

A Descriptive Catalogue of Some Key Sources That Deal with the Subject of Encounters with the Hidden Imam

What follows is an annotated catalogue of some of the main collections of stories of encounters with the Hidden Imam and other books that emphasize these stories, mentioned by Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī (d. 1970) in his *al-Dharīʿa ilā taṣānīf al-shīʿa*, a comprehensive bibliography of works written up to 1950–1.¹

1. *Al-ʿAbqārī l-ḥisān fī aḥwāl* (var., *tawārīkh*) *mawlānā ṣāhib al-zamān* (The fine wonders of beauty concerning the circumstances [var., chronicles] of our master, the lord of the [final] age) (Persian), by ʿAlī-Akbar Nahāvandī (b. 1280/1863–4, d. 1950),² a student of al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī.³ It is one of the lengthiest works on the Hidden Imam.⁴ One of the main sections of the work is entitled *al-Yāqūt al-aḥmar fī-man raʾa l-ḥujja al-muntaẓar* (The red ruby concerning those who have seen the eagerly awaited Proof [of God]). This section was republished as a separate book under the title *Barakāt-i ḥaḍrat-i valī-i ʿaṣr* (The blessings of the Guardian of the Age). The book is divided into seven chapters: (1) encounters with the Hidden Imam, in a wakeful state, during which the person has seen and simultaneously recognized the Imam (80 accounts); (2) encounters with the Hidden Imam, in a wakeful state, during which the person sees the Imam but only later realizes this fact (109 accounts); (3) sightings and unveilings, concerning people who saw the Imam in a state between wakefulness and sleep (16 accounts); (4) veridical dreams (29 accounts); (5) traces of the Hidden Imam, concerning accounts of those who saw the light of the Imam, heard his voice, or inhaled his fragrance (52 accounts) (this chapter also includes the *tawqīʿāt* of the Imam and accounts of miracles performed

1 On al-Ṭīhrānī, see Algar, “Āqā (or Āḡā) Bozorg Tehrānī,” *Elr*, 2:169–70. On his *al-Dharīʿa*, see Kohlberg, *al-Darīʿa elā Taṣānīf al-Ṣīʿa*, *Elr*, 7:35–6.

2 On *al-ʿAbqārī l-ḥisān*, see al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 15:215–6 (no. 1419). Henry Corbin is among the few Western scholar who have taken note of this work. See Corbin, *Histoire*, 108 [= Corbin, *History*, 69], where he calls it “*al-Kitāb al-ʿabqārī*,” and Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, 4:303–4 n. 2, where he calls it, “*al-Kitāb al-ʿabqārī al-hossan fī ithbāt Mawlānā Ṣāhib al-zamān*.”

3 Nahāvandī, *Barakāt-i ḥaḍrat-i valī-i ʿaṣr*, 16. On Nahāvandī, see Mišbāh, “Ḥājj Shaykh ʿAlī-Akbar Nahāvandī.” Nahāvandī also recorded stories of encounters with the Hidden Imam in his *Khazīnat al-jawāhir*, 1:378–80; 2:1047–55.

4 *Al-ʿAbqārī l-ḥisān* has been republished by the Jamkarān publishing house in nine volumes, comprising 4,400 pages.

by him); (6) accounts of those who prayed to the Hidden Imam to intercede for them (*tavassulāt*) and whose prayers were answered (19 accounts); and (7) accounts of those who met the servants, the four emissaries (*sufarā'*) or deputies (*wukalā'*) of the Imam (47 accounts—all from the Lesser Occultation).

Most of the accounts are of prominent or less well-known ulama who are said to have encountered the Imam, especially clerics from the time of Nahāvandī or the previous century, including al-Waḥīd al-Bihbihānī (d. 1791), Baḥr al-ʿUlūm al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1797), Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Najafī—known as “Ṣāhib al-Jawāhir” (d. 1850), Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī (d. 1864), Ḥasan Shīrāzī, known as Mīrzā-yi Shīrāzī (d. 1895), Āqā Najafī Iṣfahānī (d. 1914), Muḥammad-Ḥusayn Nāʾīnī (d. 1936), ʿAbd al-Karīm Yazdī Ḥāʾirī (d. 1937)—the influential *marjiʿ al-taqlīd* who founded the modern *ḥawza* in Qum, and Abū l-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī (d. 1946).

The editor of *Barakāt-i ḥaḍrat-i valī-i ʿaṣr*, Sayyid Javād Muʿallim, maintains that there are so many stories of people who have seen the Imam that the matter no longer needs to be proven.⁵ He emphasizes that anyone, regardless of learning or piety, can see the Imam, though in fact most of the stories are of scholars and students of knowledge.⁶ According to Muʿallim, the accounts serve to prove that the Imam “truly is among us” (*ān ḥaḍrat vāqʿān dar bayn-i mā hastand*).⁷ Stories of prominent ulama encountering the Imam are included throughout the work, though sources are not cited for any of the accounts.⁸ A report is also related of Nahāvandī’s scribe, a certain Muḥammad-ʿAlī Ḥāʾirī, seeing the Hidden Imam.⁹

2. *Badāʾiʿ al-kalām fī-man fāza bi-liqāʾ al-imām ʿalayh al-salām* (Wondrous words concerning those who have attained the presence of the Imam, peace be upon him) (Arabic?), by Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Murtaḍā al-Yazdī al-Ḥāʾirī al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. ca. 1313/1895–6).¹⁰ According to al-Ṭihhrānī, al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī mentioned this book in a list of his written works found at the end of his *Akhbār al-awāʾil*, published in

5 Nahāvandī, *Barakāt-i ḥaḍrat-i valī-i ʿaṣr*, 13 (from the intro. by Muʿallim).

6 Nahāvandī, *Barakāt-i ḥaḍrat-i valī-i ʿaṣr*, 14 (from the intro. by Muʿallim).

7 Nahāvandī, *Barakāt-i ḥaḍrat-i valī-i ʿaṣr*, 18 (from the intro. by Muʿallim).

8 Page references for stories about the following individuals appear in the parentheses after their names: Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (366–9); Muqaddas al-Ardabīlī (72); ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (176–7, 179–80); al-Shahīd al-Thānī (179); al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī (360); Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī (177–8); Āqā Najafī Iṣfahānī (178–9); ʿAlī al-Ḥāʾirī al-Yazdī (192–3).

9 Nahāvandī, *Barakāt-i ḥaḍrat-i valī-i ʿaṣr*, 359. Nahāvandī describes miracles and encounters with the Imam in other works as well, e.g., his *Riḥlat al-rūḥ yā kishtī-i najāt*, 144–5, 170–4.

10 Al-Qazwīnī, *al-Imām al-mahdī*, 254, lists the title of the book as *Badāʾiʿ al-kalām fī-man ij̄tamaʿ bi-l-imām*. Al-Qazwīnī’s introduction was plagiarized by al-Ibrāhīmī, *Iʿraf imām zamānika*, 83–4.

1312/1894–5.¹¹ According to al-Amīn, a section of this work was published in Bombay in 1308/1890–1 and featured an endorsement (*taqrīz*) by al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī.¹²

3. *Bahjat al-awliyā' fī-man fāza bi-liqā' al-ḥujja* (The delight of the friends of God concerning those who attained the presence of the proof [of God]) (Persian), by Muḥammad Taqī b. Mīrzā Kāẓim b. Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh b. al-Mawlā Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī al-Iṣfahānī, known as al-Almāsī (b. 1089/1678–9, d. 1159/1746–7), a maternal grandson of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī. According to al-Ṭihrānī, this title was mentioned in the work of one of al-Almāsī's students. It has never been published and no manuscripts are known to exist.¹³

4. *Bughyat al-ṭālib fī-man ra'ā l-imām al-ghā'ib 'alayh al-salām* (The object of the seeker's desire concerning those who have seen the Hidden Imam) (Persian), by Muḥammad Bāqir al-Birjandī al-Qā'inī (b. 1276/1859–60, d. 1933–4). This work was printed in Mashhad in 1923–4.¹⁴ An autograph is available in the library of Ayatollah Mar'ashī-Najafī in Qum. Another manuscript exists, presumably in the same library, under the title *Tadhkirat al-ṭālib*. The author was a student of Mīrzā-yi Shīrāzī and al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī, among others.¹⁵ According to al-Ṭihrānī, this work mentions or makes use of an anti-Bābī polemical work entitled *al-Radd 'alā l-bābiyya* by Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Khūsufī al-Qā'inī, another student of Mīrzā-yi Shīrāzī.¹⁶

5. *Dār al-salām fī man fāza bi-salām al-Imām* (The abode of peace concerning those who attained the peace of the Imam) (Persian), by Maḥmūd b. Ja'far al-Maythamī al-

11 Al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharī'a*, 3:65 (no. 190).

12 Al-Amīn, *A'yān al-shi'a*, 9:254.

13 Al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharī'a*, 3:160 (no. 567). Al-Qazwīnī, *al-Imām al-mahdī*, 254, lists the title of the book as *al-Bahja fī-man fāza bi-liqā' al-ḥujja*. The book is said to include an account about an unnamed believer from Baghdad (alive in 1136/1723–4) who, while stranded on an island, sees a giant snake killed by a rabbit, then encounters a group of people and realizes, after being transported back to his home, that one of them was the Hidden Imam. Al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī (d. 1902) read this account in *Nūr al-'uyūn*, a work written by one of al-Almāsī's students. Al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī, *Jannat al-ma'wā*, 76–9 (no. 29) [Persian translation: al-Nūrī, *Najm-i thāqib*, 2:632–4 (no. 38)]. This suggests that al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī did not have access to *Bahjat al-awliyā'*. The story is also cited in al-Ḥā'irī al-Yazdī, *Ilzām al-nāṣib*, 2:41–2 (no. 26), who gives the title of the book as *Bahjat al-awliyā' fī dhikr man ra'āhu fī l-ghayba al-kubrā*. Similar stories of island encounters with the Hidden Imam are recorded in *Najm-i thāqib*, 2:462–72 (no. 2), 2:597–615 (no. 37), 2:739–41 (no. 83).

14 Al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharī'a*, 3:133 (no. 449).

15 Mahdipūr, *Kitāb-nāmih-yi ḥadrat-i mahdī*, 1:175 (no. 398).

16 Al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharī'a*, 10:189 (no. 453).

‘Irāqī (b. 1240/1825 in Tehran; d. 1306/1888–9, 1308/1890–1 or 1310/1892–3 in Najaf).¹⁷ The author is often referred to in Shī‘ī biographical sources as “Ṣāhib-i Dār al-salām” (“the author of *Dār al-salām*”).¹⁸ Completed by al-Maythamī al-‘Irāqī in 1301/1884, two years later, *Dār al-salām* was published by the official state printing house in Tehran, with the blessing of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shah and the imperial court, in lithograph form and a generous initial printing of 1,000 copies. It was first typeset in Tehran in 1333 Sh./1954. An abridged form of the book has been published under the title *Ru‘yā-yi nūr* (Visions of the light),¹⁹ and the monograph itself has been published repeatedly, including in 2008 by the Jamkarān Mosque outside Qum. In recent printings, the title of the book appears as *Dār al-salām dar aḥvālāt-i ḥaḍrat-i mahdī va-‘alā’im-i zuḥūr va-kisānī kih dar khwāb yā bīdārī bih maḥḍar-i ān ḥaḍrat-i mubārak sharaḥyāb shudih-and* (The abode of peace concerning the Mahdī, the portents of his advent, and [the accounts of] those who were honored to attain his presence in dreams or while awake). Many of the stories recounted in *Dār al-salām* are reproduced in subsequent books on the subject of encounters with the Imam.

Dār al-salām is composed of six parts. The first three are short and devoted to restating popular apologetic themes in *ghayba* works, such as rationalizing the need for an infallible guide in every age. Part 5 constitutes the largest section of the book and is devoted mainly to stories of encounters with the Hidden Imam. The third chapter of this section is devoted to stories of those who encountered the Hidden Imam during the Greater Occultation. Here, al-Maythamī al-‘Irāqī provides a Persian translation of two accounts: the story of the Green Island in the White Sea and the story of five islands ruled by sons of the Hidden Imam.²⁰ He then records a number of accounts of those who saw the Imam while awake and those who saw him in dreams and visions.²¹ In the category of those who saw the Imam while awake, he introduces a further taxonomy of those who recognized the Imam while seeing him and those who, after having seen him, recognized that they had seen the Hidden Imam. The accounts in this section are mainly of eminent ulama from the Safavid and Qajar periods, including al-Ardabīlī and Baḥr al-‘Ulūm al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī. In addition, in this work, al-Maythamī al-‘Irāqī provides, for the first time, a now famous account of his teacher Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī encountering the Hidden Imam in Najaf (see chapter 4, above). This account appears in virtually all the

17 On this work, see al-Tihrānī, *al-Dharī‘a*, 8:20–1 (no. 18); Mahdavi, *Zindigīnāmih-yi ‘Allāmah Majlisī*, 2:284. An 1886 lithograph copy is available in the Princeton University Library (call number: 2465.4985.328q) under the title *Dār al-salām al-mushtamil ‘alā dhikr man fāza bi-salām* (344 fols.).

18 On al-Maythamī al-‘Irāqī, see I‘timād al-Saltānīh, *‘Ulamā-yi*, 126; al-Amin, *A‘yān al-shī‘a*, 10:103; Ṣaḥrā’ī, “Maythamī-‘Irāqī,” *DMT*, 15:568; Ghaemmaghami, “The Abode of Peace.”

19 Al-Maythamī al-‘Irāqī, *Ru‘yā-yi nūr*.

20 Al-Maythamī al-‘Irāqī, *Dār al-salām*, 448–64, 464–72.

21 Al-Maythamī al-‘Irāqī, *Dār al-salām*, 474–85.

biographical works on al-Anṣārī and has strengthened his reputation as a pious jurist with access to the Hidden Imam. Perhaps most significant of all, al-Maythamī al-ʿIrāqī provides two accounts of himself encountering the Imam. In one report, he looks back to a time when he was deeply disturbed by a number of ulama “who had strayed from the path” (*munḥarif shudand*) of the Imams and died clinging to “corrupt beliefs” (*ʿaqāʾid-i fāsidadah*). This is a reference to ulama that al-Maythamī al-ʿIrāqī branded as heretics, that is, ulama who embraced the Shaykhī school and the Bābī movement, including at least one of al-Maythamī al-ʿIrāqī’s colleagues from the time he was a student of al-Anṣārī.²² While troubled by this trend, he claimed to have experienced a vision of the Hidden Imam one night in a mosque in Najaf. As the Imam was leaving the mosque, al-Maythamī al-ʿIrāqī threw himself at his feet weeping. He begged to know: “What will happen to me?” The Imam gently helped him to his feet and responded in Persian: “I will not leave without you (*bī-tū nimiravam*).” Al-Maythamī al-ʿIrāqī understood the Imam’s words to mean that the Imam would not enter paradise without al-Maythamī al-ʿIrāqī, perhaps suggesting that al-Maythamī al-ʿIrāqī would live to witness the Imam’s appearance, then die with him.²³

6. *Hidāyat al-anām fī-man laqiya al-ḥujja fī l-manām* (Guidance to humanity concerning those who met the Proof [of God] in dreams) (Persian), by the prolific scholar Ḥusayn b. Naṣr Allāh b. Šādiq al-Ḥusaynī al-Mūsawī al-ʿArab-Bāghī, also known as Ḥusayn Urūmiyyih-ī and ʿArab-Bāghī Urmavī (d. 1950).²⁴ According to al-Ṭihrānī, *Hidāyat al-anām* was completed on 6 May 1913 and printed in Tabriz the following year. Al-Ṭihrānī notes that it was also appended to Urmavī’s *al-Tuḥfa al-mahdawīyya fī aḥwāl al-imām al-mahdī*, which was completed in 1330/1911–2 and printed in Tabriz in 1335/1916–7.²⁵ *Hidāyat al-anām* has been reprinted at least five times. In the introduction, Urmavī explains that having written *al-Tuḥfa al-mahdawīyya* the previous year and included forty stories of those who attained the presence of the Hidden Imam,

22 See Ghaemmaghami, “The Abode of Peace.” Al-Maythamī al-ʿIrāqī also wrote an anti-Shaykhī polemic called *Kifāyat al-rāshidīn fī l-radd ʿalā jamāʿa min al-mubdiʿīn*. Al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 18:91–2 (no. 825).

23 The two accounts are also cited in Nahāvandī, *Barakāt-i ḥaḍrat-i valī-i ʿaṣr*, 393–4. Another collection of encounter stories attributed to al-Maythamī al-ʿIrāqī, though not mentioned by al-Ṭihrānī in *al-Dharīʿa*, is *Tadhkirat al-ṭālib fī-man raʾā l-imām al-ghāʾib*. This work has never been published, and I know of no extant manuscripts, but it is mentioned in passing in al-Qazwīnī, *al-Imām al-mahdī*, 254; al-Zanjānī al-Najafī, *Aqāʾid al-imāmiyya*, 1:248; Ṭayyib, *Kalim al-ṭayyib*, 537; al-Gulpāyigānī, *Muntakhab al-athar*, 381.

24 On ʿArab-Bāghī Urūmī, see Khiradmand, *Gudhar-i āftāb*.

25 Al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 25:174 (no. 114); 3:475 (no. 1748), calls the book *al-Tuḥfa al-mahdiyya*. Chapter 11 includes accounts of forty individuals who encountered the Hidden Imam (*fāzū bi-ziyāratihī*).

it occurred to him to write a separate work and compile forty accounts of those who dreamt of the Hidden Imam.²⁶ Many of the accounts are taken from the works of al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī.

7. *Jannat al-ma'wā fī dhikr man fāza bi-liqā' al-ḥujja aw mu'jazātihi fī l-ghayba al-kubrā* (The garden of refuge concerning those who attained the presence of the Proof [of God] or [witnessed] his miracles during the Greater Occultation) (Arabic), by al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī (d. 1902), completed on 13 Shawwāl 1302/26 July 1885.²⁷ This work includes fifty-nine accounts not mentioned by al-Majlisī in his *Biḥār al-anwār*.²⁸ Al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī, in fact, hoped that his work would serve as an addendum to the volume of *Biḥār al-anwār* that is devoted to the Hidden Imam, in order to “prove [the] weighty matter of the Imam’s appearance, from time to time, to meet with his most pious disciples.” He prayed that these stories could serve “as a means [for the faithful] to draw closer to [the Imam].”²⁹

8. *Kifāyat al-muhtadī fī ma'rīfat al-mahdī 'alayh al-salām* (That which suffices the rightly guided in knowing and recognizing the Mahdī, peace be upon him) (Persian), by Muḥammad Hādī b. Muḥammad Mīr Lawḥī Sabzavārī (fl. eleventh/seventeenth century).³⁰ Also known as *Arba'ūn-i Mīr Lawḥī*,³¹ *Kifāyat al-muhtadī* is a Persian translation of, and commentary on, forty hadiths about the twelfth Imam, twenty-five of which are found in *Ithbāt al-raja'*, a work ascribed to Faḍl b. Shādhān al-Nishābūrī (d. 260/873).³² In the introduction, Mīr-Lawḥī states that he began writing *Kifāyat al-muhtadī* after seeing a dream of either the Prophet or the Imam on 14 Sha'bān 1081/27 December 1670.³³

26 Urmavī, *Hidāyat al-anām*, 1.

27 See al-Ṭihirānī, *al-Dharī'a*, 5:159–60 (no. 675).

28 On this work, see E. Kohlberg, “Behar al-Anwar,” in *Elr*, 4:90–3.

29 Al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī, *Jannat al-ma'wā*, 11. *Jannat al-ma'wā* continues to be regularly published as an addendum to the volume of al-Majlisī's *Biḥār al-anwār* on the Hidden Imam. See al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 53:199–336.

30 On the author, see Hairī, “Mīr Lawḥī,” 112; Turner, *Islam without Allah?*, 212–3; Turner, “Still Waiting for the Imam?” 45–7; Ṭāwūsī-Masrūr, “Mīr-Lawḥī, Sayyid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad,” *DMT*, 15: 586–7.

31 Sabzavārī, *Kifāyat al-muhtadī*, 112.

32 Sabzavārī, *Kifāyat al-muhtadī*, 132. Cf. al-Ṭihirānī, *al-Dharī'a*, 16: 78 (no. 395), who seems to regard al-Nishābūrī's books, *al-Ghayba* and *Ithbāt al-raja'*, as one and the same book, in the possession of Mīr-Lawḥī, but no longer available. See also Amīnī, “Kitāb-i ghaybat-i Shaykh Ṭūsī,” 472.

33 Sabzavārī, *Kifāyat al-muhtadī*, 427. The text is ambiguous about whether he saw the Prophet or the Hidden Imam though it is likely the latter considering that the dream took place on the eve of the Imam's putative birth.

The book was completed two years later.³⁴ The chapter on hadith no. 37 (a hadith ascribed to al-Ṣādiq which says that all the miracles that were performed by the prophets and their successors will also be performed by the Qā'im) is the longest chapter of the work. This chapter comprises accounts of encounters with the Hidden Imam and stories of miracles ascribed to the Imam.³⁵

On encounters during the period of the Greater Occultation, Mīr Lawḥī states, "There have been many Shī'a and *mawālī* who have attained [the Hidden Imam's] presence." He refers readers to the three works I have discussed in this book (al-Ṣadūq's *Kamāl al-dīn*, al-Rāwandī's *al-Kharā'ij*, and al-Irbilī's *Kashf al-ghumma*) as well as *al-Fuṣūl al-muḥimma*.³⁶ Regarding the final *tawqī* of the Imam, he states, "What has been mentioned in the hadith, 'Anyone who claims to have seen [me] before the appearance of al-Sufyānī and [the sounding of] the Cry is a lying impostor,' does not contradict these accounts (*bā in akhbār munāfāt nadārad*)." Mīr Lawḥī directs readers to his work *Ri'yād al-mu'minīn* for a more detailed discussion of the issue.³⁷ He also states that an unnamed Shī'ī scholar has stated in a work on the virtues of the Imams that there are so many stories of the Hidden Imam meeting his followers, healing the sick, and assisting the helpless that were they all to be collected, it would become a large tome (*kitābī 'aẓīm mīshavad*).³⁸ He then cites two accounts from this unnamed author, transmitted from al-Irbilī's *Kashf al-ghumma*: the story of Ismā'īl al-Hirqilī and the story of the father of a certain al-Bāqī b. 'Aṭwa al-'Alawī al-Ḥusaynī.³⁹ The only other account from the period of the Greater Occultation he cites is the story of the youth and the Black Stone (see chapter 4 for this account).⁴⁰ Mīr-Lawḥī adds, "I know a sick person who has seen the Imam multiple times (*mukarrar ān ḥaḍrat rā dīdih*). At one point, he suffered from a terminal illness, but the Imam fully healed him."⁴¹ Mīr-Lawḥī then refers to the hadith

34 On the work, see al-Ṭihirānī, *al-Dharī'a*, 18: 101–2 (no. 867).

35 Sabzavārī, *Kifāyat al-muhtadī*, 585–641.

36 This is a reference to *al-Fuṣūl al-muḥimma l-ma'rifat al-a'imma al-ithnī-'ashar wa-faḍlīhim wa-ma'rifat awlādihim wa-naslihim* by Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Ṣabbāgh al-Mālikī al-Makkī (d. 855/1451–2), a Sunnī scholar from the Maghrib whose testimony in support of the twelfth Imam being the Mahdī is often referred to by Shī'ī apologists. See Madelung, "al-Mahdī," *ET*². On *al-Fuṣūl al-muḥimma*, see al-Ṭihirānī, *al-Dharī'a*, 16: 246 (no. 978). *Al-Fuṣūl al-muḥimma* has been published, but there are no accounts of encounters with the Hidden Imam from the period of the Greater Occultation. Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh, *al-Fuṣūl al-muḥimma*, 2:1095–1136.

37 The full title of this work is *Ri'yād al-mu'minīn wa-ḥadā'iq al-muttaqīn* but it does not appear to have survived. See al-Ṭihirānī, *al-Dharī'a*, 11:329 (no. 2011). Mīr-Lawḥī wrote this work in his youth. Hairī, "Mīr Lawḥī," *ET*², 7:94.

38 Sabzavārī, *Kifāyat al-muhtadī*, 628.

39 Sabzavārī, *Kifāyat al-muhtadī*, 629–34.

40 Sabzavārī, *Kifāyat al-muhtadī*, 625–7.

41 Sabzavārī, *Kifāyat al-muhtadī*, 634.

that states that when the Imam attends the pilgrimage, people see him but are unable to recognize him. It appears that he understands this hadith to be applicable for the period of the Greater Occultation as well. He also quotes the account of Ibn Fāris al-Adīb (see chapter 3 for this account), though he does not say whether this account is from the Lesser or Greater Occultation. With the exception of the three accounts referred to above, all of the remaining accounts he cites are from the Lesser Occultation. It is thus odd that Mīr-Lawḥī states, at this point, that “most of the stories that have been mentioned took place during the Greater Occultation” (*va ḥikāyātī kih madhkūr shud akthar dar ghaybat-i kubrā būd*).⁴²

9. *Al-Najm al-thāqib fī aḥwāl al-imām al-ghā'ib* (also called *Najm-i thāqib*) (The star of piercing brightness, concerning the circumstances of the Hidden Imam) (Persian), by al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī, completed shortly after *Jannat al-ma'wā* on 14 Dhū l-Qa'da 1302/25 August 1885.⁴³ Chapter seven, by far the longest chapter of the book, features one hundred stories of those who encountered or contacted the Hidden Imam during the Greater Occultation. According to al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī, his teacher Mīrzā-yi Shirāzī urged him to write *Najm-i thāqib*, gave the manuscript his seal of approval, and asserted that no other work on the Hidden Imam rivals it.⁴⁴ Al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī states that his main purpose in compiling the stories is to prove the existence of the Imam, demonstrate that he lives among the people, and show how his presence benefits them. That the work was written in Persian betrays a desire to make the stories available to the educated public in al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī's native land. *Najm-i thāqib* has been published and reprinted numerous times in the original language. It has also been published in abridged form under the title *Khūrshīd-i ghā'ib* (The hidden sun).⁴⁵ The one hundred stories of encounters with the Hidden Imam during the Greater Occultation have also been extracted and published as a separate volume.⁴⁶ Additionally, *Najm-i thāqib* has been translated into Arabic (twice) and English.

10. *Tabṣirat al-walī fī-man ra'ā l-qā'im al-mahdī* (The mental perception of the guardian [of the age] concerning those who have seen the Qā'im, the Mahdī) (Arabic), by Hāshim b. Sulaymān al-Baḥrānī (d. 1107/1695–96 or 1109/1697–98).⁴⁷ Completed in

42 Sabzavārī, *Kifāyat al-muhtadī*, 637.

43 Al-Ṭihirānī, *al-Dharī'a*, 24:69 (no. 352). See a recent edition with the Persianized title: al-Nūrī, *Najm-i thāqib dar aḥwāl-i imām-i ghā'ib*.

44 Al-Nūrī, *Najm-i thāqib*, 1:36–7.

45 [Al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī], *Khūrshīd-i ghā'ib*.

46 [Al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī], *Mā imām-i zamān*.

47 On the author, see Tabrīziyān, *al-Allāma al-Sayyid Hāshim al-Baḥrānī*, 17–87; al-Baḥrānī, *Tabṣirat al-walī*, dāl-nūn (from the book's introduction); Madelung, “Baḥrānī, Hāšem,” *Elr*, 3:528–9; Lawson, “Akhbārī Shī'ī Approaches to *tafsīr*,” 187.

1099/1688, this work contains seventy-six accounts of encounters with the Imam, most of which took place during the period of the Lesser Occultation.⁴⁸ Al-Baḥrānī states in the introduction that it occurred to him to compile the reports of those who had seen or heard the Imam's voice during the lifetime of his father, the eleventh Imam (al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī), and then during "the first and second occultations," adding that there are numerous such accounts "in dependable books and reliable works."⁴⁹ A separate work by al-Baḥrānī called *Faṣl mu'tabar fī-man ra'ā l-imām al-thānī 'ashar al-qā'im al-muntaẓar* (A credible chapter concerning those who have seen the twelfth Imam, the awaited Qā'im) has been published as an addendum to *Tabṣīrat al-walī*. According to Tabrīziyān, *Faṣl mu'tabar* was likely intended to be a condensed version of *Tabṣīrat al-walī* with some additional accounts.⁵⁰

48 The comment by al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharī'a*, 3:326 (no. 1192), cited by Madelung, "Baḥrānī, Hāšem," *Elr*, 3:529, that the work includes accounts of "about 76 persons who saw the twelfth Imam down to the year 664/1265–66" is incorrect, since al-Baḥrānī includes the story of the Green Island in the White Sea, which is clearly much later. For information about manuscripts, abridgements, and translations, see Tabrīziyān, *al-'Allāma al-Sayyid Hāshim al-Baḥrānī*, 111–4. For a partial Persian translation, see Baḥrānī, *Rawzanihī bih khūrshīd*.

49 Al-Baḥrānī, *Tabṣīrat al-walī*, 4.

50 Tabrīziyān, *al-'Allāma al-Sayyid Hāshim al-Baḥrānī*, 141.