

The Awaited Mahdi And Dissensions

All Islamic groups agree on a man who appears at the end of time to fill the world with justice and equity and establish the government of righteousness over all parts of the earth as a testimony to this verse:

“Before this We wrote in the Psalms, after the message (had been given to Moses): My servants, the righteous, shall inherit the earth” (Qurʿān, 21: 105),

and also this verse:

“And We wished to be gracious to those who were being oppressed in the land, to make them leaders (in faith) and to make them the heirs” (Qurʿān, 28:5),

and also this verse:

“They would fain extinguish Allāh’s light with their mouths, but Allāh will not allow but that His light should be perfected, even though the unbelievers may detest (it). It is He who has sent His Prophet with guidance and the religion of truth to proclaim it over all religions, even though the pagans may detest (it)” (Qurʿān, 9:32–33).

The Chosen One (ﷺ) clarified that this awaited man is from among his own family; he (ﷺ) said, “The world will not come to an end before the Arabs are ruled by a man from among my own family whose name is similar to mine..., etc.”¹

Abū Saʿūd al-Khudri is quoted as having said that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “The Hour shall not come till the earth is filled with oppression, suppression and animosity, then will come out of my family one who will fill it with equity and justice after being filled with oppression and transgression.”²

Abū Hurayra is quoted as having cited the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) as saying, “If only one day remained of the life in this world, Allāh, the most Exalted One, the most Great, would have prolonged it till a man from among my Ahlul Bayt (‘a) rules the Daylam Mountain and Constantinople.”³

Umm Salamah is quoted as having cited the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) saying, “Al-Mahdi is from among

my offspring, from the offspring of Fātima (‘a).” The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said that Jesus, peace be upon him, would appear at the end of time and would pray behind al-Mahdi. Abū Hurayra quotes the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) as saying, “How will you be if the son of Maryam (Mary) descends among you and your own Imām is your king?!”⁴

Al-Hafidh, in *Sharh Sahīh al-Bukhārī*, has said, “Narratives are consecutively reported that al-Mahdi is from this nation, and that Jesus son of Mary will descend and pray behind him.”⁵ The Fiqh Assembly of the Muslim World League (Rabitat al-Aalam al-Islami) issued the following *fatwa* (verdict) dated May 31, 1976 about the Awaited Mahdi: “Al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, is Muhammad ibn Abdullāh al-Hasani al-Alawi al-Fatimi al-Mahdi, the Awaited One. The time of his appearance is at the end of time, and it [appearance] is one of the signs of the Great Hour.

He shall come out from the west, and he will receive the oath of allegiance in Hijaz, in Venerable Mecca, between the Rukn and Maqam [of Ibrahim], between the Honored Ka’ba and the fixed Black Stone. He will appear when there is a great deal of corruption, when disbelief spreads and when people oppress, and he will fill the earth with justice and equity just as it was filled with injustice and oppression.

He shall rule the entire world and everyone will be his subject, once through conviction and once through war. He shall rule the earth for seven years, and Jesus, peace be upon him, will descend after him and kill the Dajjāl [anti-Christ] or descends with him and helps him kill him at the Ludd Gate on the land of Palestine. And he is the last of the twelve righteous caliphs about whom the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke as recorded in the *Sahīh* books... The belief in the appearance of al-Mahdi is obligatory, and it is one of the tenets of the followers of Sunnah and Jamā’ah and is not denied except by one who is ignorant of the Sunnah and one who brings an innovation into the creed.”⁶

Hence, Sunnis agree with the Shā’ahs that Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) is the last of the Twelve Caliphs about whom the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) gave the glad tidings, and both parties agree on most other points relevant to the Awaited Imām. As regarding their differences in his regard, these are:

First: Most Sunnis believe Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) will be born at the end of time, while the Shā’ahs believe he was born in 255 A.H. (869 A.D.) to his father Imām al-Hasan al-Askari (‘a), the twelfth among the Imāms from among Ahlul Bayt (‘a), but Allah Almighty veiled him from the eyes for a wisdom which He decreed, and he remains alive and will come out at the end of the time.

Second: Sunnis, as in the above-quoted *fatwa*, believe al-Mahdi (‘atfs) is a descendant of al-Hasan (‘a) and the name of his father is Abdullāh based on a narrative recorded by them: “... His name shall be similar to mine, and the name of his father similar to my father’s,” whereas Shā’ahs believe al-Mahdi (‘atfs) descends from Imām al-Husayn (‘a) and was born to his father al-Hasan al-Askari. (‘a).

The latest narrative they report as follows: “... His name shall be similar to mine, and his father’s name similar to my son’s”, a reference to the Prophet’s grandson al-Hasan (‘a). Some Sunni writers tried to criticize and charge the Shā’ahs for their belief in the birth of the Awaited Imām and in his holding the

reigns of Imāmate at the age of five.

This criticism is mostly rendered to fanaticism due to their own conviction. Anything contrary to their conviction or to what they have been accustomed to or have inherited, they immediately pass their judgment on it as “invalid” without looking into the arguments of others. Our response to this is:

First: There are many Sunni scholars who believe al-Mahdi (‘atfs) is Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Askari (‘a), and that he is still alive [and in occultation] till Allāh permits him to come out. They, thus, are in agreement with what the Imāmite Twelver Shā’ahs say. Among these scholars are:

1. Muhyi ad-Dīn ibn al-‘Arabi in *Futūḥ al-Makkiyya*.
2. Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzi in his book *Tadhkirat al-Khawṣṣ*.
3. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Shā’rāni in his book *Aqā’id al-Akḥbir*.
4. Ibn al-Khashshāb in his book *Tawārīkh Mawā’id al-‘Aimma w Wafiyatihim*.
5. Muhammad al-Bukhārī al-Hanafī in his book *Fasl al-Khitāb*.
6. Ahmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Balḥadhuri in his book *Al-Hadīth al-Mutasalsil*.
7. Ibn al-Sabbāgh al-Māliki in his book *Al-Fuṣūl al-Muhimma*.
8. The man of knowledge Abd al-Rahmān in his book *Mir’at al-Asrār*.
9. Kamāl ad-Dīn ibn Talḥah in his book *Matlib al-Su’al fī Manāqib al-Rasūl*.
10. Al-Qandūzi al-Hanafī in his book *Yanābi’ al-Mawadda*.

And there are others, too.⁷

Second: There is no evidence from the Sharā’ah proving the opposite. The occultation of the Awaited Imām has many similar miracles about which the Holy Qur’ān informs us. Noah, peace be upon him, remained in his people for 950 years calling them to the way of Allāh:

“... and he stayed among them a thousand years less fifty” (Qur’ān, 29: 14).

He, of course, lived longer than that. The Fellows of the Cave remained asleep for 309 years. Allāh Almighty raised Jesus, peace be on him, to Him, saved him from being killed and will send him back to this world at the end of time. Al-Khidir, too, peace be upon him, remains alive veiled from our eyes.

As regarding the tender age of al-Mahdi (‘atfs) when he received the reigns of Imāmate following the death of his father, al-Hasan al-Askari (‘a), the eleventh in the series of the Imāms from among Ahlul Bayt (‘a), there are similar and even greater miracles than that. Allāh made Jesus son of Mary, peace be

upon him, a prophet even as he was a suckling infant in the cradle:

“But she pointed to the babe. They said, ‘How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?!’ He said, ‘I am, indeed, a servant of Allāh: He has given me Revelation and made me a prophet...’” (Qurʿān, 19:29–30).

And Allāh granted authority to Yahya (John the Baptist) while still a child: “O Yahya! Take hold of the Book firmly.’ And We granted him wisdom even as a youth” (Qurʿān, 19: 12).

If anyone says that these miracles were for the prophets, we say that there is no evidence from the Sharʿah pointing to miracles coming to a halt after the demise of the greatest Prophet (ﷺ). Miracles are not only for prophets. The fellows of the cave were not prophets.

Even the master of devils, Iblis, Allāh extended his life–span till the Hour. On the other hand, those who object to the belief in the occultation of the Awaited Imām, their objection is rendered to their ignorance of his status and the truth about him. Al–Mahdi (ʿatfs) will be the Imām of Jesus, peace be upon him, whom Allāh made a prophet even while a suckling babe in the cradle.

Thus, had the Sunnis come to know and realize that Allāh Almighty is the One Who chose the Twelve Imāms from among the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) to be the successors of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the custodians of Muhammad’s Message, their astonishment about the care with which Allāh surrounded the seal of these Imāms–till He brings him back and completes His victory for the clear righteousness and make his creed dominate all other creeds–will surely disappear and will have no excuse.

Most Sunnis are not surprised about what they have accepted through their own avenues, or from anything with which their sect agrees; rather, they accept it and take it for granted whether it be about these miracles mentioned in the Holy Qurʿān and about which nobody of course can raise any doubt, but this consideration includes what they have taken from the narratives in the *Sahāh* books of both al–Bukhārī and Muslim.

As they narrate, for example, Allāh descends to the lower earth at the end of the night; He uncovers His leg; He puts His foot in Hell on the day of Judgment (we seek refuge with Allāh against such beliefs), or the possibility of the Prophet (ﷺ) forgetting or falling under the influence of wizardry or his forgetting the text of the Qurʿān, or Moses, peace be upon him, gouging the eyes of the Angel of Death, or the *imān* of Abū Bakr weighting greater than that of the entire nation..., or the vision of ‘Umar piercing through thousands of miles in what is known as the incident of Sariya which is famous among the Sunnis, or their statement that “Had there been a prophet after me, he would have been ‘Umar,” or their saying that the angels are shy of ‘Uthmān..., in addition to many, many such tales which most of them accept as they are and despite the existence of many faults in them. As regarding what others believe, they reject it altogether, denying it without even looking into it or researching it.

I am sure had the belief in the occultation of the Awaited Imām been incorporated in their doctrine, the

Sunnis would not have surrounded it with any doubt, nor would they have questioned it! In this regard, I recall many interesting incidents which I encountered as I talked with some brothers. One of them, while denying the legitimacy of the *mut'a* marriage, which the Shā'ahs believe as legitimate, he did not know that Islam did not ban slavery, so he was attacking it because it [slavery] did not agree with his mentality.

And when I explained to him that all the Sunnis believe in its being *harām*, he immediately expressed his agreement with them. As for the *mut'a* marriage, and although he never saw anything supporting banning it in al-Bukhārī's *Sahāh*, he insisted he was not convinced of it for no reason except that all the Sunnis believe it is *harām*!

What is more funny than this, I used to tell others during my defense of the guidance which I received and the following of the Straight Path of Ahlul Bayt ('a) that the Shā'ahs believe the Prophet (ﷺ) forgot some verses of the Qur'ān or that a Jew was able to bewitch him or the story of the encounter between Moses and the angel of death, etc., they strongly rejected all of that and ridiculed such beliefs!

And When I explained to them that these are the same beliefs because of which the Shā'ahs criticize the Sunnis and which are fixed in the most "authentic" Sunni books of *hadīth*, such as al-Bukhārī's *Sahāh*, for example, some of them used to turn to defend them and to find a justification for them, insisting on upholding them, and this is nothing but what is called a blind sectarian fanaticism.

Nothing will avail in confronting it when one comes face-to-face with the truth because closing the eye about them does not mean their non-existence. The similitude of such people is, as you know, that of the ostrich.

Contrary to what some people imagine, the Awaited Imām ('atfs), despite the belief of all Islamic sects of his appearance at the end of time, they will differ about him when he does appear, and this will be the subject of a great test for all the Muslims, even for all those who follow heavenly creeds, for the Jews and the Christians, too, believe in the coming of a Promised Savior.

Narratives have told the Muslims that they will be tested with regard to the Dajjīl who will fight al-Mahdi ('atfs), so much so that many of them will fight on the side of this Dajjīl whom some narratives describe as the one-eyed Dajjīl.

The truth, as I see it, is further than what some Sunnis believe, that is, that on the forehead of this Dajjīl, the word "Kāfir" [unbeliever] will be written. In such a case, it is highly unlikely that any Muslim will be tested in his regard so long as he can read this word which tells the truth about him. As for the claim of some of them that only a believer will be able to read that word on the Dajjīl's forehead, this, too, is rejected because the result of the test will then have been determined even before seeing that Dajjīl.

There is no sense in such a case in the dissension to which the narratives have referred. The same applies to their claim that he will be one-eyed. For this reason, I used to wonder in the past about: How

can the Muslims not swear the oath of allegiance to al-Mahdi ('atfs) when he appears, or how can they even fight him despite their waiting for his appearance and their conviction that Allāh will grant him victory??!!

But I, after conducting my research in the issue of the difference between the Sunnis and the Shā'ahs, came to know that the strong tie this man enjoys according to the beliefs of the Shā'ahs, especially their belief that he is their Twelve Imām. This dissension became more clear than before. When the Awaited Imām appears according to the descriptions of the Shā'ahs, they will swear the oath of allegiance to him at the same time when the fanatics from among the Sunnis will immediately say that this Mahdi ('atfs) is Shi'i and not the one for whom we have been waiting who undoubtedly should be Sunni!

We can feel the effects of this same dissension in our contemporary life through the criticism and the charges launched by Sunni fanatics against the Islamic revolution in Iran and against the man who exploded it. In most cases, they winked at him for no reason whatsoever except his being a Shā'ah!

They did so without their knowledge of those behind this dissension, those who fuel it from among our own people whom the enemies of this nation have employed for this contemptible purpose. This is so despite the fact that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) had already given us glad tidings about such a blessed renaissance and those behind it in one *hadīth* recorded by al-Bukhārī in his *Sahīh* where he relies on the authority of Abū Hurayra who has said, "We were sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ) when the Jum'a [Friday] Sūra [Qur'ānic Chapter] was revealed:

'... As well as (to confer all these benefits upon) others who have not already joined them' (Qur'ān, 62:3).

I said, 'Who are these people, O Messenger of Allāh?' He did not answer till we asked him about them three times, and Salmān al-Fārisī was present among us. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) put his hand on Salmān then said, 'Had [the means to acquire] *imān* (conviction) been in Venus, it would have been acquired by men [or a man] from among these [Persians].'"⁸

Allāh Almighty has also referred in His Exalted Book to these folks when he said,

"Behold! You are those invited to spend in Allāh's way, but some among you are stingy. Yet any who are stingy are so at the expense of their own souls. But Allāh is free of all needs, and it is you who are needy. If you turn back (from the path), He will substitute another people in your place; then they will not be like you!" (Qur'ān, 47:38).

Abū Hurayra has said that when the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) recited this verse, he was asked, "O Messenger of Allāh! Who are these people who, if we run away [from our religious obligations], they will replace us and will not be like us?" He (ﷺ) patted Salmān's thigh then said, "This man and his people. Had the creed been in Venus, men from among the Persians would have acquired it."⁹

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) also drew attention to the group of people that will take upon itself to create

dissension among the Muslims in our time. Ibn ‘Umar has said, “The Prophet (ﷺ) once said, ‘O Allah! Bless our Syria! O Allah! Bless our Yemen!’ They asked him, “What about our Najd?!” He (ﷺ) said, ‘O Allah! Bless our Syria! O Allah! Bless our Yemen!’ They again asked him, ‘O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)! What about our Najd?’ I believe his third statement included the following: ‘It is there that shall be earthquakes and dissensions, and it is from there that the horn of Satan shall come out.’” 10

I could not interpret the dissension referred to in this *hadith* except with Wahhabism whose inventor, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, was born in one of the villages of Najd called ‘Uyayna. This group of people hid under the cover of Tawhīd which they used as a forefront to hide the vile objectives behind charging other sects, especially the one that follow Ahlul Bayt (‘a), with apostasy and *shirk*.

For example, they regard pleading to Allah through the medium of the prophets and righteous servants of His as a great innovation despite the presence of what contradicts this belief in al-Bukhārī’s *Sahih* and in what caliph ‘Umar had done.

Anas has said, “‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb, may Allah be pleased with him, used to seek help from al-Abbās ibn Abd al-Muttalib in praying for rain. He said, ‘Lord! We used to plead to You in the name of our Prophet, so you would grant us water, and we now plead to You in the name of the uncle of our Prophet , so do let rain water descend upon us.’ And they would thus get rain water.” 11

As for the reason why Wahhabism has so much concentrated on this issue, it is because the followers of Ahlul Bayt (‘a) were known more than others to uphold and to respect the sanctity of the person of the glorious Prophet (ﷺ) and the infallible Imāms after him because they realize their great status with Allah Almighty. They are the ones without whom mankind would not have been guided to the Straight Path of Allah, and mankind would have kept their ignorance and misguidance.

Suffices for an answer to Wahhabism and to its inventor what is recorded by al-Bukhārī in his *Sahih* that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has said, “Some people will come out from the east and recite the Qur’ān; it will not go beyond their throats. They abandon the creed as swiftly as an arrow abandons its bow, then they shall not return to it till the arrow returns to its bow.” He was asked, “What is their mark?” He said, “Their mark is *tahleeq* (shaving),” or he said “al-tasbeed” (shaving the head) 12.

The meaning of “tasbeed” is the same as has been quoted in this sacred *hadith*: “Ibn Abbās came and his head was *musbad*,” that is, shaven¹³. This has become the “trade mark” of the Wahhabis as is known from their history.

Al-Mahdi (‘atfs) will come to support the downtrodden on earth against all arrogant powers; so, what do you expect from his enemies? Will they not try to use the hypocrites from among the Muslims, the sultans’ preachers and the imāms of misguidance to fight this new comer? Can you not see how in our own days, how the ruler of Iraq, who earned a reputation for his sins and apostasy, was able to deceive millions of Muslims who went out shouting his name when he pretended to have *imān* and to rely on Allah and announce *jihad* against the unbelievers and the polytheist people till many naive people

thought this Dajj[ﷺ] became the Muslims' Im[am] in truth?!

This suffices to point to what the conditions of the Muslims can be once they are exposed to greater and harder events. The Chosen One (ﷺ) explained what the Muslims should do in order to guarantee their salvation from drowning in the swamp of these dissensions after his departure from this world: by upholding His Book and [at the same time] by following the Pure 'Itra from among his Ahlul Bayt ('a) as we explained in the first Chapter.

Hudhayfah ibn al-Yam[an] has said, "People used to ask the Messenger of All[ah] (ﷺ) about goodness, and I used to ask him about evil, fearing it might involve me. I said, 'O Messenger of All[ah]! We used to be in *j[ahiliyya]* and in evil, then All[ah] brought us all this goodness. Will there be evil after this goodness?' He (ﷺ) said, 'Yes.' I said, 'And will there be after that evil goodness?'

He (ﷺ) said, 'Yes, and it will have smudge in it.' I asked him (ﷺ), 'What is its smudge?' He (ﷺ) said, 'People guide others without themselves being rightly guided. What you will know about them you will detest.' I said, 'Will there be after such goodness evil?' He (ﷺ) said, 'Yes, callers at the gates of hell; whoever responds to their call to it they hurl him into it.' I said, 'O Messenger of All[ah]! Describe them for us.'

He (ﷺ) said, "They are from our own folks and they speak our [Arabic] tongue.' I said, 'What do you order me to do should I live to see that?' He (ﷺ) said, 'Uphold the Muslim masses and their *im[am]*.' I said, 'What if they have neither masses nor an *im[am]*?' He (ﷺ) said, 'Then stay aloof from all these groups even if you have to bite on a tree's root till death comes to your rescue and you are in such a condition.'" 14

This *had[ith]* clearly explains to us the obligation of upholding the Muslim masses and their *im[am]*, and that when there is confusion about the issue, and when one cannot know the truth, the Prophetic instruction directs us to remain silent. This *had[ith]* also makes it clear that the callers stand at the gates of hell; whoever responds to their call, they hurl him into it, that they are not from among the non-Arabs but from among the Arabs, something which stresses what the previous *ah[ad]ith* have stated regarding the innovating group of people.

The fact is that this dissension in which we pass nowadays and against falling into its nets did the Messenger of All[ah] (ﷺ) warn us, we are obligated to take extreme caution by selecting the path which safely helps us reach the Sunnah of the Chosen One (ﷺ), especially when there are so many paths the number of which reaches seventy-three—according to some narratives—and each one of these paths (sects) claims it is on the right track. But the Messenger of All[ah] (ﷺ) explained to us that only one of them will receive salvation; others will not.

All[ah] has promised to support the saved group. Says the Prophet (ﷺ), "A group from among my nation shall remain on the path of righteousness; they are not harmed by those who differ from them, till All[ah]'s command comes." A Muslim nowadays has become perplexed, feeling strange about all what takes

place around him of this great fuss, of the grand dissension, seeing himself required to take a second look at his Islamic creed and likewise at many significant events in our Islamic history, something which is considered as a testimony to what the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) has already said: “Islam started foreign and shall return foreign just as it started...”

Undoubtedly, anyone who takes a discerning look at our Islamic history and at our status quo, contemplating upon what Ahlul Bayt (‘a) had to endure, especially the Imams from among them, at the calamities, trials and tribulations, at the persecution to which they were exposed, and if he thinks about the reason why the truth has become lost among the Sunnis..., he will realize the meaning of Islam returning foreign.

It seems such a return has already taken place especially during the last few years. A part of the darkness which the oppressors spread on following this path, across centuries, and in testimony to what the Chosen One, the Guide (ﷺ), has already articulated thus: “We are members of a Household for whom Allāh has chosen the Hereafter over the world.

My Ahlul Bayt (‘a) shall face after me discrimination, hardship and exile in the land till some people rise from there—and he pointed with his hand towards the east—people who carry black flags; they will ask for what is right, but they will not be given it, so they will fight and achieve victory; they will be given whatever they want, and they will not accept it till they pass it on to a man from among my Ahlul Bayt (‘a) who will fill it with justice just as it was filled with oppression. Anyone who lives to see that taking place, he must go to them even if he has to crawl on ice.”¹⁵

Lord! Do hasten his honorable ease and make us among those who march behind his flag. And the last of our supplication is: Praise be to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds, and greetings and salutations upon our master, Muhammad, and his good and pure Progeny.

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1. Al-Tirmidhi, Sahih, Vol. 9, p. 74. Abū Dāwūd, Vol. 2, p. 7. Ahmad, Musnad, Vol. 1, p. 376.
 2. Mustadrak al-Sahihayn, Vol. 4, p. 557. Ahmad, Musnad, Vol. 3, p. 36.
 3. Ibn Majah, Sahih, in a chapter about ijthad.
 4. Muslim, Sahih, Vol. 1, p. 373 in a chapter about Jesus son of Mary descending (Dār al-Sha‘ab edition).
 5. Fath al-Bārī, Vol. 5, p. 362.
 6. Mu‘amarat al-Mutajjirin bid-Dīn [plot of those who trade in religion], p. 29.
 7. I took these references from the book titled Li Akoona Ma‘a al-Sadiqin (So I May be with the Truthful) by ‘allama Dr. Muhammad al-Sam‘awi al-Tajani, p. 196.
 8. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 6, p. 390 in the book of tafsir in a chapter about “... As well as (to confer all these benefits upon) others who have not already joined them”.
 9. Refer to the books of Tafsir by Ibn Kathir, al-Qurtubi, al-Tabari and Al-Durr al-Manthar.
 10. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 9, p. 166 in the book of dissensions in a chapter about a dissension from the east.
 11. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 66 in the book of praying for rain.
 12. Ibid., Vol. 9, p. 489 in the book of tawhid in a chapter about the recitation by a sinner and a hypocrite.
 13. Shaykh Imam Muhammad ibn Abū Bakr al-Razi, Mukhtār al-Sihh, p. 282 (published by Dār al-Turath al-‘Arabi for

publication and distribution).

14. Al-Bukhārī, Saḥīḥ, Vol. 9, p. 159 in the book of dissensions in a chapter about “What if there is no Jam‘a?”

15. Ibn Mājah, Sunan, Vol. 2, ahādīth No. 4082 and 4087. Al-Tabari, Tārīkh.

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