

Scientific Quarterly
Journal of Ahl al-Bayt (as) Teachings
Vol. 4, Issue 1, Spring 2026

**Mahdism in the Qur'an and Sunnah:
Foundations and the Perspectives of Sunni Scholars**

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(Received: May 25, 2026, Accepted: June 10, 2026)

Abstract

Belief in the advent of Imam al-Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) is reflected not only in Shi'ī theological and hadith sources, but also extensively in the most authoritative Sunni references, particularly the *Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah* (the Six Canonical Collections). Employing a descriptive–analytical method, the present study examines the status of Imam al-Mahdī (AJ) in the Qur'an and Sunni sources. Drawing upon the *Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah*, as well as Sunni hadith, historical, and theological works, the study elucidates the Qur'anic and narrational foundations of Mahdism, the lineage and identity of Imam al-Mahdī (AJ), his universal government, the descent of Prophet Jesus (‘Īsā), the signs of reappearance, and the viewpoints of Sunni scholars regarding him. Through an analysis of the traditions concerning Mahdism found in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, this study demonstrates that the essential belief in the advent of Imam al-Mahdī (AJ), his affiliation with the Prophet's Household (Ahl al-Bayt), his descent from Lady Fāṭimah (peace be upon her), the establishment of a universal government of justice, and the occurrence of the signs of reappearance are among the issues accepted by many Sunni traditionists and theologians. The findings of this study indicate that Mahdism, beyond its theological significance, possesses important social, civilizational, and unifying dimensions within the Muslim world. As one of the most significant shared beliefs among Muslims, it can serve as a basis for rapprochement among Islamic schools of thought and for strengthening hope in a future founded upon universal justice.

Keywords: Imam al-Mahdī (AJ), Mahdism, Ahl al-Sunnah, *Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah*, Reappearance, Ahl al-Bayt (as), Qur'anic Verses on Mahdism, Traditions of Mahdism.

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Introduction

The doctrine of Mahdism constitutes one of the most fundamental beliefs in Islam and represents one of the most significant shared doctrinal principles among Muslim schools of thought. The belief in the advent of a divinely guided savior at the end of history is deeply rooted not only in Shi'ī thought, but also in the authoritative hadith, exegetical, and historical sources of Ahl al-Sunnah. The doctrine of Mahdism embodies humanity's ultimate hope for the establishment of universal justice, the eradication of oppression, the revival of divine values, and the full realization of motheistic governance throughout the world.

Islamic sources contain numerous traditions concerning Imam al-Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance), addressing subjects such as his lineage, personal characteristics, governing conduct, signs of reappearance, companions, the scope of his universal rule, and the descent of Prophet Jesus (ʿĪsā, peace be upon him). A considerable number of these narrations are recorded in the most authoritative Sunni collections—particularly the *Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah*—to such an extent that many Sunni traditionists and theologians have regarded the narrations concerning Mahdism as *mutawātir* (mass-transmitted) and have considered belief in the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) to be among the definitive doctrines of Islam.

The significance of this issue has become even more pronounced in the contemporary era, as today's world faces crises such as injustice, war, extremism, moral disintegration, and the hegemonic ambitions of global powers. In this context, the doctrine of Mahdism may serve as an inspiring paradigm for the pursuit of justice, social hope, and the unity of the Islamic Ummah. On the other hand, certain contemporary intellectual movements have attempted to portray belief in Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) as an exclusively Shi'ī doctrine or to cast doubt upon the authenticity of the traditions related to him. However, a careful examination of Sunni sources demonstrates that the principle of Mahdism has been widely accepted by many leading Sunni scholars throughout Islamic history.

Using a descriptive–analytical approach, the present study investigates the status of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) in authoritative Sunni sources. It seeks, through an analysis of the narrations contained in the *Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah* and other hadith and theological works, to elucidate the perspectives of Sunni scholars regarding the lineage, universal government, signs of reappearance, and identity of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ). Furthermore, this study demonstrates that Mahdism, beyond its theological dimension, possesses significant social, civilizational, and unifying functions within the Muslim world.



Statement of the Problem

The issue of Mahdism and belief in the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) constitutes one of the most important doctrinal teachings of Islam and one of the most influential subjects in Islamic religious thought. Although the principle of the appearance of the eschatological savior has been extensively discussed in authoritative Islamic sources—both Shi'i and Sunni—certain contemporary intellectual and Salafi movements have sought to portray this belief as exclusively Shi'i in nature or to question the authenticity of the traditions concerning Imam al-Mahdi (AJ). Such claims are advanced despite the fact that the most authoritative Sunni hadith collections, including the *Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah*, contain numerous narrations regarding the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ), his lineage, the establishment of a universal government of justice, the descent of Prophet Jesus (as), and the signs of reappearance.

Moreover, many Sunni traditionists, exegetes, and theologians have not only accepted the doctrine of Mahdism, but have also authored independent works concerning Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) and regarded the traditions related to him as *mutawātir*. This demonstrates that Mahdism constitutes an inseparable component of the doctrinal heritage of the Islamic world and is not confined to any particular school of thought.

Accordingly, the principal question of the present study is how the status of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) has been articulated in authoritative Sunni sources—especially the *Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah*—and what perspectives Sunni scholars have adopted regarding his lineage, identity, universal government, and the signs of his reappearance. Furthermore, this study seeks to demonstrate how belief in Mahdism can serve, as one of the most important shared doctrinal principles among Muslims, as a foundation for Islamic unity, social hope, and the pursuit of justice throughout the Muslim world.

Chapter One: The Doctrinal Foundations of Mahdism in the Qur'an and Sunnah

1–1. Mahdism: A Deep-Rooted Doctrine in the Divine Religions

Belief in the advent of the Promised Savior is not exclusive to the Shi'i school; rather, it is one of the fundamental commonalities among the divine religions and major human traditions. The doctrine of salvation in the end times is discussed in the sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, each speaking in its own way of the appearance of a divinely guided figure who will fill the earth with justice and equity. In Islam as well, the principle of Mahdism is regarded as one of the definitive and *mutawātir* doctrines, and numerous narrations concerning it have been transmitted in both Shi'i and Sunni sources.



Although the Noble Qur'an does not explicitly mention the name of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ), many Qur'anic verses indicate the rule of the righteous, the inheritance of the earth by the believers, and the supremacy of the divine religion over all other religions. Shi'i exegetes, along with a number of Sunni commentators, have interpreted these verses as referring to the universal government of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ).

1–2. Qur'anic Foundations of Mahdism

A) The Inheritance of the Earth by the Righteous

God Almighty states in Surat al-Anbiyā': "And indeed We wrote in the Psalms after the Reminder that My righteous servants shall inherit the earth" (Qur'an 21:105).

This verse conveys the definite divine promise concerning the ultimate rule of the righteous over the earth. Many exegetes, including al-Tabari, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, al-Qurtubi, and al-Alusi, have regarded this verse as referring to the future course of history and the governance of the righteous. In the narrations of Ahl al-Bayt (as), this verse has also been interpreted as referring to the rule of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ).

B) The Succession of the Believers on Earth

God states in Surat al-Nur: "Allah has promised those among you who believe and perform righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession upon the earth..." (Qur'an 24:55).

This verse expresses the promise of the global rule of the believers and the realization of complete religious security. Many Muslim exegetes maintain that the full realization of this promise has not yet occurred and will be fulfilled during the era of the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ).

C) The Supremacy of the True Religion over All Religions

In three passages of the Noble Qur'an, it is stated:

"It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it prevail over all religions..." (Qur'an 9:33; 48:28; 61:9).

The complete triumph of Islam over all religions has not yet been fully realized. For this reason, many exegetes have considered the ultimate fulfillment of this divine promise to occur during the era of the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ).

D) The Establishment of Global Security

Regarding the future of the believers, the Noble Qur'an states:

"They shall worship Me and associate nothing with Me" (Qur'an 24:55).

This verse describes a monotheistic, secure, and just society which, according to the narrations, will be realized during the period of the universal government of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ).



E) The Victory of Islam over Other Religions

The Noble Qur'an states: "It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it prevail over all religions, though the polytheists may detest it" (Qur'an 9:33).

In his Tafsir, al-Qurtubi writes: "The victory of Islam over all other religions will occur at the time of the uprising of al-Mahdi (AJ). At that time, people will either embrace Islam or pay the jizyah. The claim that the Mahdi is the same as Jesus is incorrect, because authentic and mutawātir reports have established that the Mahdi is from the family of the Prophet (PBUH) ..." (al-Qurtubi, vol. 8, p. 111).

Likewise, in al-Bayan, in the commentary on this verse, it is stated: "The one through whom God will make the religion prevail over all other religions is the Mahdi from the descendants of Fatimah." (Al-Shablanji, 1409 AH: p. 343).

Furthermore, Kashf al-Asrar, one of the authoritative Sunni commentaries, states regarding this verse: "The Messenger mentioned in this verse is Mohammad (pbuh), the guidance refers to the Qur'an and faith, and the religion of truth is Islam. God shall grant this religion superiority over all other religions, such that no religion shall remain except that Islam will prevail over it. This event will occur in the future and has not yet been realized." (Maybudi, vol. 4, p. 119).

F) Baqiyyat Allah Is Best for All People

The Noble Qur'an states: "Baqiyyat Allah is better for you, if you are believers" (Qur'an 11:86).

In Nur al-Absar, it is narrated: "When al-Mahdi (AJ) appears, he will make the Ka'bah his base, and 313 of his companions will join him. Then, in his first address, he will recite this verse: 'Baqiyyat Allah is better for you, if you are believers.' Thereafter he will say: 'I am the Baqiyyat Allah, the vicegerent of God, and His proof over you.'" (Al-Shablanji, 1409 AH: p. 349).

1–3. The Hadith Foundations of Mahdism in the Prophetic Sunnah

The narrations concerning Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) are highly abundant in Sunni sources, and many Sunni scholars have regarded the traditions on Mahdism as mutawātir. Among them are the following:

"If there remained only one day from the life of this world, Allah would prolong that day until He raises a man from my household..." (Sunan Abi Dawud, hadith no. 4282).

"The Mahdi is from my progeny, from the descendants of Fatimah." (Sunan Abi Dawud, hadith no. 4284).

"He will fill the earth with justice and equity just as it had been filled with oppression and tyranny." (Al-Mustadrak of al-Hakim, vol. 4, p. 557).



“How will you be when the son of Mary descends while your Imam is from among yourselves?” (Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 205; Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, p. 136).

In some Sunni narrations, reference is also made to the role of people from the East in preparing the ground for the government of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ). The Messenger of God (pbuh) said: “A people shall emerge from the East and prepare the ground for the rule of the Mahdi.” (Ibn Majah, *ibid.*, hadith no. 4088).

These narrations clearly indicate several fundamental principles:

The certainty of the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ);

His affiliation with the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet (pbuh);

His descent from Fatimah;

The universal nature of the Mahdist government of justice;

The descent of Jesus (as) and his following of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) in prayer.

1–4. The Mutawātir Nature of the Traditions on Mahdism

Many leading Sunni scholars have regarded the traditions concerning Mahdism as mutawātir, among them:

Shams al-Din al-Safarini in *Lawami‘ al-Anwar al-Bahiyyah*;

al-Shawkani in *al-Tawdih fi Tawatur ma Ja’a fi al-Muntazar wa al-Dajjal wa al-Masih*;

Mohammad Siddiq Hasan Khan al-Qanuji in *al-Idha‘ah lima Kana wa Yakun Bayna Yaday al-Sa‘ah*;

Ibn Hajar al-Haytami in *al-Sawa‘iq al-Muhriqah*;

al-Suyuti in *al-‘Arf al-Wardi fi Akhbar al-Mahdi*.

Al-Shawkani explicitly states that the traditions concerning Mahdism have reached the level of tawātur and that there remains no doubt regarding the principle of the advent of the Mahdi.

Chapter Two: Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) in the Six Canonical Sunni Collections

2–1. The Status of the Six Canonical Collections in Sunni Hadith

The term al-Sihah al-Sittah (“The Six Authentic Collections”) is the well-known designation for the six principal hadith collections recognized by Ahl al-Sunnah. These include: Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abi Dawud, Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Sunan al-Nasa’i, and Sunan Ibn Majah. Among Sunni Muslims, this corpus constitutes the most important body of hadith literature, and its narrations hold a foundational position in the derivation of doctrines and legal rulings.

Although al-Bukhari and Muslim did not dedicate an independent chapter entitled “al-Mahdi,” narrations related to the appearance of the Savior, the descent of Jesus (as), the establishment of universal justice, the



swallowing of the army in al-Bayda', and the rule of a man from the Ahl al-Bayt (as) are found in both collections. In contrast, Abi Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Majah each devoted independent chapters to Imam al-Mahdi (AJ), demonstrating the widespread recognition and acceptance of this belief among Sunni traditionists.

2–2. The Traditions on Mahdism in Sunan Abi Dawud

Abu Dawud al-Sijistani (d. 275 AH), in his Sunan, devoted a distinct section entitled Kitab al-Mahdi. This in itself indicates that he regarded the doctrine of Mahdism as an established and authoritative belief.

Among his most famous narrations is the following:

“If there remained from the life of this world only a single day, Allah would prolong that day until He raises in it a man from me — or from my household — whose name corresponds to mine...”

(Sunan Abi Dawud, Kitab al-Mahdi, hadith no. 4282)

“If there remained from the age of the world only one day, Allah would prolong that day until He raises a man from my Ahl al-Bayt whose name is like mine.”

This hadith is among the most important Sunni textual proofs concerning the certainty of the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ). The narration indicates several fundamental points:

The certainty of the appearance of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ);

His affiliation with the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet (pbuh);

The universal nature of his mission;

The continuity of the divine tradition of guidance until the end of history.

2–3. The Traditions on Mahdism in Sunan al-Tirmidhi

Al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 AH) also devoted an independent chapter entitled *Ma Ja'a fi al-Mahdi* (“Reports Concerning the Mahdi”).

Among the well-known narrations is:

“The Mahdi is from my progeny, from the descendants of Fatimah.”
(*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, vol. 4, p. 505)

This narration is among the most important proofs establishing the lineage of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) through Lady Fatimah (as). After transmitting some of these narrations, al-Tirmidhi describes them as “hasan sahih,” indicating their reliability in his view.

This hadith establishes several important doctrinal principles:

- The connection of Mahdism with the Ahl al-Bayt (as);
- The continuation of the line of prophethood through the family of the Prophet (pbuh);
- The rejection of views that identify the Mahdi as someone outside the descendants of Fatimah (as).



2–4. The Traditions on Mahdism in *Sunan Ibn Majah*

Ibn Majah (d. 273 AH), in *Kitab al-Fitan*, devoted a separate chapter to the emergence of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ).

“A people shall emerge from the East and prepare the ground for the rule of the Mahdi.”

(*Sunan Ibn Majah*, hadith no. 4088)

This narration indicates that the universal government of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) possesses historical and social preliminaries, and that the advent is not a sudden event without prior preparation. In analyzing this narration, some contemporary researchers have interpreted it as referring to Islamic revivalist movements arising in the eastern regions of the Muslim world.

Moreover, this narration emphasizes the role of the people in preparing the conditions for the advent and reinforces the concept of “active expectation.”

2–5. Mahdism in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*

Although al-Bukhari and Muslim did not dedicate independent chapters to Imam al-Mahdi (AJ), they transmitted numerous narrations that indicate the doctrine of Mahdism.

A) The Descent of Jesus (as)

“How will you be when the son of Mary descends among you while your Imam is from among yourselves?” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 205; *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 136)

Many Sunni commentators have explicitly stated that the phrase “your Imam” refers to Imam al-Mahdi (AJ). Among them are: Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani; al-Nawawi; al-Qastallani; al-Shawkani.

This narration demonstrates:

- The continuity of divine leadership within the Muslim community;
- The supremacy of the Islamic Shari‘ah;
- The universal nature of the Mahdist government;
- The following of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) by a major prophet of firm resolve (ulu al-‘azm).

B) The Swallowing of the Army in al-Bayda’

In *Sahih Muslim* and *Sahih al-Bukhari*, several narrations report the swallowing of an invading army into the earth in the land of al-Bayda’.

Narration: “An army advancing toward the House shall be swallowed up.”

(*Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Fitan*)

This event has been regarded as one of the certain signs of the advent and has been widely transmitted in both Shi‘i and Sunni sources. Many hadith commentators have identified this army as the army of al-Sufyani.



2–6. Why Did al-Bukhari and Muslim Not Explicitly Mention the Name “Mahdi”?

This issue is among the important subjects in hadith studies. Researchers have proposed several possible explanations:

A) Political Considerations during the Abbasid Era
Many Abbasid rulers were highly sensitive toward Alid movements, and the explicit mention of the Mahdi could have carried political consequences.

B) The Particular Methodology of al-Bukhari and Muslim
Al-Bukhari and Muslim did not intend to compile all authentic narrations. Al-Bukhari himself explicitly states that he omitted many authentic hadiths for the sake of brevity.

C) Transmission of the Meaning without Explicit Mention of the Name

Al-Bukhari and Muslim transmitted many of the signs and characteristics related to Mahdism, even though they mentioned the name “Mahdi” less explicitly.

2–7. The Views of the Commentators of the *Sihah* Regarding Mahdism

Many major commentators on the canonical Sunni collections accepted the doctrine of Mahdism:

- **Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani:** In *Fath al-Bari*, he regarded the narrations on Mahdism as reliable and connected the descent of Jesus (as) with the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ).
- **Al-Nawawi:** In his commentary on *Sahih Muslim*, he considered the following of the Imam of the Muslim community by Jesus (as) as evidence of the virtue of this ummah.
- **Al-Shawkani:** In *al-Tawdih*, he declared the narrations concerning Mahdism to be mutawātir.
- **Al-Safarini al-Hanbali:** He explicitly states:
“Narrations concerning his emergence have become so numerous that they have reached the level of tawātur ma‘nawi.”

2–8. A Theological Analysis of the Traditions on Mahdism in the Six Canonical Collections

A comprehensive examination of the narrations found in the *Sihah al-Sittah* demonstrates that the principal elements of the doctrine of Mahdism are present within the authoritative Sunni sources. These elements include: The advent of the Savior in the end times; His affiliation with the Ahl al-Bayt (as); His descent from Fatimah (as); The establishment of a universal



government of justice; The descent of Jesus (as); The occurrence of the signs of the advent; The eradication of global oppression.

From a theological perspective, these narrations indicate that human history possesses a divine purpose and will ultimately culminate in the establishment of justice and monotheism.

Chapter Three: The Signs of the Advent of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ); A Hadith and Historical Analysis

The issue of the signs of the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) is among the most significant subjects related to Mahdism in Islamic sources and has been extensively discussed in both Shi'i and Sunni works. These signs, in reality, consist of a series of political, social, military, and spiritual transformations that will occur prior to the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) and will prepare the ground for the establishment of the universal government of justice.

An examination of the signs of the advent in Sunni sources demonstrates that many of these signs — particularly the emergence of al-Sufyani, the swallowing of the army in al-Bayda', and the descent of Jesus (as) — have been transmitted in their most authoritative hadith collections.

From an analytical perspective, the signs of the advent may be divided into two categories:

- **Non-definitive signs:** signs whose occurrence may be subject to change or delay;
- **Definitive signs:** signs whose occurrence, according to the narrations, is regarded as certain.

In Shi'i narrations, five signs are identified as the “definitive signs” (*al-alamat al-hatmiyyah*): The emergence of al-Sufyani; The heavenly cry; The killing of al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah; The swallowing of the army in al-Bayda'; The emergence of the Yamani.

In Sunni sources as well, some of these signs are explicitly mentioned and have received the attention of Sunni traditionists.

1. The Emergence of al-Sufyani: A Symbol of Oppression and Tyranny

One of the most important signs of the advent is the emergence of a figure known as “al-Sufyani.” In Islamic narrations, al-Sufyani is portrayed as a symbol of deviation, oppression, violence, and enmity toward the Ahl al-Bayt (as). Many Sunni narrations report that he will emerge from the region of al-Sham (Greater Syria).

Al-Hakim al-Naysaburi narrates in *al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn*:

“A man will emerge from Damascus ... then a man from my Ahl al-Bayt shall rise, and al-Sufyani will send an army against him...” (al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, 1411 AH, vol. 4, p. 565)



Historical and Political Analysis

Throughout Islamic history, al-Sham was one of the principal centers of Umayyad rule and anti-Ahl al-Bayt (as) movements. Therefore, the emergence of al-Sufyani from al-Sham, beyond its literal meaning, also carries symbolic and historical significance, representing the continuity of oppression and tyranny in opposition to the Mahdist movement of justice.

From a sociological perspective, al-Sufyani may be viewed as a symbol of arrogant and domineering systems and powers which, prior to the advent, plunge the world into crisis through the spread of violence, warfare, and hegemonic ambition. In contrast, the Mahdist movement represents a universal uprising aimed at bringing an end to such oppressive structures.

2. The Swallowing of the Army in al-Bayda': A Sign of Divine Intervention

Khasf al-Bayda' refers to the swallowing of al-Sufyani's army into the earth in the land of al-Bayda', located between Mecca and Medina. This event is regarded as one of the definitive signs of the advent and is also recorded in the canonical Sunni collections.

Muslim narrates in his *Sahih*: "An army will march toward a man who has sought refuge in the House of God; but when they reach the land of al-Bayda', all of them will be swallowed into the earth." (Muslim, 1407 AH, vol. 4, p. 2208)

Al-Bukhari, al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, and Abu Dawud have also transmitted similar narrations.

Theological and Doctrinal Analysis

The event of *Khasf al-Bayda'* is a sign of direct divine intervention in support of the movement of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ). In this incident, the army of oppression is destroyed by divine will without military confrontation or warfare. This demonstrates that the Mahdist government is not merely a political or military movement, but rather a divinely guided uprising endorsed by God.

From a doctrinal perspective, *Khasf al-Bayda'* expresses the truth that at the height of global oppression, the divine tradition decrees the destruction of falsehood and the ultimate triumph of truth — the very promise repeatedly emphasized in the Noble Qur'an.

Chapter Four: Independent Works of Sunni Scholars on Imam al-Mahdi (AJ)

Belief in the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) among Sunni scholars has not been limited merely to the transmission of a few narrations. Rather, many Sunni traditionists, historians, and theologians authored independent works concerning him. These writings demonstrate the extensive attention given by Sunni scholars to the issue of Mahdism and their acceptance of



the principle of the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ). The most important of these works are introduced below:

1. **Al-Hakim al-Naysaburi (d. 405 AH), in *al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn***

In the fourth volume of this work, he transmitted numerous narrations concerning Imam al-Mahdi (AJ), his lineage, his universal government, and the signs of the advent, considering many of them to be authentic.

2. **Mohammad ibn Talhah al-Shafi'i (d. 652 AH), in *Matalib al-Su'ul fi Manaqib Al al-Rasul***

3. The twelfth chapter of this work is entirely devoted to the Twelfth Imam, Imam al-Mahdi (AJ).

4. **Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 654 AH), in *Tadhkirat Khawas al-Ummah fi Khasa'is al-A'imma***

5. He authored an independent section entitled *Fasl fi Dhikr al-Hujjah al-Mahdi* concerning Imam al-Mahdi (AJ).

6. **Mohammad ibn Yusuf al-Ganji al-Shafi'i (d. 658 AH), in *al-Bayan fi Akhbar Sahib al-Zaman***

7. This work is among the most important independent Sunni writings concerning Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) and contains numerous chapters discussing his lineage, advent, government, and characteristics.

8. **Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 AH), in *Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah***

In this work, he accepted the narrations concerning Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) and regarded some of them as authentic.

9. **Ibrahim ibn Mohammad al-Hamuwayni (d. 732 AH), in *Fara'id al-Simtayn fi Fada'il al-Murtada wa al-Batul wa al-Sibtayn wa al-A'imma min Dhurriyyatihim***

10. This work transmits numerous narrations concerning Imam al-Mahdi (AJ), his occultation, advent, and Imamate.

11. **Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 751 AH), in *al-Manar al-Munif fi al-Sahih wa al-Da'if***

A section of this work is devoted to the narrations concerning Imam al-Mahdi (AJ), and the author considers the narration "There is no Mahdi except Jesus son of Mary" to be weak.

12. **Ibn Sabbagh al-Maliki (d. 855 AH), in *al-Fusul al-Muhimmah fi Ma'rifat Ahwal al-A'imma*: The twelfth chapter of this book is dedicated to Imam al-Mahdi (AJ), including his birth, occultation, titles, and governance.**

13. **Ibn Tulun al-Dimashqi (d. 953 AH), in *al-A'imma al-Ithna 'Ashar*: In this work, the Twelve Imams are introduced, and Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) is presented as the twelfth Imam.**



14. ‘Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha‘rani (d. 973 AH), in *al-Yawaqit wa al-Jawahir fi Bayan ‘Aqa’id al-Aka’bir*: In this book, he identifies Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) as the son of Imam Hasan al-Askari (as) and explicitly affirms his occultation.

15. Ibn Hajar al-Haytami (d. 974 AH), in *al-Sawa‘iq al-Muhriqah and al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi ‘Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar and al-Fatawa al-Hadithiyah*: In these works, he transmits narrations concerning Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) and emphasizes the certainty of his advent.

16. ‘Ali al-Qari (d. 1014 AH), in *Mirqat al-Mafatih Sharh Mishkat al-Masabih*: In his commentary on the hadiths of Mahdism, he discusses the narrations concerning Imam al-Mahdi (AJ).

17. Ahmad ibn Yusuf al-Qaramani (d. 1019 AH), in *Akhbar al-Duwal wa Athar al-Uwal*: This work contains an independent chapter on Imam al-Mahdi (AJ), his birth, and his occultation.

18. ‘Abd Allah al-Shafi‘i, in *al-Ithaf bi Hubb al-Ashraf*: In this book, alongside introducing the Twelve Imams, he refers to Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) and his titles.

19. Shaykh Sulayman al-Qunduzi al-Hanafi (d. 1294 AH), in *Yanabi‘ al-Mawaddah li Dhawi al-Qurba*: One of the most important Sunni works on the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt (as), with several chapters dedicated to Imam al-Mahdi (AJ), his occultation, advent, and lineage.

20. Sayyid Mu‘min al-Shablanji, in *Nur al-Absar fi Manaqib Al Bayt al-Nabi al-Mukhtar*: In a dedicated chapter, he discusses the life and characteristics of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ).

21. Mohammad ibn Ahmad Isma‘il, in *al-Mahdi Haqiqa la Khurafa*: This is a contemporary Sunni work written in defense of the doctrine of Mahdism and in affirmation of the narrations concerning Imam al-Mahdi (AJ).

These works clearly indicate that the issue of Mahdism has not only been discussed in Sunni hadith sources, but that many prominent Sunni scholars have authored extensive independent works on Imam al-Mahdi (AJ), considering his advent to be one of the established doctrines of Islam.

Many of these scholars explicitly state that Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) is the son of Imam Hasan al-Askari (as) and the twelfth Imam from the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet (pbuh).

Al-Qunduzi al-Hanafi writes: “He is Mohammad al-Muntazar, the son of Hasan al-Askari, who is known among the elite and the trustworthy scholars.” (Al-Qunduzi, 1308 AH, vol. 3, p. 356)



Conclusion

An examination of the Qur'anic verses, Prophetic traditions, and reliable Sunni sources demonstrates that belief in the advent of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) is an authentic, deeply rooted, and widely accepted Islamic doctrine, not exclusive to the Shi'i school. While the detailed explanations regarding the personality, birth, and occultation of the Imam vary among Islamic schools, the fundamental belief in the emergence of a divinely guided savior from the Ahl al-Bayt (pbuh), the establishment of a global government of justice, and the eradication of oppression and corruption is broadly accepted among Muslim scholars—particularly Sunni traditionists.

An examination of the *Sihah al-Sittah* shows that Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Majah dedicated independent chapters to Imam al-Mahdi (AJ), while al-Bukhari and Muslim also transmitted important narrations concerning the descent of Jesus (as), the leadership of a righteous Imam from the Muslim community, the swallowing of an army in al-Bayda', and other eschatological developments. Many Sunni commentators have interpreted these reports as referring to Imam al-Mahdi (AJ). Moreover, the explicit affirmation by leading Sunni scholars such as al-Shawkani, al-Safarini, al-Suyuti, and Ibn Hajar al-Haytami regarding the mutawātir status of Mahdist narrations reflects the strength and established nature of this belief within Sunni hadith heritage.

The analysis of narrations related to the signs of the advent further indicates that Mahdism is not merely a metaphysical or distant eschatological idea, but rather one with profound historical, political, and civilizational dimensions. Concepts such as the emergence of al-Sufyani, the swallowing of the army in al-Bayda', the descent of Jesus (as), and the role of eastern supporters highlight the ongoing struggle between truth and falsehood and the ultimate hope for the triumph of divine justice in human history.

Furthermore, the presentation of independent works by Sunni scholars on Imam al-Mahdi (AJ) shows that Mahdism is not limited to the transmission of a few narrations but has been the subject of extensive theological, hadith-based, and scholarly investigation. Some of these scholars even explicitly affirm the birth of Imam al-Mahdi (AJ), his lineage from Imam Hasan al-Askari (as), and the continuation of his life.

Despite claims made by some Wahhabi writers, the existence and authenticity of narrations concerning the Mahdi (AJ) in Sunni sources are undeniable. The abundance of such narrations in authoritative Sunni collections reflects their acceptance and validation by major Sunni scholars, while their mutawātir status further confirms their reliability according to Sunni methodological standards.



In sum, Mahdism represents one of the most significant shared beliefs among Muslims and provides an important intellectual and spiritual foundation for strengthening Islamic unity, reviving religious hope, combating oppression, and promoting justice in the contemporary world. A scholarly and evidence-based re-reading of this doctrine within Sunni sources can play a vital role in fostering sectarian rapprochement and countering divisive tendencies within the Muslim community.

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