

ALLAMAH AL-HILLI ON IMAMATE IN HIS *KASHFUL MURAD*, PART III

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ABSTRACT: This series is a list of responses to objections raised against Imamate from prominent scholar Allamah Hilli's *Kashf ul-Murād*, expanded on from Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's *Tajrid al-I'tiqād* – the first treatise on Shi'i theology. *Kashful Murad* is one of the most widely read of Allamah al-Hilli's publications as it is the first commentary written on Allamah al-Tusi's work. The concept of Imamate in Shi'i Islam refers to the necessity of having a divinely-appointed leader who will lead the Islamic nation after the Prophet's death. An Imam who exceeds all people in every virtue whether it be piety, knowledge, or bravery, and who justly leads the people and guides them towards morality is a grace of God. The previous parts included discussions such as on the proofs for the Imamate of Ali, the rules concerning those opposed to his leadership, and the proofs for his authority over the companions that qualify him for leadership such as his courage, insight, asceticism and devotion, and patience. This part expands on Imam Ali's close relationship to the Prophet, expounds on well-known hadiths on the Imam's faith and merits, and his immeasurable services to Islam.

The Seventh Issue Continued

Allamah al-Tusi: Imam Ali had the distinction of being the closest relative of the Prophet.

Allamah al-Hilli: Imam Ali was the closest relative of the Messenger of God, therefore he is superior to all others; and as he is a Hashemite (a descendant of Hashim)¹, he is superior. The Prophet said, "God chose the Quraysh, the twelfth ancestor of the Prophet, from the children of Ishmael, and He chose Hashim (the second ancestor of the Prophet) from the children of the Quraysh.

Allamah al-Tusi: And because of the brotherhood of Ali.²

Allamah al-Hilli: The Prophet saw that Ali seemed troubled and asked him about the reason. Ali replied, "You have established brotherhood amongst your companions, but you have left me alone [i.e., but have not made me the brother of anyone]". The Messenger of God responded:

I postponed the question of your brotherhood for the reason that I desired to become your brother when brotherhood among all others had been completed. Will you not be pleased to be my brother, executor and the successor after me? He said, 'Yes, O Messenger of God.'

¹ *Dhakha'ir al-'uqba* of Muhibb al-Din al-Tabari, p. 10; *al-Mustadrak 'ala Sahihain*, vol. 4, p. 73; *Sharh Nahj al-balaghah* of Ibn Ab'il-Hadid, vol. 1, p. 30; *Fada'il-al-khamsah min al-sihah al-sittah*, vol. 1, pp. 11-13; *al-Riyaz al-nazrah* of Muhibb al-Din al-Tabari, vol. 2, p. 119.

² *al-Mustadrak 'ala Sahihain*, vol. 3, p. 14; *al-Riyaz al-Nazrah*, vol. 2, pp. 124-138; *Sharh Nahj al-balaghah* of Ibn Ab'il-Hadid, vol. 4, p. 96; *al-Ghadir*, vol. 3, pp. 111-125.

The Prophet fraternized between Ali and himself and not between the Companions and himself; therefore, Ali is superior to all others.

Allamah al-Tusi: The Necessity of Love for Ali.³

Allamah al-Hilli: It is mandatory to have love for Ali only, and not for any of the other Companions, therefore he is definitely superior to them... To have affection for him is obligatory as God says: “*Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it except for the affection for [my] relatives*” (42:23).⁴

Allamah al-Tusi: Ali helped and supported the Prophet.⁵

Allamah al-Hilli: None of the Companions other than Ali had the distinction of supporting and assisting Prophet Muhammad, qualifying him as superior to all others.

The first premise can be stated as follows: God says: “*...then [know that] Allah is indeed his master, and Gabriel, the righteous among the faithful...*” (66:4).⁶ The Qur’anic commentators agree that what is intended by ‘the righteous among the faithful’ is Ali. The word ‘Mawla’ (Master) in this context means ‘supporter’, because it is this very meaning that is the common element⁷ between God and Gabriel. God specified Ali as the third of the three supporters and restricted ‘Mawla’ to the three supporters with the pronoun ‘He’ (*huwa*) in the Qur’anic verse: “Allah is indeed his master”.

³ *Dhakha’ir al-’uqba* of Muhibb al-Din al-Tabari, p. 25, *Shawahid al-tanzil* of al-Hakim al-Haaskani, vol. 2, pp. 189-211; nos. 822-844; *al-Ghadir*, vol. 2, pp. 306-311.

⁴ the Quran, 42: 23.

⁵ *Shawahid al-tanzil*, vol. 2, pp. 341-352; *al-Durr al-Manthur*, vol. 8, p. 224, Dar al-fikr, Beirut; *Tarikh* of Ibn `Asakir, *tarjamt al-imam `Ali* (the biography of Imam `Ali), vol. 2, p. 425.

⁶ The Quran, 66:4.

⁷ *al-qadr al-mushtarak*

Allamah al-Tusi: Because he is equal to the preceding Prophets.

Allamah al-Hilli: Ali is superior to all other companions because he is equal to the preceding Prophets; being equal to a superior also means being superior.

This premise is based on the narration recounted by al-Bayhaqi from the Prophet who said, “Whoever wishes to see Adam in his knowledge, Noah in his piety, Abraham in his forbearance, Moses in his awe, and Jesus in his worship and devotion should look at Ali ibn Abi Talib.”⁸

Allamah al-Tusi: Because of traditions such as Ta’ir, al-Manzilah, and al-Ghadir.

Allamah al-Hilli: The Prophet clearly stated Imam Ali’s merits and excellences over all others on many occasions, and he explicitly designated him as the Imam [i.e., as his successor].

For instance, it has been narrated in the Tradition of Ta’ir (the Tradition of the Roasted Bird) that the Prophet said, “O God, bring me the most beloved of your creation to eat this roasted bird with me.” Then Ali came and ate the roasted bird with him.⁹

Another tradition reads: “O God, bring the most beloved of you on earth.” This tradition has been narrated by Anas, Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas and Abu Rafi’, the freed slave of the Prophet, Ibn ‘Abbas.

⁸ *Tarikh* of Ibn ‘Asakir, vol. 2, p. 280, no. 804, as cited from al-Bayhaqi in the marginal note (*hamish*), and *al-Ghadir*, vol. 3, p. 355 as quoted from al-Bayhaqi on the virtues of the Companions (*fi fada’il al-sahabah*); *Fara’id al-simtayn* of al-Juwayni, vol. 1, p. 170, no. 131; *Shawahid al-tanzil* of al-Hakim al-Haskani, vol. 1, p. 100, no. 116.

⁹ *Tarikh* of Ibn ‘Asakir, *tarjamt al-imam ‘Ali* (the biography of Imam ‘Ali), vol. 2, pp. 110-158, no. 613-642; *Fara’id al-simtayn* of al-Juwayni, vol. 1, pp. 209-215, nos. 165, 166 and 167.

Abu Ja'far al-Iskafi and Abu 'Abd Allah al-Basri relied on this hadith as proof of the superiority of Ali over all others. Abu 'Abd Allah claimed that this hadith is well-known among the Companions, and none of them denied it; therefore, it is a widely-transmitted hadith (al-mutawatir).

The Hadith of the Rank (Manzilah): The Prophet said to Ali: "Your relation to me shall be like that of Aaron (Harun) to Moses (Musa) except that there shall be no prophet after me."¹⁰ Aaron was the most praiseworthy of the people of his time to his brother Moses and so was Ali to Muhammad.

The Tradition of al-Ghadir: When the Prophet returned from the Farewell Pilgrimage, he delivered a public address to the people at Ghadir Khumm (The Pond of Khumm)¹¹ and said, "O people, do I not have a greater authority over you than you have over yourselves?" They said, "Yes, O Messenger of God." Then he took Ali's hand and said:

For Whomsoever I am his master, Ali is his master. O God, love whomsoever loves Ali and be the enemy of whoever is Ali's enemy. O God, aid whoever aids Ali and forsake whoever forsakes him. O God, make the truth [the right path] turn with Ali wherever he turns [i.e., O God, make him the pivot of truth].¹²

¹⁰ *Fara'id al-simtayn*, vol. 1, pp. 122-127, nos. 85-89; *Tarikh* of Ibn 'Asakir, *tarjamt al-imam 'Ali* (the biography of Imam 'Ali), vol. 1, pp. 281-364, nos. 336-456.

¹¹ Ghadir Khumm is a location some miles from Makkah on the road to Madinah.

¹² I do not think that anyone will deny the hadith of al-Ghadir and its tawatur (the multiplicity of sources and narrators that verify the authenticity of Hadith al-Ghadir). 110 from among the distinguished companions (*al-sahabah*) and 84 from among their successors (*al-tabi'in*) have

As said before, ‘master’ (mawla) in this hadith refers to a person who is entitled to exercise full authority (awla bi’l-tasarruf). As Ali is more entitled to have an authority over anyone else than a person has over him/herself; therefore, he is definitely superior to them all...

Prophet Muhammad said regarding Dhul-Thadya – a man one of whose limbs appeared like a woman's breast or a disfigured lump of flesh: “The best of creation and of the successors [to the prophets] will kill him,” and in another narration, he said, “The best of this Community will kill him.”¹³

He said to Lady Fatimah:

Indeed, God looked most thoroughly over the people on earth and chose your father from among them and singled him out as His Prophet. Then He looked over them a second time and chose your husband and God commanded me to marry you to him and to choose him as a trustee (wasi).¹⁴

‘A’ishah said, “I was in the presence of the Prophet and Ali came. He then said pointing to Ali, ‘This is the master of the Arabs.’ She said, ‘I said to the Prophet, ‘May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, are you not the master of the Arabs?’ He said, ‘I am the master of creation and he is the master of the Arabs.’¹⁵

narrated it, and the chains of transmission have continued up to the present day. See *al-Ghadir*, the whole vol. 1.

¹³ *al-Manaqib of al-Maghazali*, p. 56, no. 79; *al-Tafdil of al-Karajaki*, p. 20, Tehran, Mu` assisah Bi` that, 1403 A. H. *Majma` al-zawa`id*, vol. 6, p. 239.

¹⁴ *al-Manqib of al-Khwarazmi*, p. 346, no. 364; *Majma` al-zawa`id*, vol. 9, p. 165, and vol. 8, p. 253; *Kanz al-`ummal*, vol. 11, p. 604, no. 32923.

¹⁵ *Tarikh of Ibn `Asakir, tarjamt al-imam `Ali* (the biography of Imam `Ali), vol. 2, pp. 261-265, nos. 780-785.

Anas narrated from the Prophet who said to Ali, “You are my brother and helper (wazir) and the choicest of men whom I am leaving behind who will pay my debt and fulfil my promise.”¹⁶

A man asked ‘A’ishah about her setting off for Basrah to participate in the Battle of al-Jamal (the Camel). She answered, “It was foreordained by God.”¹⁷ Again, that man asked her about Ali. She said, “You have asked me about the most beloved of all men to the Prophet and the husband of the most beloved of all women to him.”¹⁸ He said to Fatimah, “Are you not satisfied that I gave you in marriage to the best [man] of my Community?”¹⁹

Salman narrated from Prophet Mahammad who said, “The choicest of men whom I am leaving behind is Ali ibn Abi Talib.”²⁰

‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud narrated from the Prophet Muhammad who said, “Ali is the best of mankind. Whoever denies that will be an unbeliever.”²¹

Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri narrated from the Messenger of God who said, “The best man of my Community is Ali ibn Abi Talib.”²²

Allamah al-Tusi: Imam Ali was never an unbeliever.²³

¹⁶ *al-Isabah*, vol. 1, p. 208, no. 992 (Thabit ibn Mu‘adh); *Kanz al-‘ummal*, vol. 11, no. 32952; *Fadai‘l al-khamsah*, vol. 1, p. 382.

¹⁷ *Tarikh Baghdad*, vol. 1, pp. 159-160, no. 10 (Abu Qatadah al-Ansari); *Tadhkirat al-khawass*, p. 100.

¹⁸ *Tarikh of Ibn ‘Asakir, tarjamt al-imam ‘Ali* (the biography of Imam ‘Ali), vol. 2, pp. 162-170, nos. 641-653.

¹⁹ *Khasa‘is of al-Nasa‘i*, pp. 228-260, nos. 123-145; *Tarikh of Ibn ‘Asakir, tarjamt al-imam ‘Ali* (the biography of Imam ‘Ali), vol. 1, pp. 226-250, nos. 291-319.

²⁰ *Tarikh of Ibn ‘Asakir*, vol. 3, pp. 5-9, nos. 1021 and 1022.

²¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 444-448, nos. 954-965.

²² *Fath al-bari*, vol. 8, p. 136, with a slight variation.

Allamah al-Hilli: Ali believed in the One God when he reached adolescence, as opposed to the other companions who were unbelievers during the Age of Ignorance. The one who had always believed in the One God is superior to a person who was an unbeliever before believing.

Allamah al-Tusi: Imam Ali was the most beneficial of all due to his numerous great services to Islam.

Allamah al-Hilli: Imam Ali's countless services for Islam rendered him the most beneficial to the Muslims. He performed the most rewarding deeds, rendering him the best of all people.

Imam Ali fought numerous battles and won several conquests through Divine aid. He underwent the hardships which have not been undergone by anyone else. He established such victories for the cause of Islam that the Messenger of God said on the Day of the Parties (al-Ahzab), "One stroke of Ali's sword was more meritorious than all the acts of worship performed by the jinn and mankind."²⁴

His good character, renunciation (zuhd), and worship – particularly during the night (tahajjud) - was unachieved by anyone after him. He was an exemplar for others to follow, and taught others how to

²³ *al-'Umdah* of Ibn al-Batriq, p. 222, no. 284; *al-Shafi fi'l-imamah*, vol. 3, pp. 137-144 and vol. 3, pp. 220-242; *Shahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 6, pp. 143-144 and vol. 9, pp. 17-18; *al-Ghadir*, vol. 7, pp. 91-92.

²⁴ *al-Mustadrak of al-Hakim*, vol. 3, p. 32; *Fara'id al-simtayn*, vol. pp. 255-256, no. 197; *Tarikh of Ibn 'Asakir*, vol. 1, pp. 150-155, nos. 216 and 217; vol. 39, pp. 1-19; *Sharh al-Tajrid* of al-Qushji, p. 486, old print; *Kanz al-'ummal*, vol. 11, p. 623, no. 33035; *al-Tafsir al-kabir* of al-Razi, vol. 32, p. 31 on the commentary on *layl al-qadr* (the Night of Glory); *Shawahid al-tanzil* of al-Hakim al-Haskani, vol. 2, pp. 7-17, nos. 629-636.

attain higher spiritual levels. As for his knowledge, all scholars have relied on him and have benefited from him.

Allamah al-Tusi: Imam Ali is highly distinguished for his spiritual, physical, and kinship-based excellences.²⁵

Allamah al-Hilli: Merits are either of a spiritual, physical or kinship-based nature. As for spiritual and physical excellences, as explained before, Imam Ali had a higher status and was unmatched (except for the Prophet) in his knowledge, renunciation, courage, generosity, good character and chastity. He was endowed with such a high degree of physical power and strength that no one could equal him: Ali cut off the heads of the enemies like paring a reed pen with a knife. His sword stroke never missed its target, but rather his stroke was no more than a blow to kill a person. He wrenched the gate of Khaybar off its hinges, while seventy very strong men could not move it, though he ate very little and even the coarsest food. He also put on the coarsest garment and was content with two worn out garments to wear, fasted often, and persisted in worshipping.

As for his kinship-based excellences, with regard to his noble lineage, he was unrivalled in terms of closeness to the Messenger of God. Al-'Abbas was the paternal uncle of the Prophet while Ali was his cousin from both paternal and maternal sides – a Hashimite from both sides, as Ali is the son of Abu Talib, who is the son of Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim, and his mother is Fatimah, the daughter of Asad ibn Hashim.

²⁵ *Sharh Nahj al-balaghah* of Ibn Ab'il-Hadid, vol. 1, pp. 11-30.

As for his relationship to the Prophet by marriage (musaharah)²⁶, no one but Ali achieved this merit. He was the husband of the mistress of the women of the worlds. Although Uthman was also the son-in-law of the Messenger of God, Fatimah was the noblest daughter of the Prophet. She was greatly loved by the Prophet and was held in high esteem by him... In traditions, the Prophet counted Fatimah among the four leaders of the women of the worlds in Paradise.

As for his children²⁷, they were unmatched in their nobility and perfection. Al-Hasan and al-Husain are the masters of the youths in Paradise, whom the Prophet loved dearly.²⁸ He bent his head so that they could climb over his back....²⁹

Then, al-Hasan and al-Husain fathered children who also attained the highest degree of dignity. For instance, Hasan al-Muthanna

²⁶ *al-Khasa'is* of al-Nasa'i, pp. 228-261, nos. 123-145; *Tarikh* of Ibn 'Asakir, *tarjamt al-imam 'Ali* (the biography of Imam 'Ali), vol. 1, pp. 226-250, nos. 291-319.

²⁷ [Fakhr al-Din] al-Razi says in [his] commentary on the Chapter (108) on *al-Kawthar* (Abundance): Surely, God granted him [the Prophet] a progeny which has continued to remain in the course of time. Look how many of the members of the Household of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*) were killed. Then, the world has become filled with them, and there have not remained any important members of the Umayyads in the world. Then, look how many great learned men there were among them [i.e., the descendants of the Prophet], such as al-Baqir, al-Sadiq, al-Karim, al-Ride, peace be upon them, and *al-Naves al-Zaniyah* (the pure soul) [i. e., Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Hasan ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali] and the like. *al-Tafsir al-caber*, vol. 32, p. 124.

²⁸ *Tarik* of Ibn 'Aaker, *target al-imam al-Hasan* (the biography of Imam Hasan, peace be upon him), pp. 34-61, nos. 71-112; *al-Manaia* of Ibn Shahrashub, vol. 4, pp. 26-27; *Tarikh* of Ibn 'Asakir, *tarjamt al-imam al-Husain* (the biography of Imam Husain, peace be upon him).

²⁹ *Tarikh* of Ibn 'Asakir, *tarjamt al-imam al-Husain* (the biography of Imam Husain, peace be upon him), pp. 91-96, 154-160; *Dhakha'r al-'uqba* of Muhibb al-Din al-Tabari, pp. 130-132; *al-Manaqib* of Ibn Shahrashub, vol. 4, pp. 26-27; *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 43, pp. 261-317; *Tarikh* of Ibn 'Asakir, *tarjamt al-imam al-Husain* (the biography of Imam Husain, peace be upon him).

(Hasan the second), Hasan al-Muthallath (Hasan the third), ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Hasan al-Muthanna, and al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah (the pure soul)³⁰ and others are among the children of Imam al-Hasan.

As for the children of Imam al-Husain, Zayn al-‘Abidin (the ornament of the worshippers),³¹ Al-Baqir (the splitter-open),³² al-Sadiq (the truthful),³³ al-Kazim (the forbearing),³⁴ al-Rida (acceptance [of the divine decree],³⁵ al-Jawad (the generous),³⁶ al-Hadi (the guide),³⁷ [known by the title] al-Askari [on account of his life-long stay in a district called al-‘Askar in Samarra],³⁸ and al-Hujjah (the proof)³⁹ are counted among them. They possessed knowledge, moral virtues, asceticism, complete devotion to God (al-

³⁰ *Siyar a ‘lam al-nubala’*, vol. 4, p. 483, no. 185, d. 99 A. H.; *Mukhtasar Tarikh ibn ‘Asakir* of Ibn Manzur, vol. 6, p. 329, no. 207; *Tarikh al-Islam* of al-Dhahabi, p. 107 (the events between 141-160 A.H.); on Hasan al-Muthallath and on Abdullah ibn al-Hasan al-Muthanna, see *Maqatil al-talibiyyin*, p. 179, killed 145 A. H.; *Tarikh al-Islam* of al-Dhahabi, p. 191 (the events between 141-160 A. H.); al-‘Ibar, vol.1, p. 151, and on al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah, that is, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan, peace be upon them, see al-‘Ibar, vol. 1, p. 152; *Tarikh al-Islam*, p. 271 (the events between 141-160); *Maqatil al-talibiyyin*, p. 232.

³¹ *Tarikh* of Ibn ‘Asakir, *tarjamt al-imam Zayn al-‘Abidin* (the biography of Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin, peace be upon him), vol. 1, p. 120; *Tarikh al-Islam* of al-Dhahabi, p. 431, no. 352 (the events between 81-100 A. H.); al-‘Ibar, vo. 1, p. 82.

³² *Tarikh* of Ibn ‘Asakir, *tarjamt al-imam Zayn al-‘Abidin wa’l-Imam Muhammad ibn ‘Ali al-Baqir* (the biographies of Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin and Imam Muhammad ibn ‘Ali ibn al-Baqir, peace be upon them), pp. 121-173; *Siyar a ‘lam al-nubala’* of al-Dhahabi, vo. 4, p. 401, no. 158.

³³ *Tarikh al-Islam* of al-Dhahabi, p. 88 (the events 141-160 A. H.); *Siyar a ‘lam al-nubala’* of al-Dhahabi, vo. p. 255, no. 117.

³⁴ *Siyar a ‘lam al-nubala’*, vol. 6, p. 270, no. 118.

³⁵ Ibid., vol. 9, p. 387, no. 125.

³⁶ Ibid., vol. 13, p. 121.

³⁷ Ibid., vol. 12, p. 248.

³⁸ Ibid., vol. 12, p. 265.

³⁹ Ibid., vol. 13, p. 119, no. 60.

inqita` - detachment from all other than God] and renunciation (al-tark) to a great extent, so that distinguished spiritual leaders took pride in serving them. For example, Abu Yazid al-Bastami carried water to the house of Ja'far al-Sadiq⁴⁰ and Ma'ruf al-Karkhi (from Karkh, a suburb of Baghdad), who became a Muslim at the hands of Imam Rida, was the doorkeeper of the Imam's house until he died.⁴¹ Renowned scholars took pride in benefiting from the Imams' knowledge through their association with them. When Anas ibn Malik was asked a question at the door of his house, he did not answer the questioner at the door. He was asked why he did not answer at the door. He said: I gained [my] knowledge from Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq. When I went to him to benefit from him, he got up and put on the best clothes and perfumed himself and sat in the foremost part of his house and praised God, the Exalted and taught me something.⁴² The benefits made by Abu Hanifah from Imam Sadiq are too evident to be in need of proof.⁴³

The Eighth Issue

On the Imamate of the next eleven Imams

Allamah al-Tusi: The widely transmitted traditions prove the Imamate of the other eleven Imams; they are Imams because of the necessity of their infallibility and the non-infallibility of all others, and because of their physical and spiritual perfections.

⁴⁰ *Rawdat al-jannat*, vol. 4, p. 150, no. 371, quoted from *Jami' al-Anwar* and *al-Arba'in* of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 123, no. 717.

⁴² *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 211, no. 627.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 153, no. 731.

Allamah al-Hilli: The 11 Imams are: al-Hasan ibn Ali, succeeded by his brother al-Husayn, succeeded by Ali ibn Zayn al-‘Abidin, succeeded by Ja‘far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq, succeeded by Musa ibn Ja‘far al-Kazim, succeeded by his son Ali al-Rida, succeeded by his son Muhammad al-Jawad, succeeded by his son Ali al-Hadi, succeeded by his son the awaited Imam.

Proof of the Imamate of the eleven Imams:

First, the traditions as conveyed by the Shi‘a narrators based on the multiple unbroken chains of transmission [naql al-mutawatir] handed down from generation to generation prove the Imamate of each through the explicit specification of their names.⁴⁴ Sunni narrators reported the Imamate through multiple channels, some in brief and some in detail. For instance, among the many traditions in this regard, it has been widely narrated from the Prophet who said to Husayn: “This son of mine is an Imam, who is the son of an Imam [i.e., Imam ‘Ali] and the brother of an Imam [i.e., Imam Hasan]; he is the father of nine Imams, the ninth of whom would be the Qa‘im (the one who will rise; redresser of wrongs).”⁴⁵ It was also narrated from Masruq: “[One day] we were in the company of Abdullah bin Mas‘ud [to get our copies of the Quran checked by him so that they were free of errors]. A young man asked, ‘Has your Prophet told you about the number of his successors?’ He replied, ‘You are very young; this is something no one has asked me before. Now I will tell you about it. Yes, our Prophet informed us that

⁴⁴ *al-Irshad* of al-Shaykh al-Mufid, pp. 187-188; *Ithbat al-Hudat* of al-Shaykh al-Hurr al-‘Amili, vol. 1, p. 675.

⁴⁵ *Fara‘id al-Simtayn*, vol. 2, p. 132, nos. 430 and 431, and also *hadith al-lawh*, nos. 432-435 and also nos. 442-445 and 447; *Ithbat al-Hudat*, vol. 1, p. 573, nos. 475-478.

indeed there would twelve successors after him and it would be equal to the number of the chiefs of the children of Israel.”⁴⁶

Second, as explained before, the Imam should be infallible, and it is unanimously agreed that except for them, others are not infallible. Infallibility is exclusive to them only; otherwise it would necessitate that the earth be void of an infallible Imam, while we proved it to be impossible.^{47 48}

Third, all the spiritual and physical perfections are possessed by each of them. Just as the Imam is perfect in himself, he brings others to perfection.⁴⁹ And this entitles him to universal authority, because each of them was superior to anyone else of his time. And it will be rationally wrong to prefer an inferior to a superior. Therefore, it is necessary that each of them be an Imam; this is a causal proof (*al-burhan al-limmi*), an inference from cause to effect.

⁴⁶ *Ithbat al-Hudat*, vol. p. 580, nos. 500, 522 and 524.

⁴⁷ The author means that either the Imams are to be the infallibles or there were no infallibles at all and the latter is impossible.

⁴⁸ *Ithbat al-Hudat*, vol. 1, p. 580, no. 500; *Risalah fi'l-imamah* at the end of (fi akhir) *talkhis al-muhassal*, p. 428; *Fara'id al-simtayn*, vol. 2, p. 132, nos. 430 and 431.

⁴⁹ al-Shafi, vol. 2, p. 41; *Risalah fi'l-imamah*, p. 428; *Ithbat al-Hudat*, pp. 1-3; *Kashf al-ghummah fi ma' rifat al-a'immah*, vol. 1, pp. 54-59.