous individuals and movements profess to uphold the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), yet their actions betray a covert allegiance to opposing ideologies—manifesting through the compromise of fundamental beliefs, the promotion of sectarian dilution, or the active discrediting of sincere believers who steadfastly maintain their commitment.

Such distortions often take the form of presenting warped interpretations of *wilāyah* (divinely appointed leadership), advocating for a diluted version of Shi'i identity that sacrifices doctrinal purity for the sake of superficial progress or inclusivity. This subterfuge leads others

¹ al-Nu'mānī. P.203 H.4.

astray under the pretense of advancing enlightened ideals, masking the erosion of the Ahl al-Bayt (as)'s true legacy. Consequently, the ḥadīth serves as both a stern warning against misplaced alliances and a clarion call for vigilance. True loyalty to the Ahl al-Bayt (as) transcends mere verbal affirmation, demanding a profound discernment, an unflinching steadfastness, and an acute ability to recognize and resist deception. Those who genuinely uphold this path must remain impervious to misleading rhetoric, resolute in their beliefs, and uncompromising in their fidelity, eschewing worldly gains or hollow notions of unity that undermine the sanctity of divine truth.

6. The Trap of False Reform: Beware of Reform Movements

The narrations transmitted from the Ahl al-Bayt (as) deliver profound and insistent warnings against the perils of impulsiveness and the susceptibility to being swayed by those who falsely profess to usher in reform under the pretext of aligning with the all-encompassing Mahdawī reformation. These admonitions place a premium on the virtues of patience, discernment, and steadfastness, cautioning that numerous movements and individuals may present themselves as champions of justice and truth, yet their ultimate effect will be to lead the faithful astray from the authentic path. This recurring counsel underscores the necessity of resisting premature action and superficial allurements, anchoring believers in the anticipation of divinely ordained signs rather than human contrivances.

Imam al-Bāqir (a) imparts this guidance to Jābir al-Ju'fī with deliberate precision, advising:

الزَّمِ الْأَرْضَ لَا تَحْرِكَنَّ يَدَكَ وَلَا رِجْلَكَ أَبَدًا حَتَّى تَرَى عَلَامَاتٍ أَذْكُرُهَا لَكَ فِي سَنَةِ

“Remain grounded and do not move your hands or feet at all until you see the signs I will describe to you in a given year.”

Following this directive, the Imam (a) proceeds to enumerate the inevitable signs along with their specific details, then adds a stern caveat:

وَإِيَّاكَ وَشُدَّادًا مِنْ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ، فَإِنَّ لآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ عَلِيٍّ رَايَةً وَ
لِغَيْرِهِمْ رَايَاتٍ فَالْزِمِ الْأَرْضَ وَ لَا تَتَّبِعْ مِنْهُمْ رَجُلًا أَبَدًا حَتَّى تَرَى رَجُلًا مِنْ
وُلْدِ الْحُسَيْنِ مَعَهُ عَهْدُ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ وَ رَايَتُهُ وَ سِلَاحُهُ

“Beware of the deviants from the family of Muḥammad (as), for indeed the family of Muḥammad and Ali have a flag, while the others have [different] flags, so remain on the ground (stay where you are; don’t join a side), and do not follow any of them until you see a man from the descendants of Husayn who possesses the covenant of the Prophet of Allah, his banner, and his weapon...”¹

This instruction establishes a clear imperative: believers must exercise restraint, refraining from any action until the definitive signs of the reappearance (*ẓuhūr*) manifest. The warning against “deviants” within the prophetic lineage highlights the risk posed by those who, despite their noble descent, lack the divine mandate, urging the faithful to await the authentic figure—Imam al-Mahdi (atf)—distinguished by prophetic relics and authority.

Amīr al-Mu’minīn (a) amplifies this caution in a narration from al-Nu’mānī; the Imam declares: *“The Qā’im, will not rise until the eye of the world is gouged out, and a redness appears in the sky—these are the tears of the bearers of the Throne for the people of the earth.”*

حَتَّى يَظْهَرَ فِيهِمْ قَوْمٌ لَا خَلْقَ لَهُمْ يَدْعُونَ لَوَلَدِي وَ هُمْ بَرَاءٌ مِنْ وَلَدِي تِلْكَ
عِصَابَةٌ رَدِيئَةٌ لَا خَلْقَ لَهُمْ عَلَى الْأَشْرَارِ مُسَلِّطَةٌ وَ لِلْجَبَابِرَةِ مُقْتَنَةٌ وَ لِلْمُلُوكِ
مُجِيرَةٌ

He (a) added: “Until a group emerges among them who have no share (in goodness), who claim allegiance to my progeny while being completely disassociated from them. They are a corrupt faction with no virtue—an affliction upon the wicked, a trial for the tyrants, and a cause of destruction for kings.”²

This vivid prophecy intertwines cosmic portents with human deception, portraying the *ẓuhūr*’s prelude as marked by profound upheaval and the rise of duplicitous groups. These factions, feigning loyalty to the

¹ al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.22; al-‘Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr al-‘Ayyāshī*. V.1 P.64.

² al-Nu’mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.140 H.5; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. P.52 P.226.

Ahl al-Bayt (as), are exposed as utterly disconnected from their mission, their corruption rendering them a scourge to the wicked, a test for oppressors, and a catalyst for the downfall of rulers—yet devoid of any redemptive virtue.

Imam al-Bāqir (a) reiterates the call for restraint, advising Jābir once more:

يَا جَابِرُ الزَّمِ الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تُحَرِّكْ يَدًا وَلَا رِجْلًا حَتَّى تَرَى عَلَامَاتٍ أَذْكُرُهَا لَكَ
إِنْ أَدْرَكْتَهَا

“O Jābir, stay on the ground and do not move your hand or foot until you see the signs I have mentioned to you, if you live to see them.”¹

He then delineates the definitive signs of the reappearance, reinforcing the necessity of patience and vigilance as prerequisites for aligning with the true Mahdawī cause.

In a further narration to Abū Khālīd al-Kābulī, the Imam (a) states: *“It is as if I see a people emerging from the East seeking the right (which has been usurped) but not being granted it. They will seek it again but will not be granted it. When they see this, they will place their swords on their shoulders and will be given what they asked for, but they will not accept it until they stage an uprising. They will not relinquish their swords except to your master (Imam al-Mahdī). Their slain will be martyrs. If I were to live to see that time, I would preserve myself for the master of this affair (a).”²*

This vision likely alludes to al-Ḥasanī al-Khurāsānī, emerging from Khurāsān or Daylam, who will eventually cede his banner and leadership to the Mahdī (atf) in Kūfah. Yet, the Imam (a) counsels self-preservation, advising against joining even this movement due to elements within it—possibly Zaydiyyah in conduct—who resist full submission to Imam al-Mahdī (atf), highlighting the complexity of discerning true allegiance.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) reinforces this principle, stating: *“When al-Sufyānī emerges, he will send an army against us (Ahl al-Bayt (as)) and*

¹ al-Nu‘mānī. P.279 H.67; al-Majlisī. V.52 P.237.

² al-Nu‘mānī. P.273 H.50; al-Majlisī. V.52 P.243.

an army to you (Shia). When that happens, come to us on whatever mount you have, easy or difficult."¹

This directive emphasizes reserving action for the Mahdi's call, urging believers to remain at home until his rise. Echoing this, he adds: "*al-Sufyānī is inevitable, and he will not emerge except in Rajab.*" When asked, "*O Abā 'Abdillāh, if he emerges, what should we do?*" he replies: "*When that happens, come to us.*"²

Similarly, to Burayd, Imam al-Bāqir (a) warns: "*O Burayd, beware of the gathering of al-Aṣḥab.*" When queried, "*Who is al-Aṣḥab?*" the Imam clarifies: "*al-Abqa' (the leper).*" Imam (a) was asked, "*And who is al-Abqa'?*" He (a) replied: "*al-Abraṣ. Beware of al-Sufyānī, and beware of the two fugitives from the descendants of so-and-so who will come to Makkah, distributing wealth, imitating al-Qā'im (a). Beware of the revolutionaries from the family of Muḥammad (s).*"³

Al-Majlisī interprets this as a reference to the Zaydiyyah, whose doctrinal frailty misaligns them with the Ahl al-Bayt (as)'s teachings, despite their prophetic lineage. These narrations collectively indicate that movements in Syria, led by figures like al-Aṣḥab and al-Sufyānī, will wield dazzling slogans of reform and guidance, risking deception. Likewise, others claiming ties to the Mahdi (atf)'s mission will employ lofty rhetoric, yet their falsehood will lead astray those drawn by their appeal, exploiting sincere desires for justice.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) further instructs Sadīr:

يَا سَدِيرُ الزَّمْ بَيْتَكَ وَكُنْ جُلُوسًا مِنْ أَحْلَاسِهِ وَاسْكُنْ مَا سَكَنَ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ
فَإِذَا بَلَغَ أَنَّ السُّفْيَانِيَّ قَدْ خَرَجَ فَارْحَلْ إِلَيْنَا وَلَوْ عَلَى رَجْلِكَ... إِذْ قَدْ خَرَجَ
السُّفْيَانِيَّ فَيَحْصِدُهُمْ حَصْدُ الزَّرْعِ مَا رَأَيْتَ مِثْلَهُ قَطُّ

*"O Sadīr, stay in your home and be like a cushion on its floor. Remain as the night and day remain. When you hear that al-Sufyānī has emerged, then come to us, even if you have to walk."*⁴ He adds: "*When al-Sufyānī*

¹ al-Nu'mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.306 H.17; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.243.

² al-Nu'mānī. P.302 H.8; al-Majlisī. V.52 P.249.

³ al-Majlisī. V.52 P.269.

⁴ al-Majlisī. V.52 H.272.

*gains control over the five regions—meaning the regions of Syria—then rush to your master (Imam al-Mahdī). ”*¹

This reinforces patience, urging restraint until definitive signs emerge.

When Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī's² letter arrives, the Imam (a) dismisses it: *“There is no reply to your letter. Leave us,”* explaining:

أَيُّ شَيْءٍ تُسَارُونَ يَا فَضْلُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ ذِكْرُهُ لَا يَعْجَلُ لِعِبَادِهِ الْعِبَادِ وَلَا لِأَزَالَةِ
جَبَلٍ عَنْ مَوْضِعِهِ أَيْسَرُ مِنْ زَوَالِ مُلْكٍ لَمْ يَنْقُضْ أَجَلُهُ

“Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, does not hasten (the establishment of justice) as per the haste displayed by His servants. Removing a mountain from its place is easier than removing a kingdom whose time has not yet come.”

He then describes the signs, concluding:

لَا تَبْرَحِ الْأَرْضَ يَا فَضْلُ حَتَّى يَخْرُجَ السُّفْيَانِيُّ فَإِذَا خَرَجَ السُّفْيَانِيُّ فَاجْبِئُوا
إِلَيْنَا يَقُولُهَا ثَلَاثًا وَهُوَ مِنَ الْمَحْثُومِ.

*“Do not leave the house, O Faḍl, until al-Sufyānī emerges. When al-Sufyānī emerges, then come to us”—repeating this thrice—“and this is from the inevitable signs.”*³

This reflects on Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī al-Marwazī's premature revolt against the Umayyads, aligned with the Abbasids, which lacked divine sanction despite his outreach to the Ahl al-Bayt (as).

Imam al-Bāqir (a) advises Abū al-Jārūd:

¹ al-Majlisī. V.52 P.272.

² Abū Muslim 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muslim al-Khurāsānī (c. 700–755 CE) was a Persian revolutionary leader who played a pivotal role in the Abbasid Revolution (747–750 CE), which overthrew the Umayyad Caliphate and established the Abbasid dynasty. Born in Khurāsān, a region in northeastern Persia, Abū Muslim became a key figure in mobilizing support for the Abbasid cause, particularly among the mawālī (non-Arab Muslims) and other disaffected groups. His military and organizational skills were instrumental in the Abbasid victory at the Battle of the Zab (750 CE). However, his growing influence and popularity eventually made him a threat to the Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr, who ordered his execution in 755 CE. For further reading, see Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates* (2nd ed., Routledge, 2004).

³ al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*. V.8 P.274 H.412.

أَوْصِيكَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ وَ أَنْ تَلْزِمَ بَيْتَكَ وَ تَقْعُدَ فِي دَهْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ النَّاسِ وَ إِيَّاكَ وَ
الْخَوَارِجَ مِنْأ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَسُؤُوا عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَ لَا إِلَى شَيْءٍ- وَ اعْلَمْ أَنَّ لِبْنِي أُمِّيَّةً
مُكَا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ النَّاسُ أَنْ تَرُدَّعَهُ وَ أَنْ لَأَهْلَ الْحَقِّ دَوْلَةٌ إِذَا جَاءَتْ وَ لَا هَا اللَّهُ
لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْأ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ فَمَنْ أَدْرَكَهَا مِنْكُمْ كَانَ عِدْنًا فِي السَّنَامِ الْأَعْلَى وَ إِنْ
قَبِضَهُ اللَّهُ قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ خَارَ لَهُ وَ اعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا تَقُومُ عَصَابَةٌ تَدْفَعُ ضَيْمًا أَوْ تُعْرِئُ دِينًا
إِلَّا صَرَعَتْهُمْ الْمُمِيَّةُ وَ الْبَلِيَّةُ حَتَّى تَقُومَ عَصَابَةٌ شَهِدُوا بِدْرًا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ
ص لَا يُوَارَى قَتِيلُهُمْ وَ يَرْفَعُ صَرِيحُهُمْ «4» وَ لَا يُدَاوَى جَرِيحُهُمْ قُلْتُ مَنْ هُمْ
قَالَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ

"I advise you to fear Allah, stay in your home, and remain among the masses. Beware of the revolutionaries amongst us (from the progeny of Fāṭimah (a)), for they are not upon anything which is truthful, nor will they achieve any success... Know that no group will rise to repel oppression or strengthen the religion except that death and calamity will strike them until a group rises who witnessed Badr with the Messenger of Allah (s). Their slain will not be buried, their fallen will not be raised, and their wounded will not be treated." When asked, "Who are they?" he replies: "The angels."¹

Finally, he states:

مَثَلُ خُرُوجِ الْقَائِمِ مِنْأ أَهْلِ الْبَيْتِ كَخُرُوجِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص وَ مَثَلُ مَنْ خَرَجَ مِنْأ
أَهْلِ الْبَيْتِ قَبْلَ قِيَامِ الْقَائِمِ مَثَلُ فَرَخٍ طَارَ فَوْقَ مَنْ وَكَّرَهُ فَتَلَاعَبَتْ بِهِ الصَّبِيَّانِ

"The emergence of al-Qā'im from us the Ahl al-Bayt, is like the emergence of the Holy Prophet (s). As for those who emerge from us before the rise of al-Qā'im (a), they are like a chick that flies from its nest and is then played with by children."²

These teachings collectively caution against premature movements, affirming that only the Mahdi (atf)'s divinely sanctioned rise, supported by angelic forces, will prevail.

Conclusion: Summary Points of Guidance for Believers in the Occultation

¹ al-Nu'mānī, *al-Ghaybah*. P.194 H.2.

² al-Nu'mānī. P.199 H.14.

The narrations and teachings elucidated throughout this chapter coalesce into a robust framework designed to guide the faithful through the complexities and trials of the occultation (*ghaybah*) of Imam al-Mahdi (atf). These summary points encapsulate the core admonitions and directives, offering a comprehensive roadmap for navigating the perilous landscape preceding the reappearance (*zuhūr*) with discernment, steadfastness, and integrity.

1. **Beware of Deceptive Movements:** The believers are emphatically cautioned against being ensnared by movements or uprisings that cloak themselves in reformist slogans, proclaim resistance against injustice, or assert alignment with the sacred cause of Imam al-Mahdi (atf). This vigilance extends even to groups led by individuals from the progeny of Lady Fāṭimah (a) or those employing captivating slogans tied to Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) or Imam al-Mahdi (atf). Such entities, while superficially appealing, may prove misleading and lack the divine sanction requisite for legitimacy, posing a significant risk of diverting the faithful from the true path.
2. **No Special Deputyship for Prominent Figures:** The narrations articulated by the Ahl al-Bayt (as) unequivocally emphasize that no special deputyship (*niyābah khāṣṣah*) is conferred upon prominent figures such as al-Ḥasanī, al-Khurāsānī, or al-Yamānī, despite their association with the events heralding the reappearance. While their roles within the eschatological narrative are undeniably significant, they do not possess divine authority or serve as official representatives of Imam al-Mahdi (atf). This distinction underscores the exclusivity of the Imam's mandate, guarding against misplaced allegiance even to these figures.
3. **The Heavenly Cry as the Definitive Sign:** The decisive and irrefutable sign marking the termination of the occultation and the commencement of Imam al-Mahdi (a)'s emergence is identified as the heavenly cry (*al-ṣayḥah*), a celestial proclamation delivered by the angel Jibrā'īl (a) resounding from the heavens. This momentous event, specified in various narrations to occur in the month of Rajab or Ramaḍān, stands as the ultimate signal of the Imam (atf)'s *zuhūr*, a divine announcement that transcends

human imitation and anchors the faithful in certainty amidst preceding confusion.

4. **The Emergence of al-Sufyānī:** The second definitive sign delineated within the traditions is the rise of al-Sufyānī in Syria, where he will establish a transient yet oppressive dominion over the region. This tyrannical figure will dispatch armies to Iraq and Madinah in a bid to confront Imam al-Mahdi (atf), only to face a miraculous divine intervention when his forces are swallowed by the earth in the desert of al-Bayḍā' near Madinah. This cataclysmic event serves as a clear testament to the divine orchestration of the *ḡuhūr*, distinguishing the Imam (a)'s advent from human pretensions.
5. **Rejecting False Timelines:** The act of setting specific times for the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (atf) beyond the framework of the definitive signs is condemned as a form of deception and manipulation. Such claims exploit the credulity of the unsuspecting, serving the ulterior ambitions of false claimants who seek illegitimate leadership rather than divine truth. The narrations firmly reject these speculative assertions, affirming that the timing remains a hidden matter (*al-mastūr*) known only to Allah, unveiled solely through the appointed signs.
6. **Steadfastness During the Occultation:** Believers are enjoined to maintain unwavering steadfastness in their conviction in the Imamate of the Twelve Imams, with particular emphasis on the living and present Imam al-Mahdi (atf), who actively witnesses the unfolding events of humanity. This steadfastness demands a practical loyalty (*wilāyah*) to him, expressed through heartfelt and tangible love for the sincere followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), coupled with a resolute disavowal of their enemies in both intention and deed. This dual commitment fortifies the faithful against the trials of the *ghaybah*.
7. **Adherence to the Teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (as):** The Shia are called to cling tenaciously to the established principles of jurisprudence and the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), resisting the allure of dazzling and deceptive slogans that might tempt them to forsake their loyalty (*tawallī*) and disavowal (*tabarrī*). Such steadfast adherence safeguards against deviation from the

authentic knowledge and foundational tenets of the prophetic household, ensuring that believers remain anchored in the truth amidst attempts to dilute or distort their faith.

These points collectively serve as a comprehensive guide for believers, equipping them to navigate the multifaceted trials of the occultation with clarity and resilience. They foster a posture of steadfast faith, preparing the Shia to await the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (atf) with integrity, discernment, and an unswerving commitment to the path of the Ahl al-Bayt (as).

Addendum 1: Historical Context of the Movement of the Zaydiyyah

The Zaydī movement, which emerged in the aftermath of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a)'s martyrdom, represents a significant theological and political divergence from the path delineated by the A'immaḥ of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). Despite Zayd ibn Ali's virtuous character, his armed rebellion against the Umayyad dynasty—encouraging resistance against oppression—lacks approval of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (a) and Imam Ja'far al-Šādiq (a). While Zayd himself believed in the Imāmah of Imam al-Šādiq (a) and considered that due to some expediency, the Imam (a) did not rise against oppression.

This addendum offers a concise examination of the Zaydī movement's historical trajectory, doctrinal principles, and sectarian divisions, and the broader Zaydī ideology.

Historical Development of the Zaydī Movement

The Zaydī movement crystallized during the political upheaval following Imam al-Ḥusayn (a)'s martyrdom in 61 AH (680 CE), a period marked by Umayyad tyranny and internal 'Alid debates over strategies of resistance. During the Imāmah of Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Sajjād (a) (d. 95 AH/713 CE), certain Alids began advocating armed uprising as a prerequisite for legitimate leadership (*imāmah*), diverging from the Imam (a)'s emphasis on *taqiyyah* (dissimulation). This ideological schism became pronounced with Zayd ibn Ali (d. 122 AH/740 CE), the younger son of Imam al-Sajjād (a), who launched a revolt against the Umayyad caliph Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik in Kūfah. Motivated by letters from Kufan supporters pledging allegiance, Zayd's uprising in 122 AH aimed to restore justice, but culminated in his killing and crucifixion at al-Kunāsah, as foretold by the A'immaḥ (as).

Zayd's son, Yaḥyā ibn Zayd (d. 125 AH/743 CE), continued this activist tradition, leading a rebellion in Khurāsān that similarly ended in his death and crucifixion. The Zaydī movement gained further momentum through figures such as Muḥammad ibn 'Abdillāh and his brother Ibrāhīm (d. 145 AH/762 CE), Hasanid descendants who revolted against the Abbasids, only to be killed and crucified.

The Zaydis¹ initially positioned themselves as defenders of the Ahl al-Bayt (as)'s rights, emphasizing the legitimacy of Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib (a). However, in their quest to broaden their support base and garner popular support—particularly after Yaḥyā ibn Zayd's martyrdom—the Zaydiyyah began to dilute their strict adherence to the *Wilāyah* of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). Facing the challenge of gaining traction in a predominantly non-Shia socio-political landscape, some Zaydī leaders shifted their rhetoric to appeal to non-Shia sects, who revered Abū Bakr and 'Umar. This strategic pivot involved a notable softening of disassociation (*barā'ah*) from those who usurped Ali (a)'s rightful leadership.

Instead of focusing on restoring the rights of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), the Zaydiyyah increasingly adopted a slogan of unity in the face of oppression, emphasizing armed uprising as a means to seize power rather than a vehicle for theological restoration. This approach aimed to unite diverse factions under a common cause against the Umayyads and, later, the Abbasids. This theological compromise led to the emergence of sub-sects within Zaydiyyah, such as the Batriyyah, who were willing to accept the caliphates of Abū Bakr and 'Umar while still pledging allegiance to Imam Ali, Imam al-Ḥasan, and Imam al-Ḥusayn (as). Such a stance, however, was seen by Shia A'immah, as a betrayal of the core principle of *Wilāyah*, which holds that true leadership belongs exclusively to the divinely appointed A'immah of the Ahl al-Bayt (as).

A notable incident highlighting this tension is recorded in a narration by Sadīr al-Ṣayrafi, who witnessed a confrontation between Zayd ibn Ali and a group of Zaydī supporters during a gathering with Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (a), Zayd's brother.

A group of men gathered in the presence of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (a), among them was Sadīr al-Ṣayrafi, a loyal follower of the Imam, accompanied by Salamah ibn Kuhayl, Abū al-Miqdam Thābit al-Ḥaddād,

¹ Those leaders who came after death of Zayd ibn Ali.

Sālim ibn Abī Ḥafṣah, Kathīr al-Nawwā', and several others. These men were part of a growing movement inspired by Zayd ibn Ali, the Imam (a)'s brother, who had taken up arms to challenge the tyranny of the Umayyads and restore the rights of the Ahl al-Bayt (as).

Salamah ibn Kuhayl, speaking on behalf of the group, began with a declaration of loyalty. "*O Abu Ja'far,*" he said, *his voice steady, "we pledge our love and allegiance to Imam Ali, Imam al-Ḥasan, and Imam al-Ḥusayn (as), and we disassociate ourselves from their enemies."* The Imam nodded, his expression calm and affirming. "*Yes,*" he replied, acknowledging their devotion to the rightful A'immah.

But then, Sālim ibn Abī Ḥafṣah stepped forward, his tone more calculated. "*We also pledge our love for Abū Bakr and 'Umar,*" he declared, "*and we disassociate ourselves from their enemies."* Zayd ibn Ali, seated beside his brother (Imam al-Bāqir (a)), could not contain his outrage. His face darkened with indignation as he turned sharply to face the group. "*Are you expressing hatred toward Fāṭimah (a)? By accepting those who wronged her, you have severed our cause—the cause of the Ahl al-Bayt! May Allah sever you in return!*"¹ His words cut through the room like a blade, exposing the betrayal at the heart of their proposition. To Zayd, this was not merely a political maneuver; it was a direct assault on the legacy of his grandmother, Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' (a), who had suffered at the hands of those who usurped her father's rightful succession.

Imam al-Bāqir (a) remained silent, allowing Zayd's rebuke to echo in the hearts of those present. From that day forward, they were branded as the *Batriyyah*, a name derived from the Arabic word *batara* (to sever), symbolizing their severance from the true path of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). This confrontation underscored the growing divide within the Zaydī ranks. While Zayd ibn Ali remained steadfast in his commitment to the exclusive *Wilāyah* of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), others within his movement prioritized power over principle, seeking legitimacy for their alliances with non-Shia factions by endorsing the rule of Abū Bakr and 'Umar.

Zaydī influence expanded geographically, establishing a presence in Ṭabaristān by the late ninth century, with documented activity in Rayy during the 860s and 880s. In 934 CE, the Zaydī Buyids of Daylam defeated

¹ al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.37 P.31, al-Kashhī, *Ikhtiyār Ma'rifat al-Rijāl*. P.236.

an Abbasid force, briefly controlling Baghdad in the 940s. The most enduring Zaydī polity emerged in Yemen in 288 AH (901 CE) under Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥusayn (*al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq*), persisting until the republican overthrow in 1382 AH (1962 CE), with Yemen remaining a Zaydī stronghold to the present day. Despite these political achievements, the A'immaḥ of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) consistently rejected the Zaydiyyah.

Zaydī Doctrine and Sectarian Divisions

Zaydī doctrine fundamentally diverges from Twelver Shi'ism in its conceptualization of the Imāmah. While Twelver Shi'ism affirms the divine appointment (*naṣṣ*) of twelve infallible A'immaḥ, the Zaydiyyah limit this divine mandate to Imam Ali, Imam al-Ḥasan, and Imam al-Ḥusayn (as), positing that subsequent A'immaḥ must earn leadership through open *jihād*, descent from Fāṭimah (a) through Ḥasan or Ḥusayn (as), religious knowledge, and courage. Consequently, the Zaydiyyah recognized figures such as Zayd ibn Ali, Yaḥyā ibn Zayd, Muḥammad ibn 'Abdillāh, and Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abdillāh as A'immaḥ, while rejecting Imam al-Sajjād (a) and subsequent Twelver A'immaḥ for their abstention from armed struggle.

The Zaydī sect fragmented into three primary branches, each reflecting distinct theological positions¹:

- **Jarūdiyyah:** Founded by Ziyād ibn Abī Ziyād (d. 150 AH/767 CE), this sect posits an implicit designation (*naṣṣ khaṭfī*) of Ali (a) through attributes, arguing that the community erred by electing others. They extend the Imāmah to Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (a), with some asserting subsequent designation by prior A'immaḥ, while others recognize any Ḥasanī or Ḥusaynī who rises in *jihād* as an Imam. Views on the final Imam vary, naming Muḥammad ibn 'Abdillāh, Muḥammad ibn Qāsim, or Yaḥyā ibn 'Umar (d. 126 AH/744 CE).
- **Sulaymāniyyah:** Led by Sulaymān ibn Jaṛīr, this group advocates election via a council (*shūrā*), accepting the caliphates of Abū Bakr and 'Umar despite Imam Ali (a)'s superiority, rejecting 'Uthmān, and deeming 'Ā'ishah, Ṭalḥah, and Zubayr disbelievers for opposing

¹ Najam, *Shi'i Islam: An Introduction*.

Imam Ali (a). Their alignment with Sunnī principles is tempered by Zaydī rejection of *taqiyyah* and emphasis on *jihād*.

- **Ṣālihiyyah/Batriyyah:** Followers of Ḥasan ibn Ṣāliḥ (d. 168 AH/784 CE) and Kathīr al-Nawwā' (d. 169 AH/785 CE), these sects accept Abū Bakr and 'Umar with Imam Ali (a)'s consent, remain neutral on 'Uthmān, and recognize any scholarly, courageous Fāṭimī who undertakes *jihād* as an Imam.

Zaydī theology further incorporates Mu'tazilī rationalism in creed and Ḥanafī (and later Shāfi'ī) jurisprudence, markedly diverging from the Twelver reliance on the infallible guidance of the Ahl al-Bayt (as)—a divergence the A'imma (as) condemned as a dilution of authentic Shi'ī doctrine.

Zayd ibn Ali: Son of Imam al-Sajjād (a)

Despite his pursuit of leadership through rebellion, Zayd ibn Ali was recognized by the A'imma (as) as a virtuous individual, as evidenced by a narration in which Jābir al-Ju'fī recounts:

*"I came to see Abī Ja'far al-Bāqir (a) and his brother Zayd was with him. Ma'rūf ibn Kharrabūdh al-Makkī came to meet, and Imam al-Bāqir (a) said: 'O Ma'rūf, recite to me from the best of what you have.' He recited: 'By your life, Abū Mālik is neither disloyal nor weak. Nor does he stubbornly oppose the wise when advised. But he is an exceptional leader; noble in character, sweet in speech. When you lead him, he obeys willingly, and whatever you entrust to him, he fulfills it.' Imam al-Bāqir (a) placed his hand on Zayd's shoulders and said: 'This is your description, O Abā al-Ḥusayn.'"*¹

This narration underscores Zayd's admirable traits—loyalty, nobility, and obedience. Zayd sought to topple the Umayyad government, encouraging resistance against oppression, as evidenced by his statement:

Whosoever wants to do *jihād*, he shall come to me, and one who is after knowledge, he shall meet Ja'far ibn Muḥammad.² While Zayd's intent to combat injustice reflects his sincerity, his method—armed uprising without divine sanction—was not explicitly approved by Imam

¹ al-Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*. P.40.

² Māmqānī, *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*. V.1 P.469.

al-Bāqir and Imam al-Ṣādiq (as), leading to his downfall and the broader Zaydī deviation.

Moreover, the A'imma (as) not only praised Zayd's character but also expressed profound sadness at his killing, reflecting their familial bond and compassion. Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) is reported to have wept upon hearing of Zayd's martyrdom, saying:

*"May Allah have mercy on my uncle Zayd; he was a righteous man, but he hastened in a matter that was not sanctioned by Allah."*¹

This narration highlights the A'imma (as)'s affection for Zayd, acknowledging his righteousness while lamenting his premature revolt.

However, 'Allāmah al-Majlisī, a prominent Shi'i scholar, refrains from taking a definitive stance on the issue of Zayd's revolution. He states: *"The eternal fate of Zayd ibn Ali is a matter known to Allah and His chosen A'imma (as), who praised his character but did not approve of his revolt. We leave his affair to their judgment."*² This cautious approach reflects the complexity of Zayd's legacy—admired for his virtues yet critiqued for his actions—underscoring the Twelver emphasis on divine sanction as the sole criterion for legitimate leadership.

Discussion of Zayd with Mu'min al-Ṭāq

A pivotal narration illustrating the A'imma (as)'s concerns about to Zayd ibn Ali's uprising and the Zaydī movement is the encounter between Zayd and Mu'min al-Ṭāq (also known as Abū Ja'far), a devoted companion of the A'imma (as). This ḥadīth underscores the foundational theological principle in Twelver Shi'ism: allegiance is due solely to divinely appointed leadership.

عِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ عِيسَى عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ عَنْ أَبَانَ قَالَ: أَخْبَرَنِي الْأَحْوَلُ أَنَّ زَيْدَ بْنَ عَلِيٍّ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ عَ بَعَثَ إِلَيْهِ وَهُوَ مُسْتَخْفٍ قَالَ فَأَتَيْتُهُ فَقَالَ لِي يَا أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ مَا تَقُولُ إِنْ طَرَفَكَ طَارِقٌ مِنَّا أَ تَخْرُجُ مَعَهُ قَالَ فَقُلْتُ لَهُ إِنْ كَانَ أَبَاكَ أَوْ أَخَاكَ خَرَجْتُ مَعَهُ قَالَ فَقَالَ لِي فَأَنَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَخْرَجَ أَجَاهِدَ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمَ فَأَخْرُجُ مَعِي قَالَ قُلْتُ لَا مَا أَفْعَلُ جُعِلَتْ فِدَاكَ قَالَ فَقَالَ لِي أَتَرْغَبُ بِنَفْسِكَ عَنِّي قَالَ قُلْتُ لَهُ إِنَّمَا هِيَ نَفْسٌ وَاحِدَةٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لِلَّهِ فِي الْأَرْضِ

¹ al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V 46 P.152

² al-Majlisī, V.46 P.153.

حُجَّةٌ فَالْمُتَخَلِّفُ عَنْكَ نَاجٍ وَ الْخَارِجُ مَعَكَ هَالِكٌ وَ إِنْ لَا تَكُنْ لِلَّهِ حُجَّةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَالْمُتَخَلِّفُ عَنْكَ وَ الْخَارِجُ مَعَكَ سَوَاءٌ قَالَ فَقَالَ لِي يَا أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ كُنْتُ أَجْلِسُ مَعَ أَبِي عَلَى الْخَوَانِ فَيُلْقِمُنِي الْبُضْعَةَ السَّمِينَةَ وَ يُبْرِدُ لِي اللَّفْظَةَ الْحَارَّةَ حَتَّى تَبْرُدَ شَفَقَةً عَلَيَّ وَ لَمْ يَشْفُقْ عَلَيَّ مِنْ حَرِّ النَّارِ إِذَا أَخْبَرَكَ بِالَّذِينَ وَ لَمْ يُخْبِرْنِي بِهِ فَقُلْتُ لَهُ جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ مِنْ شَفَقَتِهِ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حَرِّ النَّارِ لَمْ يُخْبِرَكَ خَافَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ لَا تَقْبَلَهُ فَتَدْخُلَ النَّارَ وَ أَخْبِرَنِي أَنَا فَإِنْ قَبِلْتُ نَجَوْتُ وَ إِنْ لَمْ أَقْبَلْ لَمْ يُبَالِ أَنْ أَدْخُلَ النَّارَ ثُمَّ قُلْتُ لَهُ جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ أَنْتُمْ أَفْضَلُ أَمْ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ قَالَ بَلِ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ قُلْتُ يَقُولُ يَعْقُوبُ لِيُوسُفُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تَقْصُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ عَلَى إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا لَمْ لَمْ يُخْبِرْهُمْ حَتَّى كَانُوا لَا يَكِيدُونَهُ وَ لَكِنْ كَتَمْتَهُمْ ذَلِكَ فَكَدَا أَبُوكَ كَتَمَكَ لِأَنَّهُ خَافَ عَلَيْكَ قَالَ فَقَالَ أَمَا وَ اللَّهِ لَنْ قُلْتُ ذَلِكَ لَقَدْ حَدَّثَنِي صَاحِبُكَ بِالْمَدِينَةِ أَنِّي أَقْتُلُ وَ أَصْلُبُ بِالْخَنَاسَةِ وَ إِنْ عِنْدَهُ لَصَحِيفَةٌ فِيهَا قَتْلِي وَ صَلْبِي فَحَجَجْتُ فَحَدَّثْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع بِمَقَالَةِ زَيْدٍ وَ مَا قُلْتُ لَهُ فَقَالَ لِي أَخَذْتَهُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَ مِنْ خَلْفِهِ وَ عَنْ يَمِينِهِ وَ عَنْ شِمَالِهِ وَ مِنْ فَوْقِ رَأْسِهِ وَ مِنْ تَحْتِ قَدَمَيْهِ وَ لَمْ تَتْرُكْ لَهُ مَسْلَكًا يَسْلُكُهُ.

A group of our companions narrated from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Isa, from Ali ibn al-Hakam, from Aban, who said: "al-Ahwal informed me that Zayd ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn (a) requested for a meeting while he was in hiding. He said: 'I came to him, and he said to me, 'O Aba Ja'far (Mu'min al-Taq), what is your stance if someone from our faction seeks your alliance? Would you stand with them?'

"I said to him, 'If it were your father or your brother, I would stand with him.' He said to me, 'I intend to confront these people and fight them, so join me.' I said, 'No, I will not, may I be made your sacrifice.' He said to me, 'Do you turn away from me?'

"I said to him, 'It is only one soul. If Allah has an Authority (hujjah) on the earth, then the one who holds back from you is saved, and the one who joins you is doomed. But if there is no Authority of Allah on the earth, then the one who holds back from you and the one who joins you are the same.'

"He said to me, 'O Aba Ja'far, I used to sit with my father at the table, and he would feed me the best morsel and cool the hot morsel for me until it was cool, out of compassion for me. Did he not have compassion

for me regarding the heat of the Fire, that he informed you of the religion but did not inform me?' I said to him, 'May I be made your sacrifice! It was out of his compassion for you regarding the heat of the Fire that he did not inform you. He feared that you would not accept it and thus enter the Fire. But he informed me, so if I accept, I am saved, and if I do not accept, he does not mind if I enter the Fire.'

*"Then I said to him, 'May I be made your sacrifice! Are you more excellent, or are the prophets?' He said, 'Rather, the prophets.' I said, "'Ya'qūb said to Yūsuf, **O my son, do not relate your vision to your brothers, lest they plot against you**' [Qur'ān 12:5]. Why did he not inform them so they would not plot against him? Rather, he concealed it from them. Similarly, your father concealed it from you because he feared for you.'*

"He said, 'By Allah, if you say that, then your master in Madinah told me that I will be killed and crucified at al-Kunāsah, and he has a book (ṣaḥīfah) in which my killing and crucifixion are written.'

"I went for Hajj and reported the story of Zayd to Abū 'Abdillāh al-Ṣādiq (a), and what I said to Zayd. The Imam (a) said to me, 'You took him from before him, from behind him, from his right, from his left, from above his head, and from beneath his feet, and you left him no path of escape.'"¹

This narration occurs at a critical juncture in Zayd ibn Ali's life, as he prepares for his 122 AH uprising against the Umayyad caliph Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik. Zayd, in hiding, seeks to rally support from Mu'min al-Ṭāq, a trusted companion of the A'imma (as). During this period, many Alids and their supporters felt compelled to resist tyranny, yet Zayd's was not comfortable with the A'imma (a)'s strategy of patience and *taqiyyah*. The encounter, taking place before Zayd's revolt, culminates in his death and crucifixion at al-Kunāsah.

Exegesis and Theological Implications:

1. **Zayd's Appeal and Mu'min al-Ṭāq's Response:** Zayd initiates the dialogue with a hypothetical query: *"What is your stance if someone from our faction seeks your alliance? Would you stand*

¹ al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*. V.1 P.174 H.5.

with them?” This question reflects Zayd’s intent to assess Mu’min al-Ṭāq’s willingness to join his impending revolt. Mu’min al-Ṭāq responds with caution: *“If it were your father or your brother, I would stand with him,”* indicating that his allegiance is reserved exclusively for the divinely appointed A’immah—Imam al-Sajjād (a) (Zayd’s father) or Imam al-Bāqir (a) (Zayd’s brother). When Zayd reveals his own intention to *“confront these people and fight them,”* Mu’min al-Ṭāq declines: *“No, I will not, may I be made your sacrifice.”* This refusal is not a personal rejection of Zayd but a rejection of his initiative, underscoring the Twelver principle that only the Imam designated by Allah merits absolute obedience (*tā’ah*).

2. **The Role of the Ḥujjah as the Central Theological Argument:** Zayd challenges Mu’min al-Ṭāq’s refusal: *“Do you turn away from me?”* Mu’min al-Ṭāq responds with a foundational theological argument:

“It is only one personality. If Allah has an Authority (ḥujjah) i.e. Imam, whose obedience is obligatory, on the earth, then the one who holds back from you is saved, and the one who joins you is doomed. But if there is no Authority of Allah on the earth, then the one who holds back from you and the one who joins you are the same.” The term *ḥujjah* denotes the divinely appointed Imam, whose presence ensures guidance for the Ummah. Mu’min al-Ṭāq asserts that if a legitimate Imam exists—here, Imam al-Bāqir or Imam al-Ṣādiq (as)—then joining Zayd’s revolt, which lacks explicit sanction from Imam (a), leads to spiritual ruin. Conversely, abstaining ensures salvation.

3. **Zayd’s Acknowledgment of the Prophecy:** Zayd concedes the point but reveals a critical detail:

“By Allah, if you say that, then your master in Madinah told me that I will be killed and crucified at al-Kunāsah, and he has a book (ṣaḥīfah) in which my killing and crucifixion are written.” Zayd acknowledges that Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) (*“your master in Madinah”*) had foretold his fate, confirming the A’immah (as)’s foreknowledge of his doomed uprising.

4. **Imam al-Ṣādiq (a)'s Affirmation:** Mu'min al-Ṭāq later recounts this exchange to Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) during Ḥajj, and the Imam responds:

"You took him from before him, from behind him, from his right, from his left, from above his head, and from beneath his feet, and you left him no path to follow." The Imam (a)'s metaphorical language praises Mu'min al-Ṭāq's comprehensive refutation of Zayd's position, leaving him no theological or logical escape.

5. **Relevance to the Zaydī Movement and Broader Narrative:** This narration directly addresses the Zaydī movement's foundational premise—that an Imam must rise in *jihād* to claim leadership. Zayd's appeal to Mu'min al-Ṭāq reflects this ideology, as he seeks to rally support for his revolt against the Umayyads. However, Mu'min al-Ṭāq's response, validated by Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), dismantles this premise, asserting that true leadership derives from divine appointment (*naṣṣ*), not human initiative.

In the broader context of The Mahdī (a)'s Return, this narration underscores the peril of supporting unauthorized movements. His cause was supported and financed by leading figures like Abū Ḥanīfah¹, yet it ultimately failed. The A'imma (as) rejection of such actions warns believers against mistaking human-led initiatives for divinely sanctioned efforts, urging them to await the rise of Imam al-Mahdī (atf) as the sole legitimate redress for injustice.

Failed Rebellions Before the Rise of Imam al-Mahdī (atf)

Zayd's 122 AH revolt, supported by Kūfan pledges, collapsed as most abandoned him, leading to his crucifixion.

Yaḥyā ibn Zayd's Khurāsān rebellion in 125 AH met a similar fate, as did the Hasanids' 145 AH uprising against the Abbasids, with Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm crucified as Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) predicted: *"By*

¹ Shāmī, *al-Durr al-Naẓīm*. P.597.

Allah, I know that you will revolt as he revolted, and you will be slain as he was slain!”¹

Non-Shia figures like Abū Ḥanīfah, who issued a *fatwā* and donated 30,000 dirhams², alongside non-Shia narrators like Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān and Maṣṣūr ibn al-Mu‘tamir³, were main supporters of Zayd. The Buyids’ temporary success in the 940s further exemplifies this deception, as their Zaydī pragmatism diluted Shi‘i ideals, failing to establish lasting justice.

This pattern of failure is encapsulated in a narration from Imam al-Sajjād (a):

وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَخْرُجُ وَاحِدٌ مِّنَّا قَبْلَ خُرُوجِ الْقَائِمِ عِلاَّ كَانَ مِثْلُهُ مِثْلَ فَرْخٍ طَارَ مِنْ
وَكْرِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَسْتَوِيَ جَنَاحَاهُ فَأَخَذَهُ الصَّبِيَّانُ فَعَبَثُوا بِهِ.

“By Allah, no one will rise (to topple the government) from us before the Rise of the Awaited One (a), except that he will be like a nestling (baby bird), who flew off his nest before its wings grew, and kids pick him and play with him.”⁴

This metaphor vividly illustrates the futility and peril of premature uprisings, likening them to a fledgling bird that attempts to fly before its wings are ready, only to be caught and toyed with by children. Such actions, lacking divine sanction, are doomed to failure and exacerbate the suffering of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) and their followers.

¹ al-Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*.

² Shāmī, *al-Durr al-Naẓīm*. P.597.

³ al-Kashhī, *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifat al-Rijāl*. V.2 P.644.

⁴ al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*. V.8 P.264 H.382.

Addendum 2: The Hasanids

The Hasanids, descendants of Imam al-Ḥasan ibn Ali (a), played a pivotal role in the political and religious dynamics of early Islamic history, particularly during the late Umayyad and early Abbasid periods. This addendum explores their history, motives, alliances with the Abbasids, the significant Battle of Fakhkh, the responses of Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (a) (d. 148 AH/765 CE) and Mūsā al-Kāzīm (a) (d. 183 AH/799 CE), and the personalities of key Hasanid figures such as 'Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan and his son Muḥammad ibn 'Abdillāh, who claimed the title *Nafs al-Zakiyyah*. It also examines the A'imma (as)'s condemnation of the Hasanids' leadership ambitions, their warnings about the futility of revolts before the rise of Imam al-Mahdi (atf), and additional insights into their interactions, beliefs, and ultimate fate, drawing on narrations and historical accounts.

Historical Context and Motives of the Hasanids

The Hasanids, as part of the broader Alid family (descendants of Ali ibn Abī Tālib; 'Alawiyyīn), were deeply involved in the political and religious struggles that followed the martyrdom of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a). They believed that the leadership of the Muslim community—both Imāmah and Khilāfah—rightfully belonged to the family of the Prophet (s) through Imam Ali (a) and his descendants. This belief directly opposed the rule of the Umayyad dynasty (41–132 AH / 661–750 CE), which had established a hereditary caliphate that many Alids and their supporters viewed as illegitimate.

The Hasanids' primary motive was to reclaim both political and spiritual leadership of the Muslim community, even in cases where there was no Divine Appointment (*naṣṣ*) for them. They were driven by a combination of religious conviction, a sense of historical injustice stemming from the marginalization of the Alids after the martyrdom of the Holy Prophet (s), and a desire to restore the caliphate to his family. They often aligned with the Abbasids (descendants of the Prophet's uncle, al-'Abbās), and their uprisings were framed as efforts to establish justice,

enjoin good, and forbid evil—principles deeply rooted in Islamic teachings.

During the late Umayyad period, the empire was plagued by internal dissent, tribal rivalries, and widespread discontent with Umayyad rule, particularly in regions such as Iraq and Khurāsān. The Hasanids, along with other Alid factions, such as the Zaydiyyah (descendants of Zayd ibn Ali), took advantage of this unrest to launch rebellions. Their uprisings were often supported by diverse groups, including Arab tribes, mawālī (non-Arab Muslim converts who faced discrimination under Umayyad rule), and various sects like the Kaysāniyyah, who viewed the Alids as the legitimate leaders of the Muslim community.

The Hasanids' motives were not purely political; they were also deeply tied to their identity as descendants of the Prophet (s). However, their approach often diverged from the guidance of the A'imma, leading to tensions within the Alid family. Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) noted the role of jealousy in their opposition, stating:

لَيْسَ مِنَّا إِلَّا وَ لَهُ عَدُوٌّ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ فَقِيلَ لَهُ- بَنُو الْحَسَنِ لَا يَعْرِفُونَ لِمَنْ
الْحَقُّ قَالَ بَلَى وَ لَكِنْ يَمْنَعُهُمُ الْحَسَدُ

“There is no one from amongst us Ahl al-Bayt except that he will have an enemy from within his family... They recognize the truth, but jealousy stops them from accepting it.”¹

This internal rivalry, combined with their political ambitions, set the stage for their complex relationship with both the Umayyads and the Abbasids.

Alliance with the Abbasids

The Hasanids' alliance with the Abbasids was a strategic but ultimately fraught partnership. Both groups belonged to the Ban ū Hāshim and shared a common goal of overthrowing the Umayyads, whom they viewed as usurpers. This alliance was formalized in the early 2nd century AH/8th century CE, particularly during the gathering at Abwā. At this meeting, key figures from both the Hasanids (such as ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan and his sons Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm) and the Abbasids (including

¹ al-Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj ‘alā Ahl al-Lajāj*. P.204.

Abū al-‘Abbās al-Saffāḥ and Abū Ja‘far al-Manṣūr) agreed to unite under the banner of the Banū Hāshim to challenge Umayyad rule, strategically employed the rallying cry “الرضا من آل محمد” (“*Support for the Family of Muḥammad*”) to garner widespread allegiance during their revolt against the Umayyads. Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (a) was invited to the meeting at Abwā but he refused to pledge allegiance to Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh, who was proclaimed to be the Mahdi.

The Abbasids, however, had their own ambitions. They leveraged the widespread Alid support and the revolutionary fervor in Khurāsān, led by figures like Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī, to orchestrate a successful rebellion. Abū Muslim, an Iranian *mawlā*, initially rose in the name of an unnamed Imam from the House of Muḥammad (as), referred to as *al-Riḍā* (the one who is acceptable), in 129 AH/747 CE. This ambiguity allowed both Alid and Abbasid supporters to rally behind the cause. By 131 AH/749 CE, the Abbasid forces, with significant support from Khurāsān, captured Kūfah, and in 132 AH/750 CE, they decisively defeated the Umayyads at the Battle of the Zāb, marking the end of Umayyad rule.

Despite their initial alliance, tensions between the Hasanids and Abbasids quickly emerged. The Abbasids, once in power, sought to consolidate their rule and marginalize the Alids, including the Hasanids. The first Abbasid caliph, al-Saffāḥ (r. 132–136 AH/750–754 CE), and his successor, Manṣūr (r. 136–158 AH/754–775 CE), were wary of Alid claims to the Imāmah and Khilāfah, which posed a direct threat to their legitimacy. The Abbasids initially claimed the Imāmah through a supposed transfer from Abū Hāshim (son of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah, a son of Ali) to the house of ‘Abbās, but Manṣūr later abandoned this claim in 145 AH/762 CE, asserting that ‘Abbas himself was the Imam, thus severing any pretense of deference to the Alids¹.

The Hasanids, particularly ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan and his sons, felt betrayed by the Abbasids. They wanted Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh, as caliph, agreed to by the Abbasids. However, the Abbasids had no intention of ceding power. This betrayal fueled further Hasanid uprisings, including the revolt of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh in 145 AH/762 CE in Madinah and the later Battle of Fakhkh in 169 AH/786 CE.

¹ Hugh, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*. P.123-125.

The Revolution in Madinah

In 144 AH/761 CE, the arrest of ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan by Abbasid Caliph Manṣūr sparked outrage in Madinah, leading his son Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh, known as *Nafs al-Zakiyyah*, to launch a revolt in Rajab 145 AH (October 762 CE). Muḥammad swiftly captured the city, expelling the Abbasid governor Yazīd ibn Khālīd, and declared himself the rightful leader, gaining support from Alids, *mawālī*, and some non-Shia scholars. However, when Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (a) refused to pledge allegiance, Muḥammad imprisoned him near the Baqī‘ cemetery, while Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Abdillāh ibn Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib, a loyal follower of the Imam (a), was executed for rejecting Muḥammad’s leadership¹.

News of the uprising reached Manṣūr in Baghdad, prompting him to dispatch a 5,000-strong army under ‘Īsā ibn Mūsā to crush the rebellion. On the 12th of Ramaḍān 145 AH (December 762 CE), the Abbasid forces breached Madinah’s defenses after a fierce battle at the northern gate, overwhelming Muḥammad’s smaller army of fewer than 1,000 men. Muḥammad was killed in the Battle of Aḥjar al-Zayt, his head displayed on the stone of *Ḥajar al-Zanābīr* as predicted by Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), who had foretold, “*It is as if I see your head brought forth and placed upon the stone of the wasps.*”²

The aftermath saw the Abbasids reassert control over Madinah, executing many Alid supporters and burning their properties. Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) was released from captivity but remained under surveillance, while the killing of Ismā‘īl and the failure of the revolt deepened divisions among the Alids.

The Battle of Fakhkh (169 AH/786 CE)

The Battle of Fakhkh was a significant event in Hasanid history, marking one of the most tragic episodes for the Alids after the Battle of Karbalā‘ (61 AH/680 CE). It took place on the 8th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah, 169 AH (June 11, 786 CE), in Fakhkh, a location near Makkah, during the reign of the Abbasid ruler al-Ḥādī (r. 169–170 AH/785–786 CE).

¹ al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.47 P.285.

² al-Majlisī. V.47 P.275.

The uprising was led by Ḥusayn ibn Ali, a Hasanid descendant of ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan, known as *Ṣāhib al-Fakhh* (the Master of Fakhh). The revolt was sparked by the oppressive policies of the Abbasid governor of Madinah, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abdillāh, who imposed harsh restrictions on the Alids, including daily reporting requirements and severe punishments for perceived disobedience. The immediate trigger was the arrest and public humiliation of Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh al-Maḥḍ, a relative of Ḥusayn, on charges of consuming intoxicants. This incident, combined with the broader climate of oppression, galvanized al-Ḥusayn and his supporters to rebel.

On the 13th of Dhū al-Qi‘dah, 169 AH (May 17, 786 CE), Ḥusayn and his followers, numbering around 26 Alids, 10 Hajj pilgrims, and some *mawali*, seized control of Madinah. They entered the Prophet’s Mosque during the morning prayers, had the *mu‘adhhin* recite the Shi‘i version of the *adhān* (including the phrase: **حَيَّ عَلَى خَيْرِ الْعَمَلِ**), and expelled the Abbasid governor. Ḥusayn delivered a sermon calling for adherence to the Quran, the traditions of the Prophet (s), and the leadership of *al-Murtaḍā min Al Muḥammad*. Many in Madinah pledged allegiance to him, though support was not universal.

When news of the uprising reached Hādī, he mobilized an Abbasid force of 4,000 soldiers, led by Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān, to crush the rebellion. The two forces met at Fakhh on the day of Tarwīyyah (8th Dhū al-Hijjah, 169 AH). Despite an offer of security from the Abbasids, al-Ḥusayn refused to submit, choosing to fight. The battle was fierce but ultimately disastrous for the Alids. Ḥusayn and many of his companions were killed, including prominent Hasanids like Sulaymān ibn ‘Abdillāh and Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh al-Maḥḍ. Some, like Idris ibn ‘Abdillāh, escaped to Morocco, where he later founded the Idrisid dynasty, while others, such as Yaḥyā ibn ‘Abdillāh, were later captured and killed.

The aftermath of Fakhh was brutal. The Abbasids beheaded over 100 Alids, sent their heads to Hādī in Baghdad, and executed the captives. The houses and properties of Ḥusayn and his family in Madinah were burned and confiscated, and the city’s residents were forced to publicly curse Ḥusayn and his companions.

Approach of Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq and Mūsā

al-Kāẓim (as)

Imam Ja'far al-Šādiq (a) (d. 148 AH/765 CE):

Imam Ja'far al-Šādiq (a) consistently opposed the Hasanid uprisings, including those led by 'Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan and his son Muḥammad ibn 'Abdillāh. His stance was rooted in his belief that no revolt would succeed before the rise of the promised Imam al-Mahdi (atf), and that premature uprisings would only lead to bloodshed and failure. Below are the narrations from Imam al-Šādiq (a):

1. Rejection of Muḥammad ibn 'Abdillāh's Claims and Prediction of Failure:

At the gathering in Abwā, where the Banū Hāshim pledged allegiance to Muḥammad ibn 'Abdillāh as the Mahdi, Imam al-Šādiq (a) explicitly rejected this claim. He predicted that the caliphate would go to the Abbasids (al-Saffāḥ and Maṣṣūr) and that Muḥammad and his brother Ibrāhīm would be killed, a prophecy that came true in 145 AH/762 CE:

لَا تَفْعَلُوا فَإِنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ لَمْ يَأْتِ بَعْدُ ... أَنْ ابْنَكَ هَذَا هُوَ الْمَهْدِيُّ فَلَيْسَ بِهِ وَ لَا هَذَا أَوَانُهُ

*"Do not do this, for this matter has not yet come... he is not [the Mahdi], nor is this the time for it"*¹ clarifying that Muḥammad ibn 'Abdillāh was not the promised Mahdi and that the time for the Mahdi's rise had not arrived. He further predicted the Abbasids' rise and the Hasanids' failure:

إِنَّهَا وَاللَّهِ مَا هِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا إِلَى ابْنَيْكَ وَ لَكِنَّهَا لَهُمْ وَ إِنَّ ابْنَيْكَ لَمَقْتُولَانِ

*"By Allah, it is not for you nor for your two sons, but it is for them, and your two sons will be killed"*² He also specifically pointed to Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr as the one who would kill Muḥammad. When accused of jealousy by 'Abdullāh, the Imam (a) firmly denied it:

مَا وَاللَّهِ ذَاكَ يَحْمِلُنِي

¹ al-Mufid, *Kitāb al-Irshād*. V.2 P.192; al-Ṭabrisī, *I'lām al-Warā Bi A'lām al-Hudā*. P.278.

² al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.46 P.188.

“By Allah, that is not what drives me”, affirming that his opposition was based on divine knowledge, not personal enmity.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) also predicted Muḥammad’s death, stating that his head would be displayed at *Ḥajar al-Zanābīr*:

فَكَأَنِّي أَرَى رَأْسَكَ وَقَدْ جِيَءَ بِهِ وَوُضِعَ عَلَى حَجَرِ الزَّنَابِيرِ يَسِيلُ مِنْهُ الدَّمُ
إِلَى مَوْضِعٍ كَذَا وَكَذَا

“It is as if I see your head brought forth and placed upon the stone of the wasps, with blood flowing from it to such-and-such a place.”¹

2. Condemnation of Leadership Ambitions:

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) criticized the Hasanids’ motives, attributing their opposition to him to jealousy (*hasad*):

لَيْسَ مِنَّا إِلَّا وَ لَهُ عَدُوٌّ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ فَقِيلَ لَهُ- بَنُو الْحَسَنِ لَا يَعْرِفُونَ لِمَنْ
الْحَقُّ قَالَ بَلَى وَ لَكِنْ يَمْنَعُهُمُ الْحَسَدُ

“There is no one from amongst us *Ahl al-Bayt* but he will have an enemy from within his family.” He was asked whether the *Banū al-Ḥasan* do not recognize the truth. Imam (a) said: “Yes, they recognize, but jealousy stops them from accepting it.”²

He also refuted their claims to the Imamate, asserting that he possessed the *Muṣḥaf Fāṭimah*, the *Jafr*, and the Prophet (s)’s weapons, which symbolized his rightful leadership:

إِنَّ عِنْدَنَا سِلَاحَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص وَ سَيْفَهُ وَ دِرْعَهُ وَ عِنْدَنَا وَ اللَّهُ مُصْحَفُ
فَاطِمَةَ مَا فِيهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَ إِنَّهُ لِإِمْلَاءٍ مِنْ إِمْلَاءِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَ خَطُّهُ
عَلَيَّ بِيَدِهِ وَ الْجُفْرُ وَ مَا يَذْرُونَ مَا هُوَ مِسْكٌ شَاةٍ أَوْ مِسْكٌ بَعِيرٍ

“We have the weapons of the Messenger of Allah (s), his sword, and his shield, and by Allah, we have the *Muṣḥaf of Fāṭimah*, which does not contain a verse from the Book of Allah. It is a collection of knowledge dictated by the Messenger of Allah (s) and written by Ali

¹ al-Majlisī. V.47 P.275.

² al-Majlisī. V.47 P.273 H.10; al-Ṭabrisī, *al-Ihtijāj ‘alā Ahl al-Lajāj*. P.204.

(a) with his hand, and the Jafr—what do they know about it, whether it is the skin of a sheep or a camel?”¹

3. Warnings Against Revolt:

When asked about joining Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh’s uprising in 145 AH/762 CE, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) advised his followers to remain calm until the cosmic signs of Imam al-Mahdi (atf)’s rise:

اسْكُنْ مَا سَكَتَتِ السَّمَاءُ وَ الْأَرْضُ

“Remain calm as long as the sky and the earth are calm.”²

This was later clarified by Imam al-Riḍā (a):

إِنَّمَا قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع اسْكُنْ مَا سَكَتَتِ السَّمَاءُ مِنَ النِّدَاءِ وَ الْأَرْضُ مِنَ الْخَسْفِ بِالْجَيْشِ

“Abū ‘Abdillāh (al-Ṣādiq) (a) meant: ‘Remain calm as long as the sky is calm from the cry (of the call) and the earth is calm from the swallowing (of the army of al-Sufyānī).’³

4. Refusal to Participate in Political Activity:

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) refused to engage in political revolts, even when approached by Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī in 129 AH/747 CE:

أَفِ أَمَّا أَنَا لِهَؤُلَاءِ بِإِمَامٍ أَمْ يَعْلمُونَ أَنَّهُ إِنَّمَا يَقْتُلُ السُّفْيَانِيَّ

“Uff, uff! I am not the Imam of these people who don’t even understand that the one who will rise with the sword is the one who will kill al-Sufyānī.”⁴

He further emphasized that the rise would not happen until the appearance of al-Sufyānī:

قَالَ لَا تَبْرَحِ الْأَرْضُ يَا فَضْلُ حَتَّى يَخْرُجَ السُّفْيَانِيُّ فَإِذَا خَرَجَ السُّفْيَانِيُّ فَاجِيبُوا إِلَيْنَا يَقُولُهَا ثَلَاثًا وَ هُوَ مِنَ الْمَحْنُومِ

¹ al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.47 P.271.

² al-Majlisī. V.47 P.273 H.23; al-Ṣadūq, *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*. V.1 P.10.

³ al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.52 P.189 H.16; al-Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*. P.412.

⁴ al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.47 P.297 H.122.

*"The rise will not happen until the appearance of al-Sufyānī, and when al-Sufyānī comes, then come to us."*¹

5. Moral Critique of the Hasanids' Actions:

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) criticized the Hasanids' methods:

لَوْ تُوَفِّي الْحَسَنُ بْنُ الْحَسَنِ بِالزَّنا وَ الرَّبَا وَ شَرَبَ الْخَمْرِ كَانَ خَيْرًا مِمَّا تُؤَفِّي عَلَيْهِ

*"If the children of Ḥasan), who are revolting, die while committing fornication, drinking wine, or taking usury, then it's better for them than doing what they are doing now (trying to grab power by rejecting Wilāyah)."*²

6. Response to Claims About the Prophet's Sword:

Some among the 'Ijliyyah (a group associated with the Hasanids) claimed that the sword of the Prophet (s) was with 'Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan, symbolizing his right to leadership. Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (a) firmly rejected this claim, emphasizing that the true successor to the Prophet's legacy is the divinely appointed Imam, and that the Hasanids' claims were baseless:

وَاللّٰهُ مَا رَأَهُ وَ لَا أَبُوهُ بِوَاحِدَةٍ مِنْ عَيْنَيْهِ، إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ رَأَاهُ أَبُوهُ عِنْدَ الْحُسَيْنِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ). وَإِنْ صَاحِبَ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ مَحْفُوظٌ لَهُ، فَلَا تَذْهَبَنَّ يَمِينًا وَ لَا شِمَالًا، فَإِنَّ الْأَمْرَ وَاللّٰهُ وَاضِحٌ، وَاللّٰهُ لَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ السَّمَاءِ وَ الْأَرْضِ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَى أَنْ يَحْوِلُوا هَذَا [الْأَمْرَ] عَنْ مَوْضِعِهِ الَّذِي وَضَعَهُ اللّٰهُ فِيهِ، مَا اسْتَطَاعُوا، وَ لَوْ أَنَّ النَّاسَ كَفَرُوا جَمِيعًا حَتَّى لَا يَبْقَى أَحَدٌ لَجَاءَ اللّٰهُ لِهَذَا الْأَمْرِ بِأَهْلِ يَكُونُونَ مِنْ أَهْلِهِ

"By Allah, he has not seen it, nor has his father seen it with either of his eyes—unless his father saw it with Ḥusayn (a). Indeed, the Master of this Affair (Imam al-Mahdi) is preserved for him. So do not deviate right or left, for, by Allah, the matter is clear. By Allah, even if the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth were to gather to divert this matter from where Allah has placed it, they would not be

¹ al-Majlisī. V.47 P.297 H.20.

² al-Majlisī. V.47 P.273; al-Ṭabṛasī, al-Iḥtijāj 'alā Ahl al-Lajāj. P.204.

able to. And even if all people were to disbelieve, Allah would still bring forth for this affair those who would be its people.”¹

7. Futility on Relying on Popular Support:

Despite his opposition, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) expressed sorrow for the Hasanids' fate:

وَاللّٰهُ مَا وَفَّتِ الْأَنْصَارُ وَلَا أَبْنَاءُ الْأَنْصَارِ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص بِمَا أَعْطَوْهُ مِنَ
الْبَيْعَةِ عَلَى الْعَقَبَةِ

*“By Allah, neither the Anṣār nor their sons fulfilled their pledge to the Messenger of Allah (s) that they gave at al-‘Aqabah.”*²

This highlights the futility of relying on public support to initiate a revolt, as history has shown that even the Anṣār of Madinah, despite their close association with the Holy Prophet (s), did not take a stand to protect his family. Neither during his lifetime nor after his passing did, they actively defend the rights of his household. This demonstrates that counting on popular support in times of crisis or injustice can be unreliable, even from those who might be expected to be the most loyal.

8. Shallow knowledge of ‘Abdullāh:

When a man asked ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan about Ḥajj and was directed to Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), after he was not able to answer the queries, the Imam (a) affirmed his role as a guide:

نَعَمْ أَنَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالَ اللَّهُ فِي كِتَابِهِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهُدَاهُمْ اقْتَدِهْ سَلْ
عَمَّا شِئْتَ فَسَأَلَهُ الرَّجُلُ فَأَنْبَأَهُ عَنْ جَمِيعِ مَا سَأَلَهُ

*“Yes, I am among those about whom Allah said in His Book: ‘These are they whom Allah guided, therefore follow their guidance’ (Quran 6:90). Ask what you want to ask, so the man asked the Imam, and he (the Imam) informed him about all of what he asked.”*³

9. Seeking Leadership:

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) cautioned against seeking leadership:

¹ al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.27 P.49 H.1; al-‘Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr al-‘Ayyāshī*. V.1 P.326.

² al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.47 P.305.

³ al-Majlisī. V.24 P.145 H.16.

أَتَرَانِي لَا أَعْرِفُ خِيَارَكُمْ مِنْ شِرَارِكُمْ بَلَىٰ وَ اللَّهُ وَ إِنَّ شِرَارَكُمْ مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ
يُوطَأَ عَقْبُهُ إِنَّهُ لَا بُدَّ مِنْ كَذَّابٍ أَوْ عَاجِزٍ الرَّأْيِ

*"Do you think I do not distinguish the bad among you from the good? Yes, by Allah, the bad ones among you are those who love people walking behind them. Such a person is inevitably turn out to a liar or a helpless one (due to ignorance) in his opinion."*¹

Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm (a) (d. 183 AH/799 CE):

Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm (a) continued his father's policy of non-involvement in political uprisings, including the Battle of Fakhkh in 169 AH/786 CE:

1. Refusal to Pledge Allegiance to al-Ḥusayn ibn Ali:

When Ḥusayn ibn Ali, the leader of the Fakhkh uprising, asked Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm (a) to pledge allegiance, the Imam declined:

يَا ابْنَ عَمٍّ لَا تُكَلِّفْنِي مَا كَلَّفَ ابْنُ عَمِّكَ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَ فَيَخْرُجَ مِنِّي مَا لَا
أُرِيدُ كَمَا خَرَجَ مِنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَ مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ يُرِيدُ

"Do not force me to what your cousin (Zayd ibn Ali) forced your uncle (Imam al-Ṣādiq (a)) so that I have to treat you the way I do not want to, as Abū 'Abdillāh (Imam al-Ṣādiq (a)) had to treat Zayd the way he did not want to." Ḥusayn respected the Imam (a)'s position:

إِنَّمَا عَرَضْتُ عَلَيْكَ أَمْرًا فَإِنْ أَرَدْتَهُ دَخَلْتُ فِيهِ وَ إِنْ كَرِهْتَهُ لَمْ أَحْمِلْكَ عَلَيْهِ وَ
اللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ

*"I just suggested that you pledge your allegiance to me; but if you do not like it, I will not force you to do it."*²

2. Prediction of Ḥusayn's Martyrdom:

As Ḥusayn departed, Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm (a) predicted his death:

يَا ابْنَ عَمٍّ إِنَّكَ مَقْتُولٌ فَاجِدْ الضَّرَابَ فَإِنَّ الْقَوْمَ فَسَاقٌ يُظْهِرُونَ إِيْمَانًا وَ
يُسِرُّونَ شِرْكَاً وَ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَ إِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ أَحْتَسِبُكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَصَبَةٍ

¹ al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*. V2. P.299 H.8.

² al-Kulaynī. V.1 P.366; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.48 P.160 H.6.

“My cousin! You will be killed, so be serious in your affair. For people express their faith but they hide their polytheism. To Allah we belong and to Him is our return. I seek reward with Allah for you, from this difficulty.”¹

Personality of ‘Abdullāh and Muḥammad

‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan (d. 145 AH/763 CE):

‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan, also known as ‘*Abdullāh al-Mahd*, was a prominent Hasanid leader and the father of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh. He was a respected figure among the Banū Hāshim, his mother was Fāṭimah, the daughter of Imām al-Ḥusayn (a), making him a direct descendant of both Imām al-Ḥasan and Imām al-Ḥusayn (as). Despite his noble lineage, ‘Abdullāh’s ambition to secure the caliphate for his family led him into conflict with Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (a).

- **Ambition and Claims:** ‘Abdullāh believed that the Imāmah and Khilāfah rightfully belonged to the Hasanids, as they were the eldest branch of Imām al-Ḥasan (a)’s progeny. He challenged Imam al-Ṣādiq (a)’s authority, claiming that the Imāmah should have passed to his family after Imām al-Ḥusayn (a), rather than to the Husaynid line (Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (a) and his descendants). He accused Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) of envy, a charge the Imam (a) refuted².
- **Disputing and arguing:** ‘Abdullāh used to regularly dispute and argue with Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) and even broke off the family ties with Imam (a) to the extent that Imam (a) had to go and patch up with him³.
- **Dilution of Shia ideology:** To gain popular support of general Muslims, diluted Shia ideological stance of Imāmah of Imam Ali (a) after Holy Prophet (s). Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) stated this:

الْعَجَبُ لِعَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْحَسَنِ يَقُولُ لَيْسَ فِينَا إِمَامٌ صَدَقَ مَا هُوَ بِإِمَامٍ وَلَا كَانَ
أَبُوهُ إِمَامًا يَزْعُمُ أَنَّ عَلِيَّ بْنَ أَبِي طَالِبٍ ع لَمْ يَكُنْ إِمَامًا

“It is strange that ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan says there is no Imam among us. He speaks the truth; he is not an Imam, nor was his

¹ al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*. V.1 P.366; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.48 P.106 H.6

² al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.47 P.285

³ al-Irbilī, *Kashf al-Ghummah Fi Ma‘rifah al-‘Immah*. V.2 P.381.

father an Imam. He claims that Imam Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib (a) was not an Imam and repeats this.”¹

- **Conflict with Imam al-Ṣādiq (a):** ‘Abdullāh mocked the Imam 9a’s knowledge, claiming that Imam Ali (a) had left only “two pieces of sheepskin”. Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) refuted the claim thus:

إِنَّ عِنْدَنَا سِلَاحَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَ وَ سَيْفَهُ وَ دِرْعَهُ وَ عِنْدَنَا وَ اللَّهُ مُصَحَّفُ
فَاطِمَةَ مَا فِيهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَ إِنَّهُ لِإِمْلَاءٍ مِنْ إِمْلَاءِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَ خَطَّهُ
عَلَيْ يَدِهِ وَ الْجَفْرُ وَ مَا يَدْرُونَ مَا هُوَ مِنْكَ شَاةٍ أَوْ مِنْكَ بَعِيرٌ

“Indeed, we have with us the weapon of the Holy Prophet (s), his sword, and his armour. And by Allah, we also have the Muṣḥaf of Fāṭimah, which does not contain a single verse from the Book of Allah. Rather, it is dictated from the dictation of the Messenger of Allah (s), and Imam ‘Ali (a) wrote it with his own hand. And we have al-Jafr—though they do not know what it is—a skin of a sheep or a skin of a camel.”²

‘Abdullāh’s followers, including the Zaydiyyah sect, also taunted the Imam (a)’s supporters: *“They used to taunt the followers of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), calling them Jews.”³*

- **Fate:** ‘Abdullāh was arrested by Manṣūr in 145 AH/762 CE and died in captivity in 145 AH/763 CE, as predicted by Imam al-Ṣādiq (a).
- **Repentance:** When ‘Abdullāh was arrested by Manṣūr and taken to Baghdad, he repented and realised his folly for trusting Abbasids. Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) wrote a letter to him consoling him to be patient on calamities⁴.

Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh (d. 145 AH/762 CE):

Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh, claimed himself to be *Nafs al-Zakiyyah*, was born in 100 AH/718 CE and was widely regarded for his piety, bravery, and charisma.

¹ Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣā’ir al-Darajāt*. V.3 P.41; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.47 P.271 H.4.

² al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.47 P.271 H.3.

³ al-Majlisī. V.47 P.273 H.11.

⁴ al-Majlisī. V.47 P.300. H.25.

- **Claims to Leadership:** Muḥammad claimed the titles of Imāmah and Mahdi, asserting that he was the promised leader who would fill the earth with justice. At the Abwā gathering, the Banū Hāshim pledged allegiance to him as the Mahdi, a move that Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) rejected.
- **Revolt Against the Abbasids:** In 145 AH/762 CE, Muḥammad launched a major uprising against Manṣūr, seizing control of Madinah in Rajab. His forces initially gained control of Madinah and he attracted support from Sunni leaders like Mālik ibn Anas.¹
- **Conflict with Imam al-Ṣādiq (a):** Muḥammad sought Imam al-Ṣādiq's support, but when the Imam refused, Muḥammad mocked him: "*What prevented you from coming to my house except that you have seen in the Ṣuḥuf (Book of Fāṭimah (a))?*"²
- **Downfall and Death:** In the Battle of Aḥjar al-Zayt in Shahr Ramaḍān 145 AH (December 762 CE), Muḥammad was killed fulfilling Imam al-Ṣādiq (a)'s prediction. His brother Ibrāhīm was also defeated and killed at Bākhumrā in Dhū al-Ḥijjah 145 AH (February 763 CE)³.

Conclusion

The Hasanids' history is a tragic chapter in the broader narrative of the Alids' struggle for leadership in the Muslim community. Driven by a sense of historical injustice they allied with the Abbasids to overthrow the Umayyads in 132 AH/750 CE, only to be betrayed and marginalized by their former partners. Their uprisings, including the revolt of Muḥammad ibn 'Abdillāh in 145 AH/762 CE and the Battle of Fakhkh in 169 AH/786 CE, were marked by bravery but ultimately ended in failure, as predicted by Imams Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and Mūsā al-Kāẓim (as).

'Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan and his son Muḥammad ibn 'Abdillāh were complex figures. Their claims to the Imāmah and Mahdi title were rejected by Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), who warned that no revolt would succeed before the rise of Imam al-Mahdi (atf).

¹ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil Fī al-Tārīkh*. V.5 P.210.

² al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*. V.47 P.270 H.1.

³ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusūl Wal Mulūk*. V.9.

The Battle of Fakhkh underscores the high cost of the Hasanids' ambitions. While some Hasanids, like Idrīs ibn 'Abdillāh, managed to establish Idrisid dynasty in Morocco, most faced death or exile. The A'imma (as)'s warnings and their refusal to participate in these revolts reflect a broader Shi'i theological perspective that true justice and leadership will only be realized with the advent of Imam al-Mahdī (a).

In summary, the Hasanids' story, as illuminated by the narrations of Imam al-Bāqir, al-Ṣādiq, and al-Kāẓim (as), serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of pursuing leadership without divine sanction, the importance of obedience to the rightful A'imma, and the necessity of aligning actions with divine timing. The A'imma (as)'s guidance emphasizes that true justice and leadership will only be realized with the advent of Imam al-Mahdī (atf), and until then, the Ahl al-Bayt (as)'s role is to preserve the spiritual legacy of Islam through knowledge, patience, and steadfastness in the face of oppression.

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About the Author



Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sanad is a distinguished scholar and professor of Advanced Studies (*baḥth al-khārij*) in the Islamic Seminaries of Qum and Najaf. Leaving his academic studies in the UK, he pursued religious scholarship in Qum, studying under prominent scholars like Grand Āyatullāh Rawḥānī, Gulpāygānī, Tabrīzī, and Khurāsānī. Since 1990, he has been teaching at the highest levels, authoring over 50 books on *fiqh*, *uṣūl*, history, and theology.

IMAM AL-MAHDI'S RETURN

Exploring the *Mahdawī* doctrine as a living and dynamic source of hope, this book examines its profound spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions and its relevance to both individual and collective human experience. Centered on the period of occultation, it analyzes authentic narrations concerning the definitive signs preceding the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (a), the roles of key end-time figures, and the trials that characterize an age marked by confusion, widespread misinformation, and the emergence of false claimants. Through careful engagement with the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) and a rigorous methodology rooted in the scholarly sciences of ḥadīth and its interpretation, the work presents a clear framework for understanding the realities of the awaited reappearance while cautioning against speculation, premature allegiances, and deceptive movements that exploit religious expectations.

Emphasizing discernment, vigilance, and steadfast adherence to authentic teachings, the book serves as both a scholarly study and a practical guide, helping readers distinguish truth from falsehood and navigate the challenges of the occultation with clarity, awareness, and spiritual responsibility. By addressing contemporary misconceptions, examining the dangers posed by misleading movements, and reaffirming the criteria established in reliable narrations, it calls believers to intellectual caution and spiritual preparedness.

In doing so, it encourages a balanced approach grounded in knowledge, patience, and fidelity to the authentic path, enabling readers to confront uncertainty with confidence while remaining firmly rooted in the enduring guidance of the Ahl al-Bayt (a).



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