

IMAM AL-HADI: TORCH-HOLDERS OF GUIDANCE SERIES¹

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ABSTRACT: The need for a leader to apply the Prophet's teachings is necessary to guide humankind for moral and intellectual achievement with precise instruction of the Qur'an and Sunnah, and to justly govern a society. Imamah, the universal administrator of the Islam Nation after prophethood, is one of the five principles of Shi'i Islam. This article is a short biography of Imam al-Hadi, the tenth of the Twelve Imams whom are the spiritual and political successors to the Prophet Muhammad. A short biography will be offered, including Features such as his instructions and the social and political condition during his time.

¹ Farhang-e Kowrhar.

Introduction

God has placed tendencies and insights in man's nature. One of these tendencies is curiosity or the desire for discovering the truth.

With this tendency, man constantly seeks to discover the mysteries and hidden facts of creation and the universe. Man is more inclined and motivated to know that which relates to him, and it has a noticeable impact on his life and salvation.

Moreover, knowledge about religious leaders is the main factor in reaching the summit of salvation. From the Shi'a viewpoint, the "Infallible leaders" are the pioneers of treading the path of salvation and torch-holders of Divine guidance, so it is necessary to know them. In the Imam's words, knowing God depends on knowing Imams.² Although thinkers and historians have failed to grasp all aspects of the religious leaders' lives, there is certainly room to delve into this issue.

Imam al-Hadi's life at a glance

Birth and martyrdom

Imam al-Hadi was born on Zul-Hajjah 15th 212 A.H.³ His name is Ali, and his well-known titles are "Hadi" (Guide) and "Naqi"

² According to Abi Abdillah, "Imam Hussain told his companions, "O people! Surely Allah has not created mankind but to know Him ..." A man asked him, "O son of the Messenger of Allah! May my father and mother be sacrificed for you! What is the knowledge of Allah?" He said, "That people of each era know that Imam to whom obedience is obligatory for them" (*Bihar-ul-Anwar*, vol. 5, p. 312, Dar-ul-Kutub al-Islamiyyah).

عن ابي عبدالله (ع) قال: خرج الحسين بن علي (ع) على اصحابه فقال: يا ايها الناس ان الله جل ذكره ما خلق العباد الا ليعرفوه... فقال له رجل: يا ابن رسول الله باي انت و امي، فما معرفة الله؟ قال: معرفة اهل كل زمان امامهم الذي يجب عليهم طاعته

³ Mufid, Muhammad, *Irshad*, p. 327, 'Alami Institute, Beirut.

(Pure).⁴ His epithet is “Abul-Hasan,”⁵ and hadith narrators know him as the “third Abul-Hasan.”

Along with his son Imam al-Askari, he was exiled to the city of Samarra. Since they resided in Askar, they were referred to as Askariyan.⁶ After a long stay in Samarra and 33 years of leadership of the Shi’as, he was martyred by an Abbasid caliph and was buried in Samarra, where people visit his shrine until today.

His Imamate

After the martyrdom of his father Imam al-Jawad, in 220 A.H., Imam al-Hadi became the Shi’a leader while he was only 8 years old. Since the Shi’as had seen Imam Jawad beginning his Imamate at the age of 9, it was not difficult for them to accept his leadership. In some hadiths, the Infallible Imams referred to the Qur’anic verses to prove this commonly discussed theological issue.

In response to a question about Jesus Christ’s being the Hujjat (Proof) of God at an early age, Imam al-Baqir put forth Jesus Christ’s word as evidence of this⁷ as indicated in the Quran.⁸ In justifying the Imamate of Imam al-Jawad, Imam al-Rida also referred to the story of Jesus in the Quran.⁹ In the same line, Imam Jawad spoke of the equality of imamate and prophethood.¹⁰

⁴ Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir, *The History of the 14 Infallibles*, p. 975, Sorur Publications.

⁵ Ibn Shahr Ashub, Muhammad ibn Ali, *Manaqib*, vol. 3, p. 505, Heydariyyah, Najaf.

⁶ Saduq, Muhammad, *Ilal-u-Sharayi*, p.241, a-Dawari Publications, Qum.

⁷ Kulayni, Muhammad, *Usul al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 446, Beirut, section 147. Halat-ul-A’immah fi-Sinn.

⁸ Maryam, 29, 30.

⁹ Kulayni, Muhammad, *Usul al-Kafi*, vol. 1, pp. 380, 447, Beirut.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.448, section 147.

The hadiths indicate that there is no age requirement for imamate and prophethood. From a rational and philosophical perspective, there is no intellectual obstacle. Therefore, the unlimited power of God and His will necessitate the realization of imamate.

As in the case of other Imams, the Imamate of Imam al-Hadi was established through his father Imam Jawad's explicit referring to him, in addition to the 11th Imam's extraordinary acts and the Imams' prophecies. According to Isma'il ibn Mihran, "When Imam Jawad decided to travel to Iraq for the second time, I went to him and told him about my concerns, that is, the next Imam after him. He responded, 'After me, the Shi'a leadership will be assumed by my son, Ali.'"¹¹

Shaikh Mufid also wrote, "The next Imam after Imam Jawad is his son, Ali ibn Muhammad, since he possesses all features of an Imam and has reached the peak of perfection in every respect..." There are numerous hadiths in this regard, but since Shi'as agreed on the Imamate and leadership of Imam al-Hadi, and nobody else claimed Imamate then, it is not necessary to refer to all Hadiths here.¹²

According to Hasan ibn Musa Nowbakhti, "The 9th Imam's companions and followers accepted the Imamate of his son, Ali ibn Muhammad. There was only a small group who turned to Musa ibn Muhammad (Musa Mubaraq'), but they changed their minds shortly after and accepted the Imamate of Imam al-Hadi."¹³

¹¹ *ibid.*, p 381.

¹² *Irshad*, p. 329.

¹³ Nowbakhti, Hassan ibn Musa, *al-Shi'a Sects*, p. 91, Heydariyyah, Najaf.

Features of Imam al-Hadi's era

During his Imamate, Imam al-Hadi was contemporary with six Abbasid caliphs: Mu'tasim, Wathiq, Mutawakkil, Muntasir, Musta'im and Mu'tazz.¹⁴ Mu'tasim and Wathiq followed in Ma'mun's footsteps and treated the Imams leniently yet deceptively. However, when Mutawakkil came into power, the political arena changed entirely, and the 10th Imam and his followers experienced severe pressure. Abul-Faraj Isfahani related, "Mutawakkil treated the Alawids worse than all other Abbasid caliphs. His oppression of Alawids was unprecedented in the Abbasid rule."¹⁵

Mutawakkil feared the presence of Imam al-Hadi in Medina. The thought that the Imam might undertake political activities disturbed his peace of mind. He had been seeking a solution for this problem until he came up with the Satanic idea of exiling the Imam from Medina to Samarra. Concurrently, he received a letter from Abdullah ibn Muhammad, who led the public prayer and commanded the army in Medina. This letter removed all Mutawakkil's doubt about his decision. In his letter, Abdullah wrote, "If you want Mecca and Medina to be under your control, banish Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi from these cities since he invites people to accept his Imamate, and many have started to follow him."¹⁶

In a letter to Mutawakkil, the 10th Imam denied this report.¹⁷ In response, Mutawakkil informed him of removing Abdullah ibn

¹⁴ Tabarsi, Amin-ul-Islam, *'Alam-ul-Wura*, p. 339, Dar-ul-Ma'rifah, Beirut.

¹⁵ Isfahani, Faraj, *Maqatil al-Talibin*, p. 395, Heydariyyah, Najaf.

¹⁶ *Bihar-ul-Anwar*, vol. 50, p 209.

¹⁷ *Irshad*, p. 333.

Muhammad from office and inviting him to Samarra. An excerpt of the letter reads as follows:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful, surely Amir-al-Mu'minin appreciates your grandness, observes your kinship rights, considers it necessary to observe all your rights ... Surely I [Amir-al-Mu'minin] have removed Abdullah ibn Muhammad from all his positions, that is, commanding the army and leading the public prayer in Medina.¹⁸

In analysis of this letter:

1. The wording of Mutawakkil, who had hidden a grudge against the Imam and showed hostility toward him, was literary and decent, pretending to be fond of the Imam, and leaving no doubt about his intentions.
2. He repeated the word "Amir-al-Mu'minin" eight times referring to himself to emphasise his rule and leadership.
3. Although he gave the tenth Imam the choice of travelling to Samarra, he assigned Yahya ibn Harthamah and other military men to accompany him in the trip, although this was to keep the Imam under surveillance and preventing the dissidents' possible measures.¹⁹

¹⁸ ibid.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، اما بعد فان اميرالمؤمنين عارف بقدرتك، راع لقرابتك، موجب لحقك... و قد رأى [اميرالمؤمنين] صرف عبدالله بن محمد عما كان يتولاه من الحرب والصلاة بمدينة الرسول(ص)

¹⁹ Rafi'ee, Ali, *The Tenth Imam*, p.67, The Publications of the Propagation Office, Qum.

Imam al-Hadi thus started this journey, revealing his unwillingness in his statement: “O’ Abu Musa! I set out for Samarra reluctantly.”²⁰

If the Imam had not travelled to Samarra, the words of Abdullah ibn Muhammad and other informers would have been proved true and would have made Mutawakkil more resolute in his hostility towards the Imam.

Toward Samarra

Shaikh Mufid reported his journey as follows, “After the Imam received Mutawakkil’s letter, he prepared for the journey, with his family and Yahya ibn Harthamah accompanying him (during which he performed some extraordinary acts). On his way, the Imam was welcomed warmly in Baghdad – the second capital of the Abbasid rule – yet after arriving in Samarra, Mutawakkil ordered the Imam’s caravan stay in the slums. According to Salih ibn Sa’id, he aimed to devalue Imam al-Hadi.”²¹

The trip included advantageous outcomes:

1. The Imam’s good conduct and extraordinary acts made Yahya ibn Harthamah, who had been hostile toward the Imam, fond of him and became his devotee.
2. The mission of Yahya ibn Harthamah was to report how the Imam reacted to Mutawakkil’s letter and his agents. The Imam reacted in a way that Yahya instead praised Imam al-Hadi in his report.

²⁰ *Bihar-ul-Anwar*, vol. 50, p. 129.

یا ابا موسیٰ اخراجت الی سرمن رأی کرھا

²¹ *Irshad*, p. 334.

3. Although Yahya witnessed the people's love for the Imam in Medina, he might have thought that this love was limited to that land, but when the people in Baghdad welcomed the Imam with open arms, he discovered the Imam's reputable position in other Islamic lands.²²

In Samarra

With the aim of monitoring the Imam's activities closely and preventing him from any revolutionary action, Mutawakkil exiled him to Samarra. However, he did not limit his controlling measures to this and constantly thought of marring the Imam's personality. Of course, it was a failed policy, and ultimately Mutawakkil could not achieve his evil goal.²³

Mutawakkil's stances

In this article, some instances of Mutawakkil's stances against Imam al-Hadi are referred to:

1. Causing strife between the Imam and Sunnis: Mutawakkil was informed that the Imam interpreted the verse "*The Day that the wrong-doer will bite at his hands,*"²⁴ as referring to some caliphs. In a meeting with his close assistants, Mutawakkil asked their ideas on this issue. They responded, "The Imam has to be asked to interpret this verse in the presence of people (i.e., Sunnis). If he interprets it as reported to you, people's reactions will be enough for you; and if he interprets it otherwise, he will be disgraced in the eyes of his

²² *The Tenth Imam*, p. 67.

²³ *'Alam-ul-Wura*, p. 348.

²⁴ Furqan, 27. يوم يعض الظالم على يديه

followers.” Mutawakkil accepted this plot, s the Sunnis constituted a large population of Samarra. However, he did not know that God knows better to whom to assign the heavy responsibility of the Divine mission.

Thus, one day in the presence of everybody, the Imam was asked about the interpretation of this verse and replied, “They are two men about whom God has talked implicitly, and they are indebted to him for His hiding their names. Does the caliph want to reveal what God has hidden?” Mutawakkil said, “No.”²⁵

This way, Imam al-Hadi foiled Mutawakkil’s Satanic plot and disgraced him once more.

2. Plotting to degrade the Imam: Since Mutawakkil was told that Imam al-Hadi kept in his house weapons, letters and other belongings his Shi’a and followers had given him, so he ordered several Turks to make a surprise raid on the Imam’s house. Instead, they found him sitting in a room without carpet or rug, wearing coarse clothing, and carefully reciting the Quran. Regardless, they arrested him and took him to the court.

With a glass of wine in his hand, Mutawakkil greeted the Imam and offered him a drink. In response, the Imam said, “My flesh and blood have never been tainted with wine; exempt me from drinking it.” Mutawakkil accepted his excuse, but then ordered the Imam to recite some lines of poetry. The Imam replied, “I do not recite poetry often.” With Mutawakkil’s insistence, the Imam recited:

²⁵ *Bihar-ul-Anwar*, vol. 50, p. 214.

Those who are resting at the heights of government, while the strong men are protecting them, but living at these heights does not make them needless. After they enjoy honour and glory, they are pulled down from their strongholds and are placed in the holes (graves), which are bad places. When they are buried, the caller calls out:

‘Where are the thrones, crowns and the expensive clothes? Where are the faces in luxury and behind the curtains?’ Instead of them, their graves answer: ‘The faces are here, covered with worms which are fighting with each other.’²⁶

Participants in the gathering feared that Mutawakkil might decide to treat the Imam adversely, but suddenly they saw Mutawakkil crying, and they started to cry as well. Then Mutawakkil ordered to take away the glasses of wine.²⁷

Mutawakkil had planned to devalue the Imam and challenge him by offering the wine, but failed and resorted to inviting the Imam to recite some lines of poetry, assuming he would recite common poems in praise of wine or slave girls. However, the Imam recited the poems that gave moral lessons, and that struck him hard. He

²⁶ Ja’farian, Rasul, *The Intellectual and Political Life of the Shi’ite Imams*, vol. 2, p. 149.

باتوا على قتل الاجبال تحرسهم غلب الرجال فما اغتتهم القتل
و استنزلوا بعد عز عن معاقلمهم فادعوا حفرا يا بئس ما نزلوا
نادا هم صارخ من بعد دفنهم اين الاساور و التيجان و الحلل
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²⁷ Mas’udi, Ali ibn Hussain, *Murawij-a-Dhahab*, vol. 2, p. 374, published in Egypt, translated, vol. 2, p. 502.

altered the joyful party of Mutawakkil to a gathering filled with sorrow.²⁸

3. Imprisoning Imam al-Hadi: Mutawakkil confined Imam al-Hadi, who said while in prison, “To God, I am more revered than the camel of Prophet Salih,” and recited the verse, “*Enjoy yourselves in your homes for three days: that is a promise not to be belied!*”²⁹

One day later, Mutawakkil apologised to the Imam and released him from prison. Only three days later, three Turks suddenly attacked Mutawakkil and killed him. His son, Muntasir, succeeded him as the next Caliph.³⁰

The political arena

Like the previous Imams, Imam al-Hadi entered into politics, taking into account the time requirements:

1. The idea of the 14 Infallibles’ leadership

Imam al-Hadi delineated this politically sensitive and important issue in the form of supplication and Ziyarah. For example, consider Ziyarah al-Jami’ah al-Kabirah: “Peace be upon you, O’ the Prophet’s household...the leaders of peoples and the chiefs of [God’s] servants...”³¹ In this excerpt, the Imam introduced the rest of the Infallible Imams as the peoples’ leaders and policy makers of God’s servants. This emphasis on their leadership negates other caliphs’

²⁸ Hassani, Hashim Ma’ruf, *The Conduct of the 12 Shi’a Imams*, vol. 2, p. 472, Dar-Ta’aruf, Beirut.

²⁹ Hud, 65. تمتعوا في داركم ثلاثة ايام ذلك وعد غير مكذوب

³⁰ *Bihar-ul-Anwar*, vol. 50, p. 204.

³¹ Saduq, Muhammad, *Man la Yahduruhul-Faqih*, vol. 2, p. 609, published in Tehran; ‘Uyun Akhbar-al-Rida, vol. 2, p. 272.

rule, since only the Infallibles are entitled to govern people, and other forms of government are considered illegitimate usurpation.

2. Condemning cooperation with the rulers

In response to a question about being hired by the Abbasid, the Imam said, “If you are forced to do so, God will accept your excuse, but if it is not compulsive, it is unacceptable.” The questioner added, “Through my penetration into the Abbasid court, I can harm the regime.” Praising him for this measure, the Imam talked of its rewards.³²

3. Using the word “Taghut” (the illegitimate ruler) about Mutawakkil

In Quranic concepts, Taghut is the polar opposite of God. When it comes to a person’s wilayah, God considers Himself as the Wali of believers, and Taghut as the Wali of the disbelievers:

*Allah is the Wali of those who have faith: from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light. Of those who reject faith their Wali is Taghut: from light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness.*³³

In another verse, those who resort to the tyrants are rebuked, and their disbelief is emphasised: “*Their [real] wish is to resort together for judgment [in their disputes] to Taghut, though they were*

³² Hurr Ameli, Muhammad, *Wasa'ilu-u-Shi'a*, vol. 17, p. 190, Dar-ul-Ihya a-Turath al-'Arabi.

³³ Baqarah, 257. الله ولي الذين امنوا يخرجهم من الظلمات الى النور و الذين كفروا اولياءهم الطاغوت.

ordered to reject him.”³⁴ Pharaoh is also described as follows, “He has rebelled.”³⁵

Now the Imam’s word is considered from this Quranic perspective. When Mutawakkil built Ja’fari building in Samarra, Ali ibn Muhammad predicted the future, saying, “This Taghut will be killed in this building.”³⁶

4. The network of Wikalah (meaning agency)

Throughout history, Shi’as have been grappling with political problems, and the rulers limited their relationship with the Infallible Imams. As of Imam al-Jawad’s time, sensitivity and limitation have increased. Therefore, to protect Shi’ism and keep the centres of resistance dynamic, it was necessary to establish “The network of Wikalah.” In the time of Imam al-Hadi, because of the important role of Wikalah in society, Mutawakkil hired anti-Alavid people to eliminate his opponents and to terminate the organised activities of the Alavids, particularly the Twelvers.

During his 16-year-old reign, violence and crackdown against Shi’as were so great that some of Imam al-Hadi’s wakils, or agents, all over the Islamic land were tortured to death or were sentenced to years in prison. These measures seriously harmed the network of agency, but Imam al-Hadi kept this network active and dynamic through his conscious attempts.³⁷ Ali ibn Ja’far al-Wakil, Ibrahim ibn

³⁴ Nisa, 60. يريدون ان يتحاكوا الى الطاغوت و قد امروا ان يكفروا به.

³⁵ Nazi’at, 17. انه طغى

³⁶ Tabari, Muhammad ibn Jarir, *Dala’il-ul-A’immah*, p. 218, Heydariyyah, Najaf.

لما بدء المستوكل بعارة الجعفرى من سرمن رأى... يا على هذه الطاغية يقتل بهذا البناء.

³⁷ Nasiri, Muhammad Radi, *Analytical History of Islam*, p. 258.

Muhammad Hamadani, Husayn ibn Abd-e-Rabbah, his son Ali ibn al-Husayn, and Ahmad ibn Ishaq Razi were among his agents.³⁸

The cultural arena

1. Fighting with Shi'a extremists

Extremism is a problematic issue throughout the history of Shi'ism. The extremists fault was to elevate the Imams to an inordinately high position and went to extremes in expressing love for them. Imam Ali considered extremism the starting point of spiritual destruction, saying, "Two groups perish [spiritually] with regard to me; those who go to extremes in loving me and those who oppose me."³⁹

In addition to their intellectual deviation, the extremists marred the image of Shi'ism and paved the way for the enemies to oppose it. The Infallibles have always pointed out their danger, and required themselves to cleanse Shi'ism of extremism and to deprive the enemies of this weapon. However, extremists not only did not take their advice, but also insisted on their ideology, assuming that the Imams were practicing dissimulation. In a letter to Muhammad ibn 'Isa, the 10th Imam wrote, "May God curse Qasim Yaqtini and Ali ibn Hasaka Qummi!"

In another hadith, Hasan ibn Muhammad, known as ibn Baba, Muhammad ibn Nasir Namiri and Fars ibn Hatam Qazwini were cursed by the Imam.⁴⁰ Ahmad ibn Muhammad Sayyari was another

³⁸ Kushshi Muhammad, *Rijal by Kushshi*, pp. 430, 505 and 508, 'Alami Institute, Karbala.

³⁹ Sayyid Radi, *Nahj-ul-Balaghah*, wise sayings, no. 117 and 469.

⁴⁰ *Rijal by Kushshi*, p. 435.

extremist; the one who narrated many Hadiths on distortion of the Quran. Regarding him, Najashi said, “The hadiths he narrated were defective, and his faith was corrupted.”⁴¹

2. Removing doubts about Shi’a beliefs

In the time of Imam al-Hadi, some belief-related issues were among the common theological subjects discussed, such as “the creation of the Quran” which led to the Muslims’ split and disunity as its adverse consequence. Some believed that the Quran was created like other phenomena, and others insisted on its not being created. Imam al-Hadi fought against this evil debate and prevented his followers from getting involved in such useless discussions. In a letter to the Shi’ites, reported by ‘Isa bin Ubaid Yaqtin, Imam al-Hadi wrote:

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful ... May God keep me and you immune from this mischief. In my opinion, this debate about the Quran is a blameworthy innovation in the religion.⁴²

The issue of “seeing God on the Day of Judgment” also caused great controversy in that time. Ahmad ibn Ishaq sent a letter to the Imam, asking for his idea on this issue. In response, the 10th Imam—through logical reasoning—negated seeing God.⁴³

⁴¹ 39. *Rijal by Kushshi*, p. 435. ضعیف الحدیث، فاسد المذهب.

⁴² Saduq, Muhammad, *Monotheism*, p. 224, Islamic Publications.

⁴³ بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم... عصمنا الله وایاک من الفتنة... نحن نرى ان الجدل فی القرآن بدعة
Tabarsi, Abi Mansu, *Ihtijaj*, vol. 2, p. 251, Nu'man, Najaf.

Another issue delineated by the Imam was “predestination and delegation of all power to human beings (*tafwid*). Through his words, he blocked the way of those who raised doubts about it.”⁴⁴

3. Defining the Infallible Imams’ high status

In Ziyarah al-Jami’ah al-Kabirah, Imam al-Hadi offered a course in Imamate Studies. This ziyarah is reported in authentic hadith collections,⁴⁵ and many commentaries have been written on it as well. The late Aqa Bozorg Tehrani recorded their names in his book, *a-Dhari’ah*.⁴⁶ Some excerpts from this ziyarah are examined:

Peace be upon you...the doors of faith and the safeguard for the secrets of God, the Beneficent...The place where God is known and Divine blessing is sent down... Allah has kept you away from any slip, immune from mischief, and cleansed of any impurity...and the one who holds fast to the rope of your guidance is guided, and the one who follows you will enter Heaven, and the one who opposes you will enter Hell.

4. Training students in religious sciences

Training skilled religious scholars and asking for their help when necessary are among the cultural activities the Imams undertook. There were ups and downs regarding this important matter depending on the political situation in Muslim society. Training religious scholars reached its peak in Imam al-Baqir and Imam al-

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ Tusi, Muhammad, *Tahdhib-ul-Akhlaq*, vol. 6, p. 107, Tehran.

⁴⁶ Aqa Bozorg Tehrani, Mohammad Hassan, *a-Dhari’ah*, vol. 13, p. 305, Dar-ul-Adwa’, Beirut.

Sadiq's time because the reduced political pressure paved the way for fostering the Islamic culture in society.

In the time of Imam al-Hadi, great political repression inhibited political activities, but the 10th Imam—without losing the slightest chance—embarked on training elites whose names were recorded in historical accounts. The late Shaikh Tusi enumerated around 190 of his companions and students:⁴⁷

1. Hassan ibn Rashid (Abu Ali)

About him, Imam al-Hadi said: “May God have mercy on ibn Rashid, who lived in this world spiritually happily and was martyred!”⁴⁸

2. Hassan ibn Ali ibn Nasir

Sayyid Murtada praised him: “His virtues in terms of knowledge, asceticism, and jurisprudence are clear-cut. He had propagated Islam in Deylam until this call paid off and led the people from ignorance and error to salvation.”⁴⁹

3. Ayyub ibn Nuh

Shaikh Tusi quoted Amr ibn Sa'id Mada'ini, who believed in the Fatahi school of thought, as saying, “I was in the presence of Imam al-Hadi when Ayyub ibn Nuh came in. Upon his leaving there, Imam al-Hadi told me: ‘O’ ‘Amr! If you like to see a dweller of Heaven, look at him.’”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Tusi, Muhammad, *Rijal by Tusi*, pp. 409, Heydariyyah Najaf.

⁴⁸ *Rijal by Kushsi*, p. 502.

⁴⁹ Khu'i, Sayyid Abul-Qasim, *Mu'jam a-Rijal al-Hadith*, vol. 5, p. 28, Qum.

⁵⁰ Tusi, Muhammad, *al-Ghaybah*, p. 212, published in Najaf.

4. Abdul-‘Adhim Hasani

He was a descendant of Imam Hassan Mujtaba through four generations (i.e., Abdul-‘Adhim ibn Abdullah ibn Ali ibn Hassan ibn Zayd ibn al-Hasan al-Mujtaba). His high spiritual position has been recorded in the historical accounts. Today, the Shi’ites and lovers of the Infallible Imams flock to his holy shrine in Rey, near Tehran. He presented Imam al-Hadi with his religious beliefs in order to assess them. This way, he insured them through the Imam’s approving of them. In enumerating the religious obligation, he gave priority to wilayah over daily prayers and other obligations.⁵¹

Some hadiths on his high spiritual rank can be found in hadith collections. According to the late Ayatullah Kho’i: “These hadiths are defective and lack authority. His grandness, faith, and piety are so clear that we do not need such hadiths to prove them.”⁵²

5. Uthman ibn Sa’id

Uthman ibn Sa’id was trained by Imam al-Hadi and progressed spiritually so much that he became the agent of Imam al-Hadi and Imam Hasan al-Askari. He was also the first special deputy of Imam Mahdi during the Lesser Occultation.

Imam al-Hadi from the opponents’ perspective

1. In his letter to the Imam, Mutawakkil admitted his greatness, saying, “Surely Amir-al-Mu’minin appreciate your grandness.”⁵³

⁵¹ *Wasa’il a-Shi’ah*, vol. 1, p. 21.

⁵² *Mu’jam a-Rijal al-Hadith*, vol. 10, p. 49.

⁵³ *Irshad*, p. 333.

2. Yahya ibn Harthamah, who was in charge of taking him to Samarra, described his arrival in Medina and Imam al-Hadi's house as follows:

“When I arrived in Medina, I searched his home. Except for the Quran, and supplication and intellectual books, I found nothing. I was so impressed by his grandness that I took it upon myself to serve him and treat him well.”⁵⁴

3. The Sunni scholar, Ibn Hajar ‘Asqalani, said in praise of the Imam, “He inherited knowledge and generosity from his father.”⁵⁵

4. An eighth-century historian, Hafiz ibn Kathir Damishqi, who talked fervently of the Shi'as as the misled group, praised the Imam as follows, “Surely he was an ascetic worshipper [of God].”^{56 57}

Martyrdom

In religious texts, “martyrdom” is considered the best kind of death. In his historic speech before ibn Ziyad, Imam Sajjad took pride in martyrdom⁵⁸ through which all Imams passed away.⁵⁹

Like other Imams, Imam al-Hadi was martyred. The Abbasid caliph, Mu'tazz, committed the crime of poisoning and martyring him, and then hypocritically performed the funeral prayer on him. Of course,

⁵⁴ Dakhil, Ali Muhammad, *Our Imams*, vol. 2, p. 251, Beirut.

⁵⁵ ibn Hajar ‘Asqalani, Ali ibn Ahmad, *a-Sawai'q al-Muhraqah*, p. 207, Cairo. وكان وارث ابيه علما
و سخاء

⁵⁶ ibn Kathir Damishqi, Hafidh, *al-Bidayah wa a-Nahayah*, vol. 11, p. 19, Beirut. وقد كان عابدا
زاهدا

⁵⁷ For more information see: *Our Imams*, vol. 2, p. 250.

⁵⁸ *Bihar-ul-Anwar*, vol. 45, p. 118.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, vol. 27, p. 209.

before taking his body out of home for the funeral, Imam Hassan Askari had performed funeral prayer on his father.⁶⁰

After funeral, his body was returned home and buried in his prayer place.⁶¹ His holy shrine is now visited by his lovers and the Shi'as.

⁶⁰ Qummi, Abbas, *Anwar-ul-Bahiyah*, p. 299, Islamic Publications, Qum.

⁶¹ Qummi, Abbas, *Muntah-al-Amal*, vol. 2, p. 683, Hijrah Publications, Qum.