

A Series of Ideological Researches

# **Infallible Imams (a)**

**A Short Study on the Lives of the Infallible Imams (a)**

**Volume Six**

**Imam Mahdī**

(peace be upon him)

**Ayatollah al-Sayyid ‘Alī al-Ḥusaynī al-Mīlānī**

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**Islamic Truths Center**

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**In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful**



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## Foreword

The last and the most perfect divine religion was conveyed to humanity by Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him and his family. The prophethood came to an end with him. The religion of Islam emerged in Mecca but it spread all over the Arabian Peninsula after twenty-three years of strenuous efforts made by the Messenger of Allah (s) and a handful of his loyal companions.

The continuation of this divine mission was an important undertaking that was delegated publicly on Dhūl Hijja, the 18<sup>th</sup>, by Allah, to ‘Alī (peace be upon him), the Commander of the Faithful and the first and the noblest personality after the Holy Prophet (s) in the Islamic world.

With proclamation of Haḍrat ‘Alī's guardianship and succession on this day, divine blessings were completed and the religion of Islam was perfected and announced as the only religion chosen by Allah. That was when and how unbelievers and pagans despaired of destroying and harming Islam.

Soon after the demise of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, some of the companions of the Holy Prophet (s) premeditatedly deviated from the course of guidance and leadership. They closed the gate of the city of knowledge putting Muslims in perplexity and confusion. From the very beginning of their rule, they placed the truths of Islam – that were like a shining sun – behind the dark clouds of doubt and skepticism by way of putting a ban on

recording prophetic traditions, spreading fabricated ones, casting doubts and embarking on hypocritical and deceptive tactics.

Obviously, in spite of all conspiracies hatched by the enemies of Islam, the truths of Islam and noble sayings of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, continued to spread as they were carried on and communicated by the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī, peace be upon him, his successors and a few of his devout companions and those truths kept flowing and manifesting themselves in one way or the other in the course of history. By explaining the truths, they did away with doubts, specious arguments, and false beliefs presented and inculcated by the enemies of Islam, and made the truth clear to all.

In this respect, great scholars and men of knowledge such as al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, al-Sayyid Murtaḍa, Khwāja Naṣīr, al-‘Allāma al-Ḥillī, Qāḍī Nūrullah, Mīr Ḥāmid Ḥusayn, al-Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn, al-‘Allāma al-Amīnī etc. having been glittering like shining stars, since they are the ones who defended Islamic truths, explained the realities of the school of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, and dealt with spurious arguments using their tongues and pens.

In our era, one of the outstanding scholars and researchers who has, with his eloquent pen and expressive writing, explained the truths of the religion of Islam and defended the *imamate* and *wilāyah* (guardianship) of the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī (peace be upon him) is the great researcher Ayatollah al-Sayyid ‘Alī al al-Ḥusaynī al-Mīlānī, may he live long.

The Islamic Truths Center is proud to take up the task of reviving the fruitful and precious works of this great researcher by reviewing, translating and publishing them in a bid to make them available to students, scientific figures and those who are in search of Islamic truths.



The book in your hand is a translation of one of his works entitled *Infallible Imams (peace be upon him)* and which hopefully will acquaint English readers with Islamic truths. It is expected that this humble effort will earn the pleasure of the Baqiyatullah, the Imam of Age, Imam Mahdī, may Allah hasten his reappearance.

Islamic Truths Center



**Imam Mahdī**  
(peace be upon him)

## **A Brief Look at the Life of Imam Mahdī (a)**

‘Allāma Ḥillī, may Allah bless him, writes:

The son of Imam Ḥasan al-‘Askarī (peace be upon him) is Imam Mahdī (peace be upon him), whose name is Muḥammad.

Ibn al-Jawzī narrates with a chain of transmission from Ibn ‘Umar who says: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said:

يُخْرَجُ فِي آخِرِ الزَّمَانِ رَجُلٌ مِنْ وَلَدِي اسْمُهُ كَاسْمِي وَكُنْيَتُهُ كُنْيَتِي، يَمَلَأُ الْأَرْضَ عَدْلًا كَمَا مَلَأْتُ جُورًا، فَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْمَهْدِيُّ.<sup>1</sup>

*"In the End Times, a man from my descendants will emerge; his name will be the same as mine, and his title the same as mine. He will fill the earth with justice just as it has been filled with oppression. That is the Mahdī."*

## **Ibn Taymiyyah's View on Imam Mahdī (a)**

Ibn Taymiyyah says:

Prominent figures like Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, ‘Abdul-Bāqī ibn Qānī’, and several other genealogists and historians have stated that Imam Ḥasan al-‘Askarī did not leave any children. However, the Imamiya claim that he had a son and say that he entered a cellar in Samarra in his childhood. Some of them say he was two years old, others say three, and some say he was five at the time.

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<sup>1</sup> *Tadhkirat al-Khawāṣṣ*, p. 363.

Now, if such a young child had existed and been known, it would have been obligatory, according to divine instruction, as mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah and by consensus of the scholars, for him to be under the care of his mother or grandmother and be raised by them, or by others who were suitable to take care of the child. His wealth would also have needed to be safeguarded by a trustworthy person.

Furthermore, all the Imamiya agree that, whether or not this child existed, they do not benefit from him in any way. The only thing this awaited figure brings to this group is everlasting grief and frustration, constant conflict with the world, and futile hope for someone who will never come...

According to the customary practices of the Ummah of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings be upon him), the idea that a Muslim could live for such a long time is clearly false. In Islam, we do not know of anyone who has lived for 120 years, let alone for such an extended period. A sound hadith tells us that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said near the end of his life:

"From today, within the next hundred years, no one alive on earth will remain."

Therefore, as the sound hadith tells us, the lifespan of people in this Ummah is between sixty and seventy years, and very few live beyond that.

The Imamiya's argument based on the life of Khidr is also flawed. Who among them accepts that Khidr is still alive? Scholars who have researched this issue believe that he has passed away, and even if he were alive, he would not be considered part of this Ummah.

Regarding the narration from Ibn al-Jawzī, we respond from several angles:

**First**, this hadith does not benefit you, because you do not accept the hadiths of Ahl al-Sunnah nor do you argue based on it. If you claim this narration is a proof for Ahl al-Sunnah, we will address their view on the matter in its proper place.

**Second**, this narration is a solitary report (khabar wāhid). How can you rely on it to establish a principle of faith, without which one's belief is not valid?

**Third**, the wording of this hadith does not support your argument, but rather, it is evidence against you. The hadith says:

يواطئ اسمه اسمي واسم أبيه اسم أبي

*"His name will match my name, and his father's name will match my father's name."*

Therefore, the Mahdī mentioned by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) is Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullah, not Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan. Moreover, there is a narration from Imam ‘Alī (peace be upon him) stating that the Mahdī will be from the descendants of Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī, not Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī.

Of course, the hadiths about Imam Mahdī (peace be upon him) are well-known. These narrations have been reported by Imam Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, and others. For example, the hadith of ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) where he said:

لولم يبق من الدنيا إلا يوم لطول الله ذلك اليوم حتى يبعث فيه رجلاً من أهل بيتي يواطئ اسمه اسمي واسم أبيه اسم أبي، يملأ الأرض قسطاً وعدلاً كما ملئت ظلماً وجوراً.

*"If only one day remains in the world, Allah will extend that day until a man from my family is sent, whose name matches mine and whose father's name matches my father's. He will fill the earth with fairness and justice as it was filled with injustice and oppression."*

**Fourth**, he narrated the hadith in this manner:

إِسْمُهُ كإِسْمِي وَكَتَبْتُهُ كَتَبْتِي.

*"His name will be like my name, and his title will be like my title."*

He did not narrate it as:

يُوَاطِئُ إِسْمَهُ إِسْمِي وَإِسْمُ أَبِيهِ إِسْمُ أَبِي.

*"His name will match my name, and his father's name will match my father's name."*

Therefore, we must also say that the version of the hadith he cited has not been narrated with this wording in any of the famous hadith collections.

This Rāfiḍī (referring to ‘Allāma Ḥillī, may Allah have mercy on him) did not mention the hadith in the famous wording found in books such as Musnad Aḥmad, Sunan Abū Dāwūd, Ṣaḥīḥ Tirmidhī, and others, but rather, he quoted a fabricated version that none of them have narrated.

He (‘Allāma Ḥillī, may Allah have mercy on him) writes: "Ibn al-Jawzī narrated this hadith with a chain of transmission." In this regard, it should be said:

If he means the well-known scholar and prolific author, Abū al-Faraj, then he has lied about him.

But if he refers to his grandson, Yūsuf ibn Qūzūghlī, the author of the historical book *Mir’āt al-Zamān* and another book on the Twelve Imams titled *A’lām al-Khawāṣṣ*, it should still be noted that this man mixed truth and falsehood in his works and frequently used weak and fabricated hadiths to achieve his goals.

He wrote according to the desires of the people, sometimes catering to the Shī‘a to receive rewards, and other times writing according to the Ḥanafī school for certain kings to reach his aims. His method was similar to that of a preacher

who, when asked about his school of thought, responded: "In which city?"

For this reason, we see in some of his books, due to his flattery and deception aimed at Shī'a, criticism and condemnation of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and other Companions, while in others, he shows respect and reverence for the Caliphs.

Because the well-known narration among all scholars throughout history has been that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said about the Mahdī: "His name will match my name, and his father's name will match my father's," many people have aspired to be the promised Mahdī. For instance, Manṣūr al-Dawānīqī named his son Muḥammad and gave him the title of Mahdī so that his name would match the Prophet's name and his father's name would match the Prophet's father's name. But he was not the promised Mahdī.

Another person, Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Tūmart, claimed the title of Mahdī.

Then there was another one called Mahdī who appeared in the year 500 AH and something and died in the year 524 AH.

Before him, 'Ubayd Allah ibn Maymūn al-Qaddāh also claimed to be the Mahdī... He and his family were leaders of the Isma'ilī sect and heretics... He appeared in the year 299 AH and died in the year 324 AH, and the government passed to his children.

After they ruled Egypt for over two hundred years, they were finally overthrown in the year 568 AH. Their disbelief, hypocrisy, apostasy, and enmity toward Allah and His Messenger are well known to scholars.



Furthermore, the hadith narrated by Ibn Mājah, which states: "There is no Mahdī except for 'Isā ibn Maryam," is weak.<sup>1</sup>

This concludes Ibn Taymiyyah's statement on the subject matter.

### **Other Accusations**

Ibn Taymiyyah, in his works, has made numerous remarks about Imam Mahdī (peace be upon him), some of which are not in line with the decorum expected of religious individuals or the character of scholars and debaters. For instance, he writes:

"Another folly of the Shī'a is that they assign various places and locations for the awaited Mahdī and sit there awaiting his arrival. One of these places is the Samarra cellar, which they believe is the place of the Mahdī's occultation.

Sometimes they place animals such as mules, horses, and others near the cellar so that the Mahdī, upon his emergence, can ride them. At the beginning and end of the day and at other times, they appoint someone to stand before the cellar and call upon the awaited Mahdī to appear: "O our master, appear! O our master, appear!"

The Shī'a draw weapons in these locations even though no one is there to fight them. Among the Shī'a, there are those who, when it's time for prayer, say: "We will not pray now in case the awaited Mahdī appears and we miss the opportunity to serve him due to being engaged in prayer," even though these Shī'a live in cities like Medina, far from the possible place of his appearance.

The Shī'a, especially during the last ten days of Ramaḍān or on auspicious days, turn toward the east and, with loud voices, call upon him and request his appearance.

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<sup>1</sup> *Minhāj al-Ṣāliḥīn*, vol. 1, p. 44 – 49.

It is obvious that if the Mahdī exists and Allah orders him to appear, he will do so, and the Shī‘a calling for him will not affect his appearance. If Allah does not permit his appearance, then the Shī‘a’s efforts are futile, as Mahdī will not respond to their calls for his emergence.

Moreover, when he does appear, he will have divine support, so much so that his mount will be prepared, and supporters will be sent to aid him. Therefore, he does not need the misguided and pointless efforts of people who, in their ignorance, sit and wait for him endlessly.

Allah Almighty, in the Holy Qur'an, condemns those who call upon beings that do not respond to their supplications. In this regard, He says:

ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْ قِطْمِيرٍ. إِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دَعَاءَكُمْ وَلَا يُسْمِعُوا مَا اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُونَ بَشْرِكُكُمْ وَلَا يَنْبُتُكَ مِثْلُ خَبِيرٍ.<sup>1</sup>

*“That is Allah, your Lord; His is the dominion. And those whom you invoke other than Him do not possess as much as the membrane of a date seed. If you call upon them, they do not hear your supplication, and if they heard, they would not respond to you. And on the Day of Resurrection, they will deny your association. And none can inform you like the One Aware.”*

While these reprimanded individuals in the Age of Ignorance were worshipping idols that physically existed, sometimes inhabited by demons who would appear to people and speak to them, the situation of those who call upon something non-existent, like the Mahdī, is worse than those addressing inanimate objects.

## Critique of Ibn Taymiyyah’s Words

The types of things attributed to the Imamiya (Shī‘a) and the

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<sup>1</sup> Sūrah Fātir: 13-14

statements made about Imam Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) are numerous. We have only brought up this part of his statements to show a glimpse of the lies and slanders Ibn Taymiyyah has leveled against the Shī‘a and their Imam, so it becomes clear that neither religion nor reason prevents this man from engaging in falsehood and accusation.

It is necessary to briefly explain the correct belief about Imam Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance), a belief that is supported by evidence accepted by all Muslims. This way, anyone who is truly seeking the truth can find clarity. The Holy Qur'an states:

لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَلْيُحْيَىٰ مَنْ حَيَّ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ.

*“That those who perish [through disbelief] would perish upon evidence, and those who live [in faith] would live upon evidence.”<sup>1</sup>*

Now, let’s continue this discussion in several parts:

### **Belief in the Mahdī is a clearly defined religious tenet**

Belief in the Mahdī and the reports concerning him are among the unseen matters that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) certainly and unequivocally informed us about, calling the Ummah to accept and acknowledge them. Therefore, belief in the Mahdī is considered one of the conspicuous and clearly defined tenets of Islam, and whoever denies this belief is, in fact, rejecting the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), which amounts to disbelief. Even Ibn Taymiyyah himself admits:

“The narrations concerning Imam Mahdī (peace be upon him) are well-known. These reports have been transmitted

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<sup>1</sup> Sūrah al-Anfāl: 42

by Imam Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, and others.”

In the upcoming sections, we will mention some of these narrations. Our goal here is to clarify that belief in the Mahdī is, based on the numerous narrations from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), one of the fundamental tenets of Islam. Many scholars, both Shī‘a and Sunni, have authored books on this subject.

### **Sunni Scholars Who Have Written About Imam Mahdī (a)**

Now, we will list some of the most well-known Sunni scholars who, over the centuries, have written about Imam Mahdī (peace be upon him):

- Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Zuhayr ibn Harb, known as Ibn Abī Khaythama, died in 279 AH
- Abū ‘Abdullah Na‘īm ibn Ḥammād al-Marwazī, died in 288 AH
- Abū Ḥusayn Ibn Munādī, died in 336 AH
- Abū Nu‘aym al-Isfahanī, died in 430 AH
- Abū ‘Alā ‘Aṭṭār al-Hamdānī, died in 569 AH
- ‘Abdul-Ghanī al-Maqdisī, died in 600 AH
- Muḥyiddīn Ibn ‘Arabī al-Andalusī, died in 638 AH
- Sa‘d al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Mu‘ayyad Hamawī Juwaynī, died in 650 AH
- Abū ‘Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Ganjī al-Shafī‘ī, died in 658 AH
- Yūsuf ibn Yaḥyā al-Maqdisī, died in 658 AH
- Ibn Qayyīm al-Jawzīyya, died in 685 AH
- Badr al-Dīn Nablusī, died in 772 AH
- Abū al-Fidā Ibn Kathīr al-Dimashqī, died in 774 AH
- Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, died in 911 AH

- Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Ḥajar al-Makkī, died in 974 AH
- ‘Alī ibn Hisām al-Dīn al-Muttqī al-Hindī, died in 975 AH
- Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī Qārī al-Hirawī, died in 1014 AH
- Mar’ī ibn Yūsuf al-Maqdisī, died in 1033 AH
- Muḥammad Rasūl al-Barzanjī, died in 1103 AH
- Muḥammad ibn Isma‘īl al-San‘ānī, died in 1182 AH
- ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Jamālī al-Maghribī, died in 1248 AH
- Muḥammad Ḥabībullah al-Shinqīṭī, died in 1363 AH
- Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Shawkānī al-Qāḍī, died in 1250 AH
- Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Ḥalwānī, died in 1308 AH
- Aḥmad ibn Ṣiddīq al-Ghumārī, died in 1380 AH

### **Sunni Scholars Affirming the Authenticity of Narrations**

Many prominent Sunni scholars have confirmed the authenticity or the widely-transmitted nature of the narrations about Imam Mahdī. Some of these scholars include:

- Muḥammad ibn ‘Isā al-Tirmidhī, died in 297 AH
- Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn al-Abarī, died in 363 AH
- Abū ‘Abdullah al-Hakīm al-Naysaburi, died in 405 AH
- Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqi, died in 458 AH
- Faryābī al-Baghāwī, died in 510 AH
- Ibn Athīr al-Jazarī, author of "al-Nihāya," died in 606 AH
- Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, died in 748 AH
- Nur al-Dīn al-Haythami, died in 807 AH
- Shihab al-Dīn Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, died in 852 AH
- Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, died in 911 AH

## **The Mahdī is from this Ummah**

According to the content of the Mutawātir (mass-transmitted) narrations, the "Mahdī" is from this Ummah (Muslim community), and all Muslims from the past until now have believed in this.

Regarding the hadith "There is no Mahdī except for Jesus, the son of Mary," which appears in the Sunan of Ibn Mājah, it should be noted that the leading scholars of Hadith and the experts of narrators (*rijāl*) have declared this hadith weak. Ibn Mājah states:

Yūnus ibn ‘Abd al-A‘lā narrates to us from Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi‘ī, from Muḥammad ibn Khālīd al-Janādī, from Abān ibn Šāliḥ, from Ḥasan, from Anas ibn Mālīk, who narrates that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said: "The more the world advances, the more hardships will increase, and the world will turn its back on people. People will become more miserly day by day. The Hour (Day of Judgment) will come when people are accustomed to evil, and the Mahdī is none other than Jesus, the son of Mary."<sup>1</sup>

## **The False Narration and Unreliable Narrators**

In our view, the narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) and other Mutawātir narrations concerning Imam Mahdī (peace be upon him) reveal the falsehood of this hadith. For this reason, great scholars such as āl-Hākīm al-Nīshābūri, al-Bayhaqī, and others have classified this hadith as weak.<sup>2</sup>

### **1. Muḥammad ibn Khālīd al-Janādī**

Additionally, Sunni scholars have critiqued the narrators of

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<sup>1</sup> Sunan ibn Mājah, vol. 2/ 1340.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Tāj al-Jāmi‘ lil-Uṣūl, vol. 5, p. 341.

this hadith. One of the narrators is Muḥammad ibn Khālīd al-Janadī, who is the sole narrator of this hadith. For this reason, his biography is often mentioned alongside this hadith.

Al-Mizzī writes: Muḥammad ibn Khālīd al-Janadī al-Sanʿānī, the muezzin, narrates from Abān ibn Ṣāliḥ, from Ḥasan, from Anas that the Mahdī is none other than Jesus, the son of Mary. This hadith was recorded by Ibn Mājah.

Abū Bakr ibn Ziyād says: "This is a strange hadith; very few have narrated it."

Ḥāfiẓ Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī writes: This hadith is only narrated by Muḥammad ibn Khālīd al-Janadī.

Abū ʿAbdullah Ḥāfiẓ says: Muḥammad ibn Khālīd is an unknown man, and the scholars differ regarding those who are intermediaries between al-Janadī and the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) in this hadith.<sup>1</sup>

Al-Dhahabī also comments on this, writing: Al-Shāfiʿī narrates from Muḥammad ibn Khālīd al-Janadī, who narrates from Abān ibn Ṣāliḥ. Al-Azdī says: His hadiths are not accepted.

Abū ʿAbdullah Al-Ḥākim al-Nishabūrī writes: He is an unknown individual. Then, Al-Dhahabī adds: In my opinion, the hadith of Muḥammad ibn Khālīd al-Janadī, that "the Mahdī is Jesus, the son of Mary," which was narrated by Ibn Mājah, is a rejected and unknown hadith.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Ḥajar comments: Muḥammad ibn Khālīd al-Janadī, pronounced with a *fatḥa* on the 'j' and 'n,' the muezzin, is unknown and belongs to the seventh generation of hadith transmitters. He is one of the narrators in the Sunan of Ibn

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<sup>1</sup> *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 25, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Mīzān al-ʿitidāl*, vol. 3, p. 535.

Mājah al-Qazwīnī.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Abān ibn Ṣālīḥ

Although the Sunni scholars claim that all scholars agree that Abān ibn Ṣālīḥ is trustworthy, as Ibn Ḥajar reports, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr and Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥazm have classified him as weak.<sup>2</sup> Al-Dhahabī writes: Ibn Ṣalāḥ in his *Amālī* says: It has been reported that Abān ibn Ṣālīḥ never heard any hadith from Ḥasan.<sup>3</sup>

## 3. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī

The "Ḥasan" mentioned is the well-known Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who has been listed among the enemies of Imam ‘Alī (peace be upon him) in some books. For this reason, the narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) have criticized him, to the extent that some scholars consider these criticisms as ‘mass-transmitted’.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, despite the fact that the Sunnis have narrated many hadiths from Yūnus ibn ‘Abd al-A‘lā and regard him among the eight ascetics, they stress that his narrations are frequently Mursal (i.e. a hadith with interrupted chains) and that he has often committed Tadrīs<sup>5</sup> (concealing defects in narrations).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb, vol. 1, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, vol. 1, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> Mīzān al-I‘tidāl, vol. 3, p. 535.

<sup>4</sup> *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, vol. 1, p. 269.

<sup>5</sup> Tadrīs in the context of ‘ilm al-hadith is divided into two types in a general categorization:

a) Tadrīs in *Isnād* means that the narrator relates a hadith from someone whom he did not see or from whom he did not hear any hadith; he omits a narrator to make a hadith look good (ḥasan) or ṣaḥīḥ. Tadrīs is said to be next to lying.

b) It refers to the case where the narrator uses an ambiguous term which does not tell us if he heard the hadith directly from the one on whose authority he has narrated it.

<sup>6</sup> *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 1, p. 165.



#### 4. Yūnus ibn ‘Abd al-A‘lā

Although Sunni scholars consider Yūnus ibn ‘Abd al-A‘lā trustworthy, he has been accused of fabricating this narration.

Ḥāfiẓ al-Mizzī writes: Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-Qāsim in *The History of Damascus* narrates with his chain from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Rushdīn, from Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn ‘Ubayd Allah al-Wāsiṭī, who said: I saw Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi‘ī in a dream and heard him say: "In al-Janadī's hadith, Yūnus has fabricated this hadith attributed to me, the one narrated by Ḥasan from Anas about Mahdī (peace be upon him) attributed to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)."

Al-Shāfi‘ī says: "This hadith is not from me, and I did not narrate it. Yūnus falsely attributed it to me."<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, al-Dhahabī writes: This hadith has another weakness, which is that...<sup>2</sup>

#### Jesus (a) in the Presence of Imam Mahdī (a)

In contrast to the afore-mentioned fabricated hadith, there are numerous authentic narrations that state that when Imam Mahdī (peace be upon him) appears, Jesus, the son of Mary (peace be upon him), will descend from the heavens and pray behind him. To give a few examples of such hadiths:

Bukhārī and Muslim narrate with their chains from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) as follows:

One day, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said:

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<sup>1</sup> *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 25, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl*, vol. 3, p. 535

كيف أنتم إذا نزل ابن مريم فيكم وإمامكم منكم.<sup>١</sup>

*"How will you be when the son of Mary descends among you and your Imam is from among you?"*

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal narrates with his chain a hadith in which the name of the Dajjāl is mentioned. He says: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said:

فإذا هم بعيسى بن مريم فتقام الصلاة، فيقال له: تقدم يا روح الله! فيقول: ليتقدم إمامكم فيصل بكم.

*"Then they will see Jesus, the son of Mary, and the prayer will be established. It will be said to him: O Spirit of Allah, lead the prayer. He will say: Let your Imam lead, and he will lead you in prayer."*<sup>2</sup>

Al-Manāwī writes: Jesus (peace be upon him) will descend at dawn on the white minaret located in the east of Damascus. He will see Imam Mahdī (peace be upon him) preparing to lead the prayer. At that moment, Imam Mahdī will realize Jesus' presence and will step back to allow Jesus to lead the prayer. However, Jesus will place Imam Mahdī in front of him, and Jesus will pray behind him. Oh, what great virtue and honor will be bestowed upon this Ummah!<sup>3</sup>

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Āberī writes about Imam Mahdī (peace be upon him): Many narrators have transmitted Mutawātir and well-established reports from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) concerning the Mahdī (peace be upon him). In these narrations, it is said that the Mahdī will be from the Prophet's family. He will rule for seven years, and fill the earth with justice. During that time, Jesus, the son of Mary, will descend and come to the gate of Ludd (in Palestine) to assist in killing the Dajjāl. Imam Mahdī will

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<sup>1</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 3, p. 143, chapter 'On the Descent of Jesus peace be upon him', *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 3, p. 367.

<sup>3</sup> *Fayḍ al-Qadīr – Sharḥ al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr*, vol. 6, p. 17.

lead the prayer for this Ummah, and during his lifetime, Jesus (peace and blessings be upon him) will pray behind him.<sup>1</sup>

Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, in response to those who deny this matter, writes: "Their words are very surprising, because the fact that Jesus (peace be upon him) will pray behind Imam Mahdī (peace be upon him) has been narrated in several authentic traditions from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family). The Messenger of Allah is a truthful prophet whose truthfulness is confirmed by all, and all his predictions come true."<sup>2</sup>

### **The Unsoundness of al-Taftāzānī's Viewpoint**

Based on what we have presented, the invalidity of Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī's viewpoint also becomes clear, as he says: "The statement that Jesus will follow Mahdī in prayer, or vice versa, is neither credible nor based on evidence, and it should not be trusted."<sup>3</sup>

### **Mahdī from the Household of the Prophet (s)**

Another important issue is that Imam Mahdī (peace be upon him) is from the Prophet's household. The Messenger of Allah explicitly states that Mahdī (peace be upon him) is from his family. This is repeatedly emphasized in the traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and has been transmitted through a large number of traditions. As mentioned earlier, we saw this statement in the words of some Sunni scholars. Now, let us refer to some of these traditions:

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, and others have reported this tradition in various ways. We will suffice with the narration from Aḥmad's *Musnad*. He reported that

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<sup>1</sup> *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 25, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> *Al-Ḥāwī lil-Fatāwā*, 2/1367.

<sup>3</sup> *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 5, p. 313.

the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said:

لا تقوم الساعة حتى يلي رجل من أهل بيتي يواطئ اسمه اسمي.

*"The Hour (Day of Judgment) will not be established until a man from my family, whose name will be the same as mine, will take charge of the affairs."*<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Mājah, in the chapter titled "The Emergence of Mahdī," writes:

المهدي منّا أهل البيت يصلحه الله في ليلة.<sup>2</sup>

*"The Mahdī is from us, the household of the Prophet, and Allah will rectify his affairs in one night."*

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal also narrates a hadith from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, in which the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said:

لا تقوم الساعة حتى تمتلئ الأرض ظلماً وعدواناً. قال: ثم يخرج رجل من عترتي - أو من أهل بيتي - يملأها قسطاً وعدلاً كما ملئت ظلماً وعدواناً.<sup>3</sup>

*"The Hour will not be established until the earth is filled with oppression and tyranny. Then, a man from my lineage or my household will come and fill it with justice and equity, just as it had been filled with oppression and tyranny."*

Al-Ḥākim al-Nishābūrī also narrated this hadith with the same chain and the phrase "from my household." He then writes: \_ "This hadith fulfills the conditions of authenticity according to Bukhārī and Muslim, although they did not record it in their compilations."

Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī also agreed with al-Ḥākim's

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<sup>1</sup> *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 1, p. 376; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, vol. 4, p. 151; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 3, p. 343.

<sup>2</sup> *Sunan ibn Mājah*, 2/1367.

<sup>3</sup> *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 3, p. 36.

assessment in his *Talkhīṣ*.<sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere, al-Ḥākim al-Nishābūrī mentions the same hadith with the word "*min 'itrati*" (i.e. from my progeny). He quotes Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī and stays: This meets the necessary requirement for authenticity according to Muslim.

Al-Dhahabī has also confirmed this view of al-Ḥākim al-Nishābūrī.<sup>2</sup>

### **Mahdī (a) is from the descendants of Fāṭima (a):**

Another group of narrations mentions that Mahdī (peace be upon him) is from the descendants of Fāṭima (peace be upon her). Below are some of these narrations:

Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, and others have narrated in various ways that Umm Salamah said: \_ "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said:

المهدي من عترتي من ولد فاطمة.<sup>٣</sup>

*"The Mahdī is from my lineage, from the children of Fāṭima"*

Al-Ḥākim al-Nishābūrī and al-Dhahabī also narrate from Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib that Umm Salamah said: \_ "I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) speaking about Mahdī (peace be upon him) and he said:

نعم، هو حق و هو من بني فاطمة.<sup>٤</sup>

*'Yes, he is true, and he is from the children of Fāṭima.'* The author of *Al-Tāj* has deemed the chains of Abū Dāwūd and

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Mustadrak 'alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (printed along with Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak by al-Dhahabī) vol. 4, p. 557.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, p. 558.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Tāj lil-Jāmi', vol. 5, p. 343; Sunan Abī Dāwūd, vol. 2, p. 310; See: al-Mustadrak 'alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn, vol. 4, p. 55; Sunan ibn Mājah, 2/1368.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Mustadrak 'alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (printed along with Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak by al-Dhahabī) vol. 4, p. 557.

al-Hākim al-Nishābūrī authentic.

### **Mahdī is from descendants of Imam Ḥusayn (a):**

Twelver Shī‘a Muslims believe that Mahdī (peace be upon him) is from the lineage of Imam Ḥusayn (peace be upon him). Their narrations on this matter have reached the level of *tawātur* (being widely and continuously narrated). A portion of Sunni narrations also agree with this view. Therefore, there is a consensus between Shī‘a and Sunni scholars on this issue. Also, in the following section of the book, we will mention the names of a number of famous scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah in the science of hadith, history, etc., scholars who maintain that the Awaited Mahdī is the son of Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī and from the descendants of Imam Ḥusayn, peace be upon him.

### **A Different View:**

However, in Sunni texts, there are narrations that state that Mahdī (peace be upon him) is from the lineage of the Prophet’s elder grandson, Imam Ḥasan (peace be upon him), which is why some Sunni scholars have adopted this view.

#### **1. The View of Shaykh ‘Alī Qārī:**

Shaykh ‘Alī Qārī, one of the Sunni scholars who holds this view, writes: “There is a difference of opinion on whether he is from the descendants of Ḥasan or Ḥusayn. It is possible that he is from both lineages, Ḥasan from his father’s side and Ḥusayn from his mother’s side, similar to the case of Ibrahim’s two sons, Ismā‘īl and Ishāq. All the prophets of the Israelites were from Ishāq’s lineage, while from Ismā‘īl’s lineage, our Prophet alone was chosen, taking the position of all the others and reaching the status of the final prophet. Similarly, since most of the imams and leaders are from Ḥusayn’s lineage, it is appropriate that Ḥasan’s lineage be

honored with the final descendant, the Mahdī, who will fulfill the role of all those chosen.

In addition, it has been said that when Imam Ḥasan, peace be upon him, stepped down apparently from the caliphate – as also mentioned about his virtues in prophetic traditions – he was granted *wilāyah* (divine guardianship). It was, therefore, appropriate that among the lofty ranks he was granted was Mahdawiya which is attributed to him. Mahdawiya is on a par with the position of the prophethood of the Prophet Jesus, a position that helps elevate Islam and the religion of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

In a tradition reported by Abū Ishāq from ‘Alī, the same meaning is stated and Allah is All-Knowing.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Critique of Shaykh ‘Alī Qārī’s View:**

We will critique Shaykh ‘Alī Qārī’s words in three aspects:

1. The story of "Mahdī" is part of the unseen, which the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) has informed us about, just as he informed us about the grave, the Day of Judgment, its trials, and the events related to the Antichrist (Dajjāl). In such matters of belief, one must rely solely on authentic and reliable narrations, not on personal interpretations or imaginations.

Therefore, there is no room for istiḥsān and speculations found in Shaykh ‘Alī Qārī’s words, those that emanated from his false and empty thoughts and imaginations.

The conclusion is that it is not permissible to accept a belief based on “it has been said” and “it is appropriate that it should be such that...”.

2. Shaykh ‘Alī Qārī claims that since Imam Ḥasan (peace be upon him) relinquished worldly leadership to Mu‘āwiya,

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<sup>1</sup> Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ fī Sharḥ Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābiḥ, vol. 5, p. 179.

Allah made Mahdī from his descendants. However, this was a response created by Sunni scholars in opposition to the Shī‘a narrations which state that, due to the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) for the sake of Allah and the preservation of religion, Allah chose Mahdī from his lineage.

3. Shaykh ‘Alī Qārī says, “As will be mentioned in Abū Ishāq’s hadith...,” indicating that the primary basis for those who believe Mahdī is from Imam Ḥasan’s lineage is this very hadith. We will discuss it in detail here.

In the book *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, Abū Ishāq narrates: One day, Imam ‘Alī (peace be upon him) looked at his son Ḥasan (peace be upon him) and said: \_"This son of mine is a master, as the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said. From his lineage will come a man who will be named after your Prophet, and his character will resemble that of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family), but his physical appearance will be different."

Then, he narrates the story that he will fill the world justice and fairness.

Abū Dāwūd has transmitted this narration but he has made no mention of the said story.<sup>1</sup>

Qārī in the explanation of *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* writes under this hadith:

This hadith clearly supports the previous statements that Mahdī is from the descendants of Ḥasan (peace be upon him). To reconcile this with other narrations, we can conclude that Mahdī is related to Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) through his mother.

Hence, Shī‘a’s claim to the effect that “Mahdī, Muḥammad b. Ḥasan ‘Askari, is the Qā’im and the Awaited Imam

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<sup>1</sup> Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ, 3/1503.



because he is unanimously believed to be from the descendants of Ḥusayn, peace be upon him” is invalid.

Perhaps, some may claim that Imam ‘Alī, peace be upon him, might have spoken about someone other than the Maḥdī. The answer to this claim is that the saying “he will fill the world with justice and fairness” renders the claim void inasmuch as the Awaited Maḥdī is the only person among the Ḥusaynī and Ḥasanī sayyids who will fill the world the world with justice and fairness.<sup>1</sup>

In the six so-called authentic Sunni sources (better known as Ṣiḥāḥ), there is no evidence other than the one mentioned above to indicate that Maḥdi from the descendants of Imam Ḥasan, peace be upon him. This hadith is recorded in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* only.

Ibn Athīr writes: Abū Dāwūd narrates from Abū Ishāq as such: “‘Alī (peace be upon him) looked at his son Ḥasan (peace be upon him) and... then mentioned the story of filling the earth with justice.” This hadith is recorded in *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, but the aforementioned account is not included.<sup>2</sup>

## **2. Another Hadīth and Shaykh Maṣṣūr’s Viewpoint**

Shaykh Maṣṣūr writes: One day, ‘Alī, peace be upon him, looked at his son Ḥasan, peace be upon him, and said: This is my son, who as the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, said, is a leader and there will come from his lineage a man with the same name as the Messenger of God. He is similar to the Messenger of Allah in terms of moral characteristics, but he is different in terms of complexion and physical features.

Also, in another narration, ‘Alī, peace be upon him, said: The Messenger of Allah said: A man will appear from

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<sup>1</sup> Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ fī Sharḥ Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābiḥ, vol.5, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Tāj al-Jāmi‘ lil-Uṣūl, 11/49.

*Transoxiana*.<sup>1</sup>

These two narrations have been transmitted by Abū Dāwūd.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Chain of Transmission of Hadith**

We are of the view that those who consider “Mahdī” to be Imam Ḥasan’s son turn to the aforementioned hadith as the only evidence to prove their claim. In this case, we will need to examine the chain of the narration and the wording of the hadith.

When it comes to the chain of the transmission of the hadith, it is necessary to state that Abū Dāwūd reports in his *Sunan* as such:

Abū Dāwūd says: It has been narrated to me that Hārūn b. Mughīra narrated from ‘Amr b. Abū Qays, he from Abū Ishāq that ‘Alī, peace be upon him, said: “Then he mentioned the story that “he will fill the world with justice and fairness.”<sup>3</sup>

In order to learn how weak this hadith is, seeing the first and last parts of the chain of transmission are sufficient because Abū Dāwūd writes: “It has been narrated to me from Hārūn b. Mughīra...”. Now, it is necessary to ask who narrated this hadith to Abū Dāwūd.

At the end of the chain of transmission, the name of Abū Ishāq al-Sybay‘ī appears, who only saw ‘Alī (peace be upon him) once in his life, and during that one encounter, no conversation took place between them. Therefore, it is certain that Abū Ishāq must have heard this narration from another individual, but the name of this individual is not mentioned in the text of the hadith.

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<sup>1</sup> *Transoxiana*, a vast cultural land Central Asia that is called Mā Warā’ an-Nahr in historical sources in the Arabic language;

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, vol. 5, pp. 343 - 344.

<sup>3</sup> *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, vol. 2, p. 208.

Additionally, in the margins of *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl*, it is quoted from Ḥāfiẓ Mundhirī: "This hadith is disconnected<sup>1</sup> because Abū Ishāq only saw 'Alī (peace be upon him) once, and during that one time, they did not converse." Also, Abū Dāwūd begins this hadith by saying, "It was narrated to me by Hārūn bin Mughīra."

In the margins of *Al-Mishkat*, it is also stated that the chain of this hadith is weak.

### **A Study of the Text of the Hadith**

Regarding the text of the hadith, both the beginning and the end of the narration have been transmitted in different forms; for example, in the beginning, some narrations mention Ḥasan (peace be upon him) while others mention Ḥusayn (peace be upon him). Qundūzī al-Ḥanafī writes: "It is narrated from Abū Ishāq that 'Alī (peace be upon him) looked at his son Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) and said: This son of mine is a leader..." and then narrates the story about filling the earth with justice.

Abū Dāwūd narrates this hadith but does not include the aforementioned story. This narration is also recorded in *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl* and *Al-Mishkāt* from Abū Dāwūd with the difference that instead of "Ḥasan," the name "Ḥusayn" appears.

Other hadiths on this issue, found in some other books, also face similar inconsistencies. For instance, Salmī al-Shāfi'ī in his book *'Aqd al-Durar fī Akhbār al-Mahdī al-Muntaẓar* narrates the hadith of Abū Ishāq from Abū Wā'il, but the versions of this book differ from one another. In the original and a handwritten copy from the author's own hand, it says: "He looked at Ḥusayn (peace be upon him)," but in other

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<sup>1</sup> A disconnected hadith is a hadith with one or more of its narrators missing in the chain of transmission. See: *Dirāyat al-Ḥadith*, 113.

copies of this book, it says, "He looked at Ḥasan (peace be upon him)."

Salmī al-Shāfi'ī, quoting from Ḥāfiẓ Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī's *Ṣifat al-Mahdī*, narrates the hadith of Ḥudhayfah, which is derived from the book *Dhakhā'ir al-'Uqbā*. However, in the original manuscript of this book written by Salmī al-Shāfi'ī, as well as the handwritten copies, it says: "Then he placed his hand on Ḥusayn's (peace be upon him) shoulder," but in some other versions, the name "Ḥasan (peace be upon him)" appears to the reader instead.<sup>1</sup>

Was this discrepancy caused by the similarity in the writing of the two words "Ḥasan" and "Ḥusayn," or did some people deliberately alter the original narration to prevent the truth from being revealed as it is? Did they intend to deprive the Muslim community of the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), who are the most knowledgeable of the Prophet's (peace and blessings be upon him) Sunnah and the most learned in his teachings? Although the first possibility is not far-fetched, the second seems more likely, especially given the numerous instances—particularly in relation to the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them)—that support this possibility.

In this specific case, there is strong evidence indicating that some scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah deliberately avoided acknowledging the truth that "al-Mahdī (peace be upon him) is from the descendants of Ḥusayn (peace be upon him)" or, at the very least, refrained from explicitly stating it. What might have been the reason for this behavior? Only Allah knows!

For example, Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad bin Ja'far bin Munadi and Abū 'Abdullah bin Ḥammād—both prominent scholars and hadith preservers of Ahl al-Sunnah—narrate from

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<sup>1</sup> 'Aqd al-Durar fī Akhbār al-Muntaẓar, p. 23-24.

Qatāda as follows: Qatāda says, “I asked Sa‘īd bin al-Musayyib, ‘Is al-Mahdī real?’

He replied, ‘Yes.’

I asked, ‘From which tribe is he?’

He said, ‘From Quraysh.’

I asked, ‘From which branch of Quraysh?’

He said, ‘From Banu Hāshim.’

I asked, ‘From which Banu Hāshim?’

He said, ‘From the descendants of ‘Abdul Muṭṭalib.’

I asked, ‘From which descendant of ‘Abdul Muttalib?’

He said, ‘From the offspring of Fāṭima.’

I asked, ‘From which child of Fāṭima?’

He replied, ‘That is enough.’<sup>1</sup>

Now the question arises: Why did he say, "That is enough"? Allah knows best.

Now, let us examine the closing part of this hadith. As previously mentioned, Abū Dāwūd says: “Then he mentioned the story that ‘he will fill the earth with justice.’” The question is: Who narrated this story? As Ibn Athīr, al-Khaṭīb al-Tabrīzī (author of *Al-Mishkāt*), and others have stated, Abū Dāwūd did not narrate this story. What was the reason for leaving it out?

Moreover, the author of *al-Tāj* completely omits this part of the narration—i.e., “then he will fill the earth with justice.” This shows that the mentioned sentence is not part of the hadith.

To further solidify this claim, it suffices to mention that Ḥāfiẓ al-Bayhaqī, in his book *al-Ba‘ath wal-Nushūr*, narrates

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

the same narration from Abū Ishāq, but without including the aforementioned sentence, concluding the hadith with the phrase, "He resembles the Prophet (peace be upon him) in character, but not in appearance."<sup>1</sup>

### **Investigating the Purport and Signification of the Hadith**

Regarding the content of the narration, after understanding the confusion and discrepancy in the text and words of the hadith, it becomes clear that this narration is not reliable. Thus, there is no basis for Sheikh ‘Alī al-Qārī’s argument that this hadith undermines the Shī‘a Imamiyya belief.

Also, the objection that he raises by saying that “perhaps, some claim that ‘Alī, might have...” is incorrect inasmuch as even if we assume that the word “Ḥasan” is mentioned in it, the phrase “he will fill the earth with justice and fairness” is not known to have been uttered by ‘Alī, peace be upon him.

In summary, the hadith of Abū Dāwūd, even if its chain were deemed authentic, does not support the view held by some Ahl al-Sunnah scholars that al-Mahdī (peace be upon him) is from the lineage of Imam Ḥasan (peace be upon him). As previously established, their reliance on this single hadith in their most prominent books has been shown to lack credibility. It is evident that this narration cannot be relied upon.

### **Reliable Hadith According to the Right Belief**

As such, the belief held by the Shī‘a and a significant number of Ahl al-Sunnah, who believe that al-Mahdī (peace be upon him) is from the progeny of Imam Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), is a valid one. This belief is further supported by numerous authentic narrations. Some of the Ahl al-Sunnah

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 31.

narrations that affirm this belief include:

First narration: The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said: "If only one day of this world remained, Allah would prolong that day until a man from my descendants, whose name is the same as mine, would arise." At this point, Salmān al-Fārsī stood up and asked: "O Messenger of Allah! From which of your descendants will he be?" The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) placed his hand on the shoulder of Imam Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) and said: "From the descendants of this son of mine." This narration is recorded in various sources, including by Abū al-Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī, Abū Nu'aym al-Isfahānī in *Al-Arba'īn Hadithan fīl-Mahdī*, and others.<sup>1</sup>

**Second Narration:** The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family), in the last days of his life, while bedridden, said to his daughter Fāṭima (peace be upon her), "*Fāṭima, why are you crying? Don't you know that Allah looked upon the Earth and chose your father from among the people of the Earth, and He appointed him as a prophet? Then, He looked upon the Earth again and chose your husband. He inspired me to marry you to him and chose him as my successor. Don't you know that Allah, in honoring you, married you to the first Muslim, the most knowledgeable, and the most patient of people?*" Upon hearing this, Fāṭima (peace be upon her) smiled with joy. Then, in an effort to make her even happier, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) added, "*From us comes the Mahdī of this nation, behind whom Jesus will pray.*" He then placed his hand on the shoulder of Imam Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) and said, "*The Mahdī of this nation is from the lineage of this one.*" This narration has been transmitted by Abū al-Ḥasan al-

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr, vol. 10, p. 166, hadith 10222; See also, al-Manār al-Munīf, Ibn al-Qayyim, p. 148; 'Aqd al-Durar fī Akhbār al-Muntaẓar, p. 24, Fara'id al-Samṭayn, vol. 2, p. 325; al-Qawl al-Mukhtaṣar, p.7.

Dāraquṭnī, Abū Muẓaffar al-Sam'ānī, Abū 'Abdullah al-Ganjī, and Ibn Ṣabbāgh al-Mālikī.<sup>1</sup>

Third Narration: 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar narrates that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said, "The Mahdī, who is from the descendants of Ḥusayn, will appear from the East. Even if mountains stand in his way, he will crush them and create pathways through them." This narration has been recorded by Sunni hadith scholars such as Na'im ibn Ḥammād, Al-Ṭabarānī, Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī, and al-Maqdisī in his book *'Aqd al-Durar fī Akhbār al-Muntaẓar*.<sup>2</sup>

Now, some names of scholars who believe that the Mahdī is the son of Imam Ḥasan al-'Askarī (peace be upon him) are listed below:

- Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Hāshim al-Baladhurī (d. 279 AH)
- Abū Bakr 'Umar al-Bayhaqī (d. 458 AH)
- Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullah ibn Khushāb (d. 567 AH)
- Ibn Azraq (Historian) (d. 590 AH)
- Ibn 'Arabī of Andalusia (d. 638 AH)
- Kamāl al-Dīn ibn Ṭalḥa (d. 652 AH)
- Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī (d. 654 AH)
- Abū 'Abdullah al-Kanjī al-Shāfi'ī (d. 658 AH)
- Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī (d. 672 AH)

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<sup>1</sup> *Al-Bayān fī Akhbār Ṣāhib al-Zamān* by al-Ganjī al-Shāfi'ī (translated as part of *Kifāyat al-'Uṣūl*): p. 502; *al-Fuṣūl al-muḥimma* authored by Ibn Ṣabbāgh Mālikī, p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> *Al-Fitan*, vol. 1, p. 171, hadith 1095; *'Aqd al-Durar fī Akhbār al-Muntaẓar*, p. 282 as quoted by al-Ṭabarānī and Abu Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī. For further information, see: *al-Hāwī lil-fatāwa*, vol. 2, p. 66. In this source, this narration has been transmitted on the authority of Ibn 'Asākir.



- Shams al-Dīn Ibn Khallakān (d. 681 AH)
- Ṣadr al-Dīn Hamuw'ī (d. 723 AH)
- 'Umar ibn al-Wardī (d. 749 AH)
- Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Safḍī (d. 764 AH)
- Shams al-Dīn Ibn al-Jazarī (d. 833 AH)
- Ibn Ṣabagh al-Mālikī (d. 855 AH)
- Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH)
- Shaykh 'Abdul-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī (d. 973 AH)
- Ibn Ḥajar al-Makkī (d. 974 AH)
- Shaykh 'Alī al-Qārī (d. 1013 AH)
- Shaykh 'Abdul-Haqq al-Dehlawī (d. 1052 AH)
- Shāh Waliullāh al-Dehlawī (d. 1176 AH)
- Shaykh Qundūzī al-Ḥanafī (d. 1294 AH)

### **Ibn Taymiyyah's Views and Response to His Claims:**

From what has been presented earlier, it becomes clear that the words of Ibn Taymiyyah are nothing more than baseless claims and assumptions. He asserted, "Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, 'Abdul-Bāqī ibn Qānī', and other scholars of history and genealogy believed that Ḥasan ibn 'Alī al-'Askarī left no offspring or descendants."<sup>1</sup>

To refute Ibn Taymiyyah's view and his claim attributed to al-Ṭabarī, where he stated that "al-'Askarī had no children," we say:

**First**, in matters of such significance, one should refer to the Ahl al-Bayt, those connected to them, or the Shī'a scholars familiar with their affairs, not to those who are disconnected or even hostile toward them.

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<sup>1</sup> Minhāj al-Sunnah, vol. 4, p. 87.

**Second**, as previously mentioned, many non-Shī‘a scholars believe in the birth of Imam Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) as the son of Ḥasan al-‘Askarī (peace be upon him).

**Third**, Ibn Taymiyyah has attributed this view to al-Ṭabarī, ‘Abdul-Bāqī, and other genealogists. However, the editor of *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, Muḥammad Rashād Salīm, writes in the footnotes that this is based on an incident cited by Mūhib al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb in his commentary on *Al-Muntaqā min Minhāj al-I’tidāl*.<sup>1</sup> The incident, which occurred in 302 AH, is reported by al-Ṭabarī in his *History*. It indicates that Ḥasan al-‘Askarī (peace be upon him) left no children.

‘Urayb ibn Sa‘d al-Qurṭubī also narrates this event in his book *Ṣilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*.<sup>2-3</sup>

This publisher and researcher of *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, in this footnote, is content with a brief reference. In another footnote, referring to the point we quoted from him, he writes: "I mentioned there that ‘Urayb ibn Sa‘d al-Qurṭubī stated in *Ṣilat Tārīkh* that Hasan ibn ‘Alī al-‘Askarī (peace be upon him) had no children."

However, the summary of this event, as quoted from *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*<sup>4</sup> in the book *Ṣilat*, is as follows:

During the caliphate of al-Muqtadir al-‘Abbāsī, a man claimed that he was Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, the awaited Mahdī. Al-Muqtadir ordered Ibn Ṭūmār, the naqīb (chief) and representative of the Ṭalibiyyīn and the notables of the Āl-e Abū Ṭālib, to be summoned. Ibn Ṭūmār asked him about his lineage. The man claimed that he was Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn Mūsā ibn Ja‘far al-Riḍā and that he came from

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<sup>1</sup> Page 3, footnote No. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 8, p. 34 and 35, Cairo, 1939 CE.

<sup>3</sup> *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, vol.1, p. 122, footnote of the new edition.

<sup>4</sup> *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 11, p. 49 & 50.

the desert. Ibn Ṭūmār responded, "But Hasan had no children." Some said, "He had a child," while others said, "He had no children..."<sup>1</sup>

Rashād Salīm continues by quoting one of his contemporaries, Dr. Aḥmad Ṣubḥī, on this matter...

What we have presented is what this publisher and researcher of *Minhāj al-Sunnah* has been able to state in support of Ibn Taymiyyah's attribution of the claim of Imam Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (peace be upon him) having no children to al-Ṭabarī and other historians and genealogists.

As you can see, Ibn Taymiyyah himself never specifies where the statements of al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Qānī are mentioned, nor does he cite any other historians or genealogists. Likewise, the publisher and commentator of that book does not bring any statement from al-Ṭabarī or others but only relies on the statement that this matter was mentioned in the "incident" recorded by ʿUrayb ibn Saʿd al-Qurṭubī in the book *Ṣilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* (!!!).

In the first footnote, he suffices with referencing Professor Muḥib al-Dīn's mention of the "incident" that occurred in the year 302 AH, falsely claiming—by imitating him—that this incident is mentioned in *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* and that "it must certainly belong to the events of that year." And once again, like him, he claims that this incident "proves that Imam Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (peace be upon him) had no children," and then adds, "'Urayb also mentioned the incident in *Ṣilat Tārīkh*."

It is as if this incident were recorded in both *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* and *Ṣilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* in the year 302 AH.

However, in the second footnote, he attributes the report not to al-Ṭabarī, but to ʿUrayb, saying: "I previously mentioned

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, p. 87 footnote of the new edition.

that ‘Urayb ibn Sa’d al-Qurūbī stated in *Ṣilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* that Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-‘Askarī (peace be upon him) had no children."

Moreover! He does not relay the "incident" in full but instead provides only a summary of the event...

We will present the response in several points:

1. Regardless of the views and considerations of Sunni scholars about al-Ṭabarī and his book, he never mentioned in his History that Imam Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-‘Askarī (peace be upon him) was without offspring. Thus, attributing this statement to him is a lie.

2. Al-Ṭabarī's *History* ends with the events of the year 302 AH, but this specific incident is not included in it. Claiming that it is mentioned there is false.

3. Even if it is assumed that ‘Abd al-Bāqī ibn Qānī‘ al-Umawī al-Baghdādī, the scholar and genealogist, is the one being referenced and the denial attributed to him is correct, he is an unreliable figure. Two prominent Sunni scholars, al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, have written about him in their books *Mīzān al-Itidāl* and *Lisān al-Mīzān*. Al-Dhahabī, in his book *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, only mentions reproachful remarks and weaknesses regarding him.

Moreover, it seems that he never made such a statement; otherwise, the students and followers of Ibn Taymiyyah would have cited it. Therefore, this attribution is also a lie.

4. Ibn Taymiyyah does not mention any other historians or genealogists besides these two individuals. If anyone else had claimed that Imam al-‘Askarī (peace be upon him) had no offspring, undoubtedly Ibn Taymiyyah's followers would have made it known. Thus, the claim that "other genealogists and historians" made this assertion is also false.

5. 'Urayb ibn Sa'd (or Sa'id), the author of *Ṣilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, is an unknown figure. He is not mentioned in any books of rijal (narrators) nor is any hadith transmitted from him in hadith collections. Thus, one cannot trust the report of an "incident" from such an individual, especially not to reject something as important as this matter.

6. Moreover, 'Urayb al-Qurṭubī never stated that Imam Ḥasan ibn 'Alī al-'Askarī (peace be upon him) had no offspring. Therefore, the attribution made to him in the second footnote is entirely false.

7. The "incident" recorded in *Ṣilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* lacks a chain of transmission. Therefore, relying on such a dubious source to deny and reject a religious belief, or to invalidate the beliefs of the Imamiya, can only come from an ignorant person who does not understand proper reasoning, or a fanatic who harbors enmity towards the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and his household.

8. Additionally, this "incident" has no connection to our master Imam al-Mahdī (peace be upon him) or to his noble father, Imam Ḥasan ibn 'Alī al-'Askarī (peace be upon him). Perhaps this is why the modern scholar and publisher of *Minhāj al-Sunnah* refrained from narrating the story in full in the first footnote. Furthermore, in the second footnote, before summarizing the story, he adds the sentence: "A man claimed that he was Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, the Awaited Mahdī." Soon, it will become clear that these two sentences are also false.

9. The "incident" mentioned in *Ṣilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* during the events of the year 302 AH goes as follows: "In that year, a well-dressed, well-scented man, wearing a woolen cloak, red shoes, and carrying a freshly-made sword on his shoulder, approached the house of Gharīb, the maternal uncle of al-Muqtadir, the Abbasid caliph. While mounted on his horse, he asked for permission to enter, but the guard

refused. The man became furious, dismounted, entered the house, and sat beside Gharīb without addressing him as 'Emir.' Gharīb, displeased, asked: 'What do you need?'

The man replied, 'I am a descendant of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and wish to give advice to the caliph.'

No matter how much the minister, Naṣr the chamberlain, and the caliph's maternal uncle tried to find out what his advice was, he refused to reveal it, until eventually he was brought before the caliph. Al-Muqtadir ordered that Ibn Ṭumār, the chief and representative of the Ṭālibiyyīn and the notables of Āl-e Abu Ṭālib, be summoned. Ibn Ṭumār asked the man about his lineage. The man claimed that he was Muḥammad ibn Hasan ibn 'Alī ibn Mūsā ibn Ja'far al-Riḍā and had come from the desert. Ibn Ṭumār told him, "Hasan had no children,"—while some people said, "He had a child," and others said, "He had no children."

At that point, the people were confused about his case until finally Ibn Ṭumār said, "This man claims to have come from the desert, yet he has a freshly made and ornamented sword. Send the sword with someone to Dār al-Ṭāq to find its maker."

Following this, someone took the man's sword to the swordsmiths at Dār al-Ṭāq. They recognized the sword, and then they summoned the man who had bought it from a sword polisher. They asked him, "For whom did you purchase this sword?"

He replied, "For a man known as Ibn Ḍubay'ī, whose father was an associate of Ibn Furāt and who handled complaints on his behalf in the city of Aleppo."

Thus, Ḍubay'ī was summoned, and the claimant was brought before the notables of Āl-e Abu Ṭālib to stand side by side. Ḍubay'ī admitted that the claimant was his son. At this point,

the claimant became extremely anxious, and his tongue was tied in fear.

The elderly man then wept and pleaded before the minister until his son was pardoned. He was promised that his son's punishment would be reduced to imprisonment or exile. At that moment, the Banū Hāshim cried out, saying, "This man must be publicly disgraced and punished in the harshest way."

As per the instruction, the claimant was imprisoned, and on the Day of Tarwiyah and the Day of ʿArafah, he was mounted on a camel and paraded around the city, humiliated in every corner. Afterward, he was imprisoned in the western area, in the prison of the Egyptians.<sup>1</sup>

This is the full story from *Ṣilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, and whether it is factual or not, only Allah knows. In any case, there is no mention of our master Imam al-Mahdī (peace be upon him). The individual merely claimed to be Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (peace be upon them), a person entirely different from the Awaited Mahdī, whom the Shīʿa believe in and some non-Shīʿa also accept. The Mahdī, as believed by the Shīʿa, is Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (peace be upon them).

As for the denial by Ibn Ṭūmār and others — assuming the story and their denial are valid — they denied the existence of offspring for someone named Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā, which is unrelated to our belief in the Mahdī.

### **Other Claims and Their Answers**

Ibn Taymiyyah also says: "The Imamiya claim that he (Imam al-ʿAskarī) had a son and that this son entered the cellar

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<sup>1</sup> *Ṣilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, printed together with *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*. Cf. vol. 11, p. 49 & 50.

(sirdāb) in Samarra at a young age... How can a child, whose affairs and wealth must be overseen by a guardian due to his age, be an infallible Imam for all Muslims, to the extent that no one is considered a believer without faith in him?"

The response to this is clear: the invalidity of this statement is obvious, as age is not a condition for Imamate, just as it is not for Prophethood. Allah Almighty says in the Quran about 'Isā (Jesus) (peace be upon him):

فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا قَالَ إِيَّيْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنَا نَبِيٌّ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَمَا كُنْتُ وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا.

*"She pointed to him. They said, 'How can we talk to a child in the cradle?' He (Isa) said, 'I am a servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a Prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I am and enjoined upon me prayer and zakat as long as I live.'*"<sup>1</sup>

### **Possibility of Gaining Benefit from Imam Mahdī (a)**

Ibn Taymiyyah, in another statement regarding Imam Mahdī (peace be upon him), says: "Regardless of whether he exists or not, people gain no benefit from him, neither in matters of religion nor the world, and this is something on which they themselves agree."

In response to this, we say: This statement is nothing but a lie. What all Shī'a unanimously agree upon is that people benefit from him in both religious and worldly matters, and this has already occurred and continues to occur, though hypocrites may not realize it.

In short, Shī'a scholars have proven this matter in their books on Imamate. The existence of an Imam is obligatory upon Allah from the perspective of divine grace, and the Earth is never devoid of an Imam. The very existence of the Imam is

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<sup>1</sup> Maryam 19:29-31



a grace, and his involvement in matters is another grace. However, his concealment and non-interference are due to us.

Just as prophethood is obligatory and necessary upon Allah, and He sends prophets as bearers of glad tidings and warnings so that people have no excuse before Allah, those who perish do so after the proof has been established, and those who live and are guided do so through clear evidence.

Whenever a prophet came to the previous nations and they unjustly killed him, Allah would send another prophet to them. There were even prophets who were killed on the very first day of their mission, until the turn came to our Prophet. His people too opposed him and caused him much suffering, to the point that he said:

مَا أُؤْذِي نَبِيٍّ بِمِثْلِ مَا أُؤْذِيتُ.

*"No prophet was harmed as much as I was."<sup>1</sup>*

Among these trials was the siege of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) in the valley of Abū Ṭālib. But during his stay in the valley, his prophethood was not invalidated. Similarly, the Imams after the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) endured great hardships and were martyred, but the people's turning away from them and following corrupt individuals as the caliphs of the Prophet did not invalidate their Imamate. Likewise, the occultation of the Twelfth Imam does not invalidate his Imamate.

What has been said is a summary on this topic, and a more detailed discussion would require more space.

### **The Longevity of Imam Mahdī (a)**

Ibn Taymiyyah also says: "The idea that any Muslim could live for such a long time is, according to the common

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<sup>1</sup> *Tafsīr al-Rāzī*, vol. 4, p. 175; *Kashf al-Ghumma*, vol. 3, p. 346.

experience of the Ummah of Muḥammad (peace be upon him and his family), clearly false and impossible. We have no example of anyone being born and living for 120 years, let alone longer than that."

In response, we say:

Allah has the power to keep any of His creatures alive for as long as He wills. Extraordinary events occur in the world by His will and are beyond counting. This matter is not limited to a specific nation or people.

Who can claim to have fully examined the lives of every person born in this Ummah from beginning to end, and then assert that no one has lived for 120 years, using this as a flimsy excuse to accuse anyone who lives that long of being a non-Muslim? Is this really the meaning of the hadith, considered authentic, in which the Prophet said:

عمر أمتي من ستين سنة إلى سبعين سنة

*"The lifespan of my Ummah is between sixty and seventy years"?*<sup>1</sup>

In summary, the lifespan of individuals is in Allah's hands. If it is in His wisdom that a person lives for a long time, He will keep them alive. Otherwise, He takes them when He wills, and this applies equally across all nations.

Indeed, in previous nations, people generally had longer lifespans, though some also died young. In this Ummah, most people do not live longer than 100 years, but some do live significantly longer. Numerous stories about long-lived individuals have been recorded in books. Some have even written separate works on the topic, such as the book *Al-Mu‘ammarūn wa al-Waṣāyā*.

Moreover, many prominent Sunni scholars have commented

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<sup>1</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 3, p. 387; *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, vol. 1, p. 678.

on the longevity of Imam Mahdī (peace be upon him) and criticized the Shīʿa for their beliefs about it. Some have used this as a reason to question or deny the existence of Imam Mahdī (peace be upon him). However, Shīʿa scholars have responded comprehensively and clearly to these objections with well-founded arguments.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Long Lifespan of Haḍrat Khiḍr, peace be upon him**

Ibn Taymiyyah continues:

"Similarly, the Shīʿa's argument based on the life of Khiḍr is false upon false. Who among them has accepted and agreed that Khiḍr is still alive? Most scholars believe he has passed away. And even if he were alive, he does not belong to this Ummah."

In response, we say: The argument about the life and survival of Khiḍr (peace be upon him) is merely an example to show that divine will can require certain individuals to remain alive in this world for extended periods. As we mentioned earlier, this is not specific to any particular Ummah. The criteria for prolonging lives lie solely in divine power and wisdom, which cannot be denied by any believing Muslim. Allah's wisdom governs these matters, and He alone knows the reasons behind them.

Khiḍr (peace be upon him) is one of the children of Adam, whom Allah willed to remain alive for centuries, even until the time of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him and his family). Many leading scholars of hadith have narrated that Khiḍr entered the Prophet's house after his passing to offer condolences.

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<sup>1</sup> For further information about this topic, see books authored by prominent Shīʿa scholars in this regard.

This narration, as some of the hadith scholars have confirmed, is one of the indications that Khidr is alive.

Ibn Ḥajar, in *Al-Iṣābah fī Ma'rifat al-Ṣaḥābah*, has dedicated a section to Prophet Khidr (peace be upon him) and states: "I have not seen any of the early scholars mention him among the Companions, but most of them have accepted and agreed upon the reports of his long life and ongoing existence."

Ibn Ḥajar then discusses in detail the lineage, prophethood, and long life of Khidr (peace be upon him). We observe that he clearly states that the majority of the early scholars believed in Khidr's continued life. He also mentions that many prominent figures, like Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Tha'labī, Nawawī, Abū 'Amr ibn Ṣalāḥ, Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, Yāfī'ī, and others, held this view or at least confirmed that many of the leading scholars did. Numerous stories have been narrated about him, and some, such as 'Abd al-Mughīth ibn Zuhayr al-Ḥanbalī, even wrote entire books on the subject.

Nawawī, in his book *Tahdhīb al-Asmā' wal-Lughāt*, writes:

"Most scholars say that Prophet Khidr (peace be upon him) is alive and living among us. In this matter, there is consensus among Sufis and people of piety and knowledge. The stories about seeing Khidr (peace be upon him), learning from him, asking him questions, and receiving answers from him, as well as his presence in sacred places, are too numerous to count and too well-known to need further mention.

Abū 'Amr ibn al-Ṣalāḥ also writes in his *Fatāwa*: 'The opinion of the majority of scholars and pious people is that Khidr (peace be upon him) is alive. Only a few of the hadith scholars have denied this.'

Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, after quoting these statements from the great scholars, says at the end of the discussion: 'Our

shaykh, Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-Faḍl al-Irāqī, told us that Shaykh ‘Abdullah ibn As‘ad al-Yāfi‘ī believed that Khidr (peace be upon him) was alive. I told him that Bukhārī, Ḥarbī, and others deny this. The shaykh became angry at my words and said: "I become angry at anyone who claims that Khidr (peace be upon him) has died." Ḥāfiẓ al-Irāqī said: "We also abandoned the belief in Khidr's death."

Ibn Ḥajar, after narrating this incident from his teacher, adds: 'We have encountered some people who claimed to have met Khidr (peace be upon him). Among them was Qāḍī ‘Alam al-Dīn Basāṭī, who served as the Mālikī judge during the reign of Caliph al-Zāhir Barqūq. Allah knows best and has authority over the hidden matters.'

Moreover, a similar case of longevity can be found in Prophet Ilyās (peace be upon him). It is narrated from Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī: 'Khidr and Ilyās (peace be upon them both) are alive and travel across the earth.'<sup>1</sup>

We also know that the belief in the survival of Jesus (peace be upon him) is a matter of fundamental faith, just as reports about the Dajjāl (Antichrist) surviving have reached the level of mass transmission.

### **Another Objection and Its Answer**

‘Allāma al-Ḥillī, may Allah have mercy on him, referenced a narration by Ibn al-Jawzī, which Ibn Taymiyyah responded to by saying, 'We respond to this claim in several ways...' We will address Ibn Taymiyyah's response from two angles:

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'His name will be

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<sup>1</sup> *Al-Bayān fī Akhbār Ṣāhib al-Zamān* published along with Kifāyat al-Ṭālib fī Manāqib ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalib, peace be upon them, p. 522. It is to be noted that Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī is one of those people quoted frequently by Ibn Taymiyyah in historical, genealogical and exegetical discussions.

the same as mine,' and he did not say: 'His father's name will be the same as my father's.'

2. We will analyze the phrase 'His father's name will be the same as my father's' and investigate the narrators and the chain of transmission.

## **Having the Same Name as That of the Holy Prophet (s)**

Regarding the first point, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, in his *Musnad*, reports from ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd through ‘Umar ibn ‘Ubayd, from ‘Āṣim ibn Abī al-Nujūd, from Zirr ibn Ḥubaysh, from ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd: 'The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

لا تنقضي الأيام ولا يذهب الدهر حتى يملك العرب رجل من أهل بيتي اسمه يواطى اسمه.

*'Time will not pass nor will the days end until a man from my family, whose name matches mine, rules over the Arabs.'*<sup>1</sup>

Aḥmad also narrates from Yaḥya ibn Sa‘īd, from Sufyān, from ‘Āṣim, from Zirr, from ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd:

لا تذهب الدنيا - أو قال: لا تنقضي الدنيا - حتى يملك العرب رجل من أهل بيتي يواطى اسمه اسمي.<sup>2</sup>

*'The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: The world will not come to an end until a man from my family, whose name matches mine, rules over the Arabs.'*

Aḥmad includes this hadith with a similar chain and text elsewhere in his *Musnad*. He also records this hadith through ‘Umar ibn ‘Ubayd Ṭanāsī, from ‘Āṣim, from Zirr, from ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd.<sup>3</sup>

Tirmidhī narrates it as follows: ‘Ubayd ibn Asbāt ibn Muḥammad al-Qurashī al-Kūfī narrated to us, from his

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<sup>1</sup> *Musnad of Aḥmad*, vol. 1, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, p. 377.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, p. 430.

father, from Sufyān al-Thawrī, from ‘Āṣim ibn Bahdalah, from Zirr, from ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

لا تذهب الدنيا حتى يملك العرب رجل من أهل بيتي يواطئ اسمه اسمي.

*The world will not come to an end until a man from my family, whose name matches mine, rules over the Arabs.'*

Abū ‘Isā (Tirmidhī) says: 'In this regard, there are other narrations from ‘Alī, Abū Sa‘īd, Umm Salama, and Abū Hurayrah, and the hadith is good (ḥasan<sup>1</sup>) and sound.'<sup>2</sup>

### **His Father's Name Is the Same as My Father's**

Regarding the second point, we find that the hadith above is also reported in Abū Dāwūd's narrations. In one of the chains of transmission, the phrase 'his father's name will be the same as my father's' is included. Now, we bring the text from *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*:

Musaddad from ‘Umar ibn ‘Ubayd; Muḥammad ibn ‘Isā from Abū Bakr (i.e., Ibn ‘Ayyāsh); Musaddad from Yaḥyā from Sufyān; Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm from ‘Ubaydallah ibn Mūsā from Zāyidah; and Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm from Fiṭr all narrated to us that ‘Āṣim, from Zirr, from ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd narrated:

'If there were only one day left in the world, Allah would prolong that day until a man from me – or from my family – rises; this man's name will match my name, and his father's name will match my father's.'

In Fiṭr's narration, the addition reads:

يملا الأرض قسطاً وعدلاً كما ملئت ظلماً وجوراً.

<sup>1</sup> A ḥasan hadith according to Ahl al-Sunnah is a hadith whose narrators are close to the rank of trustworthiness.

<sup>2</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī, vol. 4, p. 438.

*‘He will fill the earth with justice and equity as it was filled with oppression and tyranny.’*

According to Sufyān's narration, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said: "The world will not end until a man from my family, whose name matches mine, rules over the Arabs."<sup>1</sup>

Abū Dāwūd states: 'The text of the hadith narrated by ‘Umar and Abū Bakr is similar to Sufyān's text.' Thus, it becomes clear that Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, and Abū Dāwūd all narrate ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd’s hadith with similar wording, which aligns entirely with the belief of the Imamiya (Shī‘a).

Moreover, many other Sunni scholars have identified Imam Mahdī by the name 'Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-‘Askarī,' and according to this, his name matches the name of his ancestor, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family). Among the mentioned scholars, Abū Dāwūd is the only one who brings the hadith with the chain that includes 'Zā'idah,' and this version adds the phrase ‘his father's name will match my father's name’.

Both Shī‘a and Sunni scholars have questioned the meaning and chain of this part of Abū Dāwūd's narration, and they have criticized it from various angles, dismissing it. Therefore, further discussion on this matter is unnecessary because, as established, we must set aside rare and anomalous reports and rely on the consensus of hadith that is beyond doubt.

Ibn Taymiyyah repeated his claim regarding the text of the hadith from ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd but attributed the phrase ‘his father's name will match my father's’ to no one. However, after narrating it, he says: 'Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd reported it from the narration of Umm Salama.' This

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<sup>1</sup> *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, vol. 2, p. 207.



statement falsely suggests that Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd narrated it with the same wording from Umm Salama, which is untrue."

To clarify the matter, we quote Ibn Taymiyyah directly: "The hadiths used to argue for the emergence of the Mahdī are authentic hadiths reported by Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Aḥmad, and others from Ibn Mas'ūd and others, such as the narration from Ibn Mas'ūd that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

لو لم يبق من الدنيا إلا يوم واحد لطول الله ذلك اليوم حتى يخرج فيه رجل مني أو من أهل بيتي، يواطئ اسمه اسمي و اسم أبيه اسم أبي، يملأ الأرض قسطاً و عدلاً كما ملئت جوراً و ظلماً.

*'If there remains only one day of this world, Allah will extend that day until a man from me — or from my household — emerges; his name will be my name and his father's name will be my father's name. He will fill the earth with justice and fairness just as it was filled with oppression and injustice.'*

Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd reported this hadith from Umm Salamah."

Regarding these hadiths, some groups have gone astray: some have denied them, citing the hadith of Ibn Mājah, where the Prophet (peace be upon him) reportedly said: "There is no Mahdī but 'Isā (Jesus), the son of Mary." This hadith, however, is weak.<sup>1</sup>

In response to Ibn Taymiyyah, it is clear that "the wording agreed upon by the scholars of hadith" does not include the phrase "his father's name is my father's name." This hadith has only been narrated by Abū Dāwūd in one of its chains, and he specifically states that this extra phrase was only narrated by a single narrator, Zā'idah, and no other narrators reported it.

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<sup>1</sup> *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, vol. 8, p. 254-258 (new edition).

Ibn Taymiyyah attempts to suggest that the extra phrase is universally agreed upon, while the wording without it is a fabrication by the Shī'a, accusing them of altering the hadith. He even implies that the hadith with the additional phrase was narrated from Umm Salamah. Then, Ibn Taymiyyah mentions some responses to this additional phrase, saying that some have tried to reconcile the difference between the two versions. In doing so, Ibn Taymiyyah first mentions the words of 'Allāma Ibn Ṭalḥa al-Shāfi'ī and then harshly criticizes him, accusing him of distortion.

Ibn Taymiyyah's words are as follows: "The Twelver Shī'a claim that this person is their Mahdī, whose name is Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, but the Mahdī described by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is named Muḥammad ibn 'Abdullah. Therefore, some have removed the mention of the father from the Prophet's statement to avoid contradicting their false claim. Others distorted the hadith and said: His grandfather is Ḥusayn, and his title is Abū 'Abdullah. Therefore, the Prophet meant Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Abdullah. In this way, they replaced the title with the name."

Ibn Ṭalḥa is one of those who, in his book *Ghāyat al-Su'ūl fī Manāqib al-Rasūl*, chose this interpretation. However, anyone with a little insight will realize that this is a clear distortion and a false attribution to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family). Could anyone understand from the Prophet's statement, "His name is my name, and his father's name is my father's name," anything other than that his father's name is 'Abdullah? Does this phrase imply that his grandfather's title is Abū 'Abdullah? Moreover, the Mahdī described by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) is from the descendants of Ḥasan ibn 'Alī, not from the

descendants of Ḥusayn, as was mentioned in the hadith narrated from ‘Alī (peace be upon him)."<sup>1</sup>

In response to Ibn Taymiyyah’s view, it must be said that the individual described by the Prophet is definitely "Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan," because the authentic hadith, which is unanimously agreed upon, states this clearly without any issue. Regarding the narration that includes the phrase about the father, it should be noted that this phrase is not the Prophet’s statement but rather the transmission of one narrator, who was contradicted by other narrators.

As we mentioned earlier, some scholars have tried to reconcile this narration with the agreed-upon version, and thus they have interpreted it in various ways. These interpretations, whether correct or not, are simply attempts at reconciliation, and no one calls or considers interpretation to be "distortion" except an ignorant person or a biased fanatic.

One of these interpretations was presented by ‘Allāma Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ṭalḥa al-Shāfi‘ī (who passed away in 652 AH) in *Maṭālib al-Su‘ul fī Manāqib Āl al-Rasūl*<sup>2</sup>. After discussing the issue, he says:

"Before we delve into a detailed response, two points need to be clarified:

**The first point:** In the Arabic language, it is permissible and common to use the word 'father' (ab) to refer to a 'forefather.' This can be seen in the Quran, as in the verse: '*Follow the religion of your father Ibrahim*'.<sup>3</sup> Also, in the story of Yūsuf

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<sup>1</sup> *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, vol. 8, p. 254-258 (new edition).

<sup>2</sup> This is the exact translation of the book; not the one mentioned by Ibn Taymiyyah. Great scholars have shed light on his life and have celebrated him. He is one of the famous Shāfi‘ī scholars. Details about him can be found in *al-Ibar* vol. 5, p. 213; *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, vol. 7, p. 33; *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyya al-kubra* other books authored by Sunni scholars.

<sup>3</sup> Quran 22:78

(peace be upon him), Allah says: '*And I followed the religion of my forefathers, Ibrāhīm and Ishāq*'.<sup>1</sup> The Prophet (peace be upon him) also referred to this usage when he said in the hadith of the Mi'rāj: 'I asked, who is this? He (Gabriel) replied: Your father, Ibrāhīm.' Thus, it is clear that the word 'father' can be used to refer to a grandfather.

**The second point:** Sometimes the word 'name' is used to refer to a title or characteristic. The eloquent Arabs frequently used such expressions in their speech, and we find similar usages in the hadiths. For example, both Bukhārī and Muslim narrate from Sahl ibn Sa'd al-Sa'īdī about 'Alī (peace be upon him) that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, gave him the name Abū Turāb, and it was the most beloved name to him. Here, we see that the term 'name' is used for a title or nickname.

A poet also expressed this idea when he said:

أَجَلٌ قَدَرَكَ أَنْ تُسَمَّى مُؤْتَنَّهُ      وَمَنْ كُنَّاكَ قَدْ سَمَّاكَ لِلْعَرَبِ

*'Your status is too high to be merely called by your name; And whoever calls your title (teknonym), in fact, calls your name.'*

We see here that the poet uses the word 'calling' for mentioning a title or description, and this usage is widespread and well-known in Arabic speech.

Now, after clarifying these two points, know that the Prophet had two grandsons: Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan (peace be upon him) and Abū 'Abdullah al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him). Since the righteous descendant, the awaited Imam al-Mahdī (peace be upon him), is from the offspring of Abū 'Abdullah Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) and not from the offspring of Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan (peace be upon him), and since Ḥusayn's title was Abū 'Abdullah, the Prophet

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<sup>1</sup> Quran 12:38

used the word 'name' to refer to a title, establishing a connection between the name of the father and the name of his own father, 'Abdullah. Thus, it is as though the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'His name is my name, so he is Muḥammad, and I am Muḥammad. And his grandfather's title is the same as my father's name, since his title is Abū 'Abdullah and my father's name is 'Abdullah.'

Through this explanation, the concise and brief wording of the hadith encapsulates the attributes of Imam al-Mahdī (peace be upon him) and succinctly indicates that he is from the descendants of Abū 'Abdullah, Imam Ḥusayn (peace be upon him)."

In conclusion, this is the perspective of the Shāfi'ī scholar Ibn Ṭalḥa regarding the meaning of the additional phrase in the hadith. Contrary to Ibn Taymiyyah's claim, this interpretation is not a distortion, and in fact, Ibn Taymiyyah misrepresented Ibn Ṭalḥa's words by not quoting them fully. If this interpretation is accepted, the narrations can be reconciled. Otherwise, the narration unique to Zā'id will be discarded due to its lack of authenticity.

Ibn Taymiyyah also said: "The Mahdī described (in religious sources) is from the offspring of Ḥasan b. 'Alī, not Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, as mentioned in the narration concerning 'Alī (peace be upon him)."

In this regard, we need to mention that we have already discussed this hadith narrated from Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 'Alī, peace be upon him. We will not repeat it here.

Lastly, we mention the words of 'Allāma Ḥillī, who writes: 'These are the infallible Imams who have reached the pinnacle of perfection, unlike other leaders who were consumed with their thrones, engaged in sinful behavior, disobedience, and immorality — actions that were notorious even among their close relatives. The constant plea of the

Imami Shī'a is: May Allah judge between us and them, for He is the best judge."

The poet said beautifully:

*If you wish to choose a religion for yourself,*

*And you know that people simply transmit information,*

*Then abandon the words of Shafi'i and Malik,*

*And Ahmad and the narrations of Ka'b Ahbār*

*And be a follower of those whose words and speech are:*

*'Our ancestor narrated from Gabriel, and he from God.'*

إذا شئت أن ترضى لنفسك مذهباً  
وتعلم أن الناس في نقل أخبار  
فدع عنك قول الشافعي ومالك  
وأحمد والمرووي عن كعب أخبار  
ووالِ أناساً قولهم وحديثهم  
روى جدنا عن جبرئيل عن الباري.

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