

4.

The Exoteric Proofs for the Imamah of Imam Isma'il ibn Ja'far

“From eternity, Maula Murtada’s Light has always been present. We just change our forms but the Light is the same, only names are different. Like my ancestors, I also possess the same Light. Bodies are needed to be changed. But true Imandar Mureed must understand this.....”(Mawlana Sultan Muhammad Shah, (Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah, Bombay, 8th September, 1885))

I. Proof #1

We have discussed the exalted status of Imamah in previous chapters, and the proofs for the Imamah of Ali ibn Abi Talib. While the Shi’a unanimously agree upon the need for the Imam, with time they have entered into confusion and disagreement about who it is that embodies this Divine *Nur*. The two largest claimants to this illustrious position are the Nizari Qasim-Shahi Ismailis and the Twelver Shi’ites. The former group finds this *nur* within the face of Imam Shah Karim Agha Khan IV, and believe him to be the living and manifest embodiment of this light. The latter group believes that Allah’s Supreme Proof is embodied in the form of Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Mahdi. He is believed to be the last in a line of Twelve Imams foretold by the Prophet and his family, but has existed in a state of Occultation for the past thousand years. The split between these two sects originates in the death of Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq’s, whose luminous

teachings on Imamah have been extensively quoted above. The Ismailis believe that Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq announced that his eldest son, Isma'il, would succeed him as Imam. They argue that Imam Ja'far sought to protect his beloved son from the oppression of the 'Abbasid authorities, and so staged a funeral for his son, effectively "faking" his death; Imam Isma'il went into a state of hiding (though there are a number of reports of him being witnessed after his alleged death, which will be discussed below), and was eventually succeeded by his son Muhammad. It was from this lineage that the illustrious Fatimid Empire derives itself, and whose line of Imams continues today. The Twelver Shi'as, on the other hand, argue that Isma'il died in his father's lifetime, and so could not have been his successor; they consider the Imamah to have continued through Imam Ja'far's son Musa al-Kazim, culminating in the Twelfth Imam who is in hiding today.

In this chapter, we will attempt to analyze and critique the proofs which the Twelver Shi'as offer against the Imamah of Isma'il son of Ja'far. We will find that these proofs are highly contradictory in nature; while the Twelvers all agree that Imam Ja'far was succeeded by Musa al-Kazim, they cannot agree as to whether or not Isma'il had originally been appointed as the Imam, whether or not this appointment was later withdrawn (by Imam Ja'far or by God Himself), or even whether or not Isma'il was a person of sound character and piety or a wicked sinner. Our argument is that the historical record bears witness to the *nass* (Divine designation) of Imam Isma'il, that he was the most pious and most beloved of Imam Ja'far's son, and that it was impossible for this *nass* to be withdrawn in anyway. Furthermore, we will analyze whether or not the line of Imams that Twelvers offer really fulfills the fundamental purpose of Imamah: that of being a *manifest* Sign of God to all the believers.

The great body of historical evidence establishes the great love and devotion which Imam Ja'far had for his eldest son, Isma'il, and that the Shi'as of the time were of the widespread belief that Isma'il would be the Imam after his father. A survey of all the historical sources indicates one astounding fact: that with the exception of the Twelvers, all commentators have reported that the *nass* (designation) for Imamah was originally given to Isma'il. As for the Twelver sources themselves, they are explicit that Isma'il was the most beloved son of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, and that his followers believed that Imam Isma'il would be the Imam after him. This, at the minimum, is what the historical sources confirm. The Twelver *hadith* encyclopedia of *Bihar al-Anwar*, as well as ancient Twelver historical study *Kitab al-Irshad*, we read:

كان لابي عبدالله عشرة اولاد... وكان اسماعيل أكبر إخوته، وكان أبو عبدالله شديداً المحبة له، والبر به والاشفاق عليه وكان قوم من الشيعة يظنون أنه القائم بعد أبيه، والخليفة له من بعده، إذ كان أكبر أخوته سناً، ولميل أبيه إليه، وإكرامه له، فمات في حياة أبيه.

Abu 'Abdillah [as-Sadiq] had ten children... Isma'il was the eldest of them. Abu 'Abdillah had intense love, affection, and devotion for him, and the people believed that he would be the Rectifier [*al-qa'im*] after him, and that he would be his successor. This was because he was the eldest of the brothers, as well as his father's intense inclination towards, and the great nobility which his father bestowed upon him. **He died in the lifetime of his father.** (Majlisi *Bihar Al-Anwar* 47:246, Al-Mufid *Kitab al-Irshad* 431).

Here, we see an explicit acknowledgment in the Twelver sources that Isma'il was the most beloved son of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq. This, in and of itself, raises serious problems for the Twelver cause. To say that Musa al-Kazim was the designated heir-

apparent, means that Musa al-Kazim was to be the supreme manifestation of Allah, his *mazhar* (the place of His Manifestation), and the *hujjah* (proof) over Creation. Imamah is not a mere political status, but an ontological and spiritual position. Had Musa held this *nur* (Light) of God in his very being, it seems doubtful that Imam Ja'far would have held greater affection for his son Isma'il then he did for Imam as-Sadiq.

Other non-Twelve sources confirm the set of facts. The Sunni heresiographer Ibn 'Utbah (who was no friend of the Shi'as, Twelver or Ismaili) says:

أما إسماعيل بن جعفر الصادق - - ويكنى أبا محمد، وأمّه فاطمة بنت الحسين الأثرم بن الحسن بن علي بن أبي طالب
ويعرف بإسماعيل الأعرج، وكان أكبر ولد أبيه، وأحبهم إليه، كان يحبه حباً شديداً، وتوفي في حياة أبيه.

As far as Isma'il ibn Ja'far as-Sadiq, he was given the patronym of Abu Muhammad, and his mother was Fatimah bint Al-Husayn al-Athram bin al-Hasan bin Ali ibn Abi Talib, and was known as Al-'Araj. He was the eldest son of his father, and the most beloved by him; his father loved him intensely  died during his father's lifetime. (Subhani *Buhuth* 72).

Another Sunni heresiographer, Ash-Shahristani, writes:

These [the Ismailis] hold that Isma'il was the designated Imam after Ja'far, *as the sons of Ja'far also agreed*. They differ among themselves, however, as to whether or not he died during the lifetime of his father. Some of them say that he did not die, but that his father had declared that he had died to save him from the 'Abbassid caliphs; and that he had held a funeral assembly to which Mansur's governor in Medina was made a witness. Some, on the other hand, say that he really did die. Designation, however, cannot be withdrawn, and has the advantage that the Imamah remains in the descendants of the person designation, to the exclusion of others (Ash-Shahristani *Muslim Sects* 144).

As such, we find that the non-Twelve sources are in agreement upon the Imamah of Isma'il, and that the Twelver themselves acknowledge the high position that Isma'il held with his father. The balance of these sources are difficult to reconcile with the belief in Musa's Imamah; logically, it would seem that Imam Ja'far should have had the greatest love for that son who would carry on the banner of Imamah after him. It would also seem illogical that so many of Ja'far's followers could have falsely believed that Imam Isma'il would be the successor, if Ja'far had clearly appointed Musa as his successor.

It is clear from the historical record that the followers of Imam Ja'far believed that Isma'il would succeed him in the office of Imamah. Regardless of whether or not Isma'il died during the lifetime of his father (this issue will be dealt with below), the fact that he was their heir apparent is confirmed. The Twelver narrations that speak of his alleged death during the lifetime of his father are, in fact, explicit on this; while that body of narrations is always presented by Twelver as proof of Musa's Imamah, they unintentionally prove that most Shi'as believed in the Imamah of Isma'il. Similarly, we do not find any body of evidence to suggest that the followers of Imam Ja'far were of the belief that his son Musa was the designated Imam and heir apparent. In their literature, we read:

ما بدا لله بداء كما بداء له في إسماعيل إبنِي يقول ما ظهر لله أمر كما ظهر له في إسماعيل إبنِي إذ إخترمه قبلي ليعلم
بذلك أنه ليس بإمام بعدي

Imam Ja'far said: "Nothing appeared to Allah greater than what appeared to Him in my son Isma'il meaning that nothing has manifested itself to Allah greater than was manifested to Him in my son Isma'il.

For he was taken away by death before me, in order that it would be known that he was not the Imam after me.” (As-Saduq *Tawhid* 336, *Kamal* 1:69, *Majlisi Bihar* 4:109).

In *Bihar* we read:

وروي أن أبا عبدالله جزع عليه جزعا شديدا، وحزن عليه حزنا عظيما، وتقدم سريره بغير حذاء ولا رداء، وأمر بوضع سريره على الأرض مرارا كثيرة، وكان يكشف عن وجهه وينظر إليه، يريد بذلك تحقيق أمر وفاته عند الظانين خلافته له من بعده، وإزالة الشبهة عنه في حياته، ولما مات إسماعيل رحمة الله عليه انصرف عن القول بامامته بعد أبيه من كان يظن ذلك

It is narrated that Abu ‘Abdillah was terribly sad about Isma’il, and was filled with anguish over him. He approached his bed without any shoes or robe. He ordered that his bed be laid upon the Earth a number of times. He unveiled his face and looked at it. By this, he intended to establish the fact of his death before those who believed that Isma’il would succeed him, and to remove doubt from their minds. When Isma’il died - may Allah have mercy upon him - those who believed that Isma’il was the Imam turned back from their belief. (*Majlisi Bihar Al-Anwar* 47:242,).

All of these narrations indicate that Isma’il, not Musa, was the heir apparent; they also make it clear that the belief in Musa’s Imamah did not begin until after Isma’il’s alleged death. This, in and of itself, is sufficient proof that Imam Ja’far had not given any clear designation to Musa. It is not surprising, then, that objective academic researchers have come to the same conclusion as the Ismailis: Divine *nass* was originally given to Imam Isma’il. Ivanow writes:

According to the overwhelming majority of the available sources, both sectarian and of their opponents, Imam Jafar appointed as his successor his eldest son Ismail, by his first wife, a highly aristocratic lady, great grand-daughter of Hasan.

It is clear from these narrations that the Shi'a community was well-aware of the intense devotion that Imam Ja'far had towards his eldest son, and there was widespread belief that Isma'il would succeed his father as Imam. This, in and of itself, cannot be considered firm proof that Isma'il was Imam Ja'far's heir apparent; but it does raise an extremely thorny issue for Twelver Shi'ism. For the very fact that the majority of early Shi'as believed in the Imamah of Isma'il indicates that they did *not* believe in the coming of the Twelve Imams of Twelver Shi'ism, nor had they been informed by the Prophet and his successors that their seventh Imam would be Musa al-Kazim. The body of reports which we have discussed so far explicitly contradict the fundamental Twelver claim that the Prophet had announced "twelve commanders" or "twelve princes" after him, and that this was a well-known fact amongst the early Shi'a. One must ask: if the Prophet had made such a clear and decisive decision, then how could the Shi'as of Imam Ja'far have been so confused? How is it that the Sunnis heard of this designation (as evidenced by the presence of these "twelve commander" narrations in their books), but the Shi'as of these twelve Imams did not?

In addition, there is an important doctrinal "hiccup" in the first *hadith* discussed above: we see that the community believed that the grandson of Imam Ja'far was going to be the Qa'im, the one who would rise by the sword and redress the wrongs that had been committed against the family of the Prophet. *But it is the common Twelver belief that the "Rectifier" [al-qa'im] is the Twelfth Imam, not the Seventh Imam.* This narration, found within Twelver books, indicates that this belief must have been a later development amongst the Shi'as. This, in turn, invalidates the idea that the community around Imam

Ja'far as-Sadiq believed in the coming of Twelve Imams. If, as Twelver Shi'as claim, the Prophet had foretold the coming of Twelve Imams, the *last* of whom would be the Qa'im, and if the names of these Imams were also taught by the Prophet, then why did the vast majority of the Shi'a community believe that *Isma'il* would be the Imam after Imam Ja'far?

What these evidences establish, then, is that the Shi'a community *believed* that Imam Isma'il would succeed Imam as-Sadiq. This, in and of itself, is a proof that the *nass* of Imam Ja'far was given to his son Isma'il, not his son Musa. Logically, we would have to ask: from whence did they derive this false belief? Furthermore, Imam Ja'far must have *known* that his Shi'as were harboring a false belief, a belief that could lead them into terrible misguidance in the future. Why, then, did he not emphasize to them that though he loved Isma'il dearly, that Allah had ordained Musa as the heir apparent? Twelvers cannot argue that Imam as-Sadiq did not know; their *hadith* literature is explicit that every Imam knows with absolute certainty who will inherit the *nur* after him:

الإمام يعرف الإمام الذي من بعده فيوصي إليه.

Imam as-Sadiq said: "The Imam knows the one who will be the Imam after him, and so he passes his inheritance on to him." (Al-Kulayni *Al-Kafi* 1:277)

As such, Imam Ja'far must have known what was to come after his death; and if he allowed his followers to be deluded into believing Isma'il was to be his successor, then he most certainly would have failed as guide, teacher, and defender of the faith. This is a matter of the utmost importance. In addition to explicitly acknowledging the widespread Shi'a belief in the Imamah of Isma'il, the latter narration also implies that the alleged "truth" of Musa's Imamah *did not become manifest to the Shi'as until after the*

burial of Isma'il. All of the Twelver narrations in this regard are emphatic that the followers of Imam Ja'far genuinely believed that Isma'il would be the next Imam. How could such a belief have come into being? Did it spring from nowhere? Was it merely based upon the fact that Isma'il was the eldest brother? Why would Imam Ja'far have kept his followers in misguidance about such an important issue for so long? Why build up false expectations, expectations that would inevitably lead to conflict? Could he not have simply said: "Isma'il is not the Imam after me," and left the matter in no doubt?

Realizing that they must be able to respond to this argument, Twelvers have attempted to claim that Imam as-Sadiq did, in fact, make it clear that Musa was the Imam after him. The contemporary Twelver scholar Ayatullah Ja'far Subhani writes in his heresiographical treatise:

كان الامام الصادق حريصاً على إفهام الشيعة بأنّ الإمامة لم تُكتب لإسماعيل، فليس هو من خلفاء الرسول الاتني عشر الذين كتبت لهم الخلافة والإمامة بأمر السماء وإبلاغ الرسول الاعظم و من الدواعي التي ساعدت على بثّ بذر الشبهة والشك في نفوس الشيعة في ذلك اليوم، هو ما اشتهر من أنّ الإمامة للولد الأكبر. وكان إسماعيل أكبر أولاده... ولأجل ذلك تركزت جهود الامام الصادق عليه السلام على معالجة الوضع واجتثاث جذور تلك الشبهة و أنّ الإمامة لغيره، فتراه تارة ينصّ على ذلك، بقوله وكلامه، وأخرى بالاستشهاد على موت إسماعيل.

Imam as-Sadiq was very intent upon making his followers know that Imamah had not been written for Isma'il, and that he was not of the twelve caliphs after the Prophet who had been given caliphate and Imamah by heavenly decree and the clear proclamation of the Prophet. One of the issues which caused the spread of doubt and confusion in the minds of the Shi'as was the common belief that Imamah passes to the eldest son, and the fact that Isma'il was the eldest of his brothers...and so Imam as-Sadiq had to struggle to uproot the basis of this belief, and show that the Imamah was intended for someone else. So sometimes we see him stating clear *nass* that Isma'il was not the Imam, and other times by giving witness that Isma'il had died (Subhani *Buhuth* 78).

This would seem to be a strange argument indeed: if Imam Ja'far had specifically and explicitly told his followers that Isma'il was the Imam after him, if the Prophet *himself* had announced to the Muslims that there would be Twelve Imams after him of which Musa al-Kazim would be the seventh, then why did Imam Ja'far's followers all believe that Isma'il was going to be the Imam? Were not Imam Ja'far and the Prophet's clear *nass* sufficient? The fact that the majority of Shi'as continued to believe that Isma'il was the Imam up until his alleged death clearly indicates that there never was any such *nass*, and that Subhani's claim is most like based on *post facto* historical sources, authored at a later day. Note that Subhani is saying that the Imam Ja'far had to *both* give clear *nass* and actually *show* his followers Isma'il's dead body. This means that at least some of his followers were still unconvinced, and had to actually see Isma'il's dead body in order to know that he was not the Imam. But how could this have been? Why would his followers have been so obstinate, if clear proof had been established for Musa's Imamah a century before by the Prophet?

There is also a great deal of evidence that scholars who are pillars of the Twelver tradition were perplexed after Imam as-Sadiq's death. One of them was Zurarah, who narrates more *hadith* in Twelver books than any other scholar, and is a pillar of their juristic tradition. We read in the Twelver *rijal* book of Al-Kashshi:

لما كانت وفاة أبي عبد الله قال الناس بعبد الله بن جعفر و اختلفوا فقال قائل به و قال قائل بأبي الحسن فدعا زرارة ابنه عبيداً فقال يا بني الناس مختلفون في هذا الأمر فمن قال بعبد الله فإنما ذهب إلى الخبر الذي جاء ان الإمامة في الكبير من ولد الإمام فشد راحلتك و امض إلى المدينة حتى تأتيني بصحة الأمر. و أعتل زرارة فلما حضرته الوفاة سأل عن

عبيد فقيل له لم يقدم قدعا بالمصحف فقال اللهم إني مصدق بما جاء نبيك محمد فيما أنزلته عليه و بينته لنا على لسانه و إني مصدق بما أنزلته علي في هذا الجامع و إن عقدي و ديني الذي يأتيني به عبيداً ابني و ما بينته في كتابك فإن أمتنى قبل هذا فهذا شهادتي على نفسي و إقرارى بما يأتي به عبيداً ابني و انت الشهيد علي بذلك بمات زراره و قدم عبيد فقصدناه لنسلم عليه فسأله عن الأمر الذي قدصه فأخبرهم ان أبا الحسن صاحبهم.

After Abu ‘Abdillah died, some of the people believed that the Imamah had passed to ‘Abd Allah the son of Ja’far, and they disagreed. And others said that it had passed to Abu Al-Hasan [Musa], and so Zurarah called for his son ‘Ubayd, and said: “O my son, the people are disagreeing about this affair. Those who are supporting ‘Abd Allah are basing themselves on the report that says that *Imamah goes to the eldest son of the Imam*. Get your riding camel and go to Madinah until you can bring me the truth about this affair.” Zurarah eventually became very ill, and when death approached he asked about ‘Ubayd. It was said to him: ‘He has not come.’ And so Zurarah called for a Qur’an, and said: ‘O Allah, indeed I bear witness to what has come with Your prophet Muhammad and what You have revealed to him and made clear to us through his tongue, and I bear witness to what You have sent down in this Book. Indeed, my covenant and my religion is what my son ‘Ubayd will bring, and what You have explained in Your Book. If you will end my life before he comes, then this is my testimony and confession upon my own self concerning what ‘Ubayd, my son, will say. And You are my witness for that.’ And so Zurarah died. After this, ‘Ubayd came, and so we went out to greet him. They asked him about the affair which he had set out to discover, and so he told them that their Lord (*sahib*) is Abu al-Hasan [Musa]. (Al-Kashshi *Rijal* 154).

When death began to approach Zurarah, it is narrated that he took the Qur’an and said to his aunt:

أشهدى ان ليس لى إمام غير هذا الكتاب

Bear witness for me that I have no other Imam except this Book (Al-Kashshi *Rijal* 156).

This narration indicates that there was no clear *nass* upon Musa. If there had been a clear proclamation of Musa's Imamah, why would someone of such exalted status as Zurarah have been so confused about it? Would he have not just said: "I have heard Imam as-Sadiq's *nass* on Musa, as for these other people, they are in misguidance and confusion." Yet clearly did not know; so if Zurarah did not hear this clear designation for Musa, who did?

Shaykh as-Saduq, for his part, seems to confirm the veracity of these reports. He writes:

أما زرارة بن أعين فإنه مات قبل إنصراف من كان وفده ليعرف الخبر و لم يكن سمع بالنص على موسى بن جعفر من حيث قطع عذره فوضع المصحف الذي هو القرآن على صدره و قال اللهم إني أئتم بمن يثبت هذا المصحف إمامته و هل يفعل الفقيه المتدين عند إختلاف الأمر عليه إلا ما فعله زرارة؟

As for Zurara, he died before the departure of the one he sent out to gather information for him. He had not heard the *nass* on Musa ibn Ja'far in such a manner that would leave him without any excuses, so he placed the book (which was the Qur'an) upon his breast and said: 'O Allah, I follow the one whose Imamah is confirmed by this book.' Would a religious scholar, faced with a confusing situation, do anything different than what was done by Zurarah? (As-Saduq *Kamal* 75).

As such, it seems that one of the most important scholars of the Twelver tradition, Shaykh as-Saduq, accepted these reports as true. His attempt to justify Zurarah's actions also indicates that he believed Zurarah genuinely did not know who the Imam was after Imam as-Sadiq; otherwise, he would not feel the need to praise Zurarah for doing what he did when "faced with a confusing situation." After making this defense, Shaykh as-Saduq then goes on to undercut himself completely, by offering the possibility that Zurarah was

merely doing *taqiyyah*. One is left to ask: if Zurarah had been doing *taqiyyah*, then why did Shaykh as-Saduq feel compelled to defend Zurarah's death-bed confusion? Once again, we see as-Saduq offering contradictory evidences to support the same position. Apparently, he thought that this was an effective way of arguing, but it clearly is not; the Twelvers should be able to get their story on this issue straight, rather than just throwing around all sorts of random and mutually exclusive evidences to support their position. As can be expected, as-Saduq goes on to quote a *hadith* which supports this contention, whose authenticity is highly dubious given Shaykh as-Saduq's own acknowledgment of Zurarah's *genuine* confusion about the successor of Imam as-Sadiq. In the narration which as-Saduq cites, someone asks Ali ar-Rida if Zurarah died without knowing the right of Musa al-Kazim. Ali ar-Rida replies that that yes, Zurarah indeed knew the right of Musa al-Kazim; when he dispatched his son 'Ubayd to Medinah (see above), he did not to find out who the Imam was (which he already knew), but rather to find out whether it was permissible to break *taqiyyah* and announce the Imamah of Musa.

The problems with this narration are manifold. First, we have seen that As-Saduq seems to accept that Zurarah was genuinely perplexed, and so the narration contradicts the contentions of the very person who is narrating it (as-Saduq). Furthermore, one has to ask what benefit *taqiyyah* would have had in this situation. Was Zurarah trying to protect himself? All these stories mention that Zurarah was on his death-bed when he made these pronouncements, and so *taqiyyah* would have been of little use. Was he attempting to protect Musa? But surely the 'Abbasid authorities were well-aware of the large following Musa developed after his father's death. Zurarah's hesitation and confusion would not

have served much in protecting Musa; rather, it would have only served to undermine the legitimacy of his Imamah.

Second, the narration from Ali ar-Rida clearly contradicts the actual report on the incident, cited in the *Rijal* of Al-Kashshi. In that narration, ‘Ubayd does not return with a report concerning the obligation of *taqiyyah*, but rather came back to tell the people that Musa was the Imam. Furthermore, nowhere in the report does Zurarah tell his son to ask Musa about *taqiyyah*; rather, he explicitly tells ‘Ubayd do find out who the Imam is. If the Twelvers would argue that Zurarah was doing *taqiyyah* even with his own son, then there would have been absolutely no point in sending ‘Ubayd to Madinah: for it would be the height of irrationality to send someone to another city to gather information, without specifying what information one wants gathered.

Third, the fact that someone (allegedly) asked ar-Rida about this incident indicates that, at the minimum, the Shi’a were of the belief that Zurarah had in fact died in a state of perplexity. One must ask where this wide-spread belief originated. If Zurarah had sent ‘Ubayd to Madinah in order to ask about the obligation of *taqiyyah*, then could not ‘Ubayd have simply told everybody this? Why would he allow his father’s reputation to lie in ruins, and leave it to the *next* Imam after Musa to clarify the issue? We have to remember that, within Twelver Shi’ism, Zurarah is *the* most important *hadith* narrator, narrating 20,094 *hadiths*. If Zurarah died without knowing the Imam of his time, this would have been scandalous. Certainly, ‘Ubayd should have put down any such discussion immediately, but it seems to have persisted for quite awhile. Twelver Shi’a scholars have argued that all of these negative narrations derived from enemies of Zurarah, who were jealous of his close association with the Imams. This, once again, is a

statement without any evidence, and if it were true, then such a false narration should not have been included in the *rijal* of Al-Kashshi. If one attempts to argue (as Twelvers often do when they find uncomfortable things in their *hadith* books) that Al-Kashshi was probably just collecting all the reports available in a *rijal* “encyclopedia,” then one should know that the original *rijal* of Al-Kashshi is lost and what we have today as the *Rijal al-Kashshi* is actually an *abridged* version, edited by none other than the “Shaykh of the Nation,” Shaykh at-Tusi. Since this is an abridged, edited, and censored version, then if these damning narrations about Zurarah are false, we would have expected Shaykh at-Tusi to have deleted *them* before anything else. Yet, they remain in the edited version. This can only mean that Shaykh at-Tusi accepted their authenticity; the fact that someone supposedly asked Ali ar-Rida about this incident also indicates how well-known it was.

Fourth, Shaykh as-Saduq provides no other evidence that Zurarah had sent ‘Ubayd to enquire about *taqiyyah*. He only quotes one narration, and it is obvious (perhaps even axiomatic) that a single-narration report (*khabr al-wahid*) such as this gives no certainty at all. As we have seen, all the reports about the ‘Ubayd incident depict Zurarah in a state of total disarray; never once does Zurarah ask his son about *taqiyyah*. The fact that this is the best evidence which Shaykh as-Saduq can come up with is a punishing indictment of the weakness of his case. This narration from Ali ar-Rida seems to be a convenient forgery which as-Saduq has inserted in the midst of a confused and rambling discourse based on totally contradictory sets of evidences.

These narrations also bring to light another interesting fact: Zurarah bears witness to the fact that the Shi’as were of the belief that the Imamah was supposed to pass to the *eldest* son. He seems, however, to have been rather confused. If Imam Isma’il had died,

then it is true that ‘Abd Allah was the eldest. But Isma’il, even if he had died, was still alive during his father’s lifetime and so the Imamah should have been passed to him, and then on through his progeny. The Imam is the bearer of Allah’s Light, and designation cannot be “withdrawn” from him; Imamah is not some political office that can be dispensed with at will, as the Twelver *hadith* literature bears witness:

قال ابو عبد الله: ما زلت ابتهل إلى الله في إسماعيل ابني أن يحييه لي ويكون القيم من بعدي فأبى ربي ذلك و إن هذا شيء ليس إلى الجمل منا يضعه حيث يشاء إنما ذلك عهد من الله عز و جل يعهده إلى من يشاء فشاء الله أن يكون إبنى موسى أبي أن يكون إسماعيل.

Imam as-Sadiq said: I have not ceased imploring Allah the Exalted about Isma’il, begging him to bring him back to life and make him the Rectifier after me, but my Lord has refused this. This is not something that a man place wherever he wants; rather it is a covenant from Allah the Exalted and Glorified. He will make this covenant with whomever he wills, and so Allah has willed that my son Musa would be the Rectifier after me, and has refused to make Isma’il the Imam after me. (Majlisi *Bihar* 47:270).

As such, even Twelver believe that the Imamah cannot just be switched around. Zurarah, however, bears witness that the Imamah, during that age, was going to be passed to the eldest son. If this is what the Shi’as believed in the time of Imam Ja’far, then should not the Imam have made it clear that this was *wrong* and that Imam Ja’far’s eldest son, Isma’il, would not succeed him? If he did, then how did Zurarah manage to not hear about it?

One might say: the Prophet gave clear *nass* to Imam Ali at Ghadir, but people still rejected it; could not the same thing not have happened with Imam Ja’far’s followers? The response to this is simple. The rejection of the *nass* of Imam Ali was a rejection not

only of Imam Ali as a person, but also of the very idea of infallible and Divinely appointed Imamah. Abu Bakr and ‘Umar did not claim to be the Prophet’s appointed successors, nor did they claim Divinely appointed Imamah. *Rather, they claimed that the Prophet had left no successor at all*, and that the community was free to choose their caliph. This is very different from what Subhani is alleging about the Shi’as of Imam Ja’far. If these followers of Imam Ja’far rejected his alleged *nass* on the Imamah of Musa, then that means they did not really believe that Imam Ja’far was a divine authority, just as the balance of historical evidence indicate that Abu Bakr and ‘Umar did not believe that the Prophet was a divine authority. If that was the case, their belief Isma’il was the Imam after Imam as-Sadiq would be meaningless. Are we honestly to believe that they believed Isma’il *was* the Imam, but Imam Ja’far *wasn’t*? Is there any Ismaili who claims such a thing? And if they rejected Imam Ja’far’s Imamah and believed that his *nass* was meaningless and devoid of *hujjah*, then why would they care who his successor would be? It would be as silly as Twelver Shi’as arguing about who the Imam should be after Prince Aga Khan. Do Twelver Shi’as concern themselves with identifying his successor? No, because they reject his Imamah. So why would this group of Shi’as in Imam Ja’far’s time care who his successor would be, if they rejected Ja’far’s own Imamah? And if they didn’t reject his Imamah, how could they have rejected his *nass* on Musa al-Kazim?

In any case, we have seen from these texts that the early Ismailis most certainly did believe in Imamah. Subhani says that the followers of Imam Ja’far believed that Imamah passed to the eldest son; this indicates that they believed that Imam Ja’far was the Imam, that he is the proof of God and the sole source of religious authority, and that

this office of Imamah was hereditary. As such, any comparison of the early Ismailis to Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and the other usurpers of Saqifah is a false analogy. As far as those who followed Musa, it seems that they were confused by the situation and circumstances, and had not looked into the issue of Imamah properly. It seems to have been the "best thing" they could come up with after Imam Ja'far's death, since they did not realize Imam Isma'il was still alive. Such people clearly did believe in the Imamah (otherwise their concern about Imam Ja'far's successor would have also been meaningless), but did not realize the absurdity of "changing *nass*," and did not reflect upon the matter at hand.

In any case, the fact that a group of followers did follow Musa does not harm the Ismaili claim that Imam Isma'il was the appointed successor of Imam Ja'far. This is because the Ismailis make a very different argument about Imamah than Twelvers do. Twelvers argue that the Prophet gave specific *nass* for all the Twelve Imams, and even named them; Ismailis do *not* make such an argument for their own Imams. While there are prophecies about the Ismaili line of Imams (to be discussed below), Ismailis do not claim that this was well-known amongst all the early Shi'as, nor do they claim that it was publicly pronounced by the Prophet. The possibility of confusion was there, and people would wind up being confused if they did not think about the issue properly. But Twelvers are in a very difficult position. On the one hand, they claim that the coming of Twelve Imams was foretold by the Prophet, and that this was common knowledge amongst the early Shi'a. On the other, they have to reconcile this with the historical fact that the early Shi'as seem to have been totally ignorant of this prophecy. As we have seen, the vast majority of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq's followers believed in the Imamah of

Isma'il; yet somehow, the prophecy and *nass* of the Twelve Imams had failed to reach them.

All of this is further evidence that the belief in Twelve Imams was not firmly established during the pre-Occultation period. This is a very critical problem for Twelver Shi'ism. As is well known, the main proof for the Twelver line of Imams has always been the large number of Sunni narrations prophesizing the coming of twelve Imams. In the *Kamal ad-Din*, of Shaykh as-Saduq, considered to be one of the greatest of Twelver scholars, we find that the main argument, again and again and again, is the "Twelve Imam" narrations found in works like Bukhari. What ever other evidences Twelvers might offer against Isma'il, this is considered to be their "cutting proof." The problem is that, as many academic commentators have noted, the pre-Occultation Twelver Shi'a *hadith* books have a striking lack of narrations about "Twelve Imams." While there are a few scattered references to Twelve, there are also references to five, eight, and eleven as well (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 104). The historical record, as we will see, clearly indicates that the early Shi'ite community had no belief in the coming of Twelve Imams, and that this doctrine did not develop until after the Occultation.

The two main, surviving works of Twelver Shi'ism which *pre-date* the Occultation are the *Basa'ir ad-Darajat* of Al-Qummi and the *Kitab al-Mahasin* of Al-Barqi. The former book is an extensive tract on the *fada'il* (noble attributes) of the Imams; yet we only find five references to Twelve Imams in it (As-Saffar al-Qummi *Basa'ir* 280, 319-320, 372, Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 213), and no where is the Prophet quoted as saying "After me, there will be Twelve commanders," or anything like that. In a book that is almost entirely on Imamah, which contains 1881 *hadith*, it is striking that

the amount of references to Twelve Imams should be so tiny, and that the standard Shi'a proof for Twelve Imams (namely, the Prophet's statement that there will be Twelve commanders after him) is not cited. Also, there is absolutely no reference to Occultation in this text (cf. Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 213).

Kitab al-Mahasin is a text mainly dealing with issues of *akhlaq* (ethics), but does contain an extensive introductory discussion on Imamah. Yet we find absolutely no reference to Twelve Imams in this text. Curiously enough, we find a discussion on the esoteric meaning of numbers at the beginning of this text; the numbers three through ten are mentioned, but nothing is mentioned about the number twelve (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 213, Kohlberg *From Imamiyyah* 523).

As such, it is quite shocking that we can find almost no reference to Twelve Imams in Twelver books before the *ghaybah*, in spite of the fact that the number twelve has been the subject of great philosophical and intellectual speculation within Twelver Shi'ism. Given that it is a historical fact that these Twelve Imam narrations were circulating amongst Sunnis, it is not surprising that such narrations would have crept into some Shi'a books; but since the whole basis of Twelver Shi'ism is Twelve Imams, should we not find this number continually prophesized through their pre-Occultation literature? If the Prophet and all the Imams had made such a clear announcement about Twelve Imams, why is there almost no reference to it at all in their pre-Occultation books? Astonishingly enough, the only significant reference to this number seems to be in Sunni books.

The Twelver claim that the Prophet foretold the identity of Twelve Imams and identified the Mahdi is also proven false by their own books of *hadith*. Works like *Kamal*

ad-Din of as-Saduq have whole chapters entitled “the impermissibility of naming the Qa’im.” There we read:

Imam as-Sadiq said: “The companion of this affair is a man, whom no one can name except a *kafir*.” (As-Saduq *Kamal* 2:648)

Imam Ali was asked by ‘Umar about the Mahdi, and was asked what his name was. He said: “As far as his name, my Beloved and my intimate friend has taken a covenant with me that I will not speak his name until he is arisen.” (As-Saduq *Kamal* 2:648)

If the only person who will mention the name of the Imam is a disbeliever, a *kafir*, then how can one say in the same breath that the Prophet foretold and named the Twelve Imams of his progeny? All of this is evidence that there was absolutely no *nass* from the Prophet or Imams as to the Twelfth Imam. The Twelvers seem to be trying to have it both ways: on the one hand, they want to claim that it was impermissible for anybody to identify the Mahdi, and on the other hand they want to say that there has been continual *nass* on him since the time of the Prophet.

Further evidence that no such clear *nass* was given to Twelve Imams is provided by the later history of Twelver Shi’ism. As we have seen, the Twelver argument hinges on the idea that the Prophet announced Twelve successors and named them. The Twelver *hadith* literature bears witness that this is false, and that the Twelvers themselves could not even agree as to their Imams. When their eleventh Imam died, the Shi’as split into at least thirteen different sects. If there was such clear evidence, and the Prophet and all the Imams had proclaimed the coming of a twelfth Imam who would be hidden, why the

confusion? Let us list out all of these sects, as enumerated by the renowned Twelver scholar An-Nawbakhti and others. These sects are mentioned in the Twelver Shi'a Jassim Hussain's book, *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam* (58-66).

- 1) Those who believed that Hasan was the Mahdi, and had gone into occultation.
- 2) Those who believed that Hasan had died, but had been resurrected.
- 3) The "I don't know sect" (*al-la adriyyah*). They believed that Hasan had died, and had been the Imam, and that there should be an Imam after him. However, they had no idea who this Imam would be, and adopted a "wait and see" attitude.
- 4) Those who believed Imamah passed to Hasan's brother.
- 5) Those who denied the Imamah of both Ja'far and Hasan, but rather Hasan's brother to be the Imam.
- 6) That Hasan had died, but a son had been born in his lifetime, whose name was Muhammad, and who went into Occultation out of fear of his uncle Ja'far. Some say he was an adolescent in the time of Hasan, others that he had been born two years before his father.
- 7) That Hasan had died and left a son named Ali, who was also born in his lifetime.
- 8) That Hasan had died and had a son who was born after his father had died. Their evidence that the son had to be born after he died was that Hasan had died and no one had seen any son from him, nor had he designated any son as the Imam after him. Therefore, his son must have been born after him.
- 9) That Hasan had died and left no son, but had impregnated a slave-girl who would soon give birth to the next Imam.

- 10) Those who believed that he had left a son, and that son had died, but that he would be resurrected as the Mahdi.
- 11) Those who believed that a son had been left, and that he was the Imam, and that when he died, another Imam would come, and so until the end of time.
- 12) Those who believed Imamah ceased with Hasan al-‘Askari. This group rejected the whole idea of a Mahdi.
- 13) Those who believed that Imamah ceased with Hasan, but that one day one of the Imams would be resurrected, and he would be the Mahdi who would be raised.

One cannot argue that these disputes and schisms only occurred amongst the insincere or uneducated, but that the genuine scholars of early Shi’ism were well aware of who the Imam was going to be. We see, for example, that one of the greatest theologians of early Twelver Shi’ism, Abu Sahl ibn Musa an-Nawbakhti, a relative of the third representative of the Twelfth Imam, had no such belief at all. According to Ibn an-Nadim:

He [Abu Sahl] had an idea about the Qa’im of the family of Muhammad which no one had held earlier. This is what he used to say: “I say that the Imam was Muhammad ibn al-Hasan but he died in occultation, and his son had assumed his authority during the Occultation, and so it will be with his son’s issue until God consummates his dominion by causing him to appear. (Qtd. in Arjomand *Crisis* 505).

Any sensible person would have to ask: What is going on here? If there was such clear *nass* from the Prophet, why such confusion? If the actual “Twelvers” did not know about Twelve Imams even when the Twelfth Imam was supposed to be born, how can we

suppose that they knew about Musa's Imamah after the death of Imam as-Sadiq? Let us think about this reasonably: the Twelver had *twelve generations* to get the message out that there were Twelve Imams. Yet everybody still panicked when Hasan al-'Askari died, and had no idea what was going on. We find even illustrious and important scholars of the Twelvers holding confused and contradictory positions. If it was true that the Prophet had acknowledged the coming of Twelve Imams from his family, it stands to reason that a great scholar such as An-Nawbakhti would have been aware of this prophecy and used it to justify his ideas on Imamah. s

Some researchers, such as Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi in his *Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism*, have argued that, prior to the Occultation, the Imams had done *taqiyyah* and had not told their disciples that the Mahdi would be the Twelfth Imam. Because of the difficult political situation that the Imams were in, they were (supposedly) forced to conceal the number of Imams from their disciples. Amir-Moezzi writes:

The Imams passed on two kinds of tradition concerning the Mahdi and how many Imams there would be; the first category contained confusing information, and was aimed at that large group of disciples who were writing down traditions. In this category, the name of the Mahdi is not specified. As long as the specific number of Imams was not known, which Imam was the Mahdi remained a secret, and thus the rule of the arcane [i.e., *taqiyyah*] concerning the Mahdi was observed. A second kind of tradition, aimed only at the closest of disciples, contained specific information about the number of Imams, as well as the identity and the fate of the Mahdi. His name was included in this group of traditions except that, in order to guarantee the safety of his life, this category of traditions was only to be transmitted orally until after the beginning of the Occultation; it could be put into writing only after the life of the son of the eleventh Imam was out of danger. (Amir-Moezzi 106).

This argument makes very little sense, and actually contradicts the Twelver argument. If we read Shaykh as-Sadūq's *Kamal ad-Din* (103), we see that the pivot of his argument was the Prophet's clear *nass* that there would be Twelve Imams after him. As such, there was no way to do *taqiyyah*; the fact that these narrations can be found in Sunni texts of the time (cf. Amir-Moezzi 106) indicates that this knowledge was already "out" and so there was no way to conceal it. As-Sadūq, as well as Amir-Moezzi, would have us believe that somehow the Sunnis knew about the Twelve Imams, but that the Shi'as did not. This seems hardly plausible. This is a clear case of somebody attempting to "have their cake and eat it too"; either the Prophet and Imams gave this clear *nass* concerning Twelve Imams, or they did not. Even if we accept Amir-Moezzi's thesis (which, curiously, is not offered by any early Twelver scholars in their own defense, but seems to be something which he has come up with on his own) that the number of Imams was not taught to anybody except the most special disciples, we have to ask why someone such as Zurarah was clearly "left in the dark." Furthermore, the argument that these narrations could not be committed to writing before the Occultation does not hold water; these teachings were *already* committed to writing in the Sunni books, and so *taqiyyah* on this issue would have been to no avail. Even if we were to accept this argument, it still assumes that the *nass* for Twelve Imams was in wide circulation *orally*, as Amir-Moezzi claims; but if the Imams proclaimed this *nass* orally but (for security reasons) prohibited their followers from committing it to writing, there still should not have been such confusion. If the Imams did not speak about it, then this would mean that the huge number of narrations which Twelver scholars offer *after* the *ghaybah* are forgeries, which is sufficient proof that the Twelvers are not following the right path.

In conclusion, we see that all of the arguments which Twelvers present on this issue are extremely tendentious. We are being asked to believe that the vast majority of Imam Ja'far's followers simultaneously believed in his Imamah and the obligation of following one's Imam while rejecting their Imam's most important decree. We are being asked to believe that the Prophet and all the Imams gave clear *nass* that there would be Twelve Imams, and even named these Imams, and yet somehow only the Sunnis heard about this while the Shi'a forgot. An argument for *taqiyyah* is offered, an argument which is absurd; for the presence of these narrations in the Sunni books indicates that the enemies of Shi'ism already "knew" about these Twelve Imams. We are being asked to believe that the Sunnis knew about the Twelve Imams, but the Shi'as did not. This seems hardly tenable. While these Twelve Imams narrations are in the Sunni sources, and even some sources where they are named, there is no evidence that the early Shi'as believed in or even acknowledged this prophecy, and enormous evidence that they did not. If they knew that the Imams were Twelve, why was there so much confusion after Hasan al-'Askari's death? If the Twelve Imams were named, why did such a great Twelver scholar as Zurarah not know that Musa would be the Imam after Imam as-Sadiq? If this prophecy was acknowledged by the early Shi'as, why did they not mention it in any of their books? All of this indicates that early Shi'as dismissed these "Twelve Imam" narrations in Sunni books and did not make this part of their belief system. The *taqiyyah* argument is tendentious and baseless since this "fact" was already well-known by the Sunnis.

It is far more plausible to say that the source of the Shi'a belief in the Imamah of Isma'il was based on Imam Ja'far's *own words*, rather than going against his explicit decree. Clearly Imam Ja'far's followers believed that Isma'il would be the Imam after

him; clearly he did nothing to tell them that this was not the case (otherwise it would not have been necessary for them to see Isma'il's dead body to be "convinced"); and clearly the belief that Musa was to succeed Imam Ja'far only came about after Isma'il's alleged death. All of this shows that something suspicious was going on. When we analyze the Twelver *hadith* literature further, we our suspicions will be more than confirmed.

II. Proof #2

One of the greatest proofs against the Twelvers is the confused contradictory nature of Twelver Shi'a reports about Imam Isma'il's succession and character. While the Twelver Shi'a are unanimous that Imam Isma'il did not inherit Imamah from his father, when it comes to the details we find a terrible mess of conflicting reports. On the one hand the Twelvers acknowledge that Isma'il was the most beloved son of Imam as-Sadiq; but then some of their greatest scholars invent crass arguments where they try to argue he was the most *hated* son of Imam as-Sadiq. Shaykh as-Saduq offers the following narration as proof that Imam Ja'far could have never given *nass* to Isma'il, and that Imam Ja'far had no affection for him whatsoever. He says:

و كيف نص الصادق على إسماعيل مع قوله فيه إنه عاص لا يشبهني و لا يشبه أحداً من آبائي

And how could Imam as-Sadiq have given the *nass* to Isma'il, when he said: "Indeed, he was a sinner! He does not resemble me nor any of my fathers." (As-Saduq's *Kamal* 103)

He then provides two chains of narrations for this same *hadith*, with slightly different wording:

قال الحسن بن راشد: سألت أبا عبد الله عن إسماعيل فقال عاص لا يشبهني و لا يشبه أحداً من آبائي

Al-Hasan ibn Ar-Rashid says: "I asked Abu 'Abdillah [as-Sadiq] about Isma'il, and he said: "A sinner. He does not resemble me nor any of my fathers."

قال عبيد بن زرارة: ذكرت إسماعيل عند أبي عبد الله فقال عاص لا يشبهني و لا يشبه أحداً من آبائي

'Ubayd ibn Zararah says: "I mentioned Isma'il to Abu 'Abdillah [as-Sadiq] and he said: "A sinner. He does not resemble me nor any of my fathers."

But in another set of narrations, we read:

ما بدا لله بداء أعظم من بداء بدا له في إسماعيل إبنِي

Imam as-Sadiq said: "Nothing has been manifested to Allah greater than what was manifested to him about my son, Isma'il. I implored Allah that he make Isma'il the Imam after me, but he refused to make anyone the Imam except my son Musa." (Majlisi *Bihar* 47:269).

مازلت ابتهل إلى الله في إسماعيل ابني أن يحييه لي ويكون القيم من بعدي فأبى ربي ذلك

Imam as-Sadiq said: "I have not ceased imploring Allah the Exalted about Isma'il, begging him to bring him back to life and make him the Rectifier after me, but my Lord has refused this." (Majlisi *Bihar* 47:270).

إني سألت الله في إسماعيل أن يُبقيه بعدي فأبى، ولكنّه قد أعطاني فيه منزلة أخرى، أنّه يكون أول منشور في عشرة من أصحابه.

Imam as-Sadiq said: "I asked Allah that he would preserve Isma'il after me, but He refused. But he has given me another noble station with him; indeed, he will be the first to be risen [at the End of Time] amongst his companions." (Kashshi *Rijal* 217)

These two sets of narrations are in direct contradiction to each other. In one group of narrations, Imam Ja'far curses Imam Isma'il; and in another group of narrations, Imam Ja'far loves Isma'il so much that he begs Allah to make Isma'il the Imam after him. If the Twelvers had truth on their side, one would expect them to at least be able to get their story straight on such an important and sensitive issue.

The fact that as-Saduq so blatantly contradicts himself is, by itself, a sufficient cause for dismissing his testimony on this issue; if this were a court of law, such a "witness" would have already lost all credibility. But an analysis of his evidences brings out even more problems. Not only does as-Saduq present two completely contradictory sets of evidences against Imam Isma'il, *but both of these evidences are patently absurd*. Let us deal with the "sinner" narrations first, since this is the evidence that as-Saduq authenticates. Even if we assume that it is true and Imam as-Sadiq really condemned Isma'il in this way, as-Saduq *himself* provides clear evidence that this condemnation must have been an act of *taqiyyah*. In two books, as-Saduq reports from Imam as-Sadiq:

لا يقول أحد في ولده لا يشبهني و لا يشبه شيئاً من آبائي

"No one should say about their child: 'He does not resemble me nor anything of my fathers.'" (As-Saduq *Faqih* 3:484, *Ilal* 1:103).

The fact that as-Saduq attributes to Imam Ja'far words which Imam Ja'far expressly prohibits elsewhere is sufficient proof that, even if these words are true, Imam

Imam Ja'far uttered them in a state of *taqiyyah*. In fact, it seems that Imam Ja'far's statement "He does not resemble me..." was a brilliant tactical ploy. On the one hand, it helped to conceal Imam Isma'il's Imamah during a time of terrible strife and oppression. At the same time, he said it in such a way that a careful, sincere researcher would be able to uncover what jurists refer to as the "tone of *taqiyyah*" [*lahn at-taqiyyah*], which would allow them to discern the truth of the matter. Clearly, as-Saduq has made a major blunder here.

Turning to the second set of narrations, where Imam as-Sadiq is reported to have begged Allah to make Isma'il the Imam after him, the problem is obvious. It is absurd to think that Imam Ja'far would have known that the Light of Allah was made manifest in his son Musa, but nonetheless begged Allah to switch the Imamah to his son Isma'il. Clearly, no Twelver would believe that the Imam would be so foolish as to beg Allah to switch the Imamah from one person to another; every Shi'a believes that the Imam is an Imam *from birth* and so there is no way of "changing it." The great French philosopher and Orientalist, Henry Corbin, writes about the light of the Imam:

As soon as he is "invested" (*nass*), the young Imam becomes the support of the Temple of Light. His Imamah or "divinity" is the *corpus mysticum* [the mystical body] composed of all the Forms of light of his disciples (Corbin *History* 92).

Yet these *hadiths* state that it was precisely such a "switch" that Imam Ja'far was seeking from Allah; but we know that the luminous nature of the Imam is something *ontological* rather than political. The Imam does not merely appoint a successor, as a king might; rather he *announces* who his successor will be, he informs the people who will

bear the Light of Imamah after him. The fact that so many narrations about Musa's nomination are based upon the spurious idea that Imam as-Sadiq begged Allah to make Isma'il the Imam, but Allah refused and chose to give the Imamah to Musa instead, casts a shadow upon all their *hadiths* on the subject. It should be clear to anybody who believes in the Imamah of Ja'far as-Sadiq that these narrations are either made up, or were uttered in *taqiyyah*. If they were made up, then why did the Twelvers have to resort to such crass forgery? Did they not have the truth on their side, and the clear *nass* of the Prophet about Twelve Imams? And if they were true but uttered in *taqiyyah*, why would Imam as-Sadiq have to do *taqiyyah* about his dead son? What would have been the purpose of such *taqiyyah*? Or was he, perhaps, trying to make it clear to his followers that he *did* give the *nass* to Isma'il and that Isma'il was the Imam after him, but was forced to do it in an "indirect" way in order to maintain the myth of Isma'il's death?

When we look at the Twelver *hadith* literature concerning Isma'il, we are faced with nothing but confusion and contradiction. Some Twelvers may consider it far-fetched to say that Imam Ja'far would have faked his son's death; but it is more far-fetched to believe that Imam as-Sadiq begged Allah to make Isma'il the Imam, but refused and gave it to Musa instead, or that Imam as-Sadiq condemned Isma'il while all the historical sources say that Isma'il was Imam as-Sadiq's most beloved son, or that the Prophet and Imams had given clear *nass* for Twelve Imams and yet somehow the Shi'as did not hear about this until after the Occultation. Many people, upon seeing such contradictory evidences, would immediately assume that such evidences were forgeries. This is, indeed, a distinct possibility. If the Twelvers were fighting on the side of truth, there should have been no reason to forge *hadiths* for their cause. But if we reject the argument

that most of these narrations were uttered in a state of *taqiyyah*, the confused and contradictory reports about Imam Isma'il indicate that such forgery did occur, and probably on a very wide-scale level. That in and of itself is sufficient to reject what Twelvers have to say about Musa's succession. A true believer would know that God suffices them in all affairs, and that the one who struggles for truth will never have to resort to lies and treachery.

III. Proof #3

Other than the two texts which we have mentioned in our first proof, the only other books that were purportedly compiled before the Occultation are known as the "four hundred source books." These source books are the basis for the Twelver Shi'a *hadith* literature; scholars who authored one of these books are usually held in the highest esteem by Twelver Shi'a scholars. Most of these were destroyed when the Mongols sacked Baghdad and destroyed its library, but some are extant and sixteen have been published in a text known as *Al-Usul As-Sitta 'Ashr* ("the sixteen sources"). In one of these texts, we find the most fascinating reference to the number of Imams. This quote is derived from the *asl* of Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna al-Hadrami we read:

ان منا بعد الرسول سبعة اوصياء ائمة مفترضة طاعتهم سابعهم القائم انشاء له ان الله عزيز حكيم يقدم ما يشاء ويؤخر ما يشاء وهو العزيز الحكيم ثم بعد القائم احد عشر مهديا من ولد الحسين فقلت من السابع جعلني الله فداك امرك قلت ثلث مرارة قال ثم بعدي امامكم و قائمكم.

Imam as-Sadiq said: “Indeed, after the prophet there will be *seven* inheritors, Imams, upon whom obedience has been made obligatory. The *seventh* of them will be the Qa’im, if Allah the Mighty and Wise wills he will come soon, and if He wills he will come later, and He is the Mighty and Wise. Then, after the Qa’im there will be eleven Mahdis from the progeny of Husayn.” His companion said to him: “May my soul be your sacrifice! Tell me who this Seventh Imam will be? He said this three times. Finally, Imam as-Sadiq said “After me will be your Imam, and your Qa’im.” (*Al-‘Usul as-Sitta ‘Ashr* 90-91).

This narration, in one of the most ancient Shi’a sources, gives the exact belief of Imamah of the Ismaili sect: that Imam as-Sadiq was the *fifth* Imam (with Imam Hasan ibn Ali being the “Entrusted Imam” of his time, not one of the permanent Imams like Imam as-Sadiq) and that there would be another Imam after him, and then finally the Qa’im. From this body of narrations, it seems very clear that the specific belief in Twelve Imams was unknown to early Shi’ism, and was a later fabrication. It seems that the community of Shi’as that followed the Imamah Musa ibn Ja’far do not seem to have become “Twelvers” until after the onset of their Occultation (Kohlberg “From Imami” 532); when faced with the death of their eleventh Imam and the seeming absence of a proper successor, it seems that the early Imami scholars seized upon these “Twelve Imam narrations” in Sunni books, in order to claim that their eleventh Imam *did* have a son and that this son was in Occultation. The firmest proof for this is the confusion which the community entered upon Hasan al-‘Askari’s death,

This narration is also quite astounding when we compare it to the Nizari line of Imams. In actuality, it contains a historical prophecy that would later prove to be true. Counting the Imams of the Nizari Fatimid period, who are eight, plus the three hidden Imams between Muhammad ibn Isma’il, we have *eleven* Imams. They are:

- 1) Imam Wafi Ahmad
- 2) Imam Taqi Muhammad
- 3) Imam Radi ad-Din Abdullah
- 4) Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi
- 5) Imam al-Qa'im
- 6) Imam al-Mansur
- 7) Imam al-Mu'izz
- 8) Imam al-'Aziz
- 9) Imam al-Hakim bi Amri Allah
- 10) Imam az-Zahir
- 11) Imam al-Mustansir bi Allah

These eleven could easily be the eleven Mahdis referred to in this nature, for after the eleventh Imam in this chain a split occurs in the Fatimid empire and the Nizari line loses political power. Only the Ismaili lineage fulfills this prophecy. The Twelvers may wish to argue that they do not consider all narrations in their books to be authentic; but if such forgeries have entered their books on such an important matter as Imamah and Mahdship, then why should Twelvers continue to trust them on other issues? We will deal with this issue in detail in our sixth proof.

IV. Proof #4

Beyond this, we see that the main set of narrations that Twelvers use to deny the Imamah of Isma'il are troubling theologically. Unable to deny the *nass* of Imam Isma'il, the Twelvers were forced to invent the curious theological doctrine of *bada'*, that God would somehow "change his mind" after new facts were "presented" to Him. This doctrine was formulated by the Twelvers after Imam Ja'far's death, in order to justify God changing the Imamah from Imam Isma'il to Musa al-Kazim. It is well-known that this doctrine has been the subject of numerous Sunni-Shi'a polemics, and Twelver Shi'as have been forced to gradually distance themselves from this idea as time has gone on. But any student of Twelver Shi'ism should recognize that the entire religion underwent enormous doctrinal shifts after the onset of their Occultation; the fact that modern jurists and theologians may try to recast this belief in *bada'* in a way that is theologically acceptable does not mean that early Twelvers did believe in *bada'* in the more literal and "crude form." In the formative period of Twelver Shi'ism, it seems to have been an extremely prevalent idea; Moojan Momen writes:

The change of doctrine that occurred among the Imami Shi'a involved an almost complete *volte-face* on most issues...From believing that God does change His mind over matters that He has decreed (the classic case quoted being that Isma'il was at first designated as-Sadiq's successor and this was changed to Musa al-Kazim), the Imami theologians came to re-interpret the term *bada* so as to render it virtually identical to the concept of abrogation of one verse of the Qur'an by a later verse (*naskh*), which is accepted by all Muslims (Momen *Introduction* 77).

As such, in order for us to understand how the Twelvers have used this belief in God "changing His mind" against Imam Isma'il, we have to turn to the early Twelver

hadith sources. Here, the early Twelver literature can be used as an index of what types of ideas were current in that community, and how they viewed the theology underlying their chain of Imams. Amongst Twelvers, there is no doubt that this belief has its origins in the schism that followed Imam Ja'far's death. Their theological discussions about *bada'* are always related to the idea that God somehow changed His mind about the Imamah of Isma'il; the most famous body of narrations in this regard is the *hadith* of Imam Ja'far where he says:

ما بدا لله بقاء أعظم من بقاء بدا له في إسماعيل إبنه

"Nothing has been manifested to Allah anything greater than what was manifested to him about my son, Isma'il." (Majlisi *Bihar* 4:122, 47:269, as-Saduq *Kamal* 1:69, *Tawhid* 336)

This narration is given many times throughout the Twelver *hadith* works, and is a very well-known narration amongst Twelver scholars. Other narrations also indicate upon this type of *bada'* concerning Musa's Imamah. For example, in the *ziyarah* for Musa al-Kazim, Shi'as are instructed to say to him:

السلام عليك يا نور الله في ظلمات الأرض السلام عليك يا من بدا لله في شأنه

Peace be upon you, O Light of Allah in the darkness of the Earth, you whose status was made manifest to Allah (Al-Kulayni *Al-Kafi* 4:578)

It is well-known that this issue of "*bada'*" (change in decree) has caused great consternation amongst Shi'a scholars. What, exactly, does it mean to say that something

“manifests” itself to Allah? The literal import of these narrations is hard to avoid. The Twelver academic researcher Mahmoud Ayoub comments:

However differently the term *bada'* may be explained, it necessarily implies a change of mind, which cannot be attributed to God. Thus, as we have seen in the case of Ibn Al-'Athir, traditionists got around the difficulty by interpreting *bada'* to mean in the case of God *qada*, or decree (Ayoub *Divine Preordination* 624).

The Twelver scholar Abdulaziz Sachedina confirms the problems inherent in the doctrine of *bada'*:

It implied God's change of mind because of a new consideration, caused by the death of Ismail. However, such connotations in the doctrine of *bada'* (change of mind) raised serious questions about the nature of God's knowledge, and indirectly, about the ability of the Imams to prophesy future occurrences (Sachedina *Islamic Messianism* 153)

What we see here is an attempt to reconcile what is a theologically repugnant set of narrations, invented to justify certain political ends, with the more rationalized Twelver theology that would develop after the Occultation. One of the pillars of Shi'a belief is that the essential knowledge of Allah is not affected by changes in particular events, and that He has knowledge of all universals and particulars perfectly (in contrast to the position held by Ibn Sina, for example). As-Saduq bears witness to this in his own *Kamal ad-Din*, where he offers the following narration:

Imam as-Sadiq said: “If someone claims that something manifests itself to Allah one day which He did not know the previous day, then disassociate from that person.” (As-Saduq *Kamal ad-Din* 69).

It is the standard Shi’ite belief (and of Muslims as a whole) that everything is equally manifest to Him in all times, and all places, without change; He is above time, and so if He is above time, how can something “become manifest” to him? Shi’a scholars have struggled to understand the issue, but have consistently failed in being able to provide a sound, theological explanation for this type of *bada’*. In his *Aqa’id*, as-Saduq attempts to relate this idea to a type of abrogation, where Allah manifests one thing to the people for awhile but then changes it; the example he offers is that of Isma’il son of Abraham, who was ordered to slay his son, but whose hand was stayed at the last moment. The problem with this argument is that, in the case of Isma’il son of Abraham, something was manifested to *Abraham* at first and then changed; but what this narration implies is that something becomes manifested first to *Allah*, and then something “changed His mind.” In the text of the *hadith*, we see that Allah is the indirect object of the verb “manifest”: something was manifest *to* Him as opposed to *from* Him. The seminal Twelver jurist, Shaykh at-Tusi, seems to have picked up on this discrepancy, and in his *Kitab al-Ghaybah* argues against the literal meaning of these narrations:

و أما ما تضمنه الخبر من قوله بدا لله فيه معناه بدا من الله فيه و هكذا القول في جميع ما يروي من انه بدا لله في إسماعيل معناه أنه بدا من الله فإن الناس كانوا يظنون في إسماعيل بن جعفر أنه الإمام بعد أبيه لما مات علموا بطلان ذلك.

“As far as what is implied in the report where it says “...manifest to Allah” in some issue, this means that something is manifested *from* Allah in that issue. Such is also the case in everything which is reported

about something manifesting itself to Allah about Isma'il; it means that something was manifested *from* Allah about him. This is because the people thought that Isma'il ibn Ja'far would be the Imam after his father; but when he died, they realized that this was false." (At-Tusi *Ghaybah* 83)

The fact that At-Tusi makes this argument shows that the apparent meaning of the narrations under discussion implies that something is manifested *to* Allah rather than *from* Allah. At-Tusi's argument seems tendentious at best; it is clear that the *hadith* means something which Twelver scholars were not able to accept, and hermeneutical artifices had to be constructed in order to "bring it into line" with orthodoxy. What At-Tusi is basically saying is that "This narration means the opposite of what it says", which is always a highly suspicious argument. Once again, either this narration is forged, or this narration was uttered in a state of *taqiyyah*; its literal meaning *cannot* be accepted. Furthermore, At-Tusi's account also bears witness to the fact that the followers of Ja'far believed that Isma'il would be the Imam after him. As such, it can be also seen as an added support for our first proof.

Other scholars have attempted to side-step the *bada'* narrations entirely. As-Saduq, while basing much of his argument on these narrations in his *Kamal ad-Din*, nearly rejects them in his *Tawhid*. (As-Saduq *At-Tawhid* 336). His student, the great Shaykh al-Mufid argues in his *Tashih Al-I'tiqad* that these narrations actually have nothing to do with Imam Isma'il's death at all. Rather, he produces a *hadith* which states that martyrdom had been Divinely Decreed for Imam Isma'il twice, but Imam Ja'far had implored Allah to spare him. Allah responded, and it was this that constituted the "change in decree." (Al-Mufid *Tashih* 67). This argument is probably the most bizarre of all, since

the version his teacher (As-Saduq) provides makes it clear that the *bada'* refers to Imam Isma'il's death, and was intimately related to Imam Ja'far's succession:

ما بدا لله كما بدا له في إسماعيل إبنني يقول ما ظهر لله أمر كما يظهر له في إسماعيل إبنني إذا اختمره قبلي ليعلم بذلك
إنه ليس بإمام بعدي

“Nothing has been manifested to Allah anything greater than what was manifested to him about my son, Isma'il since he was slain before me, in order that it would be known that he was not the Imam after me.”
(As-Saduq *At-Tawhid* 66).

Something is clearly wrong here. Once again, the Twelver scholars cannot get their story straight. It is obvious that the problem here is the *bada'* narrations. As Ayyoub has remarked, and all Twelver scholars have acknowledge, the use of *bada'* in this form implies a change of mind. Twelver scholars realized that this was blasphemous in relationship to God, and have struggled to explain these narrations away, and sometimes even deny them altogether. As such, we find one scholar (as-Saduq) tacking an extra phrase on to the *hadith*, trying to make it explicit that the “*bada'*” was some kind of “abrogation” which was designed to teach people that Imam Isma'il had no *nass* given to him. Then his student (Al-Mufid) seeks to deny these narrations from another standpoint, arguing that it has nothing to do with Imam Isma'il's death at all. Both arguments cannot be true, and so one is therefore made up. As such, we have to ask ourselves: if there was never any *nass* on Imam Isma'il, then why did somebody feel the need to make up the argument that he was slain in order to show the people that he was not the Imam? Similarly, if it was true that he was, in fact, slain in order to make the succession clear to all, why did someone feel the necessity to make up the argument that these narrations had

nothing to do with his premature death at all? In short, why can't these scholars get their story straight?

An objective reading of these narrations and a comparison of their importance to the historical record makes the reality of *bada'* clear. It is obvious that the Twelvers were unable to deny the *nass* of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq to his son Isma'il; it was simply too well-known and too widespread amongst his followers for them to cover it up. As such, they invented the best *ad hoc* explanation which they could find: that God has simply "changed his mind." In this, they seem to be drawing upon such claims made by certain Shi'ite "extremists" in earlier times. The Twelver academic researcher Mahmoud Ayoub writes:

The use of the concept of *bada'* by Muslims for political ends is reported to have been very early in Muslim history. It is reported that al-Mukhtar b. 'Ubaydallah al-Thaqafi (the chief avenger of the blood of the Shi'i third Imam, Husayn b. Ali, and possible founder of one of the earliest extremist Shi'i sects) invoked this concept to explain and justify his own defeat at the hands of the superior forces of Mus'ab b. al-Zubayr (Ayoub *Divine Preordination* 625).

As Twelver Shi'ism developed and became more influenced by the rational dialectics of the Mu'tazilah, they came to realize that such a doctrine was absurd. As such, we find scholars like At-Tusi attempting to reformulate these narrations in a way that would be acceptable to theologians. In order to do this, they have to reinterpret this body of *hadiths* in a way that contradicts their clear and express meaning.

Unfortunately, the idea that Imamah could somehow be switched would persist amongst Twelver Shi'as. The exact same problem, namely that the eldest son of one of

the Imams was given *nass* for Imamah and then died, and God “changed his mind” on the issue, would occur with the Imamah of their eleventh Imam. The Twelver *hadith* literature clearly states that the Tenth Imam designated his eldest son, Muhammad, as the Imam, but then claims that the Imamah was switched to Hasan al-‘Askari.

قال علي بن مهزيار: قلت لأبي الحسن أن كان كون و أعوذ بالله فإلى من قال عهدي ألى أكبر من ولدي

Ali ibn Mahziyar says: ‘I said to Abu Al-Hasan [the tenth Imam]: “If something should happen, and I take refuge in Allah from that, then who will it go to?” He said: “It will go to my eldest son.” (Al-Kulayni *Al-Kafi* 1:326)

If the Prophet had given clear *nass* to all of the Imams, then why did Ali ibn Mahziyar seem so confused about what was going to happen after the Tenth Imam? Shouldn’t he have known that Hasan al-‘Askari was going to be the next Imam? And if the Prophet had clearly announced Hasan’s Imamah, why did he first give the *nass* to his *eldest* son, Muhammad?

But that is only the beginning of the problem. As is known, Muhammad died before his father. Unlike Imam Isma’il, there were no reports of anybody seeing him after his death, and so there was no reason to confirm his Imamah. Once again, the Twelvers will have to grapple with a change in *nass*. Not surprisingly, the Twelver scholars would make recourse to the concept of *bada’* once again. Further affirmation of some type of *bada’* in the Imamah of Hasan al-‘Askari is also affirmed in the *ziyarat* (visitation) addressed to him and Musa al-Kazim:

السلام عليكم يا من بدا الله فيكما

Peace be upon you, O you to whom something was made manifest to Allah (At-Tusi *Tahdhib* 6:94)

The standard defense for this idea of *bada'* is, as we have seen, that rather than something becoming manifest *to* Allah, something becomes manifest *from* Allah. Allah, of course, already knows what will happen; but He may not share that knowledge with His servants until the appropriate time. At-Tusi, as we have seen, has made this argument. But in the specific case of Hasan al-'Askari, we discover that was not how the early Twelver Shi'as understood the issue. A narration which Al-Kulayni presents on this issue is extremely disturbing; it brings out the ugly side of their belief in *bada'*:

بدا لله في أبي محمد بعد أبي جعفر ما لم يكون يُعرَف له كما بدا له في موسى بعد مضي إسماعيل.

Something has become manifested [*bada*] to Allah in Abu Muhammad [al-'Askari] after Abu Ja'far [Muhammad] *something which was not known to Him before*, just as something became manifest to Him about Musa [al-Kazim] after the death of Isma'il (Al-Kulayni *Al-Kafi* 1:328).

If there was any doubt as to what early Twelver Shi'as understood from the idea of *bada'*, this narration makes it clear: that Allah does not know certain things before they happen, and once new facts are presented to Him he changes His Mind. The only way to salvage this *hadith* is to question whom the singular pronoun "him" refers to here. We have only three possibilities:

- 1) That it is meant to refer to Allah Himself. While this is theologically absurd, it is clearly the literal meaning of the *hadith*.

- 2) That it refers to Muhammad Abu Ja'far. This would be meaningless; how would Allah have made something manifest to Abu Ja'far after he died? Would one seek to argue that this *hadith* implies that Abu Ja'far learned he was not the Imam after he died? This would seem to stretch credulity; it would also contradict the fact that the narration states that something was manifested to *Allah* and not to Muhammad Abu Ja'far.

- 3) That the *hadith* refers to Hasan al-'Askari. This is clearly absurd; the argument would have to be that somehow Hasan al-'Askari did not know that he was the Imam. Of all the people who should have known, it would have been him.

- 4) That the *hadith* means that something that was unknown about Hasan al-'Askari was revealed to the people. This, of course, contradicts the Twelver claim that the Prophet not only foretold the Twelve Imams, but even named them.

As such, it is clear that the narration implies that something was not previously known to *Allah*. This clearly contradicts the ways in which Twelver apologists have tried to justify and explain the concept of something being “manifest” to Allah that was previously hidden from him. It is shocking that, when translating this *hadith* into English, the Twelvers have resorted to a complete distortion of what the narration actually says. Ian Howard, a Western scholar who is highly sympathetic to the Twelvers, translates this *hadith* as follows:

God has revealed (His will) concerning Abu Muhammad (al-Askari) after Abu Ja'far (Muhammad) (has suffered) what no one could have known, just as He revealed (His will) concerning Musa after the death of Isma'il revealed his state (Al-Mufid *Kitab al-Irshad* 510).

It is clear that this is not even close to what the *hadith* actually says. No where in the *hadith* is the phrase “what no one could have known.” While the *hadith* clearly uses the word “to Him” (*lahu*), Howard has translated it as “to anybody.” This is a clear distortion, and shows the uneasiness which Twelver Shi'a theology has with its own *hadith* books.

While it is certainly true that later Shi'a theologians would attempt to understand *bada'* in the way that Ayoub has outlined, it is clear that it was understood in its more literal sense during the period before and immediately after the *ghaybah*. *Bada'* was clearly a doctrine invented by the Twelvers to justify the Musa al-Kazim's succession; since they were unable to deny that the *nass* had been on Isma'il (something that all of Imam Ja'far's followers clearly believed, as the historical evidence shows), they had to invent a rather crude doctrine to justify God “changing his mind.” While Twelver scholars will argue that they do not believe, have never believed, and will never believe that God changes his mind, the presence of this *hadith* in a highly-respected Twelver book like Al-Kafi indicates that early Twelvers did believe that God “changes his mind” and is not omniscient. Further evidence for this is provided by the reports concerning Hisham ibn Al-Hakam, who (for Twelvers) was probably the second most important disciple of Imam as-Sadiq, second only to Zurarah ibn 'Ayun (see below) in the number of *hadiths* which he reports. Mahmoud Ayoub writes:

It must be observed that one of the most prominent disciples of the sixth Imam, Hisham ibn al-Hakam, is said to have held the view that God's knowledge of things is simultaneous with their coming into existence (Ayoub *Divine Preordination* 628).

It is well-known that Hisham ibn Al-Hakam was a supporter of the Imamah of Musa al-Kazim and one of the most important of Twelver Shi'ism's early theologians. It is highly likely that he was responsible for formulating this idea in order to justify Musa's Imamah; unfortunately for Twelver Shi'as, this idea would prove so repugnant that they would have to disassociate themselves from it in due time. It is a stunning indictment of the Twelver case that such a crude theological doctrine, which hardly any religious person could accept, had to be invented. If it is true that Imam Ja'far had appointed Musa as his son, why resort to claiming that God had "changed his mind?" The fact that so many absurd and contradictory arguments have been offered (Imam Ja'far hated Isma'il; Imam Ja'far begged Allah to make Isma'il the Imam but Allah refused; Allah appointed Isma'il as the Imam but then Allah found out something new and changed it) shows, at the minimum, that there was no clear *nass* upon Musa, and that all the narrations which the Twelver Shi'as offer for him are either forgeries, or were uttered in *taqiyyah* in order to protect Imam Isma'il and divert the attention of the 'Abbasids.

The fact that the Twelvers had to invent this doctrine of *bada'* is clear proof that Imam Isma'il had, in fact, been given the *nass* by his father. The doctrine is itself absurd, and even Twelver scholars like At-Tusi are forced to reject the literal import of these narrations. The only reason that Twelvers would have to invent the idea that God "changed His Mind" about Imam Isma'il was that Isma'il's *nass* was well-known amongst the Shi'a. If Isma'il had not been given the *nass*, and all along Musa had been

the designated successor of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, then the Twelvers would have had no reason to invent this bizarre doctrine and the body of *hadiths* which support it. As we have seen, Twelver scholars have had to distance themselves from this body of narrations, recognizing that no rational mind can accept God "changing His Mind" in this way. They have tried to re-interpret it as a change of manifest decree, arguing that while Allah's Will is unchanging (deriving from His Omniscience), He does not always *manifest* His Will until Times are right. As we have seen, this interpretation completely contradicts the *hadiths* under discussion; all of these narrations say that something became manifest *to* Allah rather than *from* Allah, and the narrations concerning the *bada'* in Hasan Al-'Askari's Imamah are explicit that Allah did not previously know who would be the Imam. But even if we are to accept this striking inversion of the texts under discussion, it does nothing to solve the problem of Imam Ja'far's succession.

The mere fact that Musa's Imamah had to be interpreted as a change in Divine decree clearly indicates that all the Shi'as recognized Isma'il as Imam Ja'far's successor; if he had never been given the Divine appointment, then there would be no change of decree at all. As such, if we use At-Tusi's interpretation of *bada'*, this still means that Imam Isma'il had the original *nass*; otherwise, there would have been no "change" at all. As such, the *bada'* narrations explicitly acknowledge that Allah's first *nass* was upon Imam Isma'il. The Twelvers then say that this *nass* was somehow changed. If one were to argue that it only *seemed* to the people that Isma'il would be the successor, while there had not in fact been any *nass* on him at all, then this renders *bada'* to (or from) Allah totally meaningless in this situation. If Musa had the *nass* all along, if (as Twelvers claim), the Prophet had announced and *named* all the Twelve Imams, then what possible

bada' could have occurred here? The only way to make sense of it would be to redefine *bada'* as being any manifestation of Divine decree, as opposed to a change in the decree: the argument would be that there was never any *nass* on Isma'il, but for some reason many of the Shi'a thought there was, and then Allah manifested the truth. This redefines *bada'* in such a broad-scope as to render the term meaningless. Since the Imamah of Imam Ali was not made fully manifest to all the Muslims until the proclamation of Ghadir, would the Twelvers claim that Ghadir was also a kind of *bada'*? Was the Prophet's declaration of his own prophethood also a kind of *bada'*? If so, then why do the Twelver *ziyarat* only apply the concept of *bada'* to Musa and Hasan al-'Askari? Furthermore, this argument still assumes that most of the Shi'a believed Isma'il was to be the successor of Imam as-Sadiq. This returns us to our previous point: if the *Sunnis* were aware of this prophecy about the Twelve Imams, how could the Shi'a have been ignorant of it?

As such, these narrations affirm that that there was some change in *Divine* decree, rather than merely in the minds of the people. Otherwise, *bada'* has no meaning at all. But while there may be *bada'* of this nature in many affairs (i.e., that Allah makes it seem that He wants something, but then changes it, as happened with the case of Abraham and Ishmael), *there can be no bada' in the issue of Imamah*. This is because Imamah is an *ontological* position and not a *political* or *legal* one. The case of Abraham and Ishmael (where Abraham was ordered to sacrifice his son, but was then told to stay his hand at the last moment) is the case of an abrogated *legal* injunction; it is no different than the abrogation of certain Islamic laws in the time of the Prophet, or Jesus's abrogation of part of the Jewish Law, or other such instances. There can be *bada'* (according to At-Tusi's

definition which, as we have seen, totally contradicts the text of the narrations about Imam Isma'il) in such issues: Allah may order something at one time, because it is in the best interests of the one ordered; then, things change, and Allah issues a new decree. But Imamah is a very different affair; it is a basic maxim of Shi'ism that Imamah is not subject to abrogation or change. If Imamah were a purely political or legal office, then such *bada'* could be possible. A king may appoint his son as the successor, and then change it, based upon what he desires for his kingdom. But the Imam is the Imam from birth; his Imamah is ontological. Anybody who understands the esoteric reality underlying Imamah will see this, and will understand that there can be no "change of mind" concerning this issue. This is made absolutely clear from the famous "Luminous Knowledge" sermon of Imam Ali, cited above.

When one sees how lofty the station of Imamah is, it becomes impossible to believe that Imam as-Sadiq could have desired to take the Imamah from Musa and give it to Isma'il, and that Allah could have "changed His Mind" on this issue. Changing the Imamah would involve completely changing the very nature of a person. If we look at Mawla Ali, we see that if Imamah were somehow taken away from him, then for all intents and purposes he would cease to be Ali. The same would be the case for Isma'il: if we say that Allah had initially decreed Isma'il's Imamah, but then changed it with a new decree, this means that Allah had fundamentally changed the nature of Musa and Isma'il, effectively reversing their personages. While anything is possible in the power of Allah, there is absolutely no record of such a thing ever happening in the past. No prophet has ever lost his prophethood, and no Imam has ever lost his Imamah before. It is clear from

the *hadith* literature that Imamah is an investiture *from birth*; it does not get “switched around.”

V. Proof #5

The Twelver Shi’a *hadith* literature bears witness to the fact that many people *saw* Imam Isma’il after his alleged death. This is made clear in another narration offered by as-Saduq:

إن شيطاننا قد ولع بابني إسماعيل يتصور في صورته ليفتن به الناس وإنه لا يتصور في صورة نبي ولا وصي نبي ، فمن قال لك من الناس: إن إسماعيل ابني حي لم يموت ، فإنما ذلك الشيطان تمثل له في صورة إسماعيل ، ما زلت ابتهل إلى الله في إسماعيل ابني أن يحييه لي ويكون القيم من بعدي فأبى ربي ذلك و إن هذا شيء ليس إلى الرجل منا يضعه حيث يشاء إنما ذلك عهد من الله عز و جل يعهده إلى من يشاء فشاء الله أن يكون إبني موسى أبي أن يكون إسماعيل.

“Indeed, Satan has become passionately fond of my son Isma’il, and has appeared in his image in order to create chaos amongst the people. But he cannot take the form of a prophet, nor the successor of a prophet. And so whenever the people say that my son Isma’il is alive and has not died, then this is nothing but Satan, manifesting himself in Isma’il’s form. I have not ceased imploring Allah the Exalted about Isma’il, begging Him to bring him back to life and make him the Rectifier after me, but my Lord has refused this. This is not something that a man places wherever he wants; rather it is a covenant from Allah the Exalted and Glorified. He will make this covenant with whomever he wills, and so Allah has willed that my son Musa would be the Rectifier after me, and has refused to make Isma’il the Imam after me. (Majlisi *Bihar* 47:270).

Elsewhere we read:

قال الوليد بن صبيح : جاءني رجل فقال لي: تعال حتى اريك أين الرجل؟ قال: فذهبت معه قال: فجاءني إلى قوم يشربون فيهم إسماعيل بن جعفر فخرجت مغموما، فجئت إلى الحجر فاذا إسماعيل بن جعفر متعلق بالبيت يبكي، قد بل أستار الكعبة بدموعه، فرجعت أشد فاذا إسماعيل جالس مع القوم، فرجعت فاذا هو أخذ بأستار الكعبة قدبلها بدموعه قال: فذكرت ذلك لأبي عبدالله فقال: لقد ابتلي ابني بشيطان يتمثل في صورته

Al-Walid ibn Sabih said: “A man came to me and said, ‘Come, and I will show you where the man is.’ And so I went with him, and was brought to a group of people who were drinking. Isma’il was amongst them! I fled away in anxiety, and came to the *hijr* [in the Holy Mosque of Mekkah], and there was Isma’il, clinging to the Sacred House and weeping, almost flooding the covering of the Ka’bah in tears. And so I went back, stronger this time, and saw Isma’il sitting with the people. And then I went back again, and there was Isma’il grabbing the cover of the Ka’bah, covering it with tears. I told Abu ‘Abdillah [as-Sadiq] about this, to which he said: ‘My son is being tormented by a demon which takes his form.’” (Majlisi *Bihar* 47:270, Al-Mazandarani *Al-Manaqib* 1:267, as-Saduq *Kamal* 1:70)

This narration, if true, would establish that Isma’il was cited by the people after his alleged death, and its presence in a Twelver book indicates that it was not merely a “myth” fabricated by later Ismailis. If this narration was forged, then it would only have been forged by those who opposed Isma’il’s Imamah; and if this was the case, we would have to ask why the Twelvers felt a need to resort to forgery. If the truth was on their side, why lie? If they were to lie about such a grave issue, then we would have to take everything else they say on the issue of Imamah with a great pinch of salt.

In reality, it is unlikely that these narrations were forged; for if no one had seen Isma’il after his death, and this was merely a myth concocted by Ismaili partisans, then there is no reason for the Twelver Shi’a to have made this narration up to refute such

stories. They simply could have worked to prove that no such visions of Isma'il had occurred, or that these visions were mistaken. Most certainly, God should have been sufficient to them in this cause. Like the narration in our third proof, this one is most likely true. But if this is the case, we have to ask whether we can believe that Imam Ja'far was serious in these words, or if this was also uttered in a state of *taqiyyah*.

There is strong evidence in the text of this narration to suggest that it was, in fact, uttered in a state of *taqiyyah*. This is because it is absurd to assume that Imam Ja'far would have preferred that Allah grant the office of Imamah to his son Musa, rather than his son Isma'il. If Musa was the holder of the *nur Allah*, what possible reason could Imam Ja'far have for wanting to transfer it to an ordinary man? How could he transfer it to an ordinary man, even if he wanted? The latter part of this *hadith* is instructive in this regard. Imam Ja'far confesses that he is well aware that Imamah derives from the covenant of Allah; it is not something that he can place wherever he wants. But if he knew this, why would he have gone against his own knowledge and begged Allah to make Isma'il the Imam instead?

Since the sightings of Isma'il are confirmed here, and our previous proofs establish that Imam Ja'far was doing *taqiyyah* for his son, should we not then assume that he was also doing *taqiyyah* if and when he uttered these words? It should be clear that we cannot separate Imam Ja'far's claim in the first narration that he "never ceased imploring Allah about Isma'il" from the rest of the narration; the fact that the latter claim is indicative of *taqiyyah* or forgery makes the claim that Satan had appeared in the form of Isma'il equally suspect.

As such, we are left with three possibilities: either this narration is true and was not uttered in *taqiyyah*, or it was forged, or it *was* uttered in *taqiyyah* and would therefore indicate upon the Imamah of Isma'il. The first two possibilities must be rejected. If Imam Ja'far was not doing *taqiyyah*, then this *hadith* would be a damning criticism of Imam Ja'far's submission to Allah, that he refused to accept Allah's decree on the succession, and was begging Him to change it. If Musa was the Imam, then why would Imam Ja'far have wanted that to be taken away? Why would he want the *nur* of Allah to be transferred to another one of his sons? This is truly foolish. As for the second possibility, that the Twelvers merely forged this narration, then this would be a damning criticism of the Twelver Shi'a case. If they made up something like this, how do we know they did not make up their narrations about Musa's Imamah as well? Why would they have to lie if truth was on their side? As such, we are left with only two options: either the Twelvers forged this, indicating that they had no evidence to support their cause and that their claim for Musa's Imamah was baseless, or it was true and uttered in *taqiyyah*. And if it was true, then means that Isma'il lived after his father, and had not truly died.

The necessity of *taqiyyah* is quite obvious when we understand the nature of the age. The time of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq and Imam Isma'il ibn Ja'far's Imamah was a period of horrific oppression against the family of the Prophet, as well as a time of great social and political upheaval. Sayyed Hossein Nasr writes:

The question of the successor to the Imam (Jafar Sadik) having been made particularly difficult by the fact that the Abbasid caliph al-Mansur had decided to scourge to death whoever was to be chosen officially by the Imam as his successor thereby hoping to put an end to the Shiite movement (Nasr *Ideals* 165-166).

In any case, the idea that Imam as-Sadiq would have worked to protect the future Imam from the authorities is not as farfetched as supposing that the Twelfth Imam has been hiding for the past 1,000 years, abandoning his followers to nothing but guesswork and speculation. We will discuss this more below.

VI. Proof #6

We have seen that the Twelver case against Imam Isma'il is based on scant and contradictory evidences. We are being asked to believe that Imam Ja'far gave clear *nass* for Musa, and yet somehow the most illustrious disciple of Imam as-Sadiq, Zurarah, did not hear about it. We have been offered *hadiths* that say that Allah changed His Mind concerning Isma'il, which besides clearly indicating that Twelvers (or at least the Twelvers who compiled the early *hadith* literature) acknowledged Imam as-Sadiq's *nass* on Imam Isma'il, show the desperate lengths which Twelvers have resorted to justify their line of Imams. We have been told on the one hand that Imam as-Sadiq so loved Imam Isma'il that he begged Allah to bring him back to life and to give him the Imamah, but Allah refused, and yet at the same time Shaykh as-Saduq tries to convince his audience that Imam as-Sadiq hated Imam Isma'il and condemned him as a sinner. The Twelver case is so confused that it defies imagination. Clearly the narrations concerning *bada'* are forgeries, and most likely the narrations condemning Isma'il were forgeries as well; and if they are not, then any one of sound mind can see that they were uttered in a state of *taqiyyah*. What Twelver Shi'as must ask themselves is one very simple question: if their school of thought was based upon the Truth, and the clear *nass* of the Prophet and

Imams, why did such illustrious scholars like Shaykh as-Saduq have to resort to such deception? Why do they base their argument on narrations that cannot possibly be authentic?

The standard Twelver response to all of this would be: “Scholars like Shaykh as-Saduq were not Infallible Imams. He could make mistakes, and our scholars can make mistakes. Furthermore, we do not have any *sahih* books like Sunnis do; we don’t claim that all of our *hadith* are authentic.” This type of dodge will not work here, however. While we would obviously agree that as-Saduq was not an Infallible Imam, this is precisely the whole problem with Twelver Shi’ism. *Their Infallible Imam is gone, and so they can only rely upon fallible ‘ulama’ like as-Saduq and their even more fallible hadith books.* If we acknowledge that, at the minimum, Shaykh as-Saduq has blundered and humiliated himself, then how many other blunders has he made? Shi’as are supposed to take their religion from God, and from the Infallible Imam that God appoints as His Proof over Creation. But because the Twelver Imam is hidden, his Shi’as will have no choice but to make recourse to incompetent scholars like as-Saduq. The question of Isma’il’s Imamah is one of the most important questions facing Shi’ism, and the Twelver-Ismaili split was one of the most significant events in the early period of Shi’a Islam. Shaykh as-Saduq has made a fool out of himself trying to support the Twelver position here; he has blundered, and made an enormous mistake, passing on as genuinely authentic a *hadith* whose falsity (either as a forgery or as an utterance of *taqiyyah*) is born witness to by *his own books*. Honest Twelvers should ask themselves: what other blunders has he made? His *I’tiqidadat al-Imamiyyah* (“A Shi’ite Creed”) one of the standard sources for Twelver belief, and his *Kamal ad-Din* (where he authenticates the “Sinner” narration) is one of the

most important sources for their belief in the Hidden Imam. Has he, perhaps, blundered in these books as well? What other false *hadiths* has he passed on, misinterpreted, or misreported? What do Twelvers think of this luminous *fatwa* from Ayatullah Sistani, Ayatullah Khuymayni, and Ayatullah Yazdi:

لا يجوز وطء الزوجة قبل إكمال تسع سنين دواماً كان النكاح أو منقطعاً و أما سائر الإستمتعَات كاللمس بشهوة و
الضم و التفخيذ فلا بأس به حتى في الرضیعة.

It is not permissible to penetrate a wife before nine years of age, whether it be a permanent or temporary, but all other types of enjoyment are allowed such as touching with lust, snuggling, or placing the penis between the two thighs and rubbing it. There's no problem in this, even in a new born suckling girl." (As-Sistani *Minhaj* 3:10, Khumayni *Tahrir* 2:216, Yazdi, *Al-'Urwah* 2:811).

Therefore, according to these great scholars who follow represent the Imamah of Muhammad ibn Hasan al-'Askari, a parent may give their child into the hands of a child molester who may then inflict all kinds of sexual abuse (except vaginal penetration) upon this child. And then Twelvers have the *audacity* to accuse the Agha Khan of immorality and worldliness! They holler and scream about how he has married a woman who does not wear *hijab*. Would they rather he be more "pious" and molest an infant girl instead? Would a Twelver parents want to send their young child to go off and study with one of these scholars in Qum or Najaf? Twelvers heap abuse upon Sunni scholars for rulings like this, but forget that the same rulings can be found in their own books.

What excuse will the Twelvers use to dodge this horrific ruling? That Ayatullah Sistani, Ayatullah Khuymayni, and Ayatullah Yazdi aren't infallible? So, who is infallible? No one? Then what does a sincere believer do? Just follow human guesswork?

This is, really, the only choice when the Imam is hidden and he has no direct representative. Every Twelver acknowledges this, and knows they have no other choice. When Twelvers acknowledge this, however, then they bear witness to their own disbelief in the Islamic message. They have been ordered to turn away from those who follow mere guesswork, when Allah says:

“They have no knowledge about it, and the only follow guesswork. Indeed, guesswork can never take the place of Truth! So turn from those who reject our Message, and want nothing but this worldly life.” (53:28)

The very statement “our scholars are not infallible” is precisely the whole problem with Twelver Shi’ism. All Twelvers have to go on in their religion are these books and the scholars and jurists who have written them. They make mistakes, and make mistakes all the time, in areas of critical importance. Yet Shi’ism is based upon the belief in the necessity for a constant, manifest, living Imam in every age to guide people to the truth; in practice Twelvers do not have that, and so they contradict the very foundation of their religion. What do they make of the *hadith*:

One of the Sadiqayn has said: “Indeed, Allah does not leave the Earth without a Learned one. If it were not for that, no one would know the true from the false.” (Al-Kafi 1:178)

Since they know their scholars make mistakes, terrible awful mistakes (so far as allowing men to sexually abuse small children!), and since their Infallible Source is gone (as they all admit), how are they to know the true from the false? Twelvers say: “In every age there must be an Infallible Imam,” and on the other hand they say: “We only have our

scholars, and they make mistakes.” Could there be any greater contradiction? This is firm proof that their religion is not something from Allah, for He has said:

“And had it been from other than Allah, they would have found it in numerous contradictions.” (4:82)

This, in its own way, winds up being yet another strong proof for Isma'il's Imamah. If we accept, against all the historical evidence, the Twelver claim that *nass* was given to Musa, and then so on to the alleged Imams after him, we will be left with accepting the Imamah of Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Mahdi. And if we accept the Imamah of this absent individual, then we will have no other choice but to make recourse to scholars like as-Saduq, who have proven themselves woefully incompetent. According to Twelver Shi'as, the last statement of their Imam to the world was:

“As far as the coming events, turn to our narrators of *hadith*. Indeed, they are my *hujjah* [proof] over you, and I am the *hujjah* of Allah.”

From this, we are to understand that the Imam has gone into Occultation for a thousand years, and leaves as his proof someone who can't even properly sort out the question of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq's succession? Furthermore, it is interesting that the Twelvers use this *hadith* to justify the power and authority of their clergy. Yet their clergy do not follow the rest of what this *hadith* says; a few lines down, we read:

أما الخمس فقد أبيح لشيعتنا و جعلوا منه في حل الى وقت ظهور أمرنا

As far the *khums* [the 20% religious tax which Twelvers pay to their Ayatullahs], I have exempted my Shi'as from it and made it licit to them, until the time that our Command becomes manifest (At-Tabrisi *Ihtijaj* 2:469).

Is it indeed curious that the '*ulama* who are supposed to be the Imam's representative use this narration to justify their own clerical power, but ignore what it has to say about the lifting of religious taxes, and then proceed to give *fatwas* where (unsurprisingly) the Shi'a faithful are required to pay this tax to the '*ulama*' themselves. It should, at the minimum, lead a faithful Shi'a to doubt the veracity and authenticity of the Twelver '*ulama*'.

But , for the time being, we may ignore this touchy problem. Let us focus, instead, upon the command to refer to the narrators of *hadith*. The question which any person would ask is: which *hadith* narrators should the faithful follow? Let us look at the record of the most important Twelver *hadith* narrator, Zurarah ibn 'Ayun. Zurarah ibn 'Ayun narrates 20,094 *hadiths* from the Prophet's family Al-Khu'i *Mu'jam* entry 4671) and so his narrations make up an enormous bulk of the Twelver *hadith* books. This is what Twelver books have to say about him:

كذب علي و الله كذب علي والله لعن الله زرارة لعن الله زرارة لعن الله زرارة

Imam as-Sadiq said: "Zurarah has lied about me, by God he has lied about me! May Allah curse Zurara, May Allah curse Zurara, may Allah curse Zurara!" (Al-Kashshi *Rijal* 147)

قال أبو بصير: قلت لأبي عبد الله عليه السلام ((الذين آمنو و لم يلبسوا إيمانهم بظلم)) قال: أعاذنا الله و إياك يا أبا بصير من ذلك الظلم ذلك ما ذهب فيه زرارة و أصحابه و أبو حنيفة و أصحابه.

Abu Basir reports: “I said to Abu ‘Abdillah as-Sadiq the verse: ‘Those who believe, and do not mix their faith with oppression.’ He said to me: ‘We take refuge in Allah, O Abu Basir! Stay away from this type of oppression! Indeed, that oppression is the school of Zurarah and his companions, and Abu Hanifah and his companions.” (Al-Kashshi *Rijal* 146)

قال أبو بصير: قلت لأبي عبد الله عليه السلام ((الذين آمنوا ولم يلبسوا إيمانهم بظلم)) قال: أعاننا الله وإياك يا أبا بصير من ذلك الظلم. قلت من هو قال هو والله ما أحدث زرارة وأبو حنيفة وهذا الضرب.

Abu Basir reports: “I said to Abu ‘Abdillah as-Sadiq the verse: ‘Those who believe, and do not mix their faith with oppression.’ He said to me: ‘We take refuge in Allah, O Abu Basir! Stay away from this type of oppression! I asked him what this oppression was. He said: “I swear by Allah, it is that which Zurarah and Abu Hanifah have reported, and those like them.” (Al-Kashshi *Rijal* 145)

قال علي الرضا: كيف تقولون في الإستطاعة بعد يونس فذهب فيها مذهب زراة و مذهب زرارة الخطاء

Ali ar-Rida [the Eighth Twelver Imam] said: “What do you all have to say about the issue of capacity [the legal capacity which, if a person has it, makes the pilgrimage incumbent upon them after Yunus [ibn ‘Abd ar-Rahman, another very important Twelver *hadith* narrator], who is following the school of Zurarah, and the school of Zurarah is wrong.” (Al-Kashshi *Rijal* 145)

قال أبو عبد الله: لعن الله زرارة.

Imam as-Sadiq said: “May Allah curse Zurarah.” (Al-Kashshi *Rijal* 148-149)

قال هارون بن خارجة: سألت أبا عبد الله عن قول الله عز وجل ((الذين آمنوا ولم يلبسوا إيمانهم بظلم)) قال هو ما استوجبه أبو حنيفة وزرارة.

Harun ibn Kharajah said: “I asked Abu ‘Abdillah about Allah’s words: ‘Those who believe and do not mix their faith with oppression.’ He said: ‘It is that which Zurarah and Abu Hanifah deem obligatory.” (Al-Kashshi *Rijal* 149)

قال ابو عبد الله: لا يموت زراراة إلا تائهاً

Imam as-Sadiq said: “Zurarah will not die except in misguidance.” (Al-Kashshi *Rijal* 149)

قال ابو عبد الله: ما أحدث أحد في الإسلام ما أحدث زراراة من البدع عليه لعنة الله.

Imam as-Sadiq said: No one in Islam has narrated as much heresy as Zurarah. May Allah curse him. (Al-Kashshi *Rijal* 149)

قال ابو عبد الله: لعن الله زراراة لعن الله زراراة لعن الله زراراة

May Allah curse Zurarah, may Allah curse Zurarah, may Allah curse Zurarah. Allah curse him. (Al-Kashshi *Rijal* 150)

قال حريز: قلت لابي عبد الله ما تقول في الإستطاعة فقال ليس من ديني ولا دين آبائي...قلت له جعلت فداك فيك قلت

لي ليس من ديني و لا دين آبائي قال إنما أعنى بذلك قول زراراة و أشباهه

Hariz said: “I asked Abu ‘Abdillah [as-Sadiq]: ‘What do you say about this issue of capacity? [see discussion above].’ He said: ‘It is not from my religion nor the religion of my fathers.’... So I said to him: ‘May I be your sacrifice? What do you mean when you say to ‘it is not from my religion nor the religion of my fathers.’ He said: ‘By that I mean the belief of Zurarah and those like him.’” (Al-Kashshi *Rijal* 150)

قال ابو عبد الله: هذا زراراة بن أعين هذا من الذين وصفهم الله عز و جل في كتابه فقال: و قدمنا إلى ما عملو من عمل

فجعلناه هباء منثوراً

Imam as-Sadiq said: “This is Zurarah, he is of those whom Allah has described in His Book as: “We will turn to whatever deeds they did, and turn them into nothing but scattered dust.” [25:23] (Al-Kashshi *Rijal* 151)

With an absent Imam, all Twelvers have to go one are these *hadith* books; yet as much as 20% of these books is based upon the *hadiths* of somebody openly cursed by their Imams in their own books of *hadith* and *rijal*. Or were these narrations made up? Then how can Twelvers trust the rest of their books? In response, Twelvers will of course quote other narrations where Zurarah is given the highest of praise. How do they know *those* aren't made up by the same types of scholars who say its permissible to sexually abuse infant wives? If we find narrations in *Twelver* books condemning Zurarah, is it not highly likely that these narrations are, in fact, authentic? It is not possible that Twelver scholars would have forged narrations attacking one of their most important early scholars. Twelvers will attack Sunnis about the number of narrations concerning Twelve Imams in Sunni books, saying that it is not possible Sunnis could have made up those narrations as they go against the Sunni cause. Would not the same argument apply to *these same* Twelver narrations? Since they do not have an Infallible Imam to guide them, how will they know whether the narrations praising Zurarah or true, or whether or not the ones cursing him are true? A rational mind will see how the belief in a Hidden Imam leaves the Twelvers in confusion and misguidance.

As such, we can see that the Twelvers are in an extremely difficult set of circumstances. They acknowledge that their books are not all authentic (and this is their standard defense against Sunnis when they bring up contradictory narrations); yet they have no real way of verifying what is true and what is not true in these books. At a later date, they began to use the Sunni science of *'ilm ar-rijal* to differentiate "authentic" from "inauthentic" sources (Momen *Introduction* 185); but any rational person will see that investigating chains of narrators does not in any way establish the authenticity of a text. If

one can forge the narration, one can easily forge the chain. For this reason, we see that many Twelvers reject the use of *rijal* altogether; these are the *akhbari* sect, who believe in the necessity of unquestioningly and blindly following the books of *hadith*. Their attack on the use of *rijal* is interesting; one scholar, the 19th-century Shaykhi-Akhbari scholar Shaykh Muhammad Karim Khan Al-Kirmani, presents twenty one separate points of criticism against the use of *rijal*. Instead, he argues that all these books are authentic, and they should be followed without question. Our previous discussion on the huge number of contradictions in these books is sufficient proof that they are not authentic; but his argument against *rijal* is sufficient for proving how difficult the situation of the Twelvers is. We can cite his points here:

1) The first problem lies in the nature of the *rijal* books themselves. The scholars who wrote these books did not meet any of the early *hadith* narrators whom they discuss. As such, they are not witnesses in any way to the veracity of these people, and so base their views solely on *ijtihad*. This *ijtihad* does not give any certainty; the mere fact that somebody thinks someone was reliable or not does not in any way indicate that this person was, in fact, reliable. Their arguments give no certainty and so, therefore, cannot be considered a firm legal proof.

2) That very little is written about most *hadith* narrators. What one is attempting to establish in the books of *rijal* is whether someone is reliable; the most that is ever reported about their lives is a single hour or a single day of that person's life. It does nothing to establish that person's overall veracity. Furthermore, what biographical

information is offered about these people is irrelevant; saying that person x or person y was a poet, a businessman, a carpenter, or what have you does not establish whether that person was reliable or not.

3) The most that is said about narrators is whether they were reliable or not reliable; it does not say anything about whether so-and-so was a just, pious person or not. Most Twelvers have said, in the past, that somebody must be just and pious for his narrations to be accepted.

4) The first person to write a book on *rijal* was Ibn ‘Uqdah, a Zaidi scholar. Zaidis are considered to be *nasibi*, hating the family of the Prophet, because of their enmity to Imam al-Baqir and others. The subsequent development of *rijal* was based upon these Zaidi texts, and there is no reason that a Twelver should rely upon their information.

5) The basis for saying that somebody is reliable or not reliable is not firmly established. A cursory reading of the Twelver books of *rijal* shows that many narrators were classified as “weak” simply because they believed in something that the *rijal* scholars disagree with. For example, the scholars of Qum considered anybody who believed that the Prophet did not suffer from forgetfulness and distraction in his religious worship to be an extremist (*ghali*), and rejected any narrations from such a person. This has no bearing on whether or not a person is reliable or not.

6) In the present age, we see that some scholars will praise and vet people who are the worst types of disbelievers, and attack someone who is a genuinely faithful person. This, says Al-Kirmani, is because of people's contradictory beliefs. We see this even today; the *akhbari* scholars attack the *usulis* and vice-versa, condemning each other for their false beliefs. It is therefore impossible to rely upon such statements, owing to their extremely subjective nature.

7) The scholars disagree as to what it means for someone to be pious and just. Some say that someone is pious if they do not manifest any bad behavior; others say that it is an internal "faculty" that prevents a person from committing sinful acts; then others will say that in a situation of doubt, one should say a person is unreliable, and others say that in a situation of doubt, one should say that the person is reliable. When we read in *rijal* books that somebody is "reliable" or "unreliable," we have no idea what the basis for this statement is. It is based nothing upon speculative arguments, with absolutely no reason to assign the status of legal proofs to this type of guesswork.

8) The majority *hadith* narrators are not mentioned at all in the texts; their names are merely mentioned as being "companions" of one of the Imams. Al-Kirmani mentions that there were at least 4,000 such companions of Imam as-Sadiq. If we look at all the companions of all the Imams, plus the ones that never actually met the Imams but reported from them, then the number reaches at least 100,000. Many of these people share the same names, even the same names as their fathers. Some of them may be just, some of the may not; and yet in the books of *rijal* only some of these people are

mentioned. As such, if we see a narration from “Yunus,” we can only guess as to which of the probably 1,000 Yunus’s this refers to. The only way that it can be determined is by analyzing who narrated from this person and who he himself narrates from; but at best this is only guesswork. It is entirely that possible that the well-known, authenticated Yunus (Yunus ibn ‘Abd ar-Rahman) narrated from a certain person, and that an unauthenticated Yunus also narrated from that same person. As such, we are left with nothing but a mess of speculative, contradictory evidences. We would ask: Is it not the Imam’s job to prevent such difficulties, rather than encouraging it by disappearing for 1,000 years?

9) As further support, we find that the scholars themselves disagree. One scholar will claim that the Yunus in a given narration is Yunus ibn ‘Abd ar-Rahman, while another will claim that it cannot be him. They speculate and guess, and the net result of all their work is nothing but even more confusion.

10) *Rijal* is circular. *Rijal* is itself based upon a series of reports about certain people; the bulk of early *rijal* books like that of Al-Kashshi is made up of actual *hadiths* about individual people. In order to authenticate *those* reports, we would need to use *rijal*, and so we are led into a vicious circle: in order to use *rijal*, we must use *rijal*.

11) The vast majority of narrators who *are* mentioned in the books of *rijal* are not certified one way or the other; there is no explicit statement that so-and-so was reliable, nor that he was unreliable. Furthermore, many *rijal* books base their certifications on

other *rijal* books, certifications which are, themselves, baseless. These reports are themselves confusing in nature. One may find a report about a narrator doing something sinful, but even if we could confirm that report (which we cannot, otherwise we will enter into the vicious circle discussed above), we have no idea if he committed this sinful thing after reporting a certain *hadith* or not. What this means is that someone may have been reliable and honest at one point but later “deviated,” and there is no way to establish a time-line of this person’s life in order to verify whether he reported something during his “good” period or during his “bad” period.

12) It is a well-known fact that a huge number of narrations are written down wrong, and that their chains have not been reported properly. Scholars are often baffled by some chains, as they see person X narrating from person Y in a narration, even though person X is reported in the books of *rijal* as never narrating from Person Y. An example would be the following chain found in Shaykh at-Tusi’s *Tahdhib*:

Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Mahbub from Ahmad ibn Al-Hassan from Al-Husayn from Fadalrah from Al-‘Ala’ from Muhammad ibn Muslim from Imam al-Baqir: “My father used to call the prayer and say: ‘Prayer is better than sleep’ (At-Tusi *Tahdhib* 2:277).

This narration is rather troubling because it contradicts the Twelver belief that saying “Prayer is better than sleep” was an innovation of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab. The question is, is it authentic? When analyzing the chain, one discovers that there are many people named Ahmad ibn al-Hasan. In order to “authenticate this narration,” one needs to find out which one it is. The way to do this is by analyzing whom he narrated from and

who narrated from him. Looking in the books of *rijal*, there is no record of Ibn Mahbub narrating from anybody by that name. When one looks through the rest of the page where At-Tusi reports this narration, one sees many other similar chains of narration, except that it is reported from someone named Ahmad ibn Muhammad. It seems highly likely that Shaykh at-Tusi, or somebody else, has clearly made a mistake it here, and meant to write “Ahmad ibn Muhammad.” But it is too late and the damage is done. How, then, can one rely upon his other *isnads*, when there is such clear room for error?

13) Assuming we can even sort out these chains, how do we know the chains are not forged? One may easily forge a chain of narrations that is authentic. We can easily forge such a narration right now: Yunus ibn ‘Abd ar-Rahman from Hamad ibn ‘Uthman from Muhammad ibn Muslim from Imam as-Sadiq: “My son Isma’il is the Imam after me, and anybody who says otherwise is a liar.” Now, we have this sound chain of narrators, so the Twelvers must accept the Imamah of Isma’il! Clearly, forgery is a very easy thing to do, especially in a time where the books of *hadith* had yet to be standardized.

14) The fact that one might think that a person mentioned in one of these *isnads* is, in fact, one of the reliable narrators mentioned in the books of *rijal*, does not necessarily mean that this person could not have made a mistake, forgotten, or lied. Similarly, the fact that one might think that a person mentioned in one of these *isnads* is, in fact, one of the unreliable narrators mentioned in the books of *rijal*, also does not make it impossible that this person told the truth. This was one of the big problems with Twelvers understanding of *rijal*: the technical term *sahih* has been continuously mistranslated as

“authentic.” But it does not mean this, since authenticity of a single report from over a thousand years ago cannot possibly be determined; all *sahih* means is that all the narrators are pious Twelver Shi’ites. The fact that someone may be “weak” does not mean he has lied, and the fact that someone may be “reliable” does not mean he could not have made a mistake. Once again, all people are left with is guesswork.

15) Even if we were to exert enormous effort, we would not be able to know who is truly pious and honest in our community from those who are not. This would be true even if we lived with these people for a great time. Have not people experienced that even their close family members, who they trusted dearly, have turned out to be evil people with foul intentions? If this is the case now, how can we possibly speculate about the reliability, veracity, and piety of people from a thousand years ago.

16) How do we know that the very scholars who are telling us that so-and-so is reliable or so-and-so is not reliable, are *themselves* reliable? In most of their cases, we have no reports as to their veracity or not. As far as the ones whom we do have reports about, then we would be forced to use *rijal* to authenticate those reports, and therefore enter into a vicious circle. It is also true that whatever stories we may have about certain ‘*ulama*’ are usually based on their students, and so the authenticity of those statements cannot be confirmed. And in any case, even if these scholars were pious and righteous individuals, no amount of reports will establish their infallibility. Some Twelvers will say that these people were scholars, and so they should be respected. Al-Kirmani comments that this is very similar to what Sunnis say about the “Companions.” In any case, it is not logical to

say that because someone is called a “scholar” by his students that automatically we must blindly accept everything that he must say.

17) Many scholars acknowledge that they cannot possibly establish the piety of people in their own age. For a modern day example, we see that Shi’as say that one must make *taqlid* (blind following) of a righteous *mujtahid*. But it is obvious that this is impossible; there is no way to know whether or not a scholar is truly pious or not. As such, many Shi’a scholars have said that one only needs to know that the *mujtahid* is probably a pious person. If this is the case *now*, how can we possibly speculate about the piety of people from a thousand years ago?

18) As for those Shi’as who say that piety is actually a faculty of the soul that prohibits someone from doing bad deeds (cf. Al-Khumayni *Tahrir* 1:7). If this is what piety means, then determining whether or not someone is pious would require some type of esoteric, psychic knowledge about a person’s soul. This is obviously impossible to obtain.

19) Some might say: “Yes, this is all true; as such we will only do our best.” The problem is that, as we have seen, the Qur’an prohibits such guesswork in the firmest tone:

“They have no knowledge about it, and the only follow guesswork. Indeed, guesswork can never take the place of Truth! So turn from those who reject our Message, and want nothing but this worldly life.” (53:28)

What some Twelvers seem to forget is that the purpose of Imamah is *to remove from people the need for such guesswork*, to give them a certain basis upon which to

ground their faith. The purpose is not to leave people with nothing to go on except confusion and doubt. The purpose is to give them a shining path by which they may know their Lord, and achieve the wisdom and gnosis that is the basis of religion, and the cause of salvation.

20) For his twentieth point, Al-Kirmani re-emphasizes the prohibition on guesswork and speculation in matters of religion. We agree with him that, after seeing these previous nineteen points, how can any rational soul possibly rely upon such a confused “science” in order to know the truth about their religion?

21) If *rijal* was a genuine religious science, why did the Imams not teach it? There is no record of them ordering their followers to preserve books of *rijal*, and the confused nature of these books clearly indicates that no Infallible hand was at work in their compilation.

All these points present a highly valid critique of the “science” of *rijal*; what this means is that Twelvers do not have any way of sorting “the wheat from the chaff” within their canonical books of *hadith*. This is a very precarious situation for the religion to be in, for these books of *hadith* are all the only means by which they may follow their Imams. Those *akhbari* scholars, such as Al-Kirmani, who realized that *rijal* was an ineffective means for authenticating *hadiths*, most likely realized that they would be in deep trouble if they did not come up with an alternative method. And this alternative was the only one they could come up with: to claim that all these books were absolutely

authentic, without any distortion or mistake in them. Al-Kirmani writes in his *Al-Qawa'id* (97):

Indeed, we see from the transmissions reported from contemporary scholars and their followers, and from such transmissions in every age, that such people do not satisfy themselves with any report made from any random person unless that report conforms to what has been overwhelmingly reported from that scholar's book, or if the person making the transmission is reliable. What, then, do you think about those illustrious scholars as Al-Kulayni, as-Saduq, or At-Tusi and all of the other *hadith* scholars? Do you think it is possible that they would author a book for their actions and to guide the people and lift doubt and to circulate in the community, and then be content with narrating from weak and unknown people, and then confirm these reports and take responsibility for their correctness, and make it a proof between them and between their Lord? Never, I swear by Allah that this is something could never be thought about them, ever. As such, they do not report except from reliable people or from authentic, famous, and overwhelmingly reported books.

The argument that Al-Kirmani offers is, unfortunately, very typical of religious communities that do not have a manifest Imam, and are forced to rely upon ancient textual sources for all of their religious needs. All Shi'as understand that they need an infallible source for their religion; if that infallible source is absent, they are forced to attribute the infallibility to someone else. This is exactly what Al-Kirmani is doing here. He has seen that *'ilm ar-rijal* is not an effective method of determining the authentic from the inauthentic, and realizes that, as a Twelver, he will be in deep trouble if he does not find some way in which he can rely upon these *hadith* books. The way to do this is by attributing *de facto* infallibility to scholars Al-Kulayni, as-Saduq, and at-Tusi, an argument which is entirely baseless. The same thing has occurred amongst the Bohra

Ismailis: with a hidden Imam, they have gradually come to attribute infallibility to their *da'i*, putting him in a position which the manifest Imam should fulfill himself. Nowhere in the Twelver *hadith* literature do the Imams proclaim that these scholars have been immunized from error; nowhere is it claimed that they were appointed as infallible representatives of the Hidden Imam; and nowhere is it said that *anybody* can be an infallible representative of the Hidden Imam during his greater Occultation. Furthermore, we have seen that Shaykh as-Saduq's precision, and perhaps even his veracity, is highly suspect from the way in which he dealt with the succession of Imam Isma'il. He was clearly not even able to discern which narrations were uttered in *taqiyyah* and which ones were not; while Al-Kirmani swears by Allah that we can never have any doubts our suspicions about the veracity of as-Saduq's work, the blunders he makes are sufficient proof that our suspicions are more than warranted.

As such, we can see that the Twelvers have no means for obtaining certainty about their religion. The confused nature of the narrations about Isma'il is sufficient proof that forgeries and alterations have entered into these books, and that scholars like Shaykh as-Saduq are (at best) unreliable in their reports. The Twelvers have no Imam to guide them, and have no way of discerning what is true and what is false within their *hadith* books. If we are to reject the Imamah of Isma'il, and accept the Twelver claims, this is the situation we will be left with.

VII. Proof #7

If a Twelver wishes to say: “We have the Qur’an, and we will use that to determine what is true and false in our *hadith* books,” we would respond: you clearly have not studied your own books properly. There is ample evidence in their books to suggest that the Qur’an that exists today has been tampered with. While modern day Shi’a scholars may distance themselves from this idea, going so far as to excommunicate anybody who denies the authenticity of the present-day Qur’an, this does not have any bearing upon what the Imams actually taught or what was widely believed during the formative period of Shi’a Islam. We will quote some of these narrations below:

When our Resurrector [*qa’im*] has risen up, he will recite the Book of God – may He be exalted and glorified – as it should be recited, and he will unveil the Volume written by Ali. (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 83)

Al-Baqir said: No one can claim to have all of the Qur’an, including its manifest aspect and hidden aspects, except the inheritors [the *’awsiya*, the Imams]. (As-Saffar al-Qummi *Basa’ir* 4:193)

Al-Baqir said: There is absolutely no one from the people that can say he has the entirety of the Qur’an as it was revealed by Allah except a liar; the one only who possesses it all and has preserved it as it was revealed by Allah was Ali ibn Abi Talib, and the Imams after him. (As-Saffar al-Qummi *Basa’ir* 4:193)

Ibn Salamah reports: A man was reading the Qur’an to Abu ‘Abdillah [as-Sadiq], and I heard letters from the Qur’an that were not like that read by the people. And Abu ‘Abdillah said: “Cease this reading. Read it as the people read it, until our *Qa’im* arises. Once he has arisen, then he will read the Book of Allah as it was, and he will bring out the scroll which Ali had written, and which he had brought out to the people once he had finished with it. He said to them: ‘This is the book of Allah, as Allah revealed to Muhammad. I have written it from two tablets.’” They said: “We have a complete version of the Qur’an, and so we don’t

need anything from yours.” He replied: ‘Very well. I swear by Allah that you will never, ever see it again after this day of yours. Indeed, all that was incumbent upon me was to inform you of it when I finished it, that you may have been able to read it [had you chosen].’” (As-Saffar al-Qummi *Basa’ir* 4:193)

A man asked a question to Abu Ja’far [al-Baqir], to which he said: No one can claim to have all of the Qur’an, including its manifest aspect and hidden aspects, except the inheritors [the ‘*awsiya*, the Imams]. (As-Saffar al-Qummi *Basa’ir* 4:193)

Al-Baqir said: I do not see anybody in this *ummah* who has all possession of all of the Qur’an except the inheritors. (As-Saffar al-Qummi *Basa’ir* 4:193)

Imam `Ali said: It as if I see the Persians [‘*ajam*, non-Arabs] in the mosque of Kufa, teaching the people the Qur’an as it was revealed.” The Imam was asked: “O Prince of the believers, the Qur’an is not as it is revealed?” To which he said: “There has been removed from the Qur’an seventy names of the people of Quraysh, as well as the names of their fathers. Abu Lahab’s name [mentioned in *masd*] was retained only to be used as a weapon against the Prophet.” (An-Nu’mani *Ghaybah* 2:634).

Imam As-Sadiq said: The Qur’an that the Angel Gabriel brought to Muhammad contained 17,000 verses. (Kulayni *Al-Kafi* 2:634)

Imam As-Sadiq said I swear by Allah, the command and the caliphate can never go to the family of Abu Bakr or ‘Umar, nor to the Umayyads [the family of ‘Uthman] nor to the progeny of Talha and Zubayr. This is because they have renounced the Qur’an, destroyed the traditions, and annihilated the laws.

(Kulayni *Al-Kafi* 2:600)

Imam As-Sadiq was asked in how many parts should one read the Qur’an, to which he said: “Read it in fifths, or in sevenths. But as for me, I have a manuscript that is divided in fourteen sections.” (Kulayni *Al-Kafi* 2:618)

These verses speak generally about tampering with the Qur'an. But the Twelver *hadith* literature is also replete with specific "corrections" on various verses. Twelvers will often claim that such narrations only talk about some type of missing *tafsir* of the Qur'an, but a clear reading of these narrations proves otherwise. The sections in italics are the words which the Imams say have been taken out:

From Imam Al-Baqir, on verse 2:90: Terrible is what they have purchased for themselves, that they would jealously disbelieve in what Allah has sent down *about Ali*. (Al-'Ayyashi *Tafsir* 1:50)

From Imam al-Baqir, on verse 2:102: "And they approved, *by fidelity to the demons*, what the demons told them about the kingdom of Solomon." (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

From Imam Ali, on verse 2:205: "As soon as he turns his back, he attempts to corrupt what he finds upon the earth, he destroys the harvest and the livestock *by his injustice and wickedness*, God does not like corruption." (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

From Imam as-Sadiq, on verse 2:211: "Ask the Sons of Israel how many irrefutable proofs we have given them, *some of them had faith in them, some denied them, some recognized them, and others deformed them*, but for him who deforms the gift of God after receiving it, God prepares a terrible punishment." (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

From their seventh Imam, Al-Kazim, on verse 2:255: "All that is in the heavens and upon the earth belongs to Him, *and all that is between the heavens and the earth, or under the earth, the Invisible World and visible world; He is gracious and merciful*; who can intercede with Him without his permission?" (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

From Imam Al-Baqir, on verse 2:259: *Have you not looked towards* [instead of the imperative *look towards*] the bones, how we have set them together. (Al-'Ayyashi *Tafsir* 1:141)

From Imam as-Sadiq, on verse 3:103: "You were on the edge of an abyss of fire, and He saved you *through Muhammad.*" (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

From Imam as-Sadiq, on verse 3:110: "You are the best nation [*ummah*] which has been raised to the people, commanding what is good, and forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah," Abu 'Abdillah [as-Sadiq] said: "The best nation? These were the people who killed the Prince of Believers, Hasan, and Husayn." And so it was said to him: "Then how was it revealed, O son of the Prophet?" To which he said: "Indeed, you are the best Imams [*aimmah*] which has been raised to the people.' Do you not see the praise which Allah gives in the last part of the verse, where He says: 'commanding what is good, and forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah.'" (Al-Qummi *Tafsir* 10)

From Imam Al-Baqir, on verse 4:47: O you who have been given the book from before, believe in what has been sent down *about Ali*, verifying that which is with you. (Al-'Ayyashi *Tafsir* 1:245)

From Imam Ali, on verse 4:63: "God knows what is in their hearts, keep away from them *for the Word of Wretchedness is destined to them, as is torment*; address them in convincing words, that apply to their situation." (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

From Imam as-Sadiq, on verse 4:65-66: "Then they will not find in themselves the possibility of escaping what you have decided *about the cause of the Divine Friend* [*wali*, the Imam] and they will submit *to God* totally/If we had told them: "Have yourselves put to death and *submit totally to the Imam*," or else "leave your houses *for him*," they would not have done so, except for a small number of them. *If those who oppose* followed the exhortations they received, it would truly have been better for them and more conducive to greater strength." (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

Verse 4:156 “However, Allah bears witness to what He has revealed to you concerning Ali. He brings it down with His Knowledge, to which the angels bear witness.” (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

Verse 4: 168: “Indeed, those who disbelieve and oppress *the family of the Prophet, denying them their rights*, then Allah will never forgive them.” (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

Verse 5:67: “O Prophet! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord *concerning Ali*, if you do not do this, then you will not have passed on your message.” (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

Verse 6:93 “If only those who have *oppressed the family of the Prophet, denying them their rights*, could see the deluge of death.” (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

Verse 26:227 “Those who have who disbelieved and oppress *the family of the Prophet, denying them their rights*, if only they knew by what overturning they would be overturned.” (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

Verse 4:156 “However, Allah bears witness to what He has revealed to you concerning Ali. He brings it down with His Knowledge, to which the angels bear witness.” (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

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Verse 6:93 “If only those who have *oppressed the family of the Prophet, denying them their rights*, could see the deluge of death.” (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

From Imam Al-Baqir, on verse 7:112: And they bore witness upon themselves [to Allah’s question] ‘Am I

not your Lord *and is not Muhammad the Prophet of Allah and your message, and that Ali is the Prince of Believers?*” (Al-‘Ayyashii *Tafsir* 2:41)

From the Twelver’s eighth Imam ar-Rida, on verse 9:40: “God and His Sakinah descend upon *His Prophet* and sustained him with invisible armies.” (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

From Imam as-Sadiq, on verse 9:128: “A Prophet, taken from among *us* [instead of: you] has come to *us* [instead of: you]; the evil that weighs upon *us* [instead of: you]; the evil that weighs upon *us* [instead of: you] is heavy upon him; he ardently desires *our* [instead of: your] welfare; he is good and merciful towards believers. (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

From Imam Al-Baqir, on verse 16:24: When it is said to them: “What has your Lord sent down *about Ali?*” they would say: ‘Nothing but ancient fables.’ (Al-‘Ayyashii *Tafsir* 1:51)

From Imam as-Sadiq, on verse 20:115: “In the past we confided to Adam *words about Muhammad, Ali, Fatimah, Al-Hasan, Al-Husayn, and the Imams of their descendents*, but he forgot.” (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

From Imam Ali, on verse 22:52: “Before you, We sent neither a lawgiving prophet nor a non-lawgiving prophet, *nor one inspired by angels*, without Satan intervening in his desires.” (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

Verse 26:227 “Those who have who disbelieved and oppress *the family of the Prophet, denying them their rights*, if only they knew by what overturning they would be overturned.” (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

From Imam as-Sadiq, on verse 33:71: “Whoever obeys God and His Prophet *regarding the holy power of Ali and the Imams after him* will enjoy great happiness.” (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

From Imam ar-Rida, on verse 42:13: “He has established for you, *o Family of Muhammad*, that which he prescribed to Noah in religion, and what We reveal to you, *o Muhammad*, and what We had prescribed to Abraham, to Moses and to Jesus: ‘Establish the religion *of the family of Muhammad*, do not divide yourselves in it, and be united; how hard for the associationists, *those who associate other powers the holy power of Ali*, does that to which you are calling them *through the holy power of Ali* seem. Certainly God *guides* toward this religion, *O Muhammad*, him who repents, *him who accepts your call toward the holy power of Ali*.” [instead of: God chooses and calls to this religion whomever He chooses; He guides toward it him who repents]. (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

Verse 62:9 Jabir narrates: I was with Abu Ja’far one night, and I read to him the verse: “O you who believe! If the call is made to the Friday prayer, then hasten to the remembrance of Allah.” The Imam said: “O Jabir, how did you read it again?” And so Jabir repeated his reading. The Imam said: “This is *tahrif*!” And so Jabir said: “Then how should it be read?” The Imam said: “O you who believe! If the call is made to the Friday prayer, then depart [*madu*] to the remembrance of Allah.” This is how it was sent down (Al-Kulayni *Al-Kafi* 2:618).

From Imam Ali, on verse 70:1-3: “A questioner clamored for ineluctable punishment/For those who do not believe *in the holy power of Ali*, and no one can reject this punishment/That comes from God, the Master of Degrees.” (Amir-Moezzi *Divine Guide* 85)

Are *all* of these narrations made up? If this were the case, then the entirety of the Twelver *hadith* literature would have to be thrown out the window: for if forgery could have reached such an epic level on something so important as the integrity of the Qur’an, then certainly there is no reason to trust these books on anything else. As a result, the whole of Twelver *fiqh* will have to be dispensed with; all of the details related to the five daily prayers (of which there are none in the Qur’an) and other ritual acts will have to be

treated with the utmost suspicion, as they may very well have been forged in the same way as these narrations.

The Twelvers are in the most precarious position. At the very minimum, the huge number of these narrations (which can also be found in Sunni books) should at least give one *doubt* about the authenticity of the Qur'an, which is sufficient to make it a fallible source for deriving the religion of Islam. They have no Qur'an to hold fast to (because any rational soul would lose their certainty in the integrity of the Qur'an after seeing all these narrations), they have *hadith* books which they admit are filled with forgeries, alterations, and mistakes, and yet offer no means of determining the true from the false, they have scholars who seem to agree on the permissibility of child molestation but attack each other on every other issue, and their Imam is completely *incommunicado* and hidden. What, then, are they to do?

All of this contradicts the basic theology of Imamah that all Shi'a sects agree upon: the need for an Infallible Guide, to show people the way towards Truth. In the Twelver corpus of *hadith*, we find this same theme repeated again and again:

Imam as-Sadiq said: "The Earth is never devoid of the Imam: whenever the believers advance too far, he turns them back, and whenever they fall short, he completes them." (Al-Kulayni *Al-Kafi* 1:178)

Imam as-Sadiq said: "I swear by Allah, that the Earth is never devoid of the *hujjah*. He teaches the permissible and the impermissible, and calls the people to the Path of God." (Al-Kulayni *Al-Kafi* 1:178)

One of the Sadiqayn has said: "Indeed, Allah does not leave the Earth without a Learned one. If it were not for that, no one would know the Truth from falsehood." (Al-Kulayni *Al-Kafi* 1:178)

The question is: does the Hidden Twelfth Imam fulfill any of these purposes? If he has left his followers with nothing to go on but doubtful sources, has he really enabled them to distinguish the true from the false? Where is the Light of guidance within Twelver Shi'ism? Perhaps Allah's own words are the clearest criticism of Twelver Shi'ism that one can find:

“And whoever Allah does not give Light, then he shall have no Light.” (24:40)

VIII. Conclusion

Let us recap the Twelver “proofs” for Musa al-Kazim's Imamah:

- 1) That Imam as-Sadiq gave clear *nass* to his Imamah. If this was true, why did Zurarah, the most important *faqih* and *hadith* narrator of the time, become so perplexed after Imam as-Sadiq's death, and had no idea that Musa was going to be the Imam? Why did all of Imam as-Sadiq's followers believe that Isma'il was the Imam, if Imam as-Sadiq had made it clear that Musa was to be the Imam after him? Why did it take Isma'il's alleged death for them to realize that Musa was the Imam, if it had already been foretold by the Prophet and Imam Ja'far himself? None of these questions are answered by the Twelvers.
- 2) That Imam as-Sadiq had begged Allah to make Isma'il the Imam, but Allah refused. This is patently absurd.

3) That Imam as-Sadiq had publicly condemned Imam Isma'il as a sinner. This contradicts the historical evidence that he was the most beloved son of Imam as-Sadiq. This also contradicts all their reports about Imam as-Sadiq begging Allah to make Isma'il the Imam.

4) That Allah had made Isma'il the Imam, but then changed his mind. This idea was so theologically untenable that the Twelvers themselves eventually had to distance themselves from it. The fact that they felt forced to invent such a crass argument is perhaps the most damning proof against their cause.

Based on this study, we have seen the Twelver case against Imam Isma'il is based on scant and contradictory evidences. At best, these narrations are forgeries; but if we analyze those evidences carefully, we see that they tend to *support* the Ismaili claim instead of weakening it. The striking similarity between the "Sinner!" narration and the "No one should say about their child..." narration are, perhaps, the strongest proof that Imam as-Sadiq was attempting to protect his living son from the 'Abbasid authorities.

In any case, the enormous contradictions that we have found in this literature leave us with only two possibilities: either these narrations are forged, in which case we should no longer trust any Twelver claims about Imamah; or, many of these narrations were true, but were uttered in a state of *taqiyyah*. Either way, the Imamah of Imam Isma'il would be confirmed, and so we can consider the case closed.

In conclusion, we may ask: What does Twelver Shi'ism offer its followers? In order for Twelver Shi'ism to be true, we must believe that the Prophet and the Imams

gave a clear, open, and public prophecy to the Muslim community about the coming of the Twelve Imams. Even if we accept Amir-Moezzi's *taqiyyah* thesis, Twelver Shi'as still claim that the Prophet himself made an open proclamation about the Twelve Imams, heard by all of his companions (Shi'a and non-Shi'a included). Somehow, the Sunni 'ulama' managed to remember this prophecy, while the actual Shi'as of the Imams forgot. They mistakenly believed that Imam Isma'il was the successor to Imam Ja'far; obviously, then mistakenly believed that Muhammad ibn Ali an-Naqi was the appointed Imam when it was, in fact, Hasan al-'Askari; and then when Hasan al-'Askari died, they mysteriously forgot that the Prophet and all the Imams had said that there would be twelve Imams, and that the Twelfth Imam would be the last Imam, and that he would be the Mahdi, and that this Mahdi would be in Occultation until he rose with the sword. Then, mysteriously, the Twelver Shi'a regained their memory in the time of scholars like Shaykh as-Saduq, remembered everything the Prophet and Imams said about Twelve Imams, and wrote it in their books of *hadith*. We must also believe that somehow God changed his mind about the Imamah of Isma'il, as well as the Imamah of Muhammad ibn Ali, Hasan al-'Askari's brother, because new facts were presented to Him that He was previously unaware of.

The Twelver argument is specious at best. Their argument seems to be that, because Hasan al-'Askari was the Imam of his time, he must have appointed a successor. Since he died without anybody seeing a successor after him, that successor must have been hidden. The counter-argument, of course, is that Hasan al-Askari may not have been the Imam at all, so therefore there is no necessary proof for his (occulted) successor's existence. As a counter to this, Twelvers will say his Imamah is proved by the Prophet's

specific *nass* on all Twelve Imams, including Hasan al-‘Askari, recorded in both Sunni and Shi’a *hadith* books. Yet, as we have seen, early Shi’as do not seem to have believed in this prophecy at all: even illustrious Twelver scholars like Zurarah or An-Nawbakhti seem to have been totally unaware of this prophecy.

Based on this specious argument, we are then led to an even more absurd conclusion: we are told to believe in a Hidden Guide who is totally out of contact from his followers, who does not teach them anything, and who has left them with nothing to go on except a tampered Qur’an, tampered books of *hadith*, and a group of “Ayatullahs” who openly proclaim the permissibility of child molestation. This, in short, is Twelver Shi’ism, and this is what it has to offer the world. Does it not, now, seem better to accept that line of *living, manifest Imams* who came from the progeny of Isma’il, who taught the world the esoteric *ta’wil*, who liberated the believers from the chains of dry legalism, and offered them the *gnosis* that guarantees salvation?

Ismailism has preserved the office of Imamah. The Ismaili Imams have been emphatic that, in every time and every age, the Imam must be manifest to those who seek him. If this gate were to be closed, then there would be no entrance into the City of Knowledge; without him, the soul will be forever lost. While the Twelvers are told that their Imam has left them and they must blindly submit to the clergy, the Ismaili Imams have taught the reality of a living, present Imam.

IX. Translation of the Chapter on Imam Isma’il from Ja’far ibn Mansur’s *Sarair wa Asrar an-Nutaqa*

Concerning those who disagreed about the four children of Ja'far as-Sadiq – peace be upon him, it is necessary for us to expound the differences between, and to present the truth of the matter. This is because whoever deviates from the truth falls into misguidance. Our guidance in this matter shall be the intellect. Once we disprove the three claimants, then we are left only with the fourth, and we will abandon the one who is non-existent for the one who is existent. We will begin first by discussing the Fatahiyyah, who believe that ['Abd Allah al-Aftah] was the Imam, and that he died many years after Ja'far as-Sadiq.

They say that he was a silent Imam, although he died without a son to succeed him in order to be the Imam after him, who would hold the secret of Allah and his wisdom. The caliph of Allah in His earth is the house of his Light, and the connection between Him and His creation. He is blessed with Divine Support, and is assisted so that he knows the truth to its utmost. There is no doubt that he inherits and is an inheritor, according to the narration from Imam al-Baqir and Imam as-Sadiq that the Imam never dies without leaving a son. [such was the case with 'Abd Allah]

Next we can look at the claim of the Muhamadiyyah, who claim that Muhammad ibn Ja'far was the Imam, and that he manifested him in Makkah and unsheathed his sword there in the sacred month and in the sacred precincts, even though the Muslim community is in unanimous agreement that such a thing is impermissible until the Day of Judgment. After this we see him rising up against the 'Abbasids in their land, after he had lived amongst them. They were the rulers over him, and so he went against the tradition of his grandfather and the Prophets before him, insofar as they did not live in the homes of their enemies, such that they would establish an abode of migration (*dar al-hijrah*)

which they could make themselves safe in, and from which they could fight their enemies, and after which they could fully establish their abode of migration. Insofar as I have seen this man go against the tradition of those who preceded him, we know that if he was the proof of Allah in the Earth, then why did he transgress the ways of his forefathers?

Beyond this, we see that his enemy was victorious over him, and placed a rope around his neck, and dragged him around the various countries and took him to Khurasan. He did not enter a city except that he ascended its pulpit and renounced his claim, and bore witness against himself for his mistakes, and announced that he had been in misguidance. The Shi'a agree that the Imam who rises from Makkah would never humiliate himself. Furthermore, it has been narrated in many narrations from the Prophet that the one who will rise will be one whose "name is my name, and whose father's name is my father's name." [They say] that Ja'far did not have another son named Muhammad, and that it is permissible to call him 'Abd Allah ["servant of Allah," the name of the Prophet's father] insofar as all of creation are the servants of Allah.

This group of people have followed yet another path of misguidance, and we can now turn to the worst of these deviances, which is that concerning the companions of Musa ibn Ja'far. We find them not knowing which of them is the basis for the other, and we find them following the path of those who came before them by claiming that he is still here and alive today, that he has not died and will not die. Yet we have seen him die in the prison of the 'Abbasids, and was cast outside the prison for three days until all the people saw him, and then we had buried.

His enemies triumphed over him, and divided up his inheritance, and his wives, the [alleged] mothers of the believers, married his enemies after him. He did not have a successor who prevented them from marrying in this impermissible manner...The Imam who rises with the command is established for the sake of the creation, and the creation is needy towards him. If he is invisible to the eyes, then people will await his return, so what is the benefit of whoever comes after him? Who will people go to ask about the permissible and impermissible, about the obligations and judgments? Who will establish for them the limits of Allah, and who will adjudicate between them? If we are cut off the Existing One, then we will turn to his servants, but in the course of doing this we will be attributing injustice to the Creator. When we disagree about things, we will be forced to make recourse to personal opinion and analogy, and this is not the way of the Wise One who orders people to listen, and it is foolish to order one to obey one who is absent.

If we were to allow this, then we would be ordered to serve one who is not born, and we would be forced to wait until he is born just as we wait for someone hidden to return...

Allah has order us to follow the Prophets, and to follow their *sunnah* after them, for He has said: "You have in the Prophet the most beautiful example." The word of the Prophet is for the believers, not the scum whom Allah does not care about. He has told the Prophet to say: "If you love Allah, then follow me, and Allah will love you," and said: "Call upon Allah with insight, myself and those who follow me."

We see that this sect calls for the opposite of what we call to. We must abandon them and leave their Imams who allow such a thing...We find that all those follow this sect are unanimous that the Imamah then passed to his son Ahmad ibn Musa, known as

Ali ar-Rida, who was chosen as the successor to [the ‘Abbasid caliph] Al-Ma’mun, and whose name was inscribed on the official coins, and was made the guardian of his covenant and the Imam after him. He served Ma’mun, and none of the ‘Alids and the Shi’ites doubted that he would be the Imam after Ma’mun. But he was concerned in his intellect, just as Mu’awiyah ibn Yazid ibn Mu’awiyah [a Shi’ite] was concerned that his father had stolen the rights of the people of truth, and so desired that it be returned to him.

And so Ma’mun gathered together the jurists and the scholars from all the lands, and returned Fadak to the children of Fatimah, after establishing the proof over them. All of this was a trick from the Lord of the Command, and he did not find anyway unto his hiding place or to make him manifest. When Ma’mun saw all of this and became doubtful, saw the ‘Alids gathering towards him, he wished to unveil the Lord of the Command and find him. He waited until the appropriate time. Letters were exchanged because the ‘Abbasids were afraid of what would occur because of the way they had treated the ‘Alids forefathers. They hoped that, if they were successful, that they would be able to track down the Lord of the Command. The ‘Alids knew that the command would return to them, and this information reached a man who was heading towards Sham for the *wali* of the age, whose abode of migration was Jerusalem.

The Lord of the Island [a part of the Ismaili *da’wa*] wrote to him, and expended his effort in seeking the pleasure of Allah and the hereafter. He struggled as was appropriate for the time, until he met up with this man, struggling for the sake of Allah, as is due to Allah. When Ma’mun spoke to this messenger, he said that he hoped that he would find the Hidden Proof that he was seeking, the Ever-Expanding Blessing, and Gift from the Door of Mercy, the one who is Present. The man replied to him in the negative,

telling him that it was a mercy that Ma'mun not find the man he was looking for. What happened after this is too long to discuss in this book. But eventually the man extended his hand, a hand that was once closed to the Truth and the open paradise, and realized who his Lord was, and was given the light of guidance, and allowed to sit in his presence.

The Imam continued on the path of those who came before, and was left in his situation until the time was appropriate for his manifestation, which was a fixed and appointed time. The messenger spent much time struggling to serve the Imam, and did not cease discussing with him about everything until he reached perfection. The Imam saw that the man had strengthened his affair and become correct in his religion, and turned away from what he had been following before, and so he left.

When Ma'mun thought about all this to himself, Ali ibn Musa came to him and asked him about some issues that were derived from the Qur'an and the Torah and the Gospel, concerning the affairs of past people, and the traditions of the prophets...When he didn't find this knowledge in Ali ibn Musa, he knew that the sight of the masses had been deceived, and that he had deviated from true knowledge, and knew that the wisdom of Allah was hidden from the enemies of the religion, and that those who sit in the gatherings of the Imams of Guidance were hiding away until the time for the Imam's manifestation...

After Ali ibn Musa, another sect arose which claimed Imamah for his five year old son. However, the Shi'a agree that the Imam does not go until he leaves behind a son who is mature and rightful for Imamah and for the heritage of the Prophets. And we know that a boy from the age of five to ten is not subject to the law, nor is he allowed to give witness, nor is his intellect ready, and that it is not permissible to except the

testimony of he who it is not permissible to pray behind, and that you cannot eat the meat slaughtered by such a child. We have never seen anybody from the ancient Jews or Christians present something like this. When Aaron was about to die, he made Joshua his guardian over his son, just as Ismail ibn Ibrahim made the Ram his successor over his son, as it is said by Allah “And we ransomed him with a great ransom” and “We have given a great blessing to him and to Ishaq.” Ismail was called the Ram, just as Moses was called the cow, because when his brother disappeared, he gathered the people before him and told them to sacrifice a cow. He saw: “The Imam who is the caliph of Allah in His Earth orders you to accept the appointment of a Proof who will establish his command...

How can one inherit who the Law does not even apply to? The inheritance, according to you and us, is by the command of Allah, and that the Inheritor is always appointed by the one before him. So is it permissible in the most exoteric aspect of the affair that a child who is immune to the law should inherit?

After this they broke up into many factions concerning different children, until they finally decided upon Muhammad ibn Hasan [the Twelfth Imam]. He was Abyssinian, and they held fast to his Imamah, and they do not doubt that he is awaited and will free them from the shackles of the Pharaoh, and that he is the Lord of the Religion and the World. They claim that the Prophet indicated towards him, and narrate *hadiths* that it would require too much time and effort to explain. They attribute miracles to him that are not attributed to others, such as the story about him travelling with a group of his companions, and the man narrating the story said to his friend: “I wonder if this man knows what I am thinking in my heart.” His friend said: “If he does know what we are thinking in our hearts, then let him move his turban.” And after a short period of time

he did move his turban, long enough to be a test for his follows. Is a miracle like this attributed to anybody other than Easy? This are the sorts of things they say, and the explanation of them is outside the scope of this work. Hasan died and left no one to succeed him.

It is said that he had many wives, so Allah should have left him with a son, and Allah is certainly most concerned about something like this. It is reported that after him that a people sought the various taxes [due to the Imam] and wanted to take the money that was set aside for the orphans [part of the Imam's task], so they went to a slave-girl of his whose name was Safil, and gave her a house of her own. They waited for a report of her being pregnant, and said that the Awaited Imam was inside her belly [waiting to be born]. This is the hope of those who were doing nothing but seeking the money of weak-minded people.

It is then reported [strangely] that when he manifests nobody will see him except an illegitimate child. This is nothing but anger at the world, not mercy. If Hasan had a son, then it would invalidate the Prophet of Allah's words that the Imam does not rise until his successor has matured. Hasan al-'Askari died 120 years ago, and the people are serving that which does not exist. Do they actually ascribe to Allah such injustice that He would order his people to serve that which does not exist? This would invalidate the words of the Prophet that "Whoever dies without knowing the Imam of his Age, dies the death of ignorance." So who is the Imam that you call us to? Who do you go to, to question about the affairs of your religion? You are following nothing but a non-existent being. Sometimes you say he is in the Radawi mountain, other times that he is in the desert, other times that he is in the ocean ready to come out to the world and separate

between the living and dead. The eyes have not become blind, but it is the hearts that are blind. You are well aware that the Imams who hold the command from Husayn are dedicated to worship and asceticism in the *dunya*, and enter the cave of *taqiyyah* [religious dissimulation], and order their Shi'ahs to follow this, and this is what is narrated from Imam as-Sadiq: "*Taqiyyah* is my religion and the religion of my forefathers. Whoever has no *taqiyyah*, has no religion."

The missionaries of the Imams are sent out to all the areas of the earth to call people towards guidance, and to order them to veiling and concealment until the appropriate time to manifest themselves comes. They do this out of fear of the Pharaohs of the time. They conceal the Lord of Truth and make *taqiyyah* necessary, as Imam as-Sadiq said. The Imam's missionaries travel through the Earth as the Messiah did, seeking an abode of migration that they can take refuge in, and this happens whenever the Antagonist takes control of a Prophet's abode of migration. This is in accordance with the promise of the Prophet: "The sun will rise upon us from the west."

Just as his forefather Abraham, who is the basis for this Law, had Lot seek out an abode of migration, and set one up in Syria, and fled from the land of his Antagonist and liberated the believers from there and from the humiliation of being there. After this he established the rulings of the religion, and taught the believers who were tempered by the missionaries. Missionaries were brought from all the horizons, and took the covenant from them, and held fast to their Imams. When his hand becomes strong, he wages war, and this is the piety of the believers. He divides the booty up amongst them, just as the Prophet did. When he becomes strong and his power becomes great, we will migrate to

the sacred precincts of his grandfather and will take back what has been stolen. He will liberate those believers who were left behind, and will destroy the enemies of the faith.

Is there any more need for proof here? Is this not the way of the Imams who came before, and the caliphs of the past? Tell me that your Imams are like this, if you even know. When the signs of the Imam become manifest, and his flags are raised, and his call is established, and his signs and broofs are made manifest, he will manifest himself over his enemies and those who hate him. You say the Prophet said there will never be another Prophet sent after Muhammad, and he said: "Indeed, my Lord has promised me that the sun will rise from the West," and the esoteric meaning of this refers to the Imams.

Just as the day rises at dawn, you have become like the Sunnis who have become blind, not realizing that the sun which you see will return to Ali ibn Abi Tailb, and that it is the sun of caliphate after the Prophet of Allah. This is no different then the return of the sun to Joshua after Aaron. Does this proof need anymore? It is necessary to accept the belief that Ismail took hold of the command after his father. We have come with proofs that can only be denied by the most obstinate rejector. The secret of his belief has become manifest. They hope to extinguish the Light of Allah, but Allah will complete His Light even if the disbelievers are averse. When his death was announced, his companions gathered together, and the command was passed to Ismail, who was made the Gate of Allah and His prayer niche, the house of His Light, the connection between Him and His Creation, and the caliph of Allah in His earth.

You and we both agree on this concerning Ismail son of Abraham and Harun and Musa. You say that there was no change in decree as there was concerning Ismail. This is a clear contradiction, for if this were the case then the affair would return to Ja'far, and

would not move about randomly. You have prohibited entrance to the mosques of Allah in which His Name is recited, and worked to destroy them, and become like the verse of Allah: “They are not allowed to enter the mosques of Allah except in fear, and they will have only humiliation in this worldly life.”

Allah certainly did not give Ismail the caliphate knowing that he was going to die, as you suggest. You have forgotten that change in Divine decree and will occurs in everything except Imamah, and the words of the Prophet that “His name will be my name, and his fathers name will be like my father’s name.” Or, in another narration, “Gabriel my beloved told me from the Lord of the Universe that a man from my progeny will emerge at the end of time, his name like my name and the name of his father like the name of my father, calling people to the most radiant religion of Allah in a time where apostasy is rampant and where Islam and the Law have been lost. All of that will happen because of the various misguidances they have fallen into, and so they will be brought out of the misguidance of chaos and endless disputing, and they will be brought out of it just as I brought you out of polytheism in the age of ignorance.” You lie, and you attack the call to Allah, and you call him a liar and a sorcerer. You do what the earlier generations did, just as the later generations will, even though Imam as-Sadiq has said: “If one of you brought me the head of my son, then do not doubt that he is the Imam after me,” or his statement “The one who is between my two hands here, he is the Imam after me, so what ever you take from him, you have taken it from me.” (Ja’far ibn Mansur *Sara’ir wa Asrar an-Nutaqa* 248-256).

