UNDERSTANDING
THE MAHDĪ
IN THE LIGHT OF THE NARRATIONS

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The coming of the Mahdī has always been an issue of great interest for the Muslim Ummah at large. The love and admiration for the Mahdī is a quality instilled in the hearts of the believers and shall Inshā Allāh be a uniting factor for Muslims around the globe, upon his emergence. The Muslim Ummah has always been found eager to hear anything relative to the Mahdī, be it regarding his era of emergence, his facial features, the place of his origin, the manner in which he shall emerge, etc.

Unfortunately, some details of the awaited Mahdī, despite not being mentioned in sound narrations, have over the course of time come to be understood as ‘accepted-facts’.

Deviant groups utilized many of these narrations to dupe the masses into thinking that they indeed are followers of the ‘awaited Mahdī’. On the other extreme, certain ‘prominent’ scholars, on account of the numerous fabrications regarding the ‘Mahdī’, passed a blanket-ruling over all the narrations regarding the Mahdī, declaring the entire notion to be a fabrication. According to their ‘research’ there shall be no rise, prior to the second-coming of Sayyidunā ‘Īsā, of a ‘true Islamic State’ at the hands of a ‘Mahdī’. Due to the prominence of some of those who purported such an

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1 The word ‘Mahdī’ is not a name, but rather a title, which means ‘the rightly-guided one’. In Islām, there have and will be many such people. However, special mention is made in many Aḥādīth of one such ‘Mahdī’ that will appear a few years prior to the descent of Sayyidunā ‘Īsā. In this book, the name ‘Mahdī’ is in reference to this blessed individual, who is also described as ‘المهدي المنتظر’ – ‘the awaited Mahdī’.
erroneous view, there are unfortunately many today, who do not believe at all in the coming of the ‘awaited-Mahdī’, despite this being a solid Islamic belief.

Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-Ḥasan al-Āburrī as-Sijzī (d. 363) has written:

“The Aḥādith with regards to the Mahdī are Mutawātir’ (narrated through so many chains, that the possibility of all being incorrect does not exist).”

In recent times, the emergence of a party, falsely claiming to have erected a true ‘Islamic State’, under the name of ISIS, and the many narratives that they utilized to support their claim, caused many simple-minded, sincere Muslims to race headlong towards their call. Many, later realised the deceitful nature of this group, but by then much harm had already been done. The worst harm perhaps caused by ISIS is the fact that they totally spoilt the pure image of an ‘Islamic State’.

One thus fears that when the true ‘Islamic State’ does rise, many, in ignorance, or due to having already being deceived by ISIS, shall become deaf to this true call, and shall regard it as another deception.

In even more recent times, a series titled ‘The Messiah’, has grabbed the attention and the hearts of millions world-wide. The hero of the series is portrayed as a devout, ascetic, kind-hearted preacher, that calls for world-peace and upon whose hands miraculous acts are performed. He cures the ill and the injured by the passing of his ‘blesses hand’ over their wounds; he moves between countries, without any apparent means; he strives to bring an end to the strife between the Muslims and the jews; despite facing the opposition of Western countries and Israel on the one side, and an

Many great scholars quoted this statement of Ḥāfiẓ al-Āburrī as-Sijzī, expressing their agreement with it. Amongst them are:

Imām al-Qurṭubī (d. 671) in al-Tadhkirah; Ḥāfiẓ al-Mizzī (d. 742) in Tahdhib al-Kamāl; ‘Allāmah ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 751) in al-Manār al-Munīf; Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852) in Tahdhib at-Tahdhib; ‘Allāmah al-Suyūṭī (d. 911) in al-ʿUrf al-Wardi; Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī al-Makki (d. 974); Mullā ‘Ali al-Qārī (d. 1014); ‘Allāmah Marā’ī ibn Yūsuf al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1033); al-Barzanjī (d. 1104) in al-Ishā‘ah; ‘Allāmah Zarqānī (d. 1122) in Sharḥ al-Mawāhib.
‘Islamic State’ on the other. The intended purpose of the series is to paint a distorted picture of the awaited-coming of Sayyidunā ʿIsā ﷺ, the true Messiah.

Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ, during his first stay on earth, i.e. prior to his ascent to the heavens, was perhaps similar to what the series depicts. The sick, the leper and the blind would be cured through the blessings of his miraculous hand. He would inform people of matters that were hidden from the general eye. He was an ascetic of the highest level. Whilst inviting others to the truth, he would travel from area to area. He had no fixed place of residence and; and he would not call to Jihād. And perhaps his greatest miracle would be when he would, through the permission of Almighty Allāh, bring the dead alive.

In the second-coming of Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ, his matter will be entirely different. 3 He will descend, not merely as an inviter, but as a just leader. He will call for Jihād, break the cross, kill the swine and abolish the ʿJizyah (tax collected from non-Muslim citizens). ʿJizyah will no longer be an option. It will be either Islām or the sword.

Prior to the second-coming of Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ, dajjāl (the false Messiah) shall emerge amongst the people and will wreak havoc amongst the masses, deceiving many into believing that he indeed is the ‘promised Messiah’. As a proof to his claim, he will display super-natural feats similar to what Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ had displayed during his first-coming.

Those blessed with the knowledge of the Sunnah, upon witnessing these super-natural acts, shall increase in their conviction of his being dajjāl, ‘the false Messiah’. Unfortunately, not all will be like this. Many will submit to dajjāl, on account of these super-natural feats, and will accept him as ‘the true Messiah’, the ‘promised saviour’ i.e. as Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ (Jesus).

Had such people pondered over the word ‘al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāl’ (the false Messiah), they would perhaps have understood that they were soon to face a ‘master liar’, posing in the disguise of a Messiah. They would have then perhaps responded to the feats of dajjāl, by saying:

3 فَقَالَ أَبُو ِهْرَبْرَةُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ: اِذَا أُقْمِ اِلَيْهِ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَأَعَانَهُهُ، فَقَالَ: اِنَّا أَيَّاهُ اِن يُحْرِّكُهُ هَذِهِ لَسَيْسَتْ كُتُبُهُ الْأَوَّلَ، ثُمَّ لَقَلَ أَلِيْهِ مَهَابَةَ كَمَهَابَةِ الْمُوْتِ، لَيْدَاءُ أَقَامَهَا بِدَرَجَاتِ مِنَ الْجَهَّاَنَّ» (الفتنة للداني)
“Now I am even more convinced that you are dajjāl, since my Nabī ﷺ has already informed me of this.”

In the light of the Aḥādīth regarding dajjāl, one could safely say that the character being shown in the series ‘The Messiah’ hardly bears any resemblance to Sayyidunā ‘Isā ﷺ, during his second-descent. Yes, to a very great extent, the character resembles dajjāl, the false Messiah, the anti-Christ. The false perception of the second-coming of Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ which is being created through the series, ‘The Messiah’ and other such movies/films will undoubtedly and unfortunately cloud the minds of many and will blind them to the reality of ‘dajjāl - the false Messiah’. Already we hear of Muslims expressing love and admiration for the hero of ‘The Messiah’. If the love of this fictitious character could grip so many, so firmly, what then can one expect when this fiction shall turn real.

Another aspect of confusion that will be caused by this series is with regards to the notion of an ‘Islamic State’. The series ‘The Messiah’ portrays an ‘Islamic State’ as something evil, similar to the state of Israel. A heart that gets gripped with the thrill of such a series shall without doubt find itself sceptical, when it hears of the emergence of the ‘Mahdī’.

From the above, one can well gain a glimpse of the confusion that shall be witnessed amongst the Muslims, upon the first mention of allegiance having been pledged to a man at the Kaʿbah.

Those in distress and in constant fear of persecution from oppressive regimes shall obviously grab the glad-tiding with joy and will immediately begin preparations to join their long-awaited leader. Others however, may not find their hearts so accepting, on account of some of the following factors:

- Hypocrite leaders and scholars shall proclaim the concept of the ‘Mahdī’ to be a farce, and will present as proof the fact that neither did Imām al-Bukhārī, nor Imām Muslim narrate a single narration in their famous collections, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, in which explicit mention is made of the Mahdī. They will beguile the masses by quoting the view of some historians and a few prominent scholars, who totally denied the concept of the ‘Mahdī’, merely on account of not finding explicit mention of it in narrations classified as ‘Ṣaḥīḥ’. Those, who had for years been fed the lie that only that which is narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim is to be relied upon and that all other narrations and compilations are not worthy of consideration, such people
shall unfortunately fall for the trap and shall show reluctance from stretching out their hands in allegiance.

• Those, whose minds had been corrupted through the film industry, be it the series titled, ‘The Mahdi’, or other similar clips/movies, shall perhaps even express anger at the news, on account of an incorrect perception already existing within the crevices of their hearts regarding an ‘Islamic State’.

• Those, who had been deceived by previous, false claims of an ‘Islamic State’ shall doubt the truth of the new call, on the basis of ‘once bitten, twice shy.’

• As for the wealthy and those living in luxury, it may well happen that the fear of losing their ease and luxury will cause their hearts to react in a sceptical manner to the news. They will then present lame excuses as to why they are not prepared to submit to the new Muslim leader. Their excuses shall hold no real weight, but it will obviously push the gullible into doubt.

A need has thus been felt to shed light upon the aspect of the awaited Mahdi, in the light of sound narrations, thus enabling one and all to relate with the Mahdi, in the manner that the established Sunnah demands.
CHAPTER ONE

THE MAHDI IN THE LIGHT OF AUTHENTIC NARRATIONS
Chapter One

The Mahdī in the Light of Authentic Narrations

In the pages that follow, mention shall be made of the sound narrations, in which explicit mention is made of the Mahdi, followed by those sound narrations, in which the word ‘Mahdi’ is not mentioned explicitly, but the indications of it referring to the ‘Mahdi’ are quite clear.

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1 It should be understood from the onset that the concept of the ‘awaited Mahdi’ is established by numerous Aḥādīth. Scholars have in fact stated that the concept itself is established from Mutawātir Aḥādīth (i.e. so many narrations exist regarding it, that the possibility of it being a misconception cannot in anyway be considered).

Although explicit mention of the word ‘Mahdi’ in reference to the ‘awaited-Mahdi’ cannot be found in narrations, classified as Ṣaḥīḥ li-Dhātiḥi (authentic, on its own accord), there are however numerous narrations which fulfils the requirements of the grades below this. Such narrations may fall into the grading of Ṣaḥīḥ li-Ghayriḥi (authentic, on account of other supporting narrations) or Ḥasan li-Dhātiḥi (sound, on its own accord) or Ḥasan li-Ghayriḥi (sound, on accord of supporting narrations). All of these are of a higher grade than that which is known as Daʿīf (weak). Such narrations, with regards to aspects concerning events that shall occur before Qiyāmah, are regarded as ‘reliable’.

Besides the above, there are numerous narrations, classified as Ṣaḥīḥ li-Dhātiḥi, in which, although explicit mention is not made of the ‘Mahdi’, but the indications are quite clear that it refers to none other, but the Mahdi. In the Ṣaḥīḥ of Imām al-Bukhārī and Imām Muslim many such narrations have been recorded.

The collection of all of the above narrations, in which either explicit or indicative reference to the issue of the ‘Mahdi’ can be found, is indeed more than sufficient in establishing the concept of the ‘Mahdi’ as a ‘definite belief’.

Denying the concept of the ‘Mahdi’, merely on the basis of it not being mentioned explicitly, in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Imām al-Bukhārī and Imām Muslim, is an act of ignorance, stemming from not understanding the principles of Aḥūdīth, and how rulings are extracted therefrom.
Sound Narrations in Which Explicit Mention is Made of the Mahdī

**Note:** The description that these narrations provide of the Mahdī should not be regarded as ‘definite proofs of one being the Mahdi’, but rather as signs which will be found in the Mahdī. Having these signs alone is no proof of one being the Mahdī. Yes, to be the Mahdī, one needs to have these signs.

For example, mention is mention in sound narrations of black flags from Khurāsān rising, after his emergence. The mere rising of black flags from this region is no proof of one being the Mahdī. Deviated sects in the past utilized this, as well as other such signs of the Mahdī, to strengthen their claim of being the army of the Mahdī. One group in fact came with black flags from Khurāsān and had a leader called the Mahdī, but their claim was obviously a blatant lie. Many of the ignorant fell for their lie,

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2 History has seen many who have laid claim to being the ‘promised Mahdi’. With the passing of time their lie was exposed, but unfortunately only after it had duped many to pledge their allegiance and at times sacrifice their lives for a liar. For e.g.

Ḥārith ibn Surayj, in the year 116 A.H. rebelled against the Umayyad dynasty, claiming himself to be the Mahdī, and the one accompanied by black flags. He managed to gain control over a few cities of Khurāsān, but was finally defeated.

The caliph, Abū Jaʿfar Manṣūr, due to his name being ‘Abdullāh, chose the name Muḥammad for his son, and titled him as Mahdī, in the hope of his son, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh, being the promised ‘Mahdī’. Black flags would also accompany this ‘Mahdī’ when he assumed the role of the caliph in 158 A.H., but he too was not ‘the promised Mahdī’.

Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh Tumrit, a Berber, laid claim to being the ‘Mahdī’ in the year 515 A.H. In order to achieve his fabricated dream of having all submit to his command, countless innocent souls were slaughtered by his oppressive soldiers. His most filthy lie finally ended with his death in 524 A.H.

Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf of Jounphur, India, during his Hajj in 901 A.H. laid claim to being the Mahdī. To strengthen his claim, he changed the names of his father and mother to Abdullāh and Āminah, and then set off for Khurāsān, hoping to gain for himself the black flags of Khurāsān. Death however grabbed him before he could even enter Khurāsān.
merely on account of not understanding that having the signs of the Mahdi is no proof of one’s being the Mahdi. Yes, when the Mahdi does emerge, we shall most definitely find within him the signs mentioned in the sound traditions.

Searching for the Mahdi, through the signs mentioned in the narrations could prove disastrous, since there shall always be the possibility of an evil element creating within themselves the signs of the Mahdi and his army, in order to dupe the masses and gain strength for their nefarious plots. This has occurred many a time in history and shall perhaps occur again in the future. May Almighty Allah save us all from such liars and their propaganda. Thus, understanding this principle is of extreme importance as we await eagerly the coming of the Mahdi.

The rise of the Mahdi shall indeed occur, and Almighty Allah shall create such signs and events around him which shall create, within the hearts of the scholars and the pious, conviction of his being the Mahdi. These scholars and pious individuals shall then guide those who have trust in them to pledge their allegiance to the Mahdi. The nature of those signs and events shall be fully understood when the time comes. Spurious decisions should not be made in accepting any and every individual as the ‘awaited Mahdi’, even if he displays some of the signs mentioned in the narrations.

Imam Abū Dāwūd narrates that the great scholar of Islam, Sufyān ath-Thawrī, thus said:

«وإن مر باك المهدي وأنتم في البيت، فلا تحرج إلیه حتى يجمع الناس» (سؤالات الأجر).

Muḥammad Ahmad ibn ‘Abdullāh of Sudan laid claim to being the ‘Mahdi’ in the year 1298 A.H. With great conviction in his being the ‘Mahdi’ he sent letters of warning to the Ottoman Sultan, Sultan ʿAbdu al-Ḥāmid, to the leading authorities of Egypt and to the queen of England. He made bold claims of receiving glad-tidings from Rasūlullāh ﷺ that upon his reaching Makkah Mukarramah, all believers shall pledge at his hands and he shall gain control of the world. His sudden demise in 1302 A.H. however exposed the lie behind his claims.

In 1400 A.H. Juhaymān ibn Shayf al-ʿUtaybī had the doors of the Ḥaram of Makkah locked, and announced the arrival of the Mahdi, in reference to one of his companions. His claim, and his hold onto the Haram for close to two weeks, led to a huge amount of blood being spilled in the Holy precincts.
“Even if the Mahdī passes by your dwelling, then too one should not emerge (to pledge allegiance). Rather, one should wait until the people gather” (i.e. one should not make a spontaneous decision, but should rather wait to see what the majority of scholars agree upon).

Amongst the aspects relating to the Mahdī, that have been established through sound and explicit narrations, are the following:

The Mahdī Shall be from the Ahl al-Bayt

1. The Mahdī shall be from the family of Rasūlullāh ﷺ:

Sayyidunā 'Alī narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

"The Mahdī is from amongst us, i.e., from the Ahl al-Bayt (the family of Rasūlullāh ﷺ). Allāh shall make him capable in a single night."

In the explanation of the phrase ‘Allāh shall make him capable in a single night’, ‘Allāmah ibn Kathīr has written:

“Allāh shall direct His attention towards him, guide and inspire him, blessing him with that which he did not have prior to this night.”
Seeing the word ‘يَتوب عليه’، which generally means to accept one’s repentance, some deduced that the Mahdī will be involved in sin, prior to the day in which allegiance will be pledged at his hands. Such a deduction however appears to be incorrect, due to the following factors:

• The word ‘يَتوب عليه’ (Allāh shall direct His attention towards him) does not necessarily demand that one has been a great sinner prior to this. Such a phrase has been used in the Qur’ān in reference to Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself.⁴

• The phrase that has been mentioned in the narration is ‘يَصلحه الله في ليلة’ (Allāh shall make him capable in a single night’). Being incapable before this does not necessitate that the Mahdī shall be involved in sin before this night. Rather, all it refers to is that the potential and ability to rule, which demands great wisdom, strength, courage, etc. Almighty Allāh shall bless him with all of this in a single night.

Thus:

• Mullā ʿAlī al-Qārī, in al-Mirqāt, explained the phrase: ‘يَصلحه الله في ليلة’ as:

  ﴿لَنَصْلِحَهُ اللَّهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ وَالْعَفَّةَ فِيهَا﴾

  “Allāh will settle his matter and elevate his position in a single night, or in an hour of the night, whereby those upon whom decisions rest will unite upon his being the caliph”.

• ʿAllāmah ʿIzz ad-Dīn Amīr as-Saḥānī in al-Tanwīr, the commentary of Jamiʿ aṣ-Ṣaghīr, explained it as:

  ﴿يَصِلِّحهُ اللَّهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ﴾

  “Allāh shall complete his matter for him and shall grant him power over those who oppose him in a single night.”

⁴ Refer to verse 117 of Surah at-Tawbah:

  ﴿لَقَدْ نَافَاتُ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُحَاجِرِينَ وَالْمُتَّحَدِينَ وَأَحَدَ أَصْرَ أَلَّذِينَ كَانُوا فِي سَاعَةِ الْمُضْرَرِينَ مِنْ بَعْضٍ مَا كَانُوا تَمْرَعُونَ قُلُوبَٰهُمْ فِي سَاعَةٍ﴾

  ﴿فَيَصِلِّحْهُمُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَفِيعُ الْعَمَりَّاتِ﴾

  “And indeed We have made a treaty with them. And He will complete it for them. Undoubtedly God is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.”
Shaykh ʿAbdul Ghanī al-Mujaddidi in Injāḥ al-Hājah, the commentary of Sunan ibn Mājah, explained it as:

"Almighty Allāh shall make him capable to suddenly assume the role of a caliph."

From the above it becomes clear that the notion of the Mahdī not being righteous, prior to being recognized, is incorrect. Rather, as mentioned by Sayyiduna ʿAbbās, he will be kept safe from trials and evils, even before ascending to power.

Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās said:

"The world shall not end, until a youngster from us, i.e. the Ahl al-Bayt, takes control. He shall be such that trials/evil had not touched him, nor had he ever touched it."

2. The Mahdī shall be from the progeny of Sayyidah Fāṭimah

Sayyidah Ummu Salamah has narrated that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

"The Mahdī shall be from the progeny of Sayyidah Fāṭimah."

Shaykh ʿAbdul Ghanī al-Mujaddidi in Injāḥ al-Hājah, the commentary of Sunan ibn Mājah, explained it as:

"Almighty Allāh shall make him capable to suddenly assume the role of a caliph."
“The Mahdi will be from my family, from the progeny of Fātimah”

On account of certain narrations of Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās , in which mention is made that the Mahdi will be from their family, some groups misunderstood that the Mahdi will be from the progeny of Sayyidunā ʿAbbās , and thus searched for the Mahdi amongst the caliphs of the Banū ʿAbbās. The above quoted narration from Sayyidah Ummu Salamah  makes it clear that the Mahdi will not be from the progeny of Sayyidunā ʿAbbās , but rather from the progeny of Sayyidah Fātimah , the beloved daughter of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

In the Muṣannaf of ibn Abī Shaybah, Saʿīd ibn Jubayr is quoted as saying that Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās  said:

’مِن أئمَّةَ سَالِحِينَ، وَمِن أئمَّةِ الْمُهَدِيِّينَ’  
(Mustafah Ibn Abi Shibah)

"Three are from us. ’Saffāḥ’ (the one who shall spend freely or who shall let blood flow) is from us. And ’Mansūr’ (the one who shall be aided) is from us. And the ’Mahdi’ (the rightly-guided one) is from us.”

During the initial era of the Banū ʿAbbās, the first three caliphs adopted the titles of ’Saffāḥ’, ’Mansūr’, and ’Mahdi’, in the exact sequence as detailed in the narration. Their true intention behind this will perhaps never be known, but it is highly possible that it was done in order to dupe the masses further into accepting the legitimacy of their movement, just as how they adopted black flags as their symbol, and fabricated numerous Aḥādīth mentioning their movement as the ‘true caliphate, that would directly hand the flag over to the Mahdi’.

Abū ʿAbbās ʿAbdullāh ibn Muḥammad (d. 136) was the first caliph of the Banū ʿAbbās caliphate. He adopted the title of ’Saffāḥ’, which means ‘the most generous’. Upon his demise, his brother, Abū Jaʿfar ʿAbdullāh ibn Muḥammad (d. 158) became caliph. He adopted the title =
of ‘Maḥṣūr’, which means ‘the one aided’. He then named his son Muḥammad and titled him as ‘al-Mahdī, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdūllāh’.

His son, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdūllāh al-Mahdī did succeed him as caliph and ruled until 169 A.H. Since this movement rose from Khurāsān and its flag was black, some at that time could have been duped into thinking that Muḥammad was the ‘awaited-Mahdī’, who would hand over rule to Sayyidunā ʿĪsā ﷺ. Muḥammad’s demise in 169 A.H. however proved this notion incorrect.

The nature of the rise of the first three caliphs of the Banū ʿAbbās and the oppressive measures they implemented in order to strengthen their movement (which will be discussed under the chapter of ‘Black Flags from Khurāsān’), makes it quite clear that Sayyidunā ‘Abdūllāh ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ could never have been referring to such people in the above statement attributed to him.

Rather, just as the initial leaders of the Banū ʿAbbās adopted many other devious means to prove their legitimacy, here too they most-likely stole the titles mentioned in the narration, merely in order to stamp their authority even further.

As for who Sayyidunā ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ was actually referring to in his statement: ‘From us is Saffāḥ, from us is Maḥṣūr and from us is the Mahdī’, it is highly possible that he was referring to three great individuals that this Ummah shall see, that shall come from the Ahl al-Bayt. (All of this is on the assumption that the narration of ibn ʿAbbās has not been fabricated. According to ibn al-Jawzī none of these narrations regarding Saffāḥ and Maḥṣūr are authentic, as mentioned in al-ʿIlal al-Mutanāhiyah).

From these three, the Mahdī, who shall come before Nabī ʿĪsā ﷺ is the most famous and his appearance at the end of time is definite. As for ‘Saffāḥ’ (the most-generous) and ‘Maḥṣūr’ (the aided), their era could perhaps be long before or shortly before the era of the Mahdī, or perhaps during his era, or perhaps even after. And for the three to come in the sequence mentioned in the narration, i.e. Saffāḥ first, followed by Maḥṣūr and then the Mahdī, that too is not necessary.

Also, it is not necessary that each one of them be a caliph. Rather, the title ‘Saffāḥ’ merely demands that one be extremely generous and the title ‘Maḥṣūr’ demands that one be aided in his battles/endeavours.

As for what has been narrated, by al-Khatīb al-Baghdādi, that Abū Sāʿid ﷺ has been quoted to have said: ‘I heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying:
When Sayyidunā ibn ‘Abbās mentioned that the Mahdi will be from his family, what he most likely meant was that the Mahdi will be from the Ahl al-Bayt, i.e. the family of Rasūlullāh. In fact, he himself made mention of this in clear words, when he said:

لا تمضِي الأيام والليالي حتى بيَّن من أهل النبي فقِي لم تلبسْه الفتى ولم بُلْبِسْهَا (المصنف لأبي شيبة)

“The world shall not end, until a youngster from us, i.e., from the Ahl al-Bayt, takes control. He shall be such that trials/evil had not touched him, nor had he ever touched it”.

As for the issue of which of the two sons of Fātimah will the Mahdi be from, Imām Abū Dāwūd has narrated the following statement of Sayyidunā ʿAlī:

قال عليًّا حسنًا ونظر إلى ابنه الحسن فقال: إن ابني هذا سيِّدٌ كما سَئَل اللهي صَلَّاهُ وَسَلَّم ُهُ، وَسَتَخْرَجُ من صالته رجل يُسِّنَب باسم تَفْبَحَ، يُشْبِه في الحَنْقِ، ولا يُشْبِه في الحقَّ، ثمَّ ذَكر قِصَّةً

- يَسَلُّ الأَرْض غَدٍّلاً (سنن أبي داود)

“Whilst looking at this son, Ḥasan, ʿAlī said, ‘This son of mine is a leader, since that is what Rasūlullāh called him. And from his progeny shall come a man, who shall have the name of your Nabi, ʿQāʾīm’ (the one that shall stand erect), from us is ʿAṣīr, from us is Saffāḥ and from us is the Mahdī’. The caliphate shall come to ʿQāʾīm, without any blood being spilt. No flag of ʿAṣīr shall be sent back (i.e. he will always be victorious), Saffāḥ shall let wealth and blood flow. And the Mahdī shall fill the earth with justice, just as it was filled with oppression.”

Regarding this narration, Ḥāфиз Dhahābī in Mizān al-Iʿtīdāl, under the discussion of Muḥammad ibn Jābir, has written:

خبر منكر جدًا

“It is an extremely Munkar narration.”

رواه ابن أبي شيبة في المصنف، بسند صحيح عن سفيان بن عيينة، عن عمرو بن الين، عن أبي مجد، عن أبي معيبد، عن ابن عباس.
and who shall resemble your Nabī in character, but not in appearance.
(‘Alī then mentioned an incident, and at the end of it, said:) He shall fill the earth with justice”.

In this statement, clear mention is made of the one, who shall fill the world with justice, (who most probably will be none other than the ‘Mahdī’), being from the progeny of Sayyidūn Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī.

The chain (Sanad) of this statement is however weak. Thus, until it is not strengthened from other sources, it cannot be deemed as a proof.

9 والتحقيق المعتبر هو ما قاله المحدثون في إسناده، وهو أن فيه انقطاعًا في أعلاه، وأنا الانقطاع الذي في أعلاه، فأبو إسحاق السبيعي قيل: إنه لم يسمع من علي جل الله علية رأيه، وذلك أنه ولد لستين بفية من خلافة عثمان جل الله علية، والانقطاع الذي في أسفله هو أن أبا داود لم يسم شيخه فيه، وإنما قال: حدثت عن هارون ابن المغيرة، وقد قال الخنجر في: اختصار سنن أبي داود، عن هارون ابن المغيرة، رأي عليا رأي عثمان جل الله علية، وقال فيه أبى داود: حدثت عن هارون ابن المغيرة» (الرد على من كذب بالأحاديث الصحيحة الواردة في المهدي).

10 وأما ما روي أن رسول الله صل الله عليه وسلم حين سئل عن أي ولده سيكون المهدي فقال: «من وادي هذا» وضرب بيده على الحسين، فهو مروي عن الغلاوي (وهو من مهم الحديث) عن العباس بن بكار (وهو كذب)، فالحدث موضوع عند النبي سيدنا هذا الحديث من مصاب العباس بن بكار، وقال عنه الزهبي: موقوف منكر.

(ميزان الاعتدال في ترجمة الحجاج بن رياض)
The Mahdī Shall Rule for Seven or Eight Years

Sayyidunā Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

“فَخَرَجَ في آخر أمتِي المهديَّ تَسقُى الله الغيث، وتُهرِج الأرض نباتها، ويعطي النال صالحًا، وَتَصَنَّع الناشئة وتعظم الأمهَّة، يعيش سبعًا أو ثمانية يعيّن: حَجَّاجًا. (رواه الحاكم، وقال الدهش: صحيح)

“The Mahdī shall emerge towards the latter part of my Ummah. Allāh will send rain upon him and the earth shall give off its vegetation. He will distribute wealth with justice. Livestock will be in abundance and the Ummah will be huge. He will live (after becoming leader) for seven or eight years.”

\[11\]

As for the narration of Sayyidunā Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī that has been recorded in the *Musnad* of ʿImām ʿAḥmad, in which mention is made of his rule being either seven, or eight or nine years, this narration has been classified as weak, on account of the narrator Zayd al-ʿAmmī.
Sayyidunā Jābir narrates Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

"Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ will descend. Their (the Muslims) leader, the Mahdī, will say to him, 'Come forward and lead the Ṣalāh'. Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ will reply, 'No, some of the Muslims have been made leaders over others, as an honour that Allāh has bestowed upon this Ummah'.” (i.e. a person from the Ummah should lead the Ummah, even if a Nabī of a previous Ummah is present).

With regards to whether the Mahdī will continue leading the prayers after Sayyidunā ʿIsā ﷺ kills dajjāl, ʿAllāmah Taftāzānī has written in Sharh al-ʿAqāʾid:

“The most correct opinion is that ʿIsā ﷺ shall lead the prayer and the Mahdī will perform Ṣalāh behind him, since he (i.e. Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ) is the most virtuous and is thus most deserving to be the Imām of the Ṣalāh.”

As with regards to why he will not lead the first Ṣalāh, scholars explain that since the Iqāmah had already been given for the Ṣalāh, Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ will not feel it appropriate to take an Imām off his Muṣallā. This answer finds support in a narration of Sayyidunā Abū Umāmah al-Bāhili, in which it is mentioned that when asked to lead the Ṣalāh, Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ will decline, saying:

"صَلِّ فَإِنَّمَا أَقْبَيْبِ الصَّلَاةِ لَكُمْ (رواه محمد بن تمام في الفوائد)"

Imām Muslim has recorded a similar narration in his Ṣaḥīḥ, except that in it the word ‘Mahdī’ is not mentioned.

"قال عنه ابن الجوزي في «المنار المنيف»: هذا إسناد جيد.

لا تزال طائفة من أئمة يقالون على الحق ظاهرين إلى يوم القيامة، قال: فإني عيسى ابن مريم سأقلل بهما، فيقول أميرهم: تغلال صل أنا، فيقول: لا، إن بعطيهم على بعض أمراء تحكيرمهم الله هذه الأمية."

22
“You lead the Ṣalāh, since the Iqāmah has been given for you.”

The narration of Sayyidunā Abū Umāmah, quoted in al-Fawā’id however is weak «ضعف». A similar statement is recorded from Ka‘b al-Aḥbār, as quoted by Abū Nu‘aym. Its wording is:

وَتَقَامُ الصَّلَاةُ، وَفَرَجَ إِمامُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ الْمُهْدِيِّينَ، فَيَقُولُ عَبْسٌ: تَقَدِّمْ، فَلَكَ أَيْضًا الصَّلَاةُ، فَيَضْلِكَ فِي ذَلِكَ الصَّلَاةِ، قَالَ: فَمَعْلُوَّبُ عَبْسٍ إِبْنِ إِسْحَاقَ بْنِ عُمَّارٍ.

“And the Ṣalāh shall begin/or the Iqāmah shall be given (i.e., just before the descent of ʿĪsā). The leader of the believers, the Mahdi, (seeing Nabī ʿIsā descending) shall move back. Nabī ʿIsā will say: ‘Move front, since the Iqāmah has been given for you. So, he (the Mahdi) shall lead that Ṣalāh. After that, Nabī ʿIsā will be the Imām.’

The words of Ka‘b al-Aḥbār however are not adequate to provide strength to a weak narration, nor can any ruling be based upon it.

Thus, since there is no explicit mention of whether the Mahdi will continue leading the prayers after Sayyidunā ʿIsā kills dajjāl, or not, it will be best to entertain both possibilities.

A proof that may be provided for the possibility of the Mahdi leading the prayers, even after dajjāl is slain, is the reason given by Sayyidunā ʿIsā himself, i.e. that as an honour for this Ummah, Almighty Allāh ordained that the Imām be from the people of this Ummah. Had this only been for one Ṣalāh, and that too, on account of the Iqāmah having already been given, or the Ṣalāh already having begun, then that would not be regarded as ‘a great honour’, but rather as an issue of necessity.

Discussing this honour, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

كيف أنتم إذا نزل بن مريم فيكم وتقرئكم من اسمه (رواة البخاري)

“What shall be your state when the son of Maryam descends upon you, whilst your leader 13 is a man from amongst you!”
‘Allāmah al-Munāwī, in *at-Taysīr*, explains this Ḥadīth as:

> كيف سروزهم يلقّيه وكيف يصون قصر هذه الأممة ورزوح الله يصلٌ ويؤملهم؟

“How happy will those alive not be to meet with him, and how proud will the Ummah not be that Rūḥ al-Allāh (Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ) performs Ṣalāh behind their Imām.”

Explaining a possible reason for Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ not leading the Ṣalāh during the era of the Mahdī, ‘Allāmah ibn al-Jawzī writes:

و ведь عيني إمامًا أو وقعت في النفس إشكالًا، ولقيف: أثراء تقدّمت نائبًا أو مبتدأً شرعًا؟ فصلَ مامومًا

إبّالًا يندهّس بعبار الشبهة، (ذكره ابن حجر في فتح المバリ)

“If Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ had to move forward as the Imām, a doubt would enter the minds of the followers, as to whether Nabī ʿIsā will now bring a new law, or if he will be a mere vicegerent. He will thus perform his Ṣalāh as a Muqṭadī, so that this doubt does not arise.”

Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī, in *al-Mīrqāt*, explained it as follows:

> فيقول: لا أصير إمامًا لمحفظٍ إبّالًا يفوهُ إمامي لمحفظ ديني وحش.

(Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ will reply: ‘No’), i.e. “I will not become an Imām over you, so that the thought does not arise that perhaps I have come to abrogate your faith.”

He then writes:

وقيل: تعلّل بأل هذه الصلاة أقسمت لإمامكم، فهم أولٌ يها.

“Another reason that has been given for his declining leading the Ṣalāh is that the Iqāmah had already been given for the Mahdī, thus he is now most-deserving to lead the prayer.”

Mullā ʿAlī al-Qārī, then says:

> لسخين يُؤؤدُ الأول إطلاق قولته: إن تغضبكم على بعض أمراء، أي: دينيّة أو ذلوبةً، وإن على

فأنتَبَحَّكم أو فأنتَبَحَّكم بالصلاة ولا أجل هذه الاحتمالات يحكون تفسير ابن أبي ذنيب فأنتَبَحَّكم أو فأنتَبَحَّكم بحجاب رحم.

وستة نيبَحَّكم مرجوًا.
“However, the first mentioned reason is supported by the general nature of the words of Nabī ʻIsā عليه السلام, wherein he stated, (‘it is some of you, i.e., someone from your Ummah, that have been made leaders over the others’), be it in worldly matters or in religious affairs, and I, (i.e. Nabī ʻIsā عليه السلام) have been sent merely as an aid.”

Another proof that could be provided for this view is that since Nabī ʻIsā عليه السلام shall only resume leadership over the Muslims after the demise of the Mahdī, it would seem that until then, just as he would not be taking leadership away from the Mahdī, he would not also take away the right to lead the prayer.
The Mahdi Shall Have a Broad Forehead and an Elongated Nose, With an Elevation in the Centre

Sayyidunā Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī narrates that Rasūllullāh ﷺ said:

المهدٰي متيّ، أجلج الجبهة، أفق الأنف (سنن أبي داود) 14

“The Mahdī is from me (i.e., my family). His forehead shall be broad 15 and his nose shall be elongated, with an elevation in the center.” 16

14: قال أبو داود: حدثنا سهل بن تمام بن يزيد، حدثنا عمران القطان، عن قنادة، عن أبي نضرة، عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: المهدٰي متيّ، أجلج الجبهة، أفق الأنف، يسلّم الأرض فيستأناً، وعندما يمسك سبع سنين، وسكت عنه.

15: The meaning of ‘أجلّ الجبهة’ as given by the scholars is that there exists very little hair on the area between the temples, i.e. there is hardly any hair on the area that touches the ground in Sajdah. This results in one's forehead being broad.

16: قال المنذري في إسناده: عمران القطان، وهو أبو العوام عمران بن داوز القطان البصري، استشهد به البخاري، ووثقه عبان بن مسلم، وأحسن عليه الشافعي بني مبيد القطان، وضعه بني معين والنسائي، وقال عنه شعيب الأرزووقي: جيد بهذا النقل، سهل بن تمام بن يزيد - وإن كان ضعيفاً - متاعب، وعمران القطان - وهو ابن داوز - حسن الحديث، وقد روى حديثه هذا من وجه آخر حسن في المتنبيه، وسيأتي ذكره. وقال ابن الجوزي: إن ابن عفان بنسلمان، وضع فيه ابن معين والنسائي، ووافق عليه شعيب الرنوط، جيد بهذا الفرض، وأيضاً في رواية أبي يعلى، وأيضاً في رواية آخر، بسنده حسن عن مطر الوراق، عن أبي الصديق الناجي، عن أبي سعيد الخدري ﷺ.

وفيما ذكره من الفرض، هل يقتضى أن يكون متوافقاً بالمتنبيه؟ لا يقال أن يكون متوافقاً، بل يقتضي أن يكون متنبيه، لضعف الحديث، ولأن حديثه هذا مرفوع عن أبي يعلى، وابن حبان، ولكن حديثه هذا معروف من فتوى هذا الحديث، لأن عمران لم يفرد به. وقال الألباني: حسن.
The forehead and the nose of Rasūlullāh ﷺ was of a similar nature. Amongst the Arabs this is a facial feature that portrays greatness and nobility.

The Mahdī Will Fill the World with Justice

Sayyidunā ‘Ali narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

«إِلاَّ يَوْمٍ وَلَا يُبَقِّيَ الْجَهْرُ رَجُلًا مِّنْ أُهُلِّ بَيْتٍ يُبَيَّنُهَا عَدْنَا كَمَا مُلَبِّيَ جُوْرًا.»

(سنن أبي داود)

“If only a day was left of this world, then too Almighty Allāh shall raise a man from my family, who will fill the earth with justice, just as it had been filled with oppression”.

Although the word ‘Mahdī’ is not mentioned explicitly in this narration, scholars like Imām Abū Dāwūd, ibn Abī Shaybah and Abū ‘Amr ad-Dānī, amongst others, have recorded it under the chapter of the Mahdī, since filling the world with justice is a distinguishing trait of the Mahdī.
The Name of the Mahdī Shall be Similar to the Name of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, And His Father's Name Will be Similar to the Name of Rasūlullāh ﷺ’s Father

Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

لا تندهب، أو لا تنقض في الدنيا حتى يملك العزّ رجل من أهل بيتي، يوالى اسمه اسمي، (سنین)

وزيّم من الدنيا، لأ يوم لم تطول الله ذلك اليوم حتى يبعث في رجلًا مثلي أو من أهل بيتي، يوالى اسمه اسم، واسم أبيه اسم أبي، يملأ الأرض كعبًا وجدًا، كما ملئت الظلمة وجُوّوزًا، (سنین)

“The world will not end until a man from my family rules. His name shall be similar to my name, and the name of his father will be similar to the name of my father. He will fill the world with justice, just as it had been filled with oppression.” (prior to his appearing)

Note: Since clear mention has not been made in any sound narration of the name of the Mahdī being Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh, despite this being the most probable explanation of the word 'similar to my name and the name of my father', the possibility shall always exist of the Mahdī having another name, which in meaning or in scale is similar to the name of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.
The Mahdī Shall Distribute Wealth in a Most Generous Manner

Sayyidunā Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī and Sayyidunā Jābir narrate that Rasūlullāh said:

"At the end of time there shall be a caliph who will distribute wealth, without counting."

Black Flags from Khurāsān

Thawbān narrates that Rasūlullāh said:

"Three shall fight by this treasure of yours (i.e., by the Ka‘bah). Each will be the son a caliph. None of the three will however gain control over it. Black flags will then appear from the East. (probably
Khurāsān. They will fight against you in a manner which has no parallel. (or ‘They will kill you, in a manner you have never seen before!’). Rasūlullāh thereafter mentioned something, (which I cannot remember). He then said: 'When you see him, pledge allegiance to him, even if it requires that you drag yourself on ice to get to him, for verily he is the vicegerent of Allāh, the ‘Mahdī’ (the one rightly-guided).’

The apparent wording of this narration indicates to an army, carrying black flags, that shall rise in opposition to the Muslims, or to the Arabs, and shall attack them in a most brutal manner. This army shall thus obviously not be an army in favour of Islām.

Due to Rasūlullāh thereafter making mention of other events (which Sayyidunā Thawbān could not recall), before discussing the issue of the Mahdī, it is not essential that this evil army be found during the era of the Mahdī himself. Rather, it is highly possible that this ferocious, barbaric attack upon a part of the Muslim Ummah, from the army of the east, carrying black flags, could occur long before the advent of the Mahdī. (most likely referring to the Abbasid armies)

Al-Ḥākim has narrated the above wording of Thawbān from aṣ-Ṣaffār, from Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm, from Ḥuṣayn ibn Ḥaḍī, from Sufyān ath-Thawrī, from Khālid al-Ḥadhdhā’, from Abū Qilābah, from Abū Asmā’ ar-Rahābī.

Imām ibn Mājah has also narrated this Ḥadīth of Thawbān, from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā and Ahmad ibn Yūsuf, from ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, from Sufyān ath-Thawrī, from Khālid al-Ḥadhdhā’ from Abū Qilābah, from Abū Asmā’ ar-Rahābī.

Both these chains have been declared to be sound. In both, the narration is being quoted from Sufyān ath-Thawrī, either through Ḥuṣayn ibn Ḥaḍī, or ‘Abd ar-Razzāq.
aš-San’ānī. In both, mention is made of some other matters being discussed by Rasūlullāh ﷺ, between the mention of the black flags, and the mention of the Mahdi.

Hāfīz al-Bayhaqī has narrated this Ḥadith of Thawbān, with similar wording, through three different chains, all linking up to ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, from Sufyān ath-Thawrī, from Khālid al-Ḥadhīḥā, from Abū Qilābah, from Asmā’.

Here too, mention is first made of an army carrying black flags launching a terrible attack upon the Muslims. Then mention is made of Rasūlullāh ﷺ discussing something, and only after that is mention made of the Mahdi. There is no indication of the army carrying black flags being in the era of the ‘Mahdī’, nor of the Mahdi being in this army.

In fact, in one narration, quoted by Hāfiẓ al-Bayhaqī, by separating the incidents with the word «ثم» (then), clear indication is made that the era of the Mahdī shall occur at a later stage, and not during or soon after the attack of the army carrying black flags.

The narration, quoted by al-Bayhaqī, from ibn ʿAbdān is as follows:

«ثم تجيء الزيات السود، فقتلتك ثم يقتلك قوم، ثم يجيء خليفة الله المهدي فإذًا سيعتم به قاتلوا فتباععوا فإذًا خليفة الله المهدي» (دلائل النبوة)

“That black flags shall come, and they shall kill you, in a manner which has no parallel. Then the vicegerent of Allāh, the Mahdi shall come. When you hear of him, go to him and pledge allegiance, for indeed he is the vicegerent of Allāh, the Mahdi.”

Certain narrators however, whilst quoting the above narration from Abū Qilābah, from Abū Asmā’ ar-Rahābī, from Thawbān, omitted the mention of the phrase «ثم ذكر شيء» (He thereafter mentioned something, which Thawbān could not remember), thus creating the impression that the Mahdi will be found in the very army that would launch a ferocious attack upon a part of the Muslim Ummah.

For e.g. in al-Fitan of Abū ‘Amr ad-Dānī, the narration of Sayyidunā Thawbān appears as follows:

«يقتِبَلْ عند كُنْوَمْ نُقْرُ ثُلُثًا، كُلُّهم بِنَحْيَةٍ، تَمَّ لا يُصَبِّرُ السَّلَاتُ إِلَى أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ، تَمَّ لَقِيلَ الزِّيَاتُ السَّوْدُ مِنْ قِبَلِ حِرَاسَانَ فَأَبْعَوْنَهَا فَوَلَّوْا حَيْبًا عَلَى الرُّكْبِ، فَإِنَّ فِي هَيِّئَةِ خَلِيْفَةِ اللَّهِ المهِدِيِّ».

UNDERSTANDING THE MAHDĪ
“Three shall fight by this treasure of yours. Each will be the son of a caliph. None of the three will however gain control over it. Black flags will then appear from Khurāsān. *When this happens, go to it, even if it requires that you have to crawl on your knees to get to him, for verily in it is the vicegerent of Allāh, the ‘Mahdī’."

In this narration, mention is made of the Mahdī being a part of the army that will come with black flags from Khurāsān, whereas the full narration of Sayyidunā Thawbān makes it clear that the army coming with black flags shall fight against a part of the Muslim Ummah, and not in their favour.

Al-Ḥākim in his *al-Mustadrak*, has also quoted something similar, from ‘Abdul Wahhāb ibn ‘Atā’, from Khālid al-Ḥadhhdhā’, from Abū Qilābah, from Abū Asmā’. Abu Nuʿāym in *al-Fitan*, has quoted something similar from Abū Naṣr Khaffāf from Khālid al-Ḥadhhdhā’, from Abū Qilābah, from Abū Asmā’. And Ḥāfiz al-Bayhaqī, in *Dala’il an-Nubuwwah*, has quoted something similar from ‘Ali ibn Zayd ibn Jad‘ān, from Khālid al-Ḥadhhdhā’, from Abū Qilābah, from Abū Asmā’, from Thawbān. The wording of these narrations is as follows:

«إذا رأيت الزوايا السودة خرجت من قبل خراسان، فإن فيها خليفة الله المهدي».

The wording when you see black flags rising from Khurāsān then go to it, for in it is the vicegerent of Allāh, the Mahdī.”

«إذا أقبلوا براليات السواد من عقب خراسان فألوه ولو حيوًا، فإن فيها خليفة الله المهدي».

The wording when black flags shall come from the furthest corner of Khurāsān, then go to it, even if you have to drag yourself, since in it is the vicegerent of Allāh, the ‘Mahdī’.

In this narration of Thawbān, which is narrated through the very chain of the initial narration, clear mention is made of the Mahdī being accompanied by an army from Khurāsān, that shall come with black flags. According to this, this army shall
fight for the Muslims, and not against the Muslims, whereas the initial narration had clearly mentioned that the army of black flags shall fight against the Muslims.

Other weak narrations, of Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah, Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd, and Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn Ĥārīth also make mention of the Mahdī being in the army that shall come with black flags, or of the fact that such an army shall come to aid the Muslims, and not to fight against them.

On account of the conflict found regarding whether the army of black flags shall be fighting against the Muslims (as shown in the first narration of Thawbān) or with the Muslims (as shown in the above-mentioned narrations) certain scholars have declared all the narrations indicating towards the army of the Mahdī having black flags to be fabricated.

Others however, on account of the various narrations in which indication is made of the Mahdī’s army, or of a unique Muslim army at the end of times having black flags, have opined that although there is weakness in each narration, but when all are brought together, a certain amount of strength is created within it, and thus it should not be discarded totally.
In *al-Mirqāt*, Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī offered an explanation that reconciles between the narrations that show the Mahdī being in the army of black flags that shall come from the east and between those that show him being in Makkah and Madinah. He writes:

«فأثبوها أي: فأنزلوا الزيات، واستقبلوا أهلها، واقتنعوا أمر أميرها، فإن فيها خليفة الله المهديي.»

(Go to it) “i.e., go to the flags and welcome its people and accept the command of its leader.” (For verily in it is the vicegerent of Allāh, the Mahdī)

«أي: نصركه وإجابته.»

“i.e., by joining this army, you are aiding the Mahdī and responding to his call.”

«فلا يُنافى أنَّ ابتداء ظهور المهديي إنما يحتّون في الحرمين الشريفين.» (Mulla)

(Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī then writes) “This is thus not contradicting what has been mentioned of the Mahdī initially being in the Ḥarams of Makkah and Madīnah.”

As for the contradiction between what some narrations show of the army of black flags fighting against the Muslims, whilst others show them to fighting for the Muslims, as yet I have not come across any writing that indicates to a method of reconciliation. A possible method of reconciliation that comes to mind shall now be mentioned. If it proves correct, then that is indeed from the favours of Allāh.

**A possible explanation of the Ḥadīth of Thawbān**

The first flags that shall come from the east (and most probably Khurāsān) shall be of an army, that will fight and kill many Muslims in a most brutal manner. Later on, however, black flags shall again arise from Khurāsān, except that this time its army will be coming to aid the Muslim Ummah, and shall be responding to the call of the Mahdi, or shall be moving under the command of the Mahdi. The full narration of Thawbān would thus have made mention of black flags arising twice.
Some of the narrators however made mention only of the black flags that will come from the east and shall attack the Muslims, whilst other narrators made mention only of the black flags, in which the Mahdi shall be found.

Thus, those who narrated from Khālid al-Ḥadhdhā’, from Abū Qilābah, from Abū Asmā’, regarding black flags fighting against the Muslims, they were narrating the first part of the narration of Sayyidunā Thawbān رضي الله عنه, which is:

«يَقِتَلُونَ عَنْدَ كُنْكَمْ ثَلَاثَةٌ: كَلِمَهُمْ أبْنَ خَلِيفَةٍ، ثُمَّ لاَ يُصِيرُ إِلَىٰ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمْ، ثُمَّ تُطَلَّعُ النَّزَابَاتُ السُّوُدُّ مِنْ قَبْلِ النَّشَرِّ فِيْ قَبْاِئِلْنَحْصُمْ فَتُقَلِّلُ مِنْهُمْ،» (المستدرك للحاكم)

“Three shall fight by this treasure of yours. Each will be the son a caliph. None of the three will however gain control over it. Black flags will then appear from the East. They will fight against you in a manner which has no parallel.”

And, those who narrated from Khālid al-Ḥadhdhā’, from Abū Qilābah, from Abū Asmā’, from Sayyidunā Thawbān رضي الله عنه regarding black flags of Khurāsān that shall fight in support of the Mahdi, they were narrating the second part of the narration of Sayyidunā Thawbān رضي الله عنه, which is:

«إِذَا رَايْتُمْ النَّزَابَاتُ السُّوُدُّ خَرَجَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِ حَرَاسَانَ فَأَلْوَا فِيْهَا خَلِيفَةٌ الْلَّهِ الْمُهْدِيَّ» (المستدرك)

“When you see black flags rising from Khurāsān, then go to it, for in it is the vicegerent of Allāh, the Mahdi.”

If the above is correct, a possible interpretation of the narration of Sayyidunā Thawbān رضي الله عنه could then be given as follows:

- **Three princes fighting close to the treasure of the Muslim, i.e. at the Ka‘bah:**

«يَقِتَلُونَ عَنْدَ كُنْكَمْ ثَلَاثَةٌ: كَلِمَهُمْ أبْنَ خَلِيفَةٍ، ثُمَّ لاَ يُصِيرُ إِلَىٰ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمْ،» (المستدرك للحاكم)

The narration first makes mention of three great personalities that would rise to power and fight at least one of their battles, close to the ‘treasure of the Muslims’, which has been defined by the scholars to refer to the treasures that lie under the Ka‘bah. These three personalities would all be the sons, or grandsons of a previous caliph.
The word used in some narrations is "كله ابن خليفة". Both the words "ابن" and "ول" are used in the Arabic language in the meaning of 'sons' as well as 'grandsons', 'great-grandsons', etc.

In history, three such personalities did rise. They were Yazid, (the son of the caliph, Sayyiduna Mu’awiyah), ‘Abdul Malik ibn Marwän, (the son of the caliph, Marwän ibn Ḥakam) and Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn Zubayr (the grand-son of the first caliph of Islam, Sayyidunā Abū Bakr). Under the command of each one of them a battle ensued in the Ḥaram of Makkah, close to the Ka’bah.

In the year 64 A.H. Yazid ibn Mu’awiyah ordered Ḥuṣayn ibn Numayr to lay siege to Makkah Mukarramah and to quell the uprising of Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn Zubayr and his supporters. The siege lasted for 64 days, and was only lifted due to the news of the demise of Yazid reaching the army. It was during this siege that the covering of the Ka’bah caught fire, due to which a great portion of the Ka’bah was damaged.33

33 Some claimed that the fire was on account of burning rocks and sticks that the Umayyad army had shot into the precincts of the Ḥaram. Ḥāfiz Dahabī in ‘al-Muntaqā’ refuted this, and explained the incident as follows:

“The army had no intention of showing dishonour to the Ka’bah. Their aim was ibn Zubayr. According to the consensus of the believers Yazid did not cause the Ka’bah to collapse, nor did he cause it to burn. Rather, a flame from a fire, which a woman had lit, was blown unto the covering of the Ka’bah. It was due to this that it caught fire.”

Azrūqī in Akhbār Makkah, however mentioned that the fire, which was caused by the actions of a woman, that had occurred in the era of ignorance:

And Almighty Allāh knows best.
When ʿAbdul Malik ibn Marwān rose to power in Shām, after the demise of his father, Marwan, he sent an army under the command of Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, to again lay siege to Makkah Mukarramah and to defeat the army of ʿAbdullāh ibn Zubayr. This battle ended with the tragic martyrdom of ʿAbdullāh ibn Zubayr, in the year 72 A.H. after which the Umayyad dynasty became the ruling authority of the Muslim world. During their rule of close to 100 years however, the treasures of the Kaʿbah did not enter into their hands.

- **An army of black flags from the east (Khurāsān) attacking in a most brutal manner**

نَفَّذَ مَنْ تَطَلَّعَ الْرَّاءِبَاتُ السُّودَةُ مِنْ قِبْلَةِ الشَّرْقِ فِيْفَلَاْيَاتُ وَحَمَّامَة فِيْنَا لَا ظَلَّةً قَوْمٌ (المستدرك للحاكم)

In the year 132 A.H, Abū Muslim Khurāsānī led a rebellion against the ruling Umayyad dynasty, and succeeded in toppling the caliphate, replacing it instead with rulers from the progeny of Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās, viz. Saffāh, Abū Jaʿfar Maḥṣūr, Mahdī, and so on.

Historical accounts indicate that the manner in which Abū Muslim and Saffāh snatched rule from the Umayyads was indeed one of the most brutal that the Muslim world had until then seen, especially since it was committed by ‘Muslims’ against fellow Muslims.

Shaykh Muḥammad Khudari Bek, in his book, Muḥādarāt Tārīkh al-Uman al-Islāmiyyah, has written in detail regarding the principles that the initial leaders of the Abbasid dynasty followed, in order to stabilize their rule. The crux of their principles was to kill whosoever one doubted, especially the Arabs of Khurāsān!

(Note: In the footnote 34, a slight background to the atrocities committed during their initial period, in accordance to what history has recorded, has been provided, from which one can gain an idea of how aptly the narrations fits the rise of the Banū ʿAbbās.

### 34 The rise of the Banū ʿAbbās

Efforts towards establishing this dynasty and toppling the existing Umayyad caliphate began around the year 100 A.H. (perhaps in the very year during which ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz was caliph). ʿAlī, the son of Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās was requested, in an extremely
secret manner, to support this effort and allow his name to be used where necessary in order to give credibility to the movement. Understanding their motives to be sincere, he accepted.

(The progeny of Sayyidah Fāṭimah al-‘Abbāsīyyah, who were the closest and the most recognized as the ‘Ahl al-Bayt’, was for unknown reasons, not approached to head the movement. Perhaps it was due to the Umayyad’s tight surveillance over their movements; or perhaps it was that this family had, after being deceived by the people of Iraq already, on numerous occasions, lost trust in the ‘sincere’, ‘persistent’ calls of individuals from Iraq, Iran (Khurāsān) and Egypt, who had been begging them to become their leader and pledging their full support from the era of Sayyidunā Mu‘āwiyah, yet when Sayyidunā Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbdullāh accepted their invitation and journeyed to Iraq to fulfil their request, he found none standing in his support. In fact, they openly denied writing any letter to him or ever personally, or through secret delegations, requesting him to come over to Iraq. Sayyidunā Ḥusayn was deserted by the one’s in who he placed his trust, and alone had to face the military of the Umayyads. He agreed to proceed to the caliph, Yazīd, and explain the reasons for his coming to Iraq, but unfortunately, the very evil forces that had written to him and practically begged him to come over and accept leadership, had already decided to have him martyred, and to pin the blame upon the Umayyad’s, as a trump card for their future call to topple the caliphate.

(Further details of this may be obtained from my book, titled ‘Karbala -understanding it from another angle’, available on the site spirituallight.co.za)

Those that survived from the caravan of Sayyidunā Ḥusayn, learnt a lesson from this most fateful event, which was that the ‘sincere’ calls for reform of the people of Iraq and Iran (Khurāsān) as well as Egypt can never be trusted. It was perhaps for this reason that they were now side-lined and the progeny of Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās were approached. And Almighty Allāh knows best.)

Between the years 100 A.H. and 120 A.H. much of the efforts of this movement were done discreetly, with callers to the movement acting as traders. Emotions of the one’s they would invite to their call would be stirred through:

1. Constant repetition of the false notion that rule in Islām should be inherited, just as how it has always been the case with the Persian leaders of Iraq and Iran. Thus, the caliphate belongs solely to the direct family Rasūlullāh, and it is the right of this blessed family, the Ahl al-Bayt, that all Muslims endeavour to return this right to them.
2. Constant repetition of fabricated Ḥadīths, fabrications in which the Umayyad’s are severely criticized; and fabrications in which the family of Sayyidunā ʿAbbās is identified as the ‘true leaders of the believers, who will hand rule over to Sayyidunā ʿIsā.

3. Constant repetition of fabricated incidents, detailing the rule of the first four rightly-guided caliphs, followed by the rule of the Umayyads, to be a most oppressive rule, in which the Ahl al-Bayt were continuously deprived of their rights.

The lies of the callers to this movement hit target, especially upon the sincere hearts of the Persian-reverts, and thus from the year 120 A.H., after gaining sufficient strength, this movement was able to start its call in a more public manner, in the lands of Khurāsān. At the forefront of this call was a freed-slave, known as Abū Muslim Khurāsānī, whose upbringing was in the house of Bukayr ibn Hamān, a known supporter and promoter of the shia movement, during the early stages of Islām.

By the time the movement was ready to announce its claim for the caliphate, Alī, the son of Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās, as well as his son, Muḥammad, had already passed away. The son of Muḥammad, Ibrāhīm, is thus appointed to accept the rule as the caliph of this newly-formed dynasty. Before he can proceed to Iraq however to accept this role, he is arrested by the Umayyad forces, and passes away in prison. Before his arrest, he appoints his brother, ʿAbdullāh ibn Muḥammad (Saffāḥ), as his successor.

(The arrest of Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad at such a crucial stage of the movement would have indeed been a surprise for many at that time, since until then the identity of the ‘new Imām’ had been a well-guarded secret. All that was known to the public was that a call was being made to support ‘a member for the Ahl al-Bayt’, which the Umayyads understood to refer to someone from the progeny of Sayyidah Fāṭimah.

The secret of Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad was exposed on account of a letter being discovered, supposedly written by Ibrāhīm, ordering Abū Muslim to execute every Arab-speaking Muslim in Khurāsān as soon as he finds sufficient power to do so. Whether Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad had ever written such a letter will never be known, since he was not afforded any real opportunity to explain his side of the incident. Had the identity of Ibrāhīm not been exposed and had he been allowed to move over to Iraq and assume leadership, much of the mass, merciless killings, that were later executed on the basis of it being the ‘bequest of Imām Ibrāhīm to Abū Muslim, would perhaps not have occurred.
The individual that benefitted the most from the arrest of İbrâhîm ibn Muḥammad, followed shortly by his demise in prison, on account of a wall collapsing upon him, was undoubtedly Abū Muslim himself, since he now found himself in a position to make any claim, policy, order, etc, and merely label it as also being from the ‘secret bequests that İmām İbrâhîm ibn Muḥammad had made to him."

Two of these so-called ‘bequests’ that led to perhaps the worst blood-shedding of thousands of innocent individuals that Islamic history had until that time witnessed were:

a) the order to execute all Arabic-speaking men of Khurāsān

b) the order to execute any such individual whose sincerity to the movement was doubted, even if the suspicion was based upon the most trivial of reasons. The ‘bequest’ statement of İmām İbrâhîm, which would be repeated time and again, was:

»واق تل م ن ش ك ك ت فيه«

"And kill whosoever you doubt."

**The Banū ‘Abbās dynasty and the slaughter that followed after its rise to power**

On the 13th of Rabî‘ al-Awwal 132 A.H. the pledge of allegiance was openly made to ‘Abdullâh ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alî ibn ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Abbâs, commonly known as Abû al-‘Abbâs, or as as-Saffâh. The caliph at that time was Marwân ibn Muḥammad. Hearing of the rise of a ‘new caliph’ he set out with a force of 120 000 soldiers. As-Saffâh appointed his uncle, ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Alî, to confront the Umayyads. The two forces met at Mawṣîl (Iraq). The Umayyads suffered a terrible defeat and Marwân fled the battle-field. ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Alî had all surviving Umayyad soldiers executed and sent Şâliḥ ibn ‘Alî in pursuit of Marwân. On the 27th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah, the last caliph of the Umayyad dynasty was captured in Buṣayr (Egypt) and executed.

Thereafter began the mass killings which many had perhaps never imagined could ever occur under a Muslim banner. Wherever there was a doubt or a slight fear of some tribe, group or person one day creating instability to the new caliphate, that person or group would immediately be executed.

According to historical records:

Abû Muslim Khurâsânî alone had 300 000 executed in this manner.
Senior members of the Umayyad cabinet were brought in front of the new caliph, as-Saffāh, and executed, on the excuse that they were all responsible for the martyrdom of Sayyidunā Ḥusayn. Only one son of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz was spared, on account of Dāwūd ibn ʿAlī interceding on his behalf.

ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAli had all the male off-spring of the caliphs of the Umayyad dynasty, which he could track down in Shām, executed. Only one milk-suckling infant was spared and the few who managed to escape to Spain.

ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAli also ordered for the graves of Sayyidunā Muʿāwiyyah, Yazīd, ʿAbdul Malik ibn Marwān and Hishām ibn ʿAbdul Malik to be exhumed. In most of the graves nothing was found (perhaps due to loyal supporters having already shifted it to a safer location). The body of Hishām however was found intact. It was hung up and set on fire. Its ash was then flung into the air.

Sulaymān ibn ʿAli lead the mass executions in Baṣrah and had the corpses laid unto the main highway.

Dāwūd ibn ʿAli lead the mass executions in Makkah and Madīnah. He did not spare a single Umayyad, and claimed that he was taking revenge on behalf of the Ahl al-Bayt.

The heart-less attitude displayed by the elite of the newly-formed caliphate was not restricted to only the Banū Umayyah. Rather, any person or group suspected of having supported them was also, without any trial, mercilessly executed.

The principle ‘and kill whoever you doubt’ finally bounced back upon the very people who sacrificed greatly in forming this new dynasty, viz:

Abū Salamah, Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān, the first host of the family of Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAli in Iraq, who was titled as Wazīr (helper) of the Ahl al-Bayt, was suspected of inclining towards the family of Sayyidunā ʿAli and being desirous of the caliph being from amongst them. On this basis, he and all his supporters were executed.

Sulaymān ibn Kathīr, who was described by Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAli as the well-wisher of this movement, and a senior who cannot be opposed, he was accused of deceiving the ‘Imām’ and thus executed. No concern was given to the great sacrifices made by these men for the movement, despite their not even being part of the ʿAbbāsi family.

ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAli, the uncle of as-Saffāh, played a pivotal role in laying the foundation of the Abbasid caliphate. He, in fact, was the one that defeated the Umayyad army at Mawṣil, and
brought an end to their empire. The news that his nephew, as-Saffāḥ, had appointed his brother, Abū Jaʿfar Manṣūr, as the caliph after him, infuriated him. Regarding him to be a threat, Abū Jaʿfar, upon becoming caliph, asked Abū Muslim Khurāsānī to aid him in killing ʿAbdullāh. A major fight broke out between the two factions in the year 137 A.H. Upon sensing defeat, ʿAbdullāh fled to Baṣrah and took shelter by his brother, Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī. When the news reached Abū Jaʿfar of the whereabouts of his uncle, ʿAbdullāh, he wrote to Sulaymān, ordering him to send ʿAbdullāh to him, promising ʿAbdullāh amnesty if he willingly came. ʿAbdullāh agreed, but as-as-Saffāḥ and Abū Jaʿfar had done with so many other promises, here too he ignored the sanctity of his oath, and had ʿAbdullāh immediately imprisoned. ʿAbdullāh thus remained in prison, till his demise, 9 years later, in the year 147 A.H.

After Abū Muslim had removed this major threat, the suspicious eye of Abū Jaʿfar now fell upon Abū Muslim himself. Fearing that Abū Muslim might, one day, incite some party or person to rise against him, he felt it wise to end the hold that Abū Muslim held over the Abbasid rulers. Abū Muslim Khurāsānī thus met his fate through the very principle, which he had taught as-Saffāḥ and Abū Jaʿfar, i.e. ‘and kill whosoever you doubt’!

This then is a crux of the brutality which accompanied the establishment of the Abbasid caliphate. Besides a few lines, most of these details have been quoted from what Shaykh Muḥammad Khudārī Bek wrote.

It is possible that in some of the events there is exaggeration. However, so much is definite, that high levels of oppression were meted out upon the Umayyads, by the elite members of the Banū ʿAbbās. Had it not been so, the falcon of the Banū Umayyah, ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ibn Muʿāwiyyah ibn Hishām ibn ʿAbdul Malik would never have fled his homeland and taken refuge in Spain.

The manner in which the Banū ʿAbbās rose to power, brutally eliminating every and any possible future threat, with black flags as its symbol, and Khurāsān as its base, fits perfectly with what has been described in the narration of Saʿyidunā Thawbān ﷺ, i.e.

“٤٧٢٢-٤٧٢٢ ثُمَّ تَجِيءُ الرَّآيَاتُ السَّودُ فَيَقُطَّالْنَّهُمْ قَتَالًا لَّمْ يَقْتَلُهُمْ قَوْمٌ (دَلَائِل النِّبَوَة) ﴿٤٥١٣-٤٥١٣ ثُمَّ أَتَّمَّ نَطَلُ الرَّآيَاتِ السَّوْدُ مِنْ فِيْضِ الْمَشرقِ فَيَقُطَّالْنَّهُمْ قَتَالًا لَّمْ يَقْتَلُهُمْ قَوْمٌ (المَتَّدِرُكُ لِلْحَمَاضِم)﴾

“Then black flags shall come from the east, and they shall kill you/against you, in a manner which has no parallel.”

42
The emergence of the Mahdī

"Black flags will then appear from Khurāsān. When this happens, go to it, even if it requires that you have to crawl on your knees to get to him, for verily in it is the vicegerent of Allāh, the 'Mahdī'."

The narration of Sayyidunā Thawbān ends with the mention of the arrival of the Mahdī. As with regards to whether his army too shall have black flags, it is highly probable that it will.

As mentioned above, there is no authentic (Ṣaḥīḥ) narration that speaks of the Mahdī coming in an army of black flags. However, on account of its mention being found in many weak narrations, a slight amount of strength is gained and its possibility thus should be entertained. Also, as explained by Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī, it is not necessary that the Mahdī himself be in the army. For the army coming from Khurāsān to be at his service, that alone is sufficient for it to be described as ‘in it is the vicegerent of Allāh, the ‘Mahdī’.

Two Major Battles Right at the Ka‘bah

Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah narrates that Rasūlullāh said:

"There is no battle between two peoples that jostle for this world and the Hereafter. If it is at a distance, then you shall not take part in it; if it is near, then you shall take part in it. Indeed, the army is a household; if it is in front of him, then he will command it; if it is behind him, then he will receive it. (Mishk Ḥanāfī, Ahmad 29)"

"ذكره الهميش في "مجمع الزوائد" وقال: رواه أحمد، ورجاله ثقات. إسناده صحيح."
“Allegiance will be pledged to a man between the Rukn al-Yamānī and the Hajar al-Aswad. None will commit acts against the sanctity of the Ka‘bah, except his family. And when they do so, the Arabs will face great destruction thereafter. Then (after a long period) the Abyssinians will come. They will totally destroy the Ka‘bah. They will then remove the treasure of the Ka‘bah.”

Note: Certain scholars mentioned this narration, in their compilations, under the chapter of ‘the Mahdī’. The wording of the narration however makes no indication whatsoever that it is regarding the Mahdī. Rather, it is known that after allegiance is pledged to the Mahdī, no act will be committed against the sanctity of the Ka‘bah, not by the family of the Mahdī, nor by anyone else. Rather, the land of Makkah and the surrounding Muslim lands will see great justice. It will bring new life to the Arabs, not destruction.

It is highly probable that this narration concerns some other individual who will call for allegiance right at the Ka‘bah, and whose call will then lead to blood-shed right at the Ka‘bah, followed by great destruction falling upon the Arabs. It is possible that this incident has already occurred 36, and it is possible that it is still to occur.

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36 In the year 1979 a bloody siege which lasted for two weeks and resulted in the death of hundreds, known as ‘The Siege of Makkah’ occurred at the Haram of Makkah Mukarramah. It was perhaps the world’s largest hostage crisis in history, with an estimated 100 000 pilgrims trapped within the complex. On Tuesday, the 1st of Muharram 1400 A.H. (20th of November 1979), at the time of Fajr, Juhaymān al-‘Utaybī, with between 400 to 500 loyal followers, took control of the Masjid. The purpose of the siege was to announce the arrival of ‘the Mahdī’. Juhaymān’s brother-in-law, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Qaḥṭānī, was proclaimed by the group as ‘the Mahdī’ and allegiance was pledged to him at the Ka‘bah.
A Statement of Sayyidunā ʿAlī  Regarding the Mahdī

Note: Statements of Ṣaḥābah , despite being transmitted through a sound chain, can never acquire the status of an authentic Ḥadīth, i.e. total reliance cannot be placed upon it. The reason being that the possibility shall always exist that the Ṣaḥabī had heard the statement, not from Rasūlullāh , but rather from Kaʿb Aḥbār, or some other scholar, who had in turn narrated it from scholars of the previous scriptures (Isrāʾīlī narrations), or from the previous scriptures directly.

Yes, the scholars have mentioned that a Mawqūf narration (i.e. the statement of a Ṣaḥabī) will be considered as Marfūʿ (i.e. a statement that he heard from Rasūlullāh ) when it is regarding matters which cannot be comprehended with the mind alone. The condition for this is that the Ṣaḥabī should be one who is not known to have narrated Isrāʾīlī narrations.

However, even here a slight possibility shall always exist of it not being something that he heard directly from Rasūlullāh . Thus, its level shall always be below the level of a sound Ḥadīth.

A statement of Sayyidunā ʿAlī  with regards to the Mahdī, which has reached us through a sound chain, shall now be mentioned:

The Mahdī Shall Emerge After a Great Battle in Shām

Sayyidunā ʿAlī  is quoted to have said:

"وَمَنْ كَانَ أَءَامًا بِنَفْعِ الْخَيْرِ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَبْشَرْ بِهِمُ الْجَنَّةُ\nفَلَا تَبْشَرْ بِهِمُ الْجَنَّةُ وَلَا تَبْشَرْ بِهِمُ الْقَرْبَاءِ"
A great trial will occur, through which unique people will be brought out, just as how gold is extracted from a mine. Thus, do not criticize the people of Shām. Rather, criticize the ones that oppress them, since amongst them are Abdāl (selected servants of Allāh, who occupy very high ranks).

Allāh will soon thereafter send upon them a flood from the skies, causing them to scatter. At that time, even if foxes were to attack them, it would overpower them.

Then, Allāh will raise a man from the family of Rasūlullāh, who will come with between 12 000 to 15 000 warriors. They will come under three flags. Their motto will be 'kill, kill'. The enemy, under seven flags, will face them in combat, with the leader of each enemy flag being desirous of acquiring for himself total rule. The two parties will engage in battle and the enemy will be defeated.

After some time passes, the Hāshimī (a member from the Banū Hāshim) will appear. Allāh will then return to the people ease and unity. They will remain in this state until dajjāl emerges.”

The 'Hāshimī' most probably refers to the Mahdi. Thus, according to this narration, before the emergence of the Mahdi there will be one other individual from the family of Rasūlullāh that will bring victory to the people of Shām. And Almighty Allāh knows best.
CHAPTER TWO

AḤĀDĪTH REGARDING THE MAHDĪ NARRATED THROUGH WEAK CHAINS
CHAPTER TWO

Aḥādīth Regarding the Mahdī, Narrated Through Weak Chains

In this chapter, mention shall be made of narrations regarding the Mahdī that are not mentioned in sound narrations, but rather in Aḥādīth which the scholars have graded as:

a) weak; b) very weak; c) possibly fabricated.

It should be understood well that not every narration regarding the Mahdī is acceptable. Rather, there are numerous narrations in this regard that are totally unreliable. Precaution in this matter is thus vital.

The following points should be remembered:

1. Many of the narrations regarding the Mahdī are to be found in the books of *al-Malāḥīm* (books written regarding the wars that shall occur until Qiyāmah). Regarding such books, Imām Aḥmad ibn Hanbal said:

«ثلاثة كتب ليس لها أصول، وهو: المغازي، والتفسير، والملحمة.» (لسان الميزان)

“Three books (i.e., subjects) have no basis (i.e., the basis of its narrations is not solid). These are the books regarding *‘al-Maghāzi*” (narrations regarding the battles that occurred in the initial era of Islam); narrations recorded in the books of *at-Tafsīr*; and *al-Malāḥīm*” (narrations predicting the wars that shall occur until Qiyāmah).¹

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¹ Commenting on this, Ḥāfīz ibn Ḥajar writes:

“يُنَبِّئُ أن يُضاف إليها الفضائل، فهذه أؤيدي الأحاديث الصعبة والموضوعة، إذ كانت العَنَدَة في المغازي على مثل الوافدي، وفي التفسير على مثل مقالات والكُلبي، وفي الملاحم على الإسرائيلُيِّين، وأيضاً الفضائل فلَا يُحَصَّن حَمَّوم طبعة في فضل أهل البيت، وعَرَضهم جَدَلُ هُم أهل السنة بفضائل مُعاوية بِذَا، وبفضائل الشُّيَخِين، وقد أغنِهَا الله وأغَلَّ مَرَّاتَهُما عنها.» (لسان الميزان)
2. Many of the narrations discussing the Mahdī are narrated solely from Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād al-Marwāzī (d. 228), in his compilation titled ‘Kitāb al-Fitan’. In this book, the author gathered an immense amount of narrations regarding the Mahdī, ranging between Aḥādīth, statements of the Șaḥabah and Tābī‘īn; and narrations

“The books containing narrations regarding virtues for good deeds should also be included in this, since this is the valley of weak and fabricated narrations. The reason being that the foundation of al-Maghāzī (narrations regarding the battles that occurred in the initial era of Islām) rests upon men like al-Wāqidi; the foundation of narrations of at-Tafsīr rests upon men like Muqātil and Kalbī; the foundation of al-Malāḥim (narrations predicting the wars that shall occur until Qiyāmah) rests upon Isrā’īlyāt (narrations taken from the previous scriptures or narrated from the scholars of the previous scriptures). As for narrations regarding virtues of deeds and people, one cannot count the number of narrations fabricated by the rawāfiḍ (a sect of the shia) with regards to the virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt. And then, in response, ignorant men of the Ahl as-Sunnah fabricated narrations with regards to the virtue of Sayyidunā Muʿāwiyah , as well as with regards to the virtues of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr and Sayyidunā ʿUmar , whereas Almighty Allāh had already made them independent of such fabrications and had raised their position to the highest of levels.

Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī commented on the above quote of Imām Aḥmād ibn Ḥanbal:

“و هذ ا «الكَل مِ مول عل و جه ؛ و ه و مول عت م عت م دع ح ت ها ل س وء حو ال أ م صنِّفيه ا، و ع دم ع د الة ناقل يه ا، و زي ادات الق ص اص ف يه ا. فأم اكت ب الم لح م ف ج م يع ها بهذ ه الصِّف ة ، و ل يس ي ص ح ف ذ كر الم لح م الم ر ت قب ة و الف تن الم نت ظر ة غ ير أح اد يث يس ير ة ات صل ت اس انيد ها إل ى الر سول صل الله عل و سل م من و جو م يرضي ب، و طري ف يو ضي ح جلي ية. (الجامع لأخلاق الراوي)»

“This ruling refers to those books that have been compiled specifically dealing with these three topics, but which cannot be relied upon due to the poor nature of the author himself, and due to the ones narrating the incidents not being credible, and due to many of the narrations being quoted from men known as story-tellers. With regards to the books of al-Malāḥim, all of them are of this nature. Very few authentic narrations exist with regards to the coming wars and trials.”
from the previous scriptures. This compilation could perhaps be regarded as the most comprehensive book written on the topic. In fact, most of the narrations recorded by Imām as-Suyūṭī in al-ʿUrf al-Wardī, have been taken from this book. The reliability of this book however is questionable.  

The reason of the book Kitāb al-Fitan of Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād being deemed unreliable is on account of the following two reasons:

a) The author, despite being extremely pious and a renowned jurist, has been criticized by many of the masters of the field of Rijāl (the science that deals with the credibility of narrators), on account of the many errors he made whilst narrating.

Ḥāfiẓ Dhahabī said regarding him:

"He is a container of knowledge, but his word cannot be regarded as a proof".

He himself was truthful in narrating. The guilt of erring in the weak narrations, which have been recorded solely from him, has been placed upon the one’s from who he narrated. His error was only so much that he gathered narrations without through sifting, whereby the clean could be separated from the dusty.

Maslama ibn Qāsim thus said regarding him:

"He is truthful. However, he has erred on many occasions. He has recorded Munkar Aḥādīth regarding al-Malāḥīm, which have not been narrated by anyone else."

b) The second issue that exists with regards to the narration of Nuʿaym in Kitāb al-Fitan is with regards to the one that has narrated this book from him. At present, the script that is found is that which Abū Zayd ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ibn Ḥātim al-Murādī narrates from Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād.

Regarding Abū Zayd, Shaykh ʿAbdul ʿAlīm al-Bastawī, in his book 'al-Mahdī al-Muntazar' writes:

"Ibn Yūnus said regarding him, in Tārīkh Miṣr: ‘The scholars have criticized him’. Maslamah ibn Qāsim said: ‘He is not regarded by the scholars to be
3. Many narrations concerning the Mahdī were narrated by Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, who sourced his information from the previous scriptures. Reliance cannot be placed at all on such narrations.

4. The shia (especially the sect known as the Bāṭiniyyah), in their attempt to discredit the rule of the Umayyad caliphate and to support their continuous calls for rebellion, fabricated many narrations with regards to the Mahdī.

On account of these few points, great precaution needs to be exercised when reading and narrating Aḥādīth regarding this subject. As for when a narration has been declared weak, or extremely weak, or possibly fabricated, the principle for such narrations is that since the possibility is great that this is not the words of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, Ibn al-Jawzī said: His narrations are not acceptable. Ĥāfiẓ Dhahabī said: He is weak.

Narrations of Nuʿaym, similar to that which are recorded in Kitāb al-Fitan, have also been narrated from him by at-Ṭabrānī, Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī and Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī. These narrations however are also through the chain of Abū Zayd; thus, they cannot serve as a support for what appears in Kitāb al-Fitan.

Ĥākim in his al-Mustadrak narrates from Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād, narrations similar to what is found in Kitāb al-Fitan, through Abū Bakr, Muḥammad ibn Muʿammal, who narrates from Faḍl ibn Muḥammad ash-Shaʿrānī, who narrates from Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād. The scholars have also criticized Faḍl ibn Muḥammad, thus he too is weak. Despite this, his narrations from Nuʿaym could well serve as a support for what Abū Zayd narrates from Nuʿaym in Kitāb al-Fitan. Unfortunately, as yet, a complete manuscript of Kitab al-Fitan, through the chain of Faḍl ibn Muḥammad, has not been found.

Thus, until such a manuscript is found, the narrations of Kitāb al-Fitan, which are not found through any other source, except from Abū Zayd, from Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād, shall be considered unreliable, due to Abū Zayd. Yes, it may serve as a support for other similar narrations. (End of quote)

And even if this is found, then too, the weakness of Abū Nuʿaym himself shall affect the reliability of the narration.
or at least not the exact words, such narrations should hardly be considered.

Yes, if upon the emergence of the Mahdi, such signs/matters are found, which correspond with what is mentioned in the narration, that shall then be a proof that the information of that particular narration is correct, despite the chain through which it reached us being unreliable.

A few of such narrations shall now be mentioned, which are famous amongst the masses.

Al-Ḥārith Ḥarrāth

Sayyidunā ‘Ali has been quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh said:

"A man shall emerge from Transoxiana (Mā Warā‘ an-Nahr). He will be known as al-Ḥārith Ḥarrāth. At the front of his army will be a man called Manṣūr. He shall prepare the ground for the family of..."
Muḥammad, like how the Quraysh prepared the ground for Rasūlullāh.

Imām Abū Dāwūd has not mentioned the name of the one from whom he narrates this. Ḥāfiẓ Mundhīrī has thus declared it to be Munqāṭī (its link is cut). Also, one of the mentioned narrators, Hilāl ibn ʿAmr al-Kūfī, is Majhūl (unknown). The narration has thus been declared as weak.

An Announcement from the Sky

Sayyidunā Ṭalḥah ibn ʿUbaydullāh ʿa. is quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh ʿsaw said:

“ْس تكون فتنة، لا يُهدا منها جانب إلا جاش منها جانب، حتّى يُنادي مِن من السماء: إن أميركم فلان" (المعجم الأوسط 5)

“A trial will occur, one part of which will not subside, except that another will rise. This will continue, until a caller will call from the sky, 'Indeed, your leader is so and so'.”

Cal. al-Dehī: Hālāl bin ʿUmar, ʿa. on ʿUkhrūṭa, and his companion Abu al-Ḥasan: I do not know. (Mīzān al-aʿtādāl 4)

حدثنا عبد الرزاق بن عمرو أبو زرعة قال: حدثنا أبو اليمان قال: حدثنا إسماعيل بن عيّاش، عن النعبي بن الصحاب، عن عمرو بن دينار، عن سعيد بن السبب، عن ظلحة بن عبيد الله، عن النعبي بن صحاب، عن النعبي بن الصحاب، وقال الطبراني: لا يروه هذا الحديث عن ظلحة إلا بهذا الإسناد، تفرد به إسماعيل بن عيّاش.
The Sanad of this narration is extremely weak.  

Another narration in this regard is what has been quoted from Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr that Rasūllullāh ﷺ said:

"When the Mahdī will emerge, there will be an angel above his head, announcing, ‘This is the Mahdī, thus follow him’!"

This wording has been narrated from ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Dahāk.  
Imām Abū Dāwūd has criticized him severely, and stated that he would fabricate Āḥādīth.
The Mahdī Will Hit Some People

Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah is quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh said:

لا تقم الساعة حتى يخرج عليهم زجل من أهلي تبيي، قيطرهم حي يرجعوا إلى الحق، قال: فذَّ.
وجَمْ يَضْحُون؟ قال: همس، وأثنان، قال: فذَّ. ما همس وأثنان؟ قال: لا أدري. (مسند أبي بكر)

“The hour will not be established until a man from my family emerges. He will hit the people until they return to the truth. I asked, 'How much/old will he be?' He replied, 'Five and two.' I asked, 'What is five and two?' He replied, 'I do not know.'"

This narration is transmitted through Murajjā ibn Rajā’ al-Yashkuri. Some scholars, like ad-Dārquṭnī and Abū Zur‘ah have declared him reliable, whilst others, like Imām Abū Dāwūd and ibn Ma`in have declared him weak. Accordingly, according to some the narration is reliable, whilst according to others it is weak.

The wording of the narration, regarding the question 'how much/old will he be', and the answer 'five and two', and then Rasūlullāh saying that he is unaware of the meaning of 'five and two', does indicate to some weakness in the transmission of the wording of this narration. And Almighty Allāh knows best.
The Mahdī Will Rule Over the Mountains of Daylam and Constantinople

Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah ﷺ is quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

الله تعالى أَنَّهُ يُبْتَغَ عَرْوَبُ وَجِبَّالٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْطِينِي، يُسُلِّمُ جَبَلَ الْدَّيْلِمِ

“"If only a day remains of this world, then too, Allāh will lengthen it until a man from my family rules. He will rule over the mountains of Daylam (Jilān - Iran) and Constantinople (Istanbul).”

The first sentence of this narration has been narrated through many sound sources, from Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah ﷺ. As for the second sentence, (He will rule over…), it is only Qaṣṣ ibn Rabīʿ that narrates it from Abū Ḥusayn, from Abū Ṣāliḥ, from Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah ﷺ.

The scholars have written that the memory of Qaṣṣ deteriorated greatly in his old age. Taking advantage of this, his son, who had an evil nature, added words to his narrations. Thus, wording that is only narrated from him, cannot be relied upon.

As for the content of the narration, all it shows is that the Mahdī will rule over Constantinople (Turkey) and the mountains of Daylam. Since both of these are Muslim lands, it is highly possible that the rule of the Mahdī shall be over it as well.

This narration makes no mention of the Mahdi conquering Constantinople and the mountains of Daylam. The phrase 'he will conquer Constantinople and the mountains of Daylam' has only been narrated by Yahyā ibn ‘Abdul Hamīd al-Ḥimmānī, in his Musnad, from...
Qaṣṣ ibn Rabī‘. Imām Aḥmad has declared Yaḥyā to be an open liar (Mīzān al-ī’tidāl), thus his wording is not worthy of consideration, especially since it contradicts the wording of Qaṣṣ as narrated from him by 1) Abū Dāwūd aṭ-Ṭayālīsī, 2) Yazīd ibn Ḥārūn and 3) Iṣḥāq ibn Manṣūr, who are all reliable narrators.

Yes, mention of a man from the family of Rasūlullāh ﷺ conquering Daylam has been recorded by Ḥāfiẓ Khaythamah ibn Sulaymān al-Attrābulusi, through the following chain:

In this narration however, no mention is made of this man conquering Constantinople. Rather, mention is made of his conquering Rūmīyyah (Rome). Together with this, this narration too is unreliable, since Kathīr ibn ‘Abdullāh is an extremely weak narrator.

Nu‘aym ibn Ḥammād in al-Fītan, has quoted a statement of Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ that the Mahdī will conquer Constantinople. He quotes it from Rishdīn (who is weak); from ibn Lahiḥah (who is weak). Together with this, Nu‘aym himself is weak, as well as Abū Zayd who quotes the book from him. And finally, even if all the narrators were reliable, then too the statement of Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh ibn ‘Amr ʿAbdullāh would still hold the status of being ‘a possible Isrā’īlī narrative’.

Abū Nu‘aym al-Asbahānī in Akhbār Aṣbahān, has quoted an incident in which mention is made of a group setting out for the land of Balanjār for Jihād. In the narration it is mentioned that Sayyidunā Ḥudhayfah ʿAbdullāh said to the group:

“You will not conquer this land in the near future, nor during the rule of the Banū Umayyah. None will conquer Balanjār and the mountains of Daylam and Constantinople, except a Hāshimī. With them has this matter begun and with them it will end.”

Besides the weakness in the chain, history itself has exposed the lies of the text, since Muḥammad al-Fāṭiḥ was the one who conquered Constantinople, and he was not a Hāshimī.

As for whether Istanbul will be taken over by the Christians before the emergence of the Mahdī, I have discussed this in detail in my book, ‘Will Istanbul fall to the Christians’. It may be downloaded from the site: spirituallight.co.za.
The skies and the earth will let forth its blessing during the era of the Mahdī

Sayyidunā Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī is quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

اُيُّوَّل بَأْيُنِي فِي أَخْرَ الْزَّمَانِ بَلَاءَ شَيِّدُ مَنْ سِلَطَاهُمْ لَمْ يُسْقُ بَلَاءًا أَشْدُدُ مِنْهُ، حَتَّى تَضِيقَ عَنْهُمْ الأَرْضُ الرَّهْبَةُ، وَحَتَّى يُمَلَأُ الأَرْضُ جُوَّرًا وَظَلَمًا، لَا يَجِدُ الْمُؤْمِنُ مَلِجاً بِلَعَجُّهِ إِلَّيْهِ مِنَ الظَّلَمِ، فَيَبِعُ الْلَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ رَجُلًا مِنْ عَرَبِي، فَيُمَلَأُ الأَرْضُ قِسْماً وَعَدَلاً، كَانَا مُبْنِىَانِ ظَلَمًا وَجُوَّرًا، يُبْرَزُ عَنْهُ سَاحِيِّ السَّمَاءِ وَسَاحِيِّ الأَرْضِ، لَا تَتَخَرِّجُ الأَرْضُ مِنْ بَذَرْهَا شَيْبَةً إِلَّا أَخْرِجَهَا، وَلا السَّمَاءُ مِنْ قَطْرِهَا شَيْبَةً إِلَّا صَيْبَةً الْلَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَدْرَازًا، يَعَشُّ فِيْهَا سَعْبُ سَيْبِينِ أو ثْمَانٌ أو ثَمَانِينَ، يَتَمَلَّى الْأَخْيَاهُ الأَشْوَاطُ مَمَّا ضَعَفَ الْلَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بَأْهُلِ الأَرْضِ مِنْ خَيْرِهِ. (المستدرك للحاكم)

“At the end of times a severe calamity will befall my ummah from the side of their sultan (leader), such that had never been heard of before. Life for the believers will become difficult, despite earth’s vastness. The earth will be filled with oppression. A believer will not find any place of refuge. Then Allāh will raise a man from my family. He will fill the world with justice, as it had been filled with oppression. The inhabitants of the sky and the earth will be pleased with him. The earth will give off its full produce, not leaving a seed unsprouted. The skies will rain in torrents upon the lands. He will live (as a leader) for about seven, or eight or nine years. Seeing the blessings of this time, the believers will wish if the dead could also have experienced it.”

The Sanad of this narration is quite weak, thus Ḥāfīz Dhahabī, in his book at-Talkhis, described it as «ظلم،» i.e. totally dark, with many of its narrators unknown. As for its meaning, most of its content can be found scattered amongst other stronger narrations.
The Mahdī Will Distribute Without Counting

1) Sayyidunā Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه is quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

"إن من أمرائِي أُمرًا يحبِّي النَّاسَ خَيْبًا ولا يُّفْغَمَ عِندهَا يَأتيهُ الرَّجُلُ يسألهُ يقُولُ: خَذْ فيَبِسطَ الرَّجُلُ كُونهُ قَبْحِي فِيهِ، وَيَبْسطَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّي الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمُ صَحِيحَةً غَلِيظَةً كَانَتُ عليهِ يَجِيكي صَبَيعَ الرَّجُلْ، ثُمَّ يَمْحِي إِلَيْهِ أَكَانَهَا، قَالَ: أَقِيمُ النَّاسَ، ثُمَّ يَنْطِلِقُ. (مسند أحمد)"

"From your leaders will be a leader who will openly distribute wealth, without even counting. A man will ask and he will say, ‘Take!’ The man will spread out his shawl and will fill it up. Describing the scene, Rasūlullāh ﷺ spread open a thick shawl, which he was wearing and imitated the action of the man filling the cloth. Rasūlullāh ﷺ then folded up the cloth and said, ‘He will take it and leave’.

The Sanad is weak, due to Mujālid ibn Saʿīd. As for the content of the first part of the narration, i.e. the Mahdī distributing, without counting, mention of it has been made in many sound narrations.

2) Sayyidunā Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه is quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

"يُصْبِحُونَ فِي أَخْرِ الزَّمَانِ عَلَى نَظَائِرِهِمْ انقَطَاعٌ مِنَ الزَّمَانِ إِنَّمَا يُعْلَمُ مَعْطُوْنَ النُّاسِ، يُعْلِمُهُ الرَّجُلُ فِي حَمْلَهُ فِي جُرِّهِ، يُعْلِمُهُ مِنْ يَفْتَلُ عَنْهُ ضَدَّةَ ذَلِكَ النَّاسَ مَا تَنَدَّهُ وَيَنْتَبَحُّ أَهْلُهُ، لِيُصْبِحُ النَّاسُ مِنَ الحَلِيْفِ. (مسند أبي يعلي)"

“At the end of times there will be a leader, who will be the most generous. He will place so much in the lap of the one who will come..."
asking for something, that the person will then begin worrying of who in his family he will give the Zakāt of this amount to, since all will be enjoying times of ease.”

The *Sanad* of this narration is extremely weak, on account of Sahl ibn ʿĀmir (Muttaham - i.e., he has been accused of fabricating Aḥādīth) and ʿAṭīyah al-ʿAwfī (Mudallis of the worst type, i.e., he would narrate in such a manner that one would think he heard it directly from the source he quotes, whereas that is not the case), especially when he narrates from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī.

That Ummah Will Not Be Destroyed in the Centre of Which is the Mahdī

Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās has been quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh said:

الن تهلك أمَّة أَنا في أوُّله، وعِيسى بن مَرِيم في آخرها، والمهدِي في وَسْطهاً (كتاب الفتنة لأبي نعيم)

“That ummah will never be destroyed, in which I am at the front, ʿĪsā, the son of Maryam, is at the end, and the Mahdī is in the centre.”
The meaning that the narrations seem to imply is that the Mahdī shall appear somewhere in the middle of this ummah's time-frame, and Nabī ʿIsā will appear at the end. This is contrary to what is found in authentic narrations, which show clearly that both will appear towards the end period of this Ummah, with the Mahdī preceding Nabī ʿIsā by just a few years.

The Mahdī Will Be From ʿAlī, And Not From ʿAbbās

Sayyidunā ‘ Abdullāh ibn ʿUmar has been quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh ʿṣallā ʿlä ‘l-hūm once took the hand of ʿAbbās in his right hand and the hand of ʿAlī in his left hand and said:

“From the progeny of this one (i.e., Sayyidunā ʿAbbās) a village will emerge that will fill the earth with oppression. And from the progeny of this one (i.e. Sayyidunā ʿAlī) a village will emerge that will fill the earth with justice. When you see this, hold unto the youngster from the tribe of at-Tamīm. He will come from the east and he will carry the flag of the Mahdī.”

Aṭ-Ṭabrānī has narrated this from ibn Lahīḥah, who in turn narrates it from ibn ʿUmar al-ʿUmarī. Both of these narrators are weak. ʿAllāmah al-Haythami, after quoting this narration in Majmaʿ az-Zawāʾid, declared it to be Munkar (contradicting what reliable
narrators have mentioned).  

Al-Qā’im, Al-Manṣūr, As-Saffāḥ and the Mahdī

Sayyiduna Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī has been quoted as saying that Rasūllullāh ﷺ said:

«من انا من المائتين، ومن انا من المنصوريين، ومن انا السفاحين، ومن انا المهديين، فانا الفائزون في حكايته الحالية، لم يحترق فيها محبة من دم، وأنا المنصوريين فلا تزهد له راية، وأنا السفاحين فهو يتسلى المال والدم، وأنا المهديين فظلمًا به الأرض عدلاً كما ملئت ظلمًا.»

"Al-Qā’im (the one who stands upright) is from us. Al-Manṣūr (the one who is aided) is from us. As-Saffāḥ is from us. And the Mahdī is from us. The caliphate will come to al-Qā’im without a drop of blood being spilled. No flag of al-Manṣūr will be repelled. As-Saffāḥ will cause both wealth and blood to flow. As for the Mahdī, he will fill the earth with justice as it had been filled with oppression."

After quoting this narration in Mizān al-Īṭidāl, whilst discussing Muḥammad ibn Jābir ibn Sayyār, Ḥāfiẓ Dhahabī declared it to be extremely unreliable. ❯ للخبر منكر جداً»
At Which Masjid Will Sayyidunā ʿIsā ʿalayhi السلام Descend?

Sayyidunā Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh has been quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

«لا تزال طائفة من أمتى تقاتل عن الحق حتى ينزل عيسى ابن مريم عند طلوع الفجر ببيت المقدس، ينزل على المهدي.» (السن الواردة في الفتن للداني 18)

“A group from my Ummah will remain fighting for the truth, until ʿIsā ibn Maryam descends upon the Mahdī, at the time of dawn, at Bayt al-Maqdis.”

According to this narration, Nabī ʿIsā ʿالى السلام will descend at Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). This is contrary to what is mentioned in authentic narrations.

18 This has also been mentioned by Kaʿb al-ʾAḥbār, as quoted by Abū Nuʿaym. Due to it being in conflict with authentic narrations, it is not credible. The full narration of Kaʿb al-ʾAḥbār is as follows:

19 "Dajjāl shall lay siege to the believers at Bayt al-Maqdis. They will be afflicted with severe hunger, due to which they will even eat the strings of their bows. At that moment they will hear a voice in the darkness. They will say, ‘This is the voice of one who has eaten well’. They will look and find it to be ‘Isā ibn Maryam.’"

16 قال عبد العليم البستوي: إسناده ضعيف؛ ففيه عدَّة لم أجد لَم ترجمة.
that Nabī ʿIsā ﷺ will descend at a white minaret, on the eastern side of Damascus.²¹

As-Sufyānī and Shuʿayb ibn Ṣāliḥ

In certain narrations discussing the Mahdī, mention is made of a man called as-Sufyānī and another called Shuʿayb ibnṢāliḥ. Nearly all of these narrations are transmitted through weak, unreliable chains, and mostly through Abū Nuʿaym.

There is one narration however which al-Ḥākim in his al-Mustadrak, has classified as fitting the conditions of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and Ḥāfīz Dhahabī agreed with his classification. The narration is as follows:

1) Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah Ṣaḥḥāḥ has been quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

"A man called as-Sufyānī will emerge from the furthest part of Damascus.²² The majority of his followers will be from the tribe of Kalb. He will slit the bellies of women and will kill children. The tribe of Qays

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²¹ From Ibn Katāb, A‘lām al-dūr, 1/371.
²² From Ibn al-ʿArabī, Ṣaḥḥāḥ, 1/188.
will gather against him, but he will defeat them terribly, leaving them in a most weak and disgraced state.  

A man from my family will then emerge at al-Ḥarrah (in Madīnah). The news will reach as-Sufyānī, who will send an army against him, but they will be defeated. The as-Sufyānī himself will then set out with his followers. When they reach an open space of land, all will get swallowed by the earth. None will survive, except the one who will inform regarding this.”

Note: Despite Ḥāfiẓ Dhahābī agreeing with the classification of al-Ḥākim, certain scholars have still preferred to be cautious with regards to its authenticity. The reason being that it has been narrated from Walīd ibn Muslim, from Imām al-Awzā’ī, whereas Walīd was well known for spoiling the narrations of Imām al-Awzā’ī in a manner that it would appear to be authentic.

If he would find a weak narrator in the chain (for e.g. B), he would skip his name and pretend as though (A) had heard it directly from (C). By making use of the word ىعَ، which merely means that (A) narrates 'from' (B), without being clear whether (A) narrates directly from (B) or indirectly, he would regard himself absolved of his responsibility to be truthful in his narration.

Discussing this trait of Walīd ibn Muslim, ‘Allāmah ibn Kathīr writes in التكميل في الحجح والتعديب: Ad-Daraquṭnī has stated that Walīd ibn Muslim would narrate from al-Awzā’ī narrations that al-Awzā’ī had heard from weak Shuyūkh (teachers), who in turn narrated from (reliable) Shuyūkh that al-Awzā’ī himself had met, like Nāfi’, ‘Aṭā’ and az-Zuhrī. Walīd would however omit the names of the weak Shuyūkh, and would narrate it from al-Awzā’ī, from Nāfi’; or from al-Awzā’ī, from ‘Aṭā’.
Ibn Kathîr then quotes from Şâliḥ ibn Jazarah who has mentioned that he heard Haytham ibn Khârijah say 25:

“I said to Walîd ibn Muslim, ‘You have spoilt the narratives of al-Awzâ‘î’. He asked why. I replied:
‘You narrate (a) from al-Awzâ‘î, from Nafî‘; and (b) from al-Awzâ‘î, from az-Zuhri; and (c) from al-Awzâ‘î from Yahyâ ibn Sa‘îd; whilst others narrate (a) from al-Awzâ‘î, from ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Amir al-Aslami, from Nafî‘; and (b) from al-Awzâ‘î, from irbâhîm ibn Murrah, or from Qurrah, or from someone else, from az-Zuhri. What makes you do such a thing?’ He replied, ‘I lift al-Awzâ‘î away from the taint of having narrated from such weak narrators!’
I then said then to him, ‘If al-Awzâ‘î has in fact narrated from such unreliable people, and you then delete their names from the chain and pretend as if al-Awzâ‘î has narrated it directly from a reliable source, by this act of yours al-Awzâ‘î has been made unreliable!’ Walîd however did not pay any heed to my advice.”

Ibn Kathîr also quotes from Abû Mushîr, who said 26,

“Walîd would take the Aḥâdîth of al-Awzâ‘î from ibn Abû Sa‘îr, who was a well-known liar, and would then say, ‘al-Awzâ‘î has narrated...’.”

After understanding this, a glance at the Sanad of the above narration of al-Ĥâkim will reveal that here too Walîd ibn Muslim has utilized the word ‘عن’ between al-Awzâ‘î and Yahyâ ibn Kathîr. The Sanad is as follows:

After understanding this, a glance at the Sanad of the above narration of al-Ĥâkim will reveal that here too Walîd ibn Muslim has utilized the word ‘عن’ between al-Awzâ‘î and Yahyâ ibn Kathîr. The Sanad is as follows:

رَيْت اَنَّ اَلْيَهُوْدَىَّ مِنْ مَسْلِمٍ، حَدَّثَنَا الْأَوْزَاعِيُّ، عَنْ يَهْيَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمَجِيرٍ، عَنْ أَبِي سُلَيْمانٍ، عَنْ أَبِي الْفَّرَّجٍ، عَنْ ثَانِىٍ مَهْرَبَةٍ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهُ ﷺ مَسْلِمُ عِنْدَ مَسْلِمٍ ﺑَيْنِىْ. ﴿٦٦﴾

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In the narration at hand, since Walīd has made it clear, through the usage of the word ُحدثنا that al-Awzā’ī has narrated this directly to him, the likelihood of it being from ibn Abī Safr now falls away. However, since he has thereafter utilized the word ُعتنِ، there will always remain a great possibility that, in accordance to his habit of deleting any weak narrator that appears between al-Awzā’ī and a reliable source, here too he has done the same. 27

After discussing the above in great detail, Shaykh ʿAbdūl ʿAlīm al-Bastawī, writes 28:

27 Ḥāfīẓ al-ʿIrāqī, in his commentary on the Muqaddimah of ibn Ṣāliḥ, made mention of certain narrators known for omitting names from the chain (known as a Mudallis), who would use the word ُحدثنا between them and the one they directly narrate from, but would later in the chain utilize the word ُعتنِ in order to omit the mention of weak narrators. Under this discussion, he makes special mention of Walīd ibn Muslim, and his habit of doing such a thing with the Aḥādīth of al-Awzā’ī.

Ḥāfīẓ al-ʿIrāqī described this as the worst form of Tadlis, and as an area of ‘great deception’, on account of which weak narrations could have been classified as ʿṢaḥīḥ’. Part of what he has written is as follows:

قوله: «التدليس قسمان» إلى آخر كلامه، ترك المصنف ﻣن أحوال الحديث وهو شر الأقسام وهو الذي يُسمى التدليس النسوية، وقد سنِّ، بدأ باب الحسن بن القطان وغيره من أهل هذا الكتاب، وصارت هذه القسم من المدلس أن يجعل المدلس إلى حدود يُسمع من شيخ ثقة، وقد سُمِّى ذلك الشيخ الثقة من شيخ ثقة، وذلك الشيخ التدليس يرويها عن شيخ ثقة، يجعل المدلس الذي سمع الحديث من القول الأول، يُسمع منه شيخ، يُظهِر ضعيف ويجعله من رواية شيخئة الثقة عن القول الثاني يُوظف محتملًا كالتفحص وزُوِّر، فيصير الراجع كله ثقاً؛ وتصير هو بالاتفاق منهم وبين شيخية؛ لأنه قد سمعه منه، فلا يظهر حديث وذلك في الإسناد مما يقتضى عدم قبوله إلا لأهل القول، والثقة بالعمل، ومن كان يضطُّع هذا النوع من التدليس: الوليد بن ضلِّمٍ...

قال شيخنا الحافظ أبو سعيد الغلابي في كتاب جامع التحصيل: والجملة هذه النوع أفْحَش أنواع التدليس مُطلقا وشرها.

قلت: وما يلزم منه من الغرور المذكور أن القول الأول قد لا يُعْتَنِ مَعْرُوفًا بالتدليس، ويعتبر المدلس قد صُرِح به سامع من هذا الشيخ الثقة، وهو كذلك، فإنَّ القياس على هذا السند، فلا يبرى فيه مَوضَع علمه، لأن المدلس صَرَح بالمصلحة، والقولة الأولى ليس مَسْتَمِلًا، وقد رأى عن ثقة آخر، فيفُحَص له بالصحة، وفيه ما فيه من الألف التي ذكرناها، وهذا فاحش فيَهيَن تَعْتَنِ، والله أعلم، (التدليس والإيضاح).

وهذا فَأَنَّا مَتوَفَّقُ في هذا الحديث حَتَّى يُفْتَح الله عَلَيْهِ، وهو خِير الفائِحين، والكلمة إلى تَضْعِيفه أميَل، والله أعلم. (الموضوعة في أحاديث المهدي التسعة والليوم)
“For this reason, I prefer not to form an opinion regarding this Ḥadīth, until Allāh opens up its reality to me. And He is the best of those who discloses realities. My heart, however, is more inclined to grading it as ‘weak’. And Allāh knows best.”

As for the other narrations regarding the man called as-Sufyānī and Shuʿayb ibn ʿĀlīh, due to it being transmitted through weak chains, and mostly through Nuʿāym, whose condition has already been discussed, the need to reconcile between the many contradictions found in these narrations does not arise, nor is there any real need to make mention of these narrations.

Will the Mahdī Emerge at the Age of Forty?

Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr has been quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

«ستكون بينكم وبين الروم أربع هدنة، تقوم الزبابة على يد رجل من آل هرقل، تدوم سبع سنين.»

قال له رجل من عبد الشمس يقال له المستورد بن جيلان: يا رسول الله: من إمام الناس يومئذ؟ قال: من ولي بين أربع سنين سنة كأن وجهه كوكب ذريي في خدائه الأيمن خال أسود. عليه عبادة عبادة بن عدنان.

تقولون في الاربعاء، كانه من رجال بني إسرائيل، يملك عشرين سنة، يخرج الكؤوس ويفرح مداين الشرك. (المعجم الكبير للطبراني)"

“Between you and the Romans there will be four truces. The fourth will occur on the hands of a man from the family of Hercules. It will remain for seven years.”
A man from the tribe of ʿAbdul Qays, known as al-Mustawrid, asked, ‘O messenger of Allāh, who will be the leader of the believers on that day?’ Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied, A man from my progeny. He will be forty years old. His face will resemble a shining pearl. On his right cheek there will be a black mole. He will wear two white overcoats (with stripes of black). It will seem as though he is a man from the Banū Isrā’il. He will rule for twenty years. He will extract treasures and conquer the cities of polytheism.’

ʿAnbasah ibn Abī Ṣaghīrah has narrated this from Imām al-Awzāʾī. Ḥāfīz Dhahabī criticized this narration of ʿAnbasah declaring it to be a false narrative. Ḥāfīz ibn Ḥajr however questioned the declaration of it being a fabrication. Allāmah al-Haythamī declared ʿAnbasah to be a weak narrator. The narration is thus regarded as weak.

The text of the narration which mentions that the period of his rule will be twenty years, contradicts authentic narrations which make clear mention of it being between seven to eight years.
Will the Mahdī Have a Stutter?

Sayyidunā Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl has been quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh described the Mahdī:

«فَذَكَرَ نَقَلاً في لسانيه، وضَرَبَ بِفَخْذِهِ الْيَسِّرِ بِسَبِيلِ الْيَسِّرِ، إِذَا أَبَطَأً عَلَى الْكَلَامَ.» (الفتن لمعيم بن حماد)

“Rasūlullāh made mention of the Mahdī having a stutter, and that he will hit his left thigh with his right hand when he finds difficulty in speaking.”

Abū Nuʿaym has recorded this narration in his book, ‘al-Fitan’. Both he, and the one who has narrated this book from him, i.e. Abū Zayd, have been declared unreliable. Together with this, in the chain ibn Lahī‘ah, who is a weak narrator, and he in turn is recorded as narrating it from Isrā’îl, from Maymūn al-Qaddāh. Since Maymūn was not known to have narrated Aḥādīth, the scholars of Rijāl have not made mention of him. Yes, his son, ‘Abdullāh has been discussed, since he would narrate Aḥādīth. He has been severely criticized by the scholars.

As for Maymūn himself, mention of him has been made in the books of history. He was a leading figure in the creation of the Maymūniyyah/Qarāmiṭah/Shia movement.” No reliance can thus be placed upon him. The narration is thus weak and unreliable.
Will the Mahdī be from the Progeny of Both Ḥasan and Ḥusayn? 

Sayyidunā ʿAli al-Hilālī has been quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh said to Sayyidah Fāṭimah prior to his demise:

اِبَا قَاطِمَةٍ، وَالَّذِي بَعْذَبْتُهُ بِالْحَظَّ، إِنَّ مِنْهُمَا أَشْهِدُي هَذِهِ الْأَمَةُ إِذَا صَارَتْ الْبَنْيَةُ خَرْجٌ، وَمَرْجٌ، وَتُظَاهرَتْ الْيَتَّنَ، وَتُقَطَّعَتْ الْسَّبَبُ، وَأَغَارَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ، فَلا كَبِيرٌ يَرْتَحِلُ السَّبَبُ، وَلَا صَغِيرٌ يُؤْمِرُ الْكَبْرَ، فَيَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ عَنْدَ ذَلِكَ مِنْهُمَا مَنْ يَفْتَخَ حُصُنَ الْحَلاَلةَ، وَقَلْوُهُمْ عَلَى هَذِهِمَا يَرْتَحِلُهُمَا هَذِهِ، يَقُومُ الْبَنْيَةُ فِي الْخَلْقِ. (المعجم الأوسط 34)

"O Fāṭimah, by the oath of the One who sent me with the truth, the Mahdī of this Ummah is from your two sons. When the world will be in turmoil and war, and trials and tribulations will be many; when roads will be blocked, and some will be launching attacks upon others; when the elderly will show no mercy to the young, and when the young will show no respect to the old, at that time Allāh will raise one, through who Allāh will conquer and break down forts of misguidance and closed hearts. He will raise this religion at the end of times as I raised it at the beginning. He will fill the world with justice as it was filled with oppression."

ʿAllāmah ibn Ḥajr and Ḥāfīz Dhahabī have declared this narration to be a fabrication. 35

34 هـ ذَاتُ جَزْرٍ مِنْ خَدِيِّّي، رَوَاهُ الْفَلْحَرَّيْنِ ﴿في الأَوْسَطِ﴾، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ بْنُ رَزِقٍ بْنُ جَاَمِعٍ، حَدَّثَنَا الْهَيْبَيْمُ بْنُ خَيْبَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا صَفِيَّانِ بْنُ غَيْبِيْنِ، عَنْ عَلِيٍّ بْنِ الْهَلَالِي، عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: دَخَلَتْ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﰍ مَعْلَةٌ عَلَى الْخُطَابِ فِي بَيْتِهِ، لَيْفَضَيْ فِي هَذَا، فَأَقَامَهُ عِنْدَ رَأْيِهِ، قَالَ: فَبِنَقْتُ حَتَّى اَرْتَفَعَ صَوْتُهُ، فَقَرَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﰍ مَعْلَةً عَلَى الْخُطَابِ، فَظَلَّهُ أَذْهَبَ فِي هَذَا، فَقَالَ: أَحْيَيْنِي قَاطِمَةٍ...؟

35 قَالَ عَنْهُ ابن حَجْرُ ﴿في التَّفْهِيْمِ﴾: رَوَى عَنْ بْنِ غَيْبِيْنِ بِالْمَسْتَحِيضِ صَحِيحًا تُوْلُيًا فَأَثَّرَ الْبَيْطَلُ فِي ذَكرَ الْمِهْدِيِّ وَذَلِكَ أَوْرَّهُ الْفَلْحَرَّيْنِ ﴿في الأَوْسَطِ﴾ عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنُ رَزِقٍ بْنُ جَاَمِعِ، عَنْهُ، فَأَثَّرَ الْبَيْطَلُ فِي ذَكَرَ الْمِهْدِيِّ، قَالَ: فَأَثَّرَ الْبَيْطَلُ ﴿في مَعْلَةٍ﴾، قَالَ: بْنُ غَيْبِيْنِ ﴿في اَلْمَيْمَانِ». رَوَاهُ الْفَلْحَرَّيْنِ ﴿في الأَوْسَطِ﴾ وَالْكِبْرَيْنِ، وَفِيهِ الْهَيْبَيْمُ بْنُ خَيْبَيْرٍ، فَقَالَ: أَنُّهُمَا بِهَا الْحَدِيثُ.
Will a Man from Qaḥṭān Rule After the Mahdī?

Sayyidūnā Abū Jābir, Mājid ʾṣ-Sadafi has been quoted as saying Rasūlullāh  said:

”سِيَكونَ مِنْ بَعْضِيْ خَلْقِيْ، وَمِنْ بَعْضِيْ خَلْقِيْ أُمِّرُوْنَ، وَمِنْ بَعْضِيْ خَلْقِيْ مُلْكُوْنَ، وَمِنْ بَعْضِيْ خَلْقِيْ جَبَارُوْنَ. ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَهْلِيْ بِنَبِيِّيْ بَيْنَّ الْأَرْضِ عَدْلاً كَانَ مُلْبِثُ جُوَرَ، ثُمَّ يُؤْمِنُ الْخَطَافَيْنَ. فَوَأَلَّيْي بَعْضُيْ بَيْنَنَا حَقَّ مَا هُوَ دُونُهُ” (المعجم الكبير)

“After me there will be caliphs. Then there will be Amīrs. Then there will be kings. Then there will be oppressors. Then a man from my family will emerge, who will fill it with justice, just as it had been filled with oppression. He will then appoint a man from Qaḥṭān to rule. By the oath of the one who sent me with the truth, he (the man from Qaḥṭān) will not be any lesser (in greatness) than him.”

The Sanad of this narration is weak. Shaykh Albānī declared it to be a fabrication. Ḥāfīẓ Dhahabī, whilst discussing Abū Jābir ʾṣ-Sadafi mentioned, ‘One Munkar narration is attributed to him’. Al-Haythamī, after recording this narration, stated, ‘In it are narrators that I do not recognize’. (Majma‘ az-Zawā’id)

As for its subject matter, regarding a man from Qaḥṭān ruling after the Mahdī, this contradicts what appears in sound narrations, that after the Mahdī, Sayyidūnā ʾIsā  will rule.

\[\text{Ref: }36, 37, 38, 39\]
Will the Mahdī be Located Between the Rukn Al-Yamānī and the Maqām-Ibrāhīm?

Qatādah has been quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

«إِن هَيْنَاءٌ مِنَ الْمُدِينَةِ إِلَى مَكَّةٍ فِي سُلَّمِهَا نَامُّشَنَّ وَيُبْعَيْنُنَا وَالْمَقَامُ وَهُوَ كَارِهٌ.»

(تن الفلنعيم بن حماد 40)

“He (the Mahdī) will leave Madīnah for Makkah, where people will locate him and pledge allegiance to him, between the Rukn al-Yamānī and the Ḥajr al-Aswad, despite his unwillingness.”

Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād and the one who narrates from him, Abū Zayd, are weak. Together with this, the narration is Mursal i.e. Qatādah is a Tābiʿī. The one who Qatādah narrates from has not been mentioned, thus breaking the link of the Sanad. The narration is, on account of these issues, weak.
The Trial of Āḥlās (Rough Mats)

Sayyidunā Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī has been quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

"After me there will be trials. Amongst these will be a trial called ‘Āḥlās’ (rough mats). During this trial there will be war and fleeing. This will be followed by even worse trials. Then will come a trial, that whenever it will be said that it is going to end, it will stretch itself out again. There will remain no house in which it will not enter and no Muslim face which it will not afflict. It will remain until the Mahdī emerges."

The Sanad of this narration is extremely weak. It is questionable from the beginning right till the end. 42

2) Through this very chain, Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād narrates that Sayyidunā Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī has been quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

"After me there will be trials. Amongst these will be a trial called ‘Āḥlās’ (rough mats). During this trial there will be war and fleeing. This will be followed by even worse trials. Then will come a trial, that whenever it will be said that it is going to end, it will stretch itself out again. There will remain no house in which it will not enter and no Muslim face which it will not afflict. It will remain until the Mahdī emerges."

The Sanad of this narration is extremely weak. It is questionable from the beginning right till the end. 42

42 Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād and Abū Zayd, who narrates it from him are weak. Walīd ibn Muslim narrates it using the word "عن"، thus there is a high possibility of him deleting the mention of a narrator between himself and Ismāʿīl ibn Rāfīʿ. Ismāʿīl ibn Rāfīʿ is an extremely weak narrator. And the name of the narrator between him and Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī has been quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh ﷺ is not mentioned.
“The Ummah will seek refuge by the Mahdī, just as bees seek refuge by their queen. He will fill the earth with justice, just as it was filled with oppression, until people will return to the state, they were on at the beginning. He will not wake up any sleeping person, nor will he spill any blood.”

The Sanad of this narration is extremely weak, for the very reasons mentioned in the footnote of the previous narration.

Bloodshed at Minā

Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ʿAbdullāh ibn ‘Amr is quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

"In the month of Dhū al-Qaʿdah there will be a clash amongst the tribes. The Ḥujjāj will be looted. A battle will occur at Minā, in which many will die. Blood will flow, even upon the Jamarah al-ʿAqabah. Their man (i.e. the Mahdī) will flee and will come to the area between the Rukn al-Yamānī and the Ḥajr al-Aswad. Allegiance will be pledged to..."
him there, whilst he is unhappy. It will be said to him, ‘If you refuse, we will slit your neck!’ The number of participants in Badr (i.e. 313) will pledge allegiance to him. The inhabitants of the sky and the earth will be pleased with him.”

Al-Ḥākim narrates this from Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād (weak), who narrates from Abū Yūsuf al-Maqdisi (Majhul/unknown). Ḥāfīz Dhahabī in his at-Talkhīṣ, has mentioned that this Sanad is «سائق» (unreliable).

Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād and Abū ʿAmr ad-Dānī, have recorded something similar from Salamah ibn Abī Salamah al-Qurashī; from Shahr ibn Ḥawshab (a Tābiʿī), who skips his source and narrates directly from Rasūlullāh ﷺ. In the beginning of his narration the wording is:

“There will be a (loud) sound in Ramaḍān. And in Shawwāl there will be a lot of provoking. And in Dhū al-Qaʿdah the tribes will fight each other.” (The rest of the wording is similar to the above narration)

Besides the fact that Shahr ibn Ḥawshab has been declared as weak by some scholars46, he has omitted the mention of his source, causing the narration to become even weaker and thus unreliable.
Will There be a Battle Between a King of The East and a King of the West, Prior To the Emergence of the Mahdī?

Sayyidah Ummu Salamah  is quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

“A king from the east will launch an attack upon a king from the west and will kill him. Then a king from the west will launch an attack upon a king from the east and will kill him. Then he will send an army to Madīnah, which will be swallowed into the earth. He will then send another army. They will capture many from Madīnah. A man will flee to the Ḥaram for protection. People will gather around him, like how scattered birds gather. Three-hundred and fourteen people will gather around him, amongst whom will be women. He will gain victory over every oppressor and over the son of every oppressor. He will bring about such justice, that the living will wish the dead could experience it. He will live for seven years. After that, what is below the earth will be better than what is above (i.e. death will be better than life).”

After narrating this, Imām at-Ṭabrānī mentioned that none besides Layth ibn Abī Sulaym have narrated this, and from the students of Layth, none besides Muṭṭalib ibn Ziyād narrated it from him.

Layth ibn Abī Sulaym, besides being a Mudallis (one who skips mentioning his source by utilizing the word ﴿عن﴾, which means ‘from’, with no indication if it is from the...
source directly, or indirectly, has also been declared weak by many scholars. Since he is the only narrator of this, and he utilized the word "عن" between himself and Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn, the narration is regarded as weak.

Will the Mahdī Distribute Booty from the Tribe of Kalb?

Sayyidah Ummu Salamah is quoted as saying that Rasūllullāh said:

"There will be confusion upon the death of a caliph. A man from Madīnah will flee to Makkah. The people of Makkah shall force him to come out, despite him being unwilling. They will pledge allegiance to him between the Rukn al-Yamānī and the Maqām. (i.e. Maqām-Ibrāhīm)"

16. Say: "Who is the one that has said, 'There will be confusion upon the death of a caliph?' And who is the one that has said, 'A man from Madīnah will flee to Makkah?'. The people of Makkah shall force him to come out, despite him being unwilling. They will pledge allegiance to him between the Rukn al-Yamānī and the Maqām-Ibrāhīm."
A group from Shām will be sent against him. They will be swallowed by the earth, at an open field between Makkah and Madinah. When the people will witness this, the Abdāl (selected servants of Allāh) of Shām and groups from Iraq will come to pledge allegiance to him.

A man from the Quraysh will rise against him, who mother’s family will be from the tribe of Kalb. He (i.e. the man from Makkah – as narrated by Imām Ahmad) will send an army against this person (i.e. against the new leader), but they (the leader and his followers) will defeat them. That will be the army of Kalb. And loss is for the one who is not present for the spoils of war from the tribe of Kalb.

He will distribute the wealth and will lead the people in accordance to the Sunnah of their Nabi ﷺ. He will greatly strengthen the Islamic world. He will pass away seven years later. The Muslims will perform his Janāzah Ṣalāh.”

Besides Imām Abū Dāwūd, many other scholars too made mention of this narration in their compilations. All the chains however meet up to one narrator, viz. Qatādah, who was reliable, except that he was a Mudallis. Since he has narrated this with the word عن، there will always be a slight amount of weakness in the narration, as it will never be known whether he is narrating directly from his source or indirectly.

Despite the weakness created from this, scholars like Imām Abū Dāwūd, Ḥafiẓ Mundhirī and ibn al-Jawzī did not criticize the narration. In fact, ibn al-Jawzī graded it as Ḥasan in المدار المنيف.

Recent scholars, like Shaykh Albānī (in his Tahqīq of al-Mishkāt) and Shaykh ‘Abdul ‘Alīm al-Bastawī in الموسوة في أحاديث المهدي differed and felt that the narration should be regarded as weak, on account of Qatādah narrating it with the word عن، and on account of the link further in the chain not being clear. And Almighty Allāh knows best.

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50 The details of this are:

The Sanad of the narration, as mentioned by Imām Abū Dāwūd is as follows:

عن قائدة، عن صالح أبي الخليل، عن صاحب آل، عن أم سلمة؛
Will Two-Thirds of the Army of the Mahdī Be Martyred in Two Days?

Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah is quoted as saying that Rasūlullāh said:

«تُمَتِّعُ الرُّمُوسُ عَلَى وَاحِدٍ مِّن عَيْنَتَيْنَ، اسْمُهُ يِوَاَجِي، اسْمُهُ فِي قَبْلَ الْرُّمُوسِ، فِي قَبْلَهُونَ، فِي قَبْلَ أَوْ مَعَ ذَلِكَ، فَمُتِّعُونَ يُمَتِّعُونَ يُمَتِّعُونَ»

With regards to who Šāliḥ narrates from, two students of Qatādah, viz Hishām ibn ‘Abdullāh and Hammām, make mention of the Sanad as mentioned above, i.e.: ‘from Qatādah; from Abū Khalīl; from ‘his companion’; from Ummu Salamah. Since the ‘companion’ of Abū Khalīl is ambiguous, weakness is created in the Sanad.

Abū Hishām Rāfīʿī mentions the Sanad as: ‘from Hishām ibn ‘Abdullāh; from Qatādah; from Šāliḥ; from Mujāhid; from Ummu Salamah. Abū Ya’lā and Ibn Ḥibbān quote the narration of Abū Hishām. According to Abū Hishām Abū Khalīl narrates from Mujāhid. Abū Hishām however is weak, thus his word alone cannot be relied upon, especially since he is also quoting from Hishām ibn ‘Abdullāh, yet he contradicts what the other more reliable students of Hishām, viz Muʿāth, ‘Abd as-Ṣamad and Hirmi, narrated, i.e. ‘from Hishām; from Qatādah; from Abū Khalīl; from ‘his companion’; from Ummu Salamah.

ʿImrān al-Qaṭṭān mentions the Sanad as: ‘from Qatādah; from Abū Khalīl; from Qatādah; from Ummu Salamah. Imām Abū Dāwūd, after quoting the above narration, as quoted this one from ʿImrān. According to ʿImrān, the ‘companion’ of Abū Khalīl is ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥārith. ʿImrān al-Qaṭṭān however is weak; thus, his word cannot be relied upon, especially since it contradicts the manner that the other more reliable students of Qatādah narrated it from him, i.e. without the mention of ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥārith.
“The Romans will send an army against a governor from my family. His name will be similar to my name. They will meet at a place called al-ʿUmāq. On the first day, one-third of the Muslims will be killed. On the second day, again one-third of the Muslims will be killed. On the third day, the Muslims will gain victory. They will then continue until they conquer Constantinople. Whilst they are distributing, with their shields, an announcement will be made, ‘Dajjāl has taken your place amongst your children!’”

Khatīb al-Bhtagdādī has made mention of this narration, in his book ‘al-Muttafiq wa al-Muftariq’. The author of Kanz al-ʿUmmāl has quoted it from there. There is no mention of it in the famous books of Aḥādith. I have not as yet come across an investigation into this Sanad.
CHAPTER THREE

SOME STATEMENTS OF THE ṢAḤĀBAH AND TABIʿĪN REGARDING THE MAHDĪ, MENTIONED IN THE BOOK AL-FITAN THROUGH WEAK NARRATIONS
CHAPTER THREE

Some Statements of the Saḥābah and Tabiʿīn Regarding the Mahdī, Which Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād Has Recorded in His Book, Al-Fitan, Through Weak Chains

1) Sayyidunā ‘Ali has been quoted as saying:

“An army will be sent to Madīnah. They will arrest whoever they can from the family of Rasūlullāh. They will kill many men and women of the Banū Hāshim. That is when the Mahdī and the ‘white one’ will flee from Madīnah to Makkah. Men will be sent in pursuit of them, but they will reach the Ḥaram of Allāh, and the place of safety, i.e. Makkah Mukarramah.”

2) Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās has been quoted as saying:

Besides the weakness created by Nuʿaym, as well as the one narrating from him, i.e. Abū Zayd, the Sanad reaches Sayyidunā ʿAlī through ibn Lahīyah, who has been declared weak.
“Allāh will raise the Mahdī after despondency sets in, and when the people begin saying that ‘there is no Mahdī’. His helpers will be men from Shām. They will be 315 men, equal to the number who participated at Badr. They will come to him from Shām, and will force the Mahdī to emerge from a house at Ṣafā. They will pledge allegiance to him, despite his unwillingness. He will then lead them in prayer at the Maqām-Ibrāhīm. He will perform two Rakʿāts, since he will be a traveler. He will then ascend the pulpit.”

Besides the weakness created by Nuʿaym, as well as the one narrating from him, i.e. Abū Zayd, there are quite a few other issues that create weakness in this narration, amongst which are:

a) Walīd ibn Muslim has narrated this saying, using the word ‘عن’. He is known to omit the names of extremely weak narrators from a chain, by merely saying ‘عن’ (which means ‘from’), instead of ‘حدثنا’ (which means ‘he narrated to us’).

b) Abū ‘Abdullāh, from who Walīd indicates he is narrating from, is ‘مجهول’ (unknown).

c) Abān ibn Walīd, who narrates this statement from ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ, is also ‘مجهول’ (unknown).

3) Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ﷺ has been quoted as saying:

"فِجْحَ النَّاسِ مَعَهُ، وَيُمُؤُونَ مَعَاهُ عَلَىٰ غَيْرِ إِمَامٍ، فَبِئْسَمَا هُمْ نَزُولُ بِهِ، إِذَا أَخَذُهُمُ الْكَلِبُ، فَقُلَّتُ الْمَيْلَاءُ بَعْضٌ بَعْضٍ هُم، فَأَفْتَقَتْهُمُ الْعَقِبَةُ دَمًا، فَمُضِغْنُونَ إِلَى خَيْرِهِمْ فِي أَلْوَاهُ، وَهُوَ مُصْلِّيٌّ وَسَطَاءٌ إِلَى الْكَعْبَةِ بِبَيْكَ، كَأَنَّ أَنْظِرَ إِلَى دُمَيْعَهُ، فِي قُولُهُ: هَلْنَّ أَنَّا نَبِيُّانَ، فِي قُولُهُ: وَذَلِكَ خِضْمٌ مِّن عَدَدٍ، فَدُسْتُمُوْا، وَوُلْدُمُ إِلَى دُمَيْعَةٍ، فَإِنَّ أَدْرَكْتُمْ فِي قُبُولَهُ، فَإِنَّ اَلْمَهْدِيُّ فِي الأَرْضِ، وَالْمُهْدِيُّ فِي السَّمَاء" (العنام لنعيم 3)
“People will make Ḥajj and ‘Umrah together, despite having no leader. Whilst they are at Minā, it (a major trial that had already surfaced) will grab them like a dog. Tribes will attack each other, until blood will flow at ‘Aqabah. The people will, in panic, approach the best amongst them. They will find him with his face stuck to the Ka‘bah, crying. It is as though I am looking at his tears. The people will say, 'Allow us to pledge allegiance!' He will say, 'Alas, how many pacts you have already broken and how much of blood you have already spilled!’ Allegiance will be pledged to him, despite his unwillingness. If you find his era, pledge allegiance to him, for he is the Mahdī in the earth and the Mahdī in the sky.”

Al-Ḥākim and Abū ‘Amr ad-Dānī have also narrated this incident with the same Sanad. Ḥāfiz Dhahabī declared the Sanad of this narration to be ساطع (worthless).¹

The Sanad leads up to Muḥammad ibn ‘Ubaydullāh al-Arzamī, who is متورك (i.e. his narrations are not considered worthy of being narrated).⁵

⁴ Sayyidūnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr has been quoted as saying:

"أَنَّمَا إِلَّا هُوَ سَتَكَّوْنَ فِي نَفَاتِهَا، وَنَاسًا يُصِلُّونَ مَعَهَا، وَيُحْجُّونَ مَعَهَا، وَيَعْرَفُونَ مَعَهَا، وَيَضْحَقُونَ مَعَهَا، ثُمَّ تَهِيجُ كَالْكَلِبِ، فَيَفْتَلُونَ حَتَّى تَصِبُّ الْعَقْبَةَ دَمًا، وَحَتِّي يَرِى الْمَرْيِمُ أَنْ يَرَاهُنَّ لَنْ تَنْتَجِبُ، وَيَرِى الْمُعْتَلِلُ أَنَّ الْمَلِكَ لَنْ يَنْفُعَهُ، فَمَّا يَسْتَكِرُونَ رِجْلًا شَيْاً مَعْنِيًا مَعِينًا، تَرَهُّدُ عَرَضَهُ، يَقُولُ لِلَّهِ الْمَهْدِيَّ الْأَرْضَ وَهُوَ الْمَهْدِيُّ فِي النَّعْمَاءَ، فَمَنْ أَدْرَكَ فِي بَيْعَتِهِ". (الفتاة لمعيم) "Indeed, there will be a trial, whilst people will be praying together,

¹ التعليق من تلخيص الذهبي: اسند ساقط.

² قال عبد الله، سيبعث أي يقول: قرأت في بعض الكتب عن حاجاج، قال: حديثي محمد بن عبيد الله الغزيمي، عن عمر بن مالك، عن أبيه، عن جد، عن ابن أبي الظبي، عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، قال: أول رواية عبد الله، الجامع لعلوم الإمام أحمد، قال: آية حكما: وكان صلى الله عليه وسلم، وكان ديني الحق، فجعل يحدث من حكمة وفهم، فكأنك المتأكر في روايته، تركه ابن المبارك، ويجري القول، وانت مهدي، ويجري بن معين، (المجروحين من المحدثين).

⁶ قال له: حديثنا معاصر بن سليمان، عن الأخضر بن عجلان، عن عطاء بن زياد بن قراجة العдачи، عن أبيه، عن عبد الله بن عمر، قال:
making Ḥajj together, going to ʿArafāt together and slaughtering together. Then the trial will spiral out of control, causing the people to kill each other, until blood will flow at ʿAqabah. At that time the innocent will find his innocence unable to save him, and the one who avoided (arguments) will find that his distancing to be of no avail. Then they will force a young man (to accept allegiance), whose back will be resting at the Rukn (most probably Rukn al-Yamānī), and who will be shivering. He will be called Mahdī on earth and he is the Mahdī in the sky. Whoever finds him should pledge allegiance to him.”

Besides the weakness in the narration created by Nuʿaym, as well as the one narrating from him, i.e. Abū Zayd, the fact that Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr would narrate Ṣarā’ilī narratives adds further weakness to this narration, since even if its Sanad was sound, it would still carry the possibility of it being an Ṣarā’ilī narration.

5) Sayyidunā ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir has been quoted as saying:

“From amongst the signs of the Mahdī are: a) When the Turks will fall upon you; b) your caliph, who would amass wealth, will die; c) after him a weak caliph will be appointed, who will be removed from his post two years later; d) the earth will sink at the western-side of the Masjid of Damascus; e) three men shall emerge (and take over) in Shām; f) and a group from the west shall emerge and move towards (and take control of) Egypt. And that will be the sign of the Sufyānī.”

The Sanad of this narration is extremely weak. Besides the weakness in the narration created by Nuʿaym, as well as the one narrating from him, i.e. Abū Zayd, the narrator after Nuʿaym is Rishdīn, who is weak; followed by ibn Lāḥiʿah, who is weak; followed by Abū Zurʿah, who is Mātrūk (his narrations have not been given any consideration by the scholars).
Sayyiduna ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd has been quoted as saying:

“... And if the businesses stop, the roads will close and the trials will increase, seven scholars from areas far apart will meet up in Makkah, without having made any prior arrangements for the meeting. At the hands of each one of these seven, a little over three-hundred people will have pledged allegiance. One will ask the other, ‘What has brought you here?’ They will say, ‘We have come in search of the one, upon whose hands this trial will be subdued and upon whose hands Constantinople will be conquered. We know his name, the name of his father, the name of his mother and his features.’ Each of the seven will explain that he too has come for the same purpose. They will search for him and locate him in Makkah. They will say, ‘You are such and such, and your mother is such and such, the daughter of such and such.’ He will reply, ‘No, I am a man from the Anṣār.’ With this, he will...”

*قال أبو بُنيا: حدثنا أبو عمرو، عن ابن طيغة، عن عبد الوهاب بن حضني، عن محمد بن ثابت، عن أبيه، عن الحارث، عن عبد الله بن مسعود، حُكّمَتْنَا قِالَ.*
manage to sneak away from them. They will then describe the features of this man to the people who have knowledge in this regard. They will say, 'That is the man who you are searching for, and he has now gone to Madīnah.' They will then travel to Madīnah but he will sneak past them and come back to Makkah. Here they will finally catch up with him. They will say, 'You are so and so, and your mother is so and so, the daughter of so and so, and in you is this and that sign. You escaped us the first time, so now spread out your hand, so that we may pledge allegiance to you.'

He will reply, 'I am not the one you seek. I am a man from the Anṣār. Allow me to leave and I will show you the one you seek.' With this ruse, he will manage to escape them again. They will travel to Madīnah to find him, but he will again sneak past them and return to Makkah. They will finally locate him at the Rukn al-Yamānī. They will say, 'Our sin is upon you and our blood is upon your neck, if you do not stretch your hand out for us to pledge allegiance. The army of Sufyānī are after us, being led by a man from Jurm. He will sit between the Rukn and the Maqām (Maqām-ibrāhīm) and will stretch out his hand. Allegiance will be pledged at his hand. Allāh will place his love in the hearts of the people. He will proceed forth with a nation, who are lions during the day and worshippers at night.'

Besides the weakness of Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād and Abū Zayd, from the beginning till the end of the chain there is weakness. Abū ‘Umar is Majhūl (unknown). Ibn Lahījah is weak. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Ḵūsayn is Majhūl (Lisān al-Mīzān). Muḥammad ibn Thābit is weak (at-Taqrīb). And Ḥārīth al-Aʿwar is extremely weak (Mīzān al-ʿItīdāl).

Through this very Sanad al-Ḥākim has quoted a Ḥadīth in his al-Mustadrak. Ḥāfīz Dīnahābī commented on this narration as "ذا موضوع والسلام" ‘This is a clear fabrication’.
The ruling for the above, due to it being through the same Sanad, will thus be the same, i.e. a clear fabrication.

7) Sayyidunā ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir ḥanafiyyah has been quoted as saying:

إذا قُتل النَّفس الرَّكِيبة وأخوه، يُقتل بسَكّة ضيِّغة، نادي مناد من النساء: إن أميركم فلان، وذلك المهدِّي الذي يملأ الأرض حَقًّا وغَدْلاً. (الفتنه لتعيم)

“When the ‘pure one’ and his brother are killed in Makkah, a caller will call from the sky, ‘Your Amīr is so and so!’ And that will be the Mahdī, who will fill the earth with the truth and justice.”

This narrative is narrated through the exact Sanad as the previous one, thus it too is extremely weak.

8) Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī (al-Ḥanafīyyah), the son of Sayyidunā ʿAlī ﷺ has been quoted as saying:

ِّيشع بك أمير الدولة في سنة سبع وتسعين، أو تسع وتسعين، ويقوم المهدِّي سنة مائتين» (الفتنه لتعيم)

“The rule of the Banū ʿAbbās will stand in the year 97 or 99. And the Mahdī will emerge in the year 200. (i.e. A.H)”

We have already entered the year 1442 and the Mahdī has still not emerged. Time itself has thus exposed the true nature of this fabrication. The only reason it has been quoted is so that one may realise the extent of fabrications that exist in the books.

فيِّسكون كذلك ما شاء الله، ثم يُسرعُ النَّفوس في المؤمنين فَلا يبقى مؤمن يفعل الكافر، قد كنَا مرغوبين من المؤمنين، فلم يبق منهم أحدًا، وليست تقبَّلاً عملاً تُؤْثِبُه قَبَائلهم في الفَرْق تَهْزَجُه النَّبِيّين، ثم يقوم أخَذُهم بِأذنَه واحْتِيَ واتِّباعَه وِفَتْنَكَهها وفَتْنَ النَّاظِر، يقوم عَنْها إِحْدَى وينزَر عَلَيْها أَخْرَى لا يَنْكر ولا يَعْفَر، فأَفْضَلُه يَدْمِجُون مِن يَقُولُ، لَو تَتَحَمَّلُه وَمَن النَّاظِر كَانَ أَحْسَن، فِيِّسكون كذلك حَتَّى لا يِنَبِّئَ أحَدٌ مِن أَوَّلَ الدَّكَار وينظرون أَهَلَ الأرض أَوَّلَ الْسُّفَاح، فِيِّسكون كذلك ما شاء الله، ثُم يُعْفَر اللّه أَرْحَامُ الْمَسَاءَ ثلاثين سَنَةً، لا يَنَبِّئُ اثْنَيَّنَا مَلِكَة، وَيَحْتَمُّون أَلَّهُمُ أَوَّلَ الْعَزَّةِ وَجَرَاءَ النَّاسِ، وَعَلَيهِمْ يَتْمَّونَ السَّعالَة: ﴿مَعَمِّدَ بِن تَابِعُ أَسْلَمَ الْبَنِيَةَ مِن أَعْرَاضَ التَّعْمِيرَ والْأَوَّلَ التَّمَيُّعِيَّن، إِلَيْهِ أَنَّ عِبَادَ الْوَهَابَ بن أَبي مَهْجُولَ، فَالْبَنُةُ لَهُ، ذَٰلِكَ مَوْضَعَ، وَالْسَلاَمُ.﴾

۹ حدثنا مُعَبَّر، قال: حدثنا أبو يوسف المُقدسي، عن فطيم، عن محمد بن الحنفية، قال:
regarding the issue of the Mahdī, and the weak nature of the book of Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād, known as al-Fitan.

9) Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyib has been quoted as saying:

"I testify: In the heavens, is it not the case that the angels are not occupied with anything, and consequently they are not occupied by the assembly of the Mahdī, children of Shām? They will not be held accountable, until the one who calls out ‘hold onto so and so’ appears, and a palm will appear, pointing (in his direction)."

Nuʿaym narrates this statement through two Sanads. In the first is Ishāq ibn Yahyā (Matrūk -the scholars would not narrate from him). In the second is ʿIyād ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Fihri (Imām Bukhārī declared him to be Munkar al-Hadith - his narrations contradict the narrations of reliable sources). Together with this is the weakness of Nuʿaym and Abū Zayd.

10) Ibn Shihāb az-Zuhri has been quoted as saying:

"I testify: In the heavens, is it not the case that the angels are not occupied with anything, and consequently they are not occupied by the assembly of the Mahdī, children of Shām? They will not be held accountable, until the one who calls out ‘hold onto so and so’ appears, and a palm will appear, pointing (in his direction)."

Ibn Shihāb az-Zuhri has been quoted as saying:

"I testify: In the heavens, is it not the case that the angels are not occupied with anything, and consequently they are not occupied by the assembly of the Mahdī, children of Shām? They will not be held accountable, until the one who calls out ‘hold onto so and so’ appears, and a palm will appear, pointing (in his direction)."
“From the family of Abū Sufyān, the 2nd, an Amīr will be appointed over the Ḥajj. When they will reach the plains of ʿHajj, they will hear an announcement from the sky, ‘Listen well, your Amīr is so and so!’ A caller from the earth will then announce, ‘He has lied!’ A caller from the sky will reply, ‘He has spoken the truth!’ This will continue and the people will not know who to follow. The truthful one is the one who will announce from the sky the first time. Thus, when you hear it, remember that the word of Allāh is the highest, and the word of the devil is the lowest.”

Besides the weakness of Nuʿaym and Abū Zayd, Walīd ibn Muslim narrates this with the word «عن»1, which is not acceptable from him. And then he identifies his source as ‘from a shaykh’, without clarifying who this shaykh is.

11) Maṭar al-Warrāq has been quoted as saying:

«لا يَخْرَجُ المَهْدِيُّ حَقٍّ يُعْتَصِمُ بِاللَّهِ جَهَرًا.»

“The Mahdi will not emerge, until Allāh is openly denied.”

Yaḥyā ibn al-Yamān narrates this from Minhāl ibn Khalifah. Both of them have been declared to be weak. Together with this is the weakness of Nuʿaym and Abū Zayd.

12) Arṭāt ibn Mundhir (a reliable Tābiʿi) has been quoted as saying:

إِبْقَاءِ السُّفِيَّانِ الْوَلِيدُ ثُمَّ يَتِمُّونَ اسْتِئْصَالُهُمْ عَلَى يَدِيَ الْمَهْدِيِّ، وَهُوَ أَوَّلُ لَوَاهِ يَعْقُبُهُ الْمَهْدِيُّ بِبَعْضِهِ إِلَى الْوَلِيدِ.»

قال نعيم: حدثنا الوليد بن مسلم، عن شجّي، عن ابن شباه، قال.

قال نعيم: حدثنا يحيى بن اليمنخ، عن البنيهاني بن خليفة، عن منذر الوراق، قال.

قال نعيم: حدثنا الحصصّم بن نافع، عن جراح، عن أرطاة، قال.
The Sufyānī will fight the Turks. Then they (i.e. the Turks) will be uprooted at the hands of the Mahdī. This will be the first flag the Mahdī will tie, and send to (against) the Turks.”

Despite Arṭāṭ ibn Mundhir being reliable, he has made no mention of the source of this narration. Thus, it cannot be relied upon. Also, Abū Zayd, followed by Nuʿaym, who narrate this from Arṭāṭ, both have been declared weak.

Nuʿaym has quoted many other narratives regarding the Mahdī, from Arṭāṭ ibn Munthir, through this chain. Their ruling will be the same as the above.
CHAPTER FOUR

SOME STATEMENTS OF KAʿB AL-AḤBĀR WHICH NUʿAYM IBN ḤAMMĀD HAS RECORDED IN HIS BOOK, AL-FITAN
CHAPTER FOUR

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Note: Ka‘b Aḥbār accepted Islām in the era of Sayyidun Ābū Bakr. Prior to this, he was recognised amongst the great scholars of the Jews of Yemen. Much was learnt from him with regards to the previous nations and past history, in accordance to what the religious scriptures of the past had recorded. His narrations will thus be on the category of Isrā‘īliyyāt (i.e. narratives from the previous scriptures). And if the Sanad to him is not strong, then this will further increase the weak nature of the narrative.

1) Ka‘b Aḥbār has been quoted as saying:

«قادة المهديّ خير الناس، أهل لصرته وتبعته من أهل كوفان واليمن، وأبدال الشام، مقاتلته جبريل، وساقته ميكائيل، مخبرٌ في الخلافات، يلتقى الله تعالى الفتنة العُمياء، وقائمٌ الأرض، حتى إن المرأة لمتحفّظٌ في خمس نساءٍ، لا يخافُن شياً إلا الله، تعلُّب الأرض ركابها، والنسماء بركتها» (الفتنة لمعيم)

“The leaders appointed by the Mahdī will be the best of people. His helpers and those who will pledge allegiance to him will be from Kūfah and Baṣrah, from Yemen, and the Abdāl (high-ranking servants of Allāh) from Shām. Ahead of him will be Jibril and behind him will be Mikā‘īl. He will be beloved in the creation. Allāh will extinguish the trials that had blinded man. The earth will become so peaceful, that a woman will travel in a group of five women, accompanied by no man, yet she will fear none but Allāh. The earth will give off its produce and the sky will send down its blessings.”

Walid ibn Muslim narrates this, with the word ‘عن’. His narrations in this manner are not acceptable. Together with this, he then makes no mention of who he had heard it from, and merely says that ‘someone’ had narrated it to him from Ka‘b.
This narration is thus extremely weak and unreliable.

2) Through the above Sanad, Nuʿaym also narrates the following from Ka‘b:

"A comet will appear from the east, before the emergence of the Mahdi."

This narration is extremely weak and unreliable, on account of the reasons mentioned above.

3) Nuʿaym narrates from Abū Yūsuf, from Muḥammad ibn ʿUbaydullāh (both are unknown), from Ka‘b Aḥbār:

“The sign of the emergence of the Mahdi is flags that will come from the west. In charge of it will be a man from Kindah.”

Both Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad ibn ʿUbaydullāh are unknown.

4) Nuʿaym narrates from Rishdīn; from ibn Lahiʿah; from Abū Qābil from Ka‘b Aḥbār:

“When the ruler of Shām and Miṣr will fight each other and the people of Shām will take captive tribes from Egypt, and a man from the east will come with small black flags from the side of the leader of Shām, he will be the one who will pledge obedience to the Mahdi.”

Rishdīn is weak. Ibn Lahiʿah is weak. And Abū Qābil is weak.
5) Nuʿaym (weak) narrates from Muʿtamir ibn Sulaymān (reliable); from ʿImrān ibn Ḥuṣayr (reliable); from Ṣāmit (reliable); from Kaʿb Albār:

“The Mahdī will be fifty-one or fifty-two years old”

Will There Be a Solar and Lunar Eclipse in the Same Month, Prior to the Appearance of the Mahdī?

Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī (al-Ḥanafīyyah), the son of Sayyiduna ʿAlī, has been quoted as saying:

“For our Mahdī there are two signs, which have not occurred from the time Almighty Allāh created the skies and the earth. On the first of Ramaḍān there will be a lunar eclipse and in the middle of Ramaḍān there will be a solar eclipse. And this has never happened from the time Allāh created the skies and the earth.”
Due to this being narrated through ‘Amr ibn Shāmir al-Ju’fī, who has been declared as a fabricator of narrations, followed by Jābir al-Ju’fī, who is Matrūk, the narrative should be regarded as a fabrication.

**Will There Be an Earthquake at Ghouta, Prior to the Arrival of the Mahdī?**

Khālid ibn Ma’dān (a reliable Tabi’ī) has been quoted as saying:

«لا يَجْزِعُ الْمُهْدِيُّ حَتَّى يُجْسَفْ بْقَرْيَةٌ فِي الْغُوْثَا تْسَى حَرَّسَةٌ» (فضائل الشام لأبي الإحول 6)

“The Mahdī will not emerge until the earth sinks in at a village of Ghouta (Southwestern Syria), known as Ḥarastā.”

The Sanad to Khālid is weak. And since it is not known who Khālid quoted it from, it cannot be relied upon.
Conclusion

As mentioned in the beginning of the book, the concept of the ‘awaited Mahdi’ is established from Mutawātir Aḥādīth (i.e., so many narrations exist regarding it, that the possibility of it being a misconception cannot in anyway be considered). To believe in the coming of the Mahdi is an essential part of our faith.

The purpose of this booklet is merely to highlight the gradings of the various narrations that have been recorded with regards to the Mahdi, so that one may understand this concept in the light of reliable narrations.

May Almighty Allāh, in His infinite kindness, accept it, make it beneficial for all, and allow us all the opportunity to be part of the army of the Mahdi, if he has to appear in our lifetime. And if he appears after, then may Allāh ʿṣma Allāha ʿl-ʿadālah walladāt al-ʿadālah allow our progeny to be part of his blessed army and to convey our Salāms to him and to Sayyidunā ʿIsā ʿl-ʿaṣāmīm. Āmīn.


Completed with the help and kindness of Almighty Allāh, on the 12th of Jumādā al-Ākhirah 1442 (26/01/2021).