

Mashhad Ali Amir al Muminin, An Najaf al Ashraf, Iraq: A Review on the Phases of Destruction & Restoration

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1. History of An Najaf al Ashraf:

The city of Najaf is located 30 KM South of the ancient city of Babylon and 400 KM North of the ancient Biblical city of Ur. It is around 85 KM from Karbala and 8 KM away from Kufa. The effect of religious institutions on the life of the city runs very deep. Centuries of study, research and dialogue has crafted Najaf as a rich hub of Knowledge. Najaf takes pride in giving birth to numerous religious and literary figures, poets, historians as well as political leadership in Iraq. It is a hub of Muslim Culture and Civilization; it is the nucleus of intellectual movements. Najaf and culture are two inseparable friends. It is not just another city of Iraq, but it is the city of the largest cemetery in the Muslim world, a place so sacred where every devotee yearns to be buried, because of the Mashhad of Amir al Muminin Ali Ibn Abi Talib. The Mashhad of Ali is in the heart of the city. The nature of the city is concisely summarised by a famous Najafi poet, and scholar Syed Ahmed as Safi: [1]

"My town's imports are coffins;

My town's exports are turbans"

Najaf city has numerous names, a few are as follows: Al Ghari, which means the good from every point. Al Ghari also means, the thing painted by glue, and signifies the two buildings like the two shelters, which appear from the rear direction of Al Kufa, which some of the Al Hihreh kings, like Al Munthir bin Manissam'a had built. [2] Al Hamawi commented as follows: [3] It is probable that; the name of Al Ghari is derived from each of these two possibilities.

Najaf has other several names, they are as follows:

Al Mashhad; which Ibn Jubair and Ibn Batutah mentioned in their travelogues. Well known personalities and intellectuals of this town are called Mashhadi due to their relation to Al Mashhad. Najaf has other names; some of them are known historically and some of them are mentioned through the following traditions of the Ahl al Bait:

Banqiyah, Al-Ghariy, Al Lis'aan, Ar-Rabwah, At-Tur, back of Al Kufa and Aj-Judi. [4]

Famous researcher Al Badri has mentioned the name of the ancient Euphrates, with reference of Mufaddal bin Amr , who quoted Imam Assadiq as follow:

"It is the Euphrates of Al Kufa".

To Al Majlisi the name seemed to be a distortion and that the true name is Al Kufa. It appears that the term Araraat has been mentioned throughout the Hebrew Torah, and that the term

Qurdo has been mentioned through the Aramanic and the Assyrian terminology. The Ark of Nuh halted on that mountain; rather these are the two names of Babel, which validates the names in spite of the distortion of the ancient Old Testament.

The celebrated poet of "Qasidah al Karrariyyah" says: [5]

*"Sharufat Bihi Ardul Ghariyyi wa Fuzzilat;
Waddaru Tasmud Daru Bil Mutadayyiri"*

(Through you (O Ali) this land of Garri achieved exalted position; it is a known fact that the house got this honour through its residents or dwellers)

To address the city of Najaf in a unique poetic manner, Ibn Abil Hadid al Mutazali discussed the merits of Najaf in his famous "Qasidah al Ayniyyah" as follows: [6]

*Qad Qulta Lil Barqal Lazi Shaqqad Duja;
Fakana Zanjayan Hunaka Yajdau*

You ordered lightening, which removed all the darkness,
Due to which the low in grade was visible

*Ya Barq In Jital Ghari Faqul Lahu;
Aturaka Talamu Min Biardika Mudeu*

(O Barq! When you reach on the land of Najaf then raise a question to that land, do you know who is resting here)

*Fika Ibn Imranal Kalim wa Baduho;
EssaYuqfihi wa Ahmad Yatbiu*

(In your land Musa Kalimullah, Essa Ruhillah are resting except Mohammad Rasulullah(S). This is their Wadiyah)

*Bal Fika Jibril wa Mikail wa Is -
Rafil wal Malik al Muqaddas Ajmau*

(But Jibrail, Mikail, Israfil and Malak Muqaddas are here)

*Bal Fika Noorullahi Jala Jalalahu;
Lizavil Basirati Yatashaffi Fayalmau*

(But Noor of Allah is buried in this land; this Noor is shining for the people of insight)

*Fika Imamal Murtaza Fikal Wa -
Wasiyil Mujtaba Fikal Batinal Anzau*

(Wasi of Rasulullah(S), Ali al Murtaza is (resting) in your land, who is 'Sahib al Anza ul Batin')

*Haza Zamirul Aalam al Maujudi Aan;
Adm wa SIRR Wajudihil Mastawdau*

(He is the one, who is aware of the facts of world and trustee of its secrets, which was created from nothing)

Najaf is an Arabi word which means the highest hill of the world. Abi Abdillah Imam Jafar Assadiq says: [7]

"When one of the hostile sons of Nuh(A.S), whose name was Kin'an refused to enter into the fold of the Dawah(the Ark), he uttered that he would take refuge on the peak of the mount at the time of flood. A Wahi came therefore to the mount:

"Do you undertake to protect this son of mine from Az'ab?"

The wordings of the Rabb turned the mount into pieces at once. In place of the mount a large river appeared, but after a few years the river dried up, and the place was called Nijaf, Nayjaft - meaning, the dried river. [8]

Consequently, Nayjaft came to be pronounced as its present name-Najaf.

A Yemeni Ismaili Musta'alavi manuscript, written under the supervision of the 5th Al Dai al Fatemi, Syedna Ali bin Mohammad al Walid says:

"Najaf was honoured first on the earth where Adam (A.S) and his Ash'ab offered the first Ibadah of their Rabb. Malaek offered Sajdah to Adam on the soil of Najaf. Najaf is the place where Nabi Ibrahim (A.S) got the Khilah from his Rabb. Imami Tradition says it was the part of the mount on which Musa (A.S) got the Tajalli of his Rabb. Essa (A.S) offered special Ibadah on this place before achieving his exalted position. Rabb declared Mohammad(S) His Habib(friend) at this place".

Distinguished Sufi saint Jalaluddin Rumi praises Ali in his famous Masnavi in following beautiful words: [9]

"Ae Shehnai Dashti Najaf Az Tu Najaf Dedai Sharaf;

Tu Durri O Kabah Sadaf Mastan Salamat Mi Kunand"

("O Emperor of Najaf! Only because of you Najaf received this honour, you are the pearl and Kabah is the oyster, accept Sal'am from your loved ones". Mashhad of Ali is like a pearl in the shell of Najaf, the focal point of Zaiyrin.)

It is a fact that from centuries, Najaf is famous for its precious gems, especially its beautifully shaped, transparent Durre Najaf. Rings made from these gems are believed to bestow benefits of Allah on the wearer. [10]

2. Ibrahim (A.S) & Ishaq(A.S) visited Najaf:

Ibrahim (A.S) had come to this place along with his son Ishaq (A.S). There had been many earthquakes in the vicinity, but till the time Ibrahim remained there, there were no tremors. On the night, however, when Ibrahim and Ishaq went to another village, Najaf experienced an earthquake. On their return, the natives requested them to make Najaf their permanent abode. Ibrahim agreed on condition that they would sell him the valley behind the village for cultivation. Ishaq argued with Ibrahim that this land was neither fit for farming nor harvesting, but Ibrahim assured him that the time would come when there would be a Mashhad, at which 70,000 people would gain absolute salvation, and be able also to intercede for many others. [11]

The valley that Ibrahim wanted to buy was Wadi as Salaam. Abi Jafar Imam Mohammad al Baqir narrated that Amir al Muminin Ali once mentioned:

"This is part of Jannah and that the soul of every single believer in the world, whether he dies in the east or west, will come to this Jannah to rest. [12]

Ali said:

"As there is nothing hidden in this world from my eyes"

He further says:

"I see all the believers seated - here in groups and talking with one another"

In Wadi as Salaam many important graves are located, including the graves of Hud (A.S) Yunus (A.S) and Sualeh (AS). Inside the Mashhad are also the graves of the Anbiya, Awliya and the Ash'ab an Nabi. The grave of Nuh(A.S) is located near to Ali. The cemetery of Wadi As Salam is the largest in the Muslim world.

3. Phases of Destruction & Restoration of the Mashhad:

661 (A.D): Authentic traditions provide us detail regarding the resting place of Amir al Muminin Ali, who himself guided his successors, Imam Hasan and Imam Husain to his burial place. Amir al Muminin Ali informed them that after Salaat al Janazah raise my Janazah from the side of my feet, and not from the side of the head, as Malaek will raise it and lead you to my burial site. When the Janazah is set down on the earth, in the direction of Kabah dig a single time, and a grave will appear, prepared by my ancestor Nabi Nuh (A.S) which is adjacent to his grave. The children followed the instructions of their father and when they dug, a plate was discovered upon which details was written in the Siryani language.

As per the forecast of Nabi Ibrahim (A.S), Amir al Muminin was buried here. As per his will, forty similar graves were prepared for the protection of the real grave. Due to the instructions of Amir al Muminin, his burial place was not disclosed, as Ali had many bitter enemies who had inherited the tradition of mutilation of the body and its parts, like Hind, "the liver eater". The enemies of Allah, His Rasul and the Ahl al Bait, were so cruel and savage that they tortured these great people in countless ways and even assassinated majority of them. Their ignorance and fear did not allow them even to spare the graves of these friends and lovers of Allah. They are known even to destroy the graves of the Aimmah and their family-members and to mutilate their sacred remains. Keeping this in view, many of the graves of these great beings remained undisclosed by Allah, to their enemies. Only the children of Amir al Muminin and his leading Ash'ab knew the secret of his burial place, amongst them were Syedi Misam at Timar, Syedi Saasah bin Suhan, Syedi Qais bin Saeed, Syedi Hujar bin Adi, Syedi Amr bin al Humaq, etc. Hasan bin Ali Khilal has narrated:

"We asked Imam Hasan, as to where was Amir al Muminin buried? He replied, we carried his coffin at night and passed through Masjid Ashas, till we reached Ghari. [13]

Ibn Aasam Kufi also transmitted from Imam al Hasan the same narration.

Umaiyyad Era, Black Spot on Muslim History: During the reigns of Bani Umaiyyah the grave of Ali Ibn Abi Talib was kept secret and was not disclosed, due to their born and burning enmity. Volumes are needed to discuss as what was happened during this dark period with the children of Fatemah. Devotees of Ahl al Bait were slaughtered mercilessly. Haraam acts were declared as legal under the Umayyads. The names of Ali and Husain given to a newly born child became a license to kill the entire family.

750 (A.D) =133 (A.H): During the period of Abul Abbas As-Saffah(d.750 AD), his uncle Dawood bin Ali al Abbasi(d. 132 AH) who never believed in the sanctity of the grave of Amir al Muminin, saw a nightmare, which frightened him. He then allowed the devotees to build and fix a beautiful expensive wooden box over the grave of Amir al Muminin. This tradition continued and still continues and wooden boxes are still placed on the graves of Ahl al Bait. [14]

When Mansur Abbasi received information that Imam Assadiq and some of his companions frequently used to visit a grave in the jungle, he followed them secretly along with a few of his confidants. He found signs which confirmed his doubt that about the grave of Amir al Muminin. He issued a command to secretly build a subway in the direction where the grave was located, and used to visit that place and spend time in repentance so that Allah may forgive his crimes through the intervention of the 'Saheb' of the grave, as he had committed many injustices and tortures upon Ahl al Bait and their followers.

149 (A.H): Imam Jafar Assadiq used to visit this place with his companions Syedi Abu Hamzah As Sumali and others. When Mansur Abbasi invited Imam Jafar Assadiq to Al Hireh, Imam left for Ziyarah, accompanied with some of his followers, and on one occasion he gave Safwan Aj'Jamal funds to rebuild the grave. Among those who visited the grave of Amir al Muminin with Imam Assadiq in the year 149 A.H were his sons Isma'il & Musa Kazim and from his companions Aban bin Taghlib, Muhammad bin Muslim, Safwan Aj'Jamal, Muhammad bin M'aruf Al Hilali, Sulaiman bin Khalid, Abul Faraj As Sindhi, Al Mu'alla bin Khanis, Zaid bin Talheh, Abdullah Ar Razavi, Mufaddal bin Umar, Yunus bin Dhubiyan, Imam encouraged his followers to do Ziyarah of Amir al Muminin. [15]

791 (A.D): Najaf became the hub of learning, for scientific, literary and theological studies and a large number of believers, poets, mystics, scholars and seekers of various branches of sciences came to Najaf from far and wide.

175 (A.H) =791 (A.D): According to the authentic sources, in the year 175 A.H. =791 A.D., Harun Abbasi came out of Kufa for hunting. [16]

The site was famous for Zebras and Deer. When he saw a Deer, he sent his hawks and dogs for hunting; the deer took shelter on a sandy mound there. The hawks and dogs refrained from attack. When the Deer came out from that site, the royal hawks and dogs again targeted it, and the deer again took shelter on the mound. This happened thrice, which made Harun curious. He instructed his courtiers to enquire the reason from the learned of the area, who were well versed about the site. A Shaikh of Bani Asad was brought before Harun, who questioned him about the place. The Shaikh hesitated to discuss till Harun gave him amnesty for his life. The Shaikh was not worried about his life but was concerned with the sanctity of the grave of Amir al Muminin, and he took Ahd of Allah from Harun Abbasi, in the presence of his courtiers that he should not create anything wrong and maintain serenity, in this connection. The Shaikh then disclosed that Imam Sajjad, Imam Baqir and his successor visited this place for Ziyarah. This is the burial place of Amir al Muminin Ali. Allah has declared this place as a centre of peace and refuge, and any one whoever takes refuge, would find peace and tranquility here.

Under the influence of his courtiers, who were secretly devotees of Ahl al Bait, the Emperor summoned his expert engineers and architects and ordered them to design an edifice over the grave with four entrances. They used red clay in the structure, and put a green covering over the dome. The dome was prepared with red stone, which was covered by green covering. [17]

People started to visit the Shrine and settle down in its vicinity. [18]

End of the 2nd Century: Some of the Shi'a started to dwell in the vicinity of the Grave of Amir al Muminin Ali, and also began to bury their departed beloveds near the site of the Mashhad. An Najaf became a little town, during the 3rd century.

260 (A.H) =874 (A.D): After taking over the power and command, one of the Amirs of Musil, Abdullah bin Hamdan contributed generously for the renovation of Mashhad of Amir al Muminin. For beautification inside the Mashhad he presented decorative items prepared in silver and crystal, along with expensive carpets.

270 (A.H) =884 (A.D): Muhammad bin Zaid al Alavi, the ruler of Tibristan built a vault over the grave of Amir al Muminin. For construction of the floor in Najaf and Karbala he arranged expensive stones from Iran. He built a vast Sehan, covered by numerous domes. During the hot summer and rainy season it provided protection for the Zaireen.

287 (A.H) =900 (AD): By the order of Mohammad b. Zaid b. Mohammad al Alavi also known as the Little Herald, the construction of the Mashhad was initiated. It took 17 years to build a dome, a wall and a fort with 70 arches. The architecture of the Mashhad can be considered to be a metaphysical fact when you realize that Imam Jafar Assadiq told his companions about it with every detail tens of decades ago.

Throughout the later periods, some repairs and additions took place to the building, as those made by Umar bin Yahya Kufi. [19] "There had been reconstruction of the Mashhad before the development constructed by Azduddaulah Buwaiyh". [20] Similarly, Abul Hayjaa Abdullah bin Hamdan beset the Shrine completely and ordered a great, magnificent dome to be built over the Mashhad, with doors opening towards all directions. [21]

369 (A.H) =980 (A.D): After recovery from a severe health problem, Imran bin Shahin presented valuables to the Mashhad. He constructed Evan-e-Imran the sign of which are still seen in the Haram of Najaf. He built a Masjid and generously spent among the neighbors of the Mashhad and natives of Najaf.

Azduddaulah Al Buwaiyh (d.372 A.H) built a huge building and greater vault. He built the first wall that encircled the town of Najaf completely. A Mashhad was built over the grave by Azduddaulah in 977(A.D). The Mashhad was regarded as a wonder of the world at that time. He employed the most skillful masons and architects. [22]

Walls were covered by crafted wooden work, prepared by master craftsmen. Expensive chandeliers, covered by gold and crystal fittings were suspended from the roof of the Mashhad. A new expensive wooden box was fixed over the grave, decorated by silver inlay work. Curtains made from very expensive fabrics were fixed. Expensive carpets were placed, many Mabkhar (incense burners) were placed, which continuously spread fragrance. For the safety of the Mashhad from invaders and looters, he built a wall around Najaf. Inside the city of Najaf he built houses for the Ulama and donated properties as Trusts for academic and research work on Islam.

400 (A.H): Abu Muhammad Al Hasan bin Sahlaan al Buwaiyh, the minister built the second wall around Al Mashhad (Najaf) in 400 (A.H). He made changes in the structure over the grave of Amir al Muminin.

End of the 6th Century: An Nasir Abbasi visited Najaf. He presented a Maqsurah for the grave of Amir al Muminin. He generously treated the natives of Najaf and participated in their welfare projects magnanimously.

479 (A.H) =1086 (A.D): Seljuq monarch Malik Shah constructed the Mashhad in 1086(A.D)

491 (A.H) : It seemed that this vault is the same vault, which Al Husain bin Al Hajjaj mentioned through his poems, when he addressed Ali as follows: [23]

O, the owner of the radiant vault in Najaf.

Whoever visited your grave and asked for recovery near you,

So, he was recovered.

Visit Aba Hasanin, perhaps that you shall win by reward, acceptance, and approach.

633 (A.H) =1226 (A.D): Mustansir Abbasi (d.1242) constructed a splendid Mashhad, and for the maintenance of the Mashhad set up large trust. He also generously gifted amounts to the natives of Najaf

676 (A.H) =1277 (A.D): People of Najaf were severely suffering with the problem of water shortage and accordingly a large number of the population had migrated. It was Ata ul Mulk Juveni who paid attention towards this basic necessity and dug up a canal from the Euphrates River, known as Qinat which passed through Najaf. Tajuddin was the supervisor of this canal and later on it was known as Tajjiyyah Canal.

730 (A.H): It appears that the construction of the Masjid is attributed to Ghazan. Shaikh Jafar Mahbuba quotes: [24]

“Radiyya Sultan Baighum daughter of Shah Husain, and wife of Shah Nadir Shah, spent 20,000 Nadiri for the repair of the Masjid, which lies in the direction of the head of the Mashhad. Moreover, he states that this event took place during the year in which the dome was covered with gold.

752 (A.H) =1351 (A.D): Mohammad Shah Tughlaq sent 100,000 Tinkas (Indian coins) for distribution among the people of Najaf and Karbala. [25]

753 (A.H): The Mashhad was destroyed in the year 753 (A.H). [26]

Late 8th Century (A.H): Ali bin Al Mutamadi damaged the Mashhad. He along with his army resided in Najaf for six months in which he committed all kind of crimes and plundered the city.

914 (A.H) =1508 (A.D): Shah Ismail Safavi I, paid great attention towards the development of Najaf. The centuries old wooden box on the grave of Amir al Muminin was replaced with another valuable box. Funds in the existing Welfare Trusts were increased manifold. Financial stipends were allotted generously for scholars, for the promotion of Sciences of Islam.

930 (A.H): Emperor Ismail Safavi held reign over Baghdad. He visited Najaf, and looked after its necessities, and instructed for a canal to be dug near it, which was known as the Shah canal. It flowed from the Euphrates River through a special subway, thus settling the problem of shortage of water once and for all. As a result Najaf prospered tremendously and by two decades, they overcame their trials and the calamities successfully.

958 (A.H) =1550 (A.D): Emperor Abbas Safavi I renovated the Mashhad and many constructions took place in the city of Najaf during his era.

10th & 11th centuries (A.H): In the 10th & 11th centuries Najaf suffered from several plagues, and epidemics. It also suffered from the violent attacks that took place between Safavid Power of Iran and the Ottoman Empire.

1032 (A.H): Obstruction was created around Najaf in 1032 A.H. during the era of Ottoman Emperor Salim . Six hundred houses suffered.

1039 (A.H): One of the Indian kings –built a wall around Najaf in 1039 A.H., and that was the third wall”.

1042 (AH) =1633 (A.D): Shah Safi I paid attention towards the decoration of the Mashhad and the city of Najaf especially. Due to his efforts its beatification made it a matchless Mashhad and a unique city.

1047 (A.H) =1637 (A.D): Ottoman Emperor Murad paid tribute to Amir al Muminin and magnanimously spent funds for the renovation of the Mashhad and the city.

1500 (A.D): The Mashhad was re-built again by Ismail Shah Safavi, in about 1500.

1635 (A.D): The current structure and buildings were built by the famous emperor of Iran, Shah Safi in about 1635. It was Shah Safi the grandson of Shah Abbas I, who cared very much for the construction and maintenance of the Mashhad.

1095 (A.H) =1684 (A.D): The present building was built by Shah Safi the grandson of Shah Abbas I, who ordered the expansion of its courtyard, beautification of the dome and decoration of the halls and walls with Kashani stones in 1095 AH/ 1684 AD. The Mashhad was characterized, in comparison with other architectures, by its grandeur, accuracy of planning and creative skill, which is still an enigma to the engineers of the current era. Even today, when expert of the fields visit the Shrine, they are amazed to see its construction techniques. They are unable to explore

the secret of such a wonderful construction. Salaat az Zuhur time can be known through the architecture of the Mashhad, which is one of the unique feature of this Mashhad. [27]

1156 (A.H) = 1743 (A.D): The Mashhad consists of the courtyard, the halls and the four-sided tomb in the middle which is covered with windows of silver and gold. The courtyard has four gates with arches. The tomb is covered by 7777 pure gold tiles. The gold in these bricks is about ½ cm thick. They were laid on the order of Emperor Nader Shah, who visited Najaf in 1156 (A.H) =1743. [28]

During the last eight centuries, a lot of additions, alterations, repairs and renovations were made to the building of the Masjid. Now only one-third of its original building exist, which is the northern part. The remainder of it, according to the book, Najaf in the Past and Today about five meters were added to the main street surrounding the courtyard and some of its pillars have also fallen down. However, it was rebuilt later exactly in the same way as it used to be previously. It is the place where leading Ulama delivered Asb'aq and offered Ibadah.

Under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, Najaf experienced severe difficulties as a result of repeated raids by Arab tribes, hostile to Ahl al Bait, and because of acute water shortage. The numbers of inhabited houses in the city were reduced from 3000 to 30 by the 16th century.

Emperor Nader Shah visited Najaf for Ziyarah of Amir al Muminin. He gifted his crown, a heavy chain made by gold, precious Majmar decorated with valuable Gems, unique and very expensive Mabkhar –incense burner and standing light lamp. The Ewan and entire building were decorated by traditional Kashi and gold work. The Grave of Amir al Muminin was covered with a wooden box. He presented a beautiful Maqsurah made of gold, the structure of which was based on iron. It was Emperor Nadir Shah who prepared the dome laid in pure gold. For the safety of the city a wall was re-constructed.

Nader Shah ordered the calligraphy work of the dome from within with enamel and mosaic. He also ordered the dome, pillars and junctions to be covered with mirrors of great beauty and precision, and then topped this by enveloping the cylindrical base with glazed tiles, and had Ayaat from the Quran written on it, surrounded by Ibn Abil Hadid poetry in the form of the lines of the poem at the top, as well as the bottom. Windows for lighting and ventilation were also positioned from within and around the cylindrical base. The outside of the dome was covered with ceramic tiles until they were removed in the reign of Nader Shah 1156 (AH), who visited Najaf and ordered to take off the ceramic tiles and replace them with gold plates.

1801 (A.D): The Wahhabi Salafi forces looted the gold of the dome of the Shrine and burnt it in 1801. They looted all the valuable Khazanah of the Mashhad, leaving nothing. History never witnessed such atrocities committed at Atabaat Aaliyyah, in Najaf and in Karbala. Following the

Wahhabi invasion, the city's Shaikhs established a self-governing republic which ended by re-imposition of Ottoman rule in 1843.

1802 (A.D): The Wahabi forces targeted the cities of Samawa, Souq al Shuyukh, Basra, Karbala and Najaf. Karbala fell to the Wahhabis in 1802, but resistance prevented the Wahhabis from entering Najaf. [29]

1803 (A.D): The water shortage was finally resolved in 1803 with the construction of the Hindiyya canal. The city's population rapidly doubled from 30,000 to 60,000. Since Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab bin Suleyman At-Tamimi Al Hanbali established his extremist movement (the Wahhabis) in 1143 A.H, 1722 A.D, they attacked all neighboring Muslim territories. Some of their heinous condemnable acts are black spots on the forehead of Muslim history, and humanity. Followers of the extremist movement led by their monarch, Saud bin Abdel Aziz attacked Najaf in 1218/1803. They attacked the city of Najaf and the Mashhad of Ali, successor and cousin of Rasulullah(S). Natives of Najaf defended their city, countered the attack and defeated them. The sacred Mashhad was safe.

1222 (A.H) =1807 (A.D): Emperor Fateh Ali Shah Qajar with the intention of safe guarding the city covered the entire city with trenches, wall watch-towers and strong gates.

1258(A.H) = 1842: Nawab Mohammad Ali Shah of Awadh & Lucknow sent 1, 50,000 Indian Rupees for the restoration work of the Mashhad at Najaf & Karbala.

1843 (A.D): The Ottoman viceroy, Najib Pasha attacked the Salafi Wahhabi force in 1843. The Ottoman Emperors always at war with Safavid Emperors of Iran gave considerable autonomy to Najaf, Kufa and Karbala, in reverence.

1287 (A.H) = 1870 (A.D): Emperor Nasiruddin Shah Qajar further beautified the Mashhad and the city. He presented his crown, upon which an extra ordinary large diamond was fixed on which the entire Surah al Mulk was written. He gifted silver which was placed inside the Maqsurah.

1298 (A.H) =1880 (A.D): Malika Jehan wife of Nawab Mohammad Ali of Awadh & Lucknow visited Najaf and under her instructions a huge guest house was constructed for Zairin. She gifted her husband's crown and sword. History of gifts and donations for the Mashhad is long and beyond anyone's imagination.

Late 18th Century (A.D): The city was besieged by the Salafi Wahhabi force in the late 18th century, which prompted the clergy of the city to arrange for the construction of a wall around the city and under-ground tunnels as a refuge for the women and children if the wall was overrun. These fortifications successfully repelled the Wahhabi siege later on. The accumulated treasures of the Mashhad were carried off by the Wahhabi raiders early in the 19th century. The

building itself had also been damaged during the periods of civil strife and warfare and has been rebuilt and renovated on numerous occasions.

Hirzuddin states that large numbers of the Ismaili Musta'alavi Shia come for Ziyarah in Najaf and Karbala. It is their priority in life to perform the Ziyarah of Ali & Husain. As a result, the Awqaf Administration in Najaf opened a new door to the Masjid through the Baqtashyya Takya and closed the old one near the Sabaat. However, this door itself was also closed for many years until the occupation of Iraq by the British forces and then the formation of the Arab government later on.

1842 to 1918 (A.D): During the reign of the Ottoman Emperor Abdul Hamid II, the walls of the Masjid were coated with various paints and a marble Minbar was installed there for the Sunni clerics. Later, when the Ottoman rule declined, it was removed and repair works were carried out by the Iraqi government.

1351 (A.H): The second closure and repairs of the Mashhad took place in 1351 (A.H). On 23rd Zilhajjah, a square rock was found, about one and a half of arm's length long and wide. This rock, on which a script written in the Kufi script, is located at the place mentioned by Hirzuddin, whereby another rock is fixed onto the altar of the Masjid. These two rocks have a historical value for archeologists.

The team disclosed that the Archeological Administration took a photograph of these two rocks in 1937. The rock is made from what is known as Chinese iron, which is generally black. But these rocks are coloured, and hence so precious. When the Masjid was reconstructed, they were kept in the storehouse to protect them from being damaged.

"This Masjid was rebuilt during the time of Syed Bahr ul Ulum, one of the great religious scholars of Najaf, who used to say to some of his close companions that this is the position of the Shrine of Imam Husain and that the Masjid had been built for this reason." [31]

1965 (A.D): In 1965, an archeological expedition arrived with cameras and asked about the two rocks.

13th Rajab 1361 (A.H) =1942: 13th Rajab is the day when Amir al Muminin was born inside Kabah. On the Milaad day of Ali, his devotee 51st Al Dai al Fatemi Syedna Taher Saifuddin presented a unique silver and gold Maqsurah as covering for his grave. It was prepared in Mumbai, India, with great religious zeal and dedication.

2000 (A.D): Some features of the Mashhad were removed during the reign of Saddam regime, which included lines of poetry inscribed at the top of the gate, previously mentioned, and also the gold belt surrounding the dome, etc.

November 2009(A.D): 52nd Al Dai al Fatemi of Ismaili Mustaalavi Dawoodi School, Dr. Syedna Mohammad Burhanuddin has gifted a valuable Ghil'af for the wooden Sanduq (traditional

covering of the grave) of the grave of Amir al Muminin. It is 30 meters long and prepared with a valuable German fabric, which cost is @ 423.5 X 30 = 12,705 US \$. Calligraphy of Qur'an is embroidery with gold thread, weighing 15 KGS. The Grapes on the Ghil'af are made of 9.5 KGS pure Gold. Seven Bismillah are decorated on it with rare jewels attributed to the following Fatemi Duaat:

- 1). Al Dai al Fatemi, Syedna Ali Shamsuddin (Yemen)
- 2). Al Dai al Fatemi, Syedna Idris Imaduddin (Yemen)
- 4). Al Dai al Fatemi, Syedna Dawood bin Ajabshah (Ahmadabad, India)
- 3). Al Dai al Fatemi, Syedna Ismail Badruddin I (Jamnagar, India)
- 5). Al Dai al Fatemi, Syedna Abde Ali Saifuddin (Surat, India)
- 6). Al Dai al Fatemi, Syedna Taher Saifuddin (Mumbai, India)
- 7). Al Dai al Fatemi, Syedna Mohammad Burhanuddin

The Ghil'af is inlaid with 1000 Rubies which are uniquely cut and set in channels.

Total rubies: 34,225 Numbers

The borders are decorated with green and red Aqiq grapes, weighing 10 KGS.

Inlaid are also 1200 best quality south sea pearls.

Emeralds inlaid are 216 Pieces.

On the four corners of the Ghil'af, four remarkable 'Musaqqil'at'(crowns) are fixed. It was prepared in 26 KGS pure gold, 9.5 KGS pure silver.

He also presented four beautiful pillars, made of gold and silver, for the Maqsurah of Ali Ibn Abi Talib. On each pillar "Ya Ali" was written by the Dai. Amin & Custodian of the Alavi Haram Mr. Mehdi Abdulhusain al Husaini paid great tributes to the Dai for his services for the cause of Al Atabaat al Aaliyyah.

4. Amazing Magnificent Mashhad:

The inside is decorated with lights sparkling off the mirrored tiles and silver walls. The entire exterior of the Mashhad is inlaid with a mosaic pattern of light powder blue, a unique central Asian traditional art.

It is noteworthy to discuss the experience of the renowned Muslim traveler of the world, Ibn-e-Batutah . In 727 (A.H) he crossed the border of Mesopotamia and visited al Najaf, the burial place of Ali. He described the city of Najaf, in his travelogue as follow: [32]

"It's a beautiful city, established on a vast solid ground, one of the most beautiful cities in Iraq and whose construction is the strongest."

He describes the town its markets, schools, and the valuables that the Mashhad contains. Then he discussed about the keepers of the Mashhad and what they do to the Zairin coming from various areas. Furthermore, he gives a full description of the hanging lamps and the Mastaba (terrace) and the material with which it was coated. He also mentions its height and the Mashhad:

"They (Scholars) claim that one of these graves (at Wadi as Salaam) is that of Nuh, and the next is Ali ibn Abi Talib . [33]

In addition, he describes the pans made of gold and silver filled with Rose water, Musk and fragrances of various types and how the visitors dip their hands in them to rub their faces for blessing. [34]

The famous traveler of the medieval era, Ibn Batutah was not a follower of the Shi School of thought; he gave us his amazing experience regarding the miracles of Ali at his Mashhad on 27th Rajab:

27th night of Rajab is famous amongst Shi Muslims as “Lailat al Ahya”. Seriously ill-patients who are unable to move are brought to this Mashhad. Majority of them are afflicted by paralysis. After Salaat al Isha, these patients were placed adjacent to the Maqsurah (grill around the grave) of Amir al Muminin. People recited Dua, Salaat and Tilawat of Qur’an and waited for the cure of these patients. From midnight onwards, those who were unable to move stood up by themselves unaided by the order of Allah and their diseases cured”. A couplet of Syedna Taher Saifuddin is worth mentioning: [35]

Salamun Alayka Aya Mazharal;

Ajaebe Min Kulle Shanin Ajab

(A distinctive appearance with all unique merits; upon you Salaam)

Salamun Alayka Waliyal ilahe

Rafial Maqami Azimal Rutab

(O Wali of Allah! O lofty position holder, O leading among the prominent; upon you Salaam)

Shahidtu Biannaka Qumta Biamril;

ilahi wa Addayta Ma Qad Wajab

(I witnessed that you have enforced Order of Allah and did what was needed and Wajib)

The Mashhad itself is splendid, to say the least. All those who have visited Ali's Mashhad have been mesmerised by its magnificence and striking brilliance. It is said that all the great emperors of the world put together could not have a Mashhad as magnificent as this, as this Mashhad has been constructed with the love and contribution of both kings and peasants, to enshrine the mortal remains of their beloved Moula Ali.

It is surrounded by two golden Minar, about 35 meters high, each made of 40,000 gold bricks. When you look closely at the top of the vault, you will notice the date when the Mashhad and the two Minar were gilded, by order of emperor Nadir Shah. In the gilded vault, the ceiling and walls are coated with pure gold. At the top of each Minar there are beautiful inscriptions of some Ayaat from the Surah al Jumuah. [36]

The resting place of Ali is covered by silver Maqsurah, presented by the 51st Al Dai al Fatemi of Ismaili Musta'alavi Dawoodi School, Dr. Syedna Taher Saifuddin. [37] The inner portion of the Maqsurah is made of polished stainless steel and glass, and the Maqsurah is made of silver, on the top of which is a crown made of gold. The upper portion of the grave is a box, made of teak and inlaid with ivory on which some of Ayaat are inscribed.

The floor of the Mashhad is laid with glazed Mediterranean (Italy) marble. The walls are covered up to two meters from the floor with marble. The rest of the wall along with the roof is covered

by colored mirrors inlaid in mosaic and designed in splendid geometric decoration with beautiful forms. The rays of light from the row of beautiful lamps on the four corners when reflected by the mirrors produces a mesmerizing effect. Couplets by Ibn Abil Hadid[38] and Al Himyari [39]are beautifully written at the top side of the wall, indeed a master piece of calligraphy. The room of the Mashhad has four gates which lead to the portico. Two of them are made of enameled gold which directly faces the golden gate of portico, which is enameled also, and other two gates are made of silver which are on the northern side. It has four doors, two of them lead to the golden hall, which is known as At Tarmeh, the main part of it is located at the middle of the hall facing the clock of the Mashhad, it is made of enameled gold, Hadith is written on the high part of it: [40]

“Ali is with the truth and the truth is with Ali, they will never be separated till they will come to me near the Hawz(Al Kawsar)”

Over the Grave is a wonderful, wide, and high dome, 35 meters high from the floor of the area. The dome’s perimeter is 50 meters, and its diameter is about 16 meters. The dome has twelve windows, which are decorated from the inside with wonderful mosaic and inscribed with Ayaat and Abyaat in praise of Amir al Muminin.

The external shape of the dome is itself unique as there is no dome of any Masjid in the world that matches it. The Dome of Amir al Muminin Ali is one of highest domes and characterized with its cylindrical base, which increases its prestige and significance. It is considered to be one of the most technically accurate and architecturally coordinated domes and is spectacular in sight. The inside of the dome is decorated with the most wonderful decoration of Muslim Art. Inside the dome there is a strip which separates the dome from the cylindrical base which has Surah al Fajr written on it in Thulth Arabi calligraphy. Also at the bottom of the cylindrical base where it sits on the four corners, Surah an Naba is written in Thulth Arabi calligraphy.

A golden spherical shape is placed on top of the golden dome with a height of (3.5 m) from the tip of the dome to the Name of Allah, which is put at the highest peak. The golden name of Allah was the replacement to a golden crown (consisting of a golden palm and sun and wrote the Ayah Allah's hands over their hands). The gilding of the dome and minarets of the most famous historical monuments of the Shrine was carried out by more than two hundred jewelers and brass smiths who were gathered from several countries, including China, India, Turkey, Persia, and Arabia. Most of them wrote their names on the copper sheets behind the gold. Each piece has been painted with 9.36 Gram of pure gold as reported by one of the immediate repair workers.

The grave of Amir al Muminin is located in the middle of the Mashhad which is in a square figure. Its height is 17 meters, length is 31 meters and width is 30 meters. It is decorated by mirrors in various geometrical forms. The amazing calligraphy of the Ayaat is eye catching.

The height of Ar-Riwaq or Sehan is 17 meters, its northern side is 74 meters in length, the southern side is 57 meters in length, and the western side is 84 meters in length. It is decorated with chandelier which is multicolored with marvelous figures on which Ayaat are written. The

outer side of the building contains about 100 rooms, and four main passages facing each other. The five doors of the yard as follows:

- 1-As Sa'eh door, facing the greater market from the east side, considered as the main door.
- 2-As Salaam door, located besides the door of As Sa'eh facing Al-'Abaiychiyeh (the frocks sellers).
- 3-At Tusi door, facing At Tusi Street, towards the northern direction.
- 4-Al Faraj door, facing Al 'Imareh market, towards the west direction.
- 5-Al Quiblah door, facing Ar Rasul street, towards the southern direction.

A great chronometer with a bell is hung over the main door of the nave, and it has four faces over which are gilded domes made of pure gold.

5. Khazanah of Mashhad Amir al Muminin:

The Mashhad of Ali houses many rare treasures, jewels, silken carpets and ornaments, gifted by famous Indian, Persian and Middle-Eastern kings. The study of these valuable gifts and antiques is very important in many ways due to the fact that these things can be taken as examples of the time they belong to; they may shed light on the period of the donators in which they lived in and the way these gifts and artifacts were made. Thus, one can compare the art of that period with that preceding it and the impact it has over the ages to follow. It can also give clues to the sociological system of the community that produced those works of art. The oldest of these various gifts can be traced back to the 4th century (A.H). They are classified as follows:

Manuscripts of the Qur'an

Metal works

Textiles

Carpets

Glass products

Wooden antiques.

These unique treasures are kept in special safes in the basement and not often displayed. The most famous gift was the personal crown of Emperor Nader Shah covered with pearls. The beauty of Persian carpets is beyond imagination. There is a purple velvet carpet embroidered with diamonds, pearls, emeralds and corundum. There are two carpets measuring 4m by 2m which the experts cannot evaluate. The carpet presented by Emperor Abbas Safavi measures 7m by 3m and is made of silk and gold. There is also a carpet made totally of pearls in varying sizes with a crown in the middle carried by two angels and surrounded by a peacock, an incense burner, lion and a parrot. It bears a pearl inscription:

"No warrior like Ali and no sword equal to Zulfiq'ar." [41]

In the recent period, the secretariat of the Mashhad formed a committee to make an inventory of the contents and valuables of the treasury and clean the contents according to the latest scientific methods in order to protect them.

This treasury of precious gifts and antiques suggest the highness of the place and to the one presented to, in the hearts of all believers and Muslims. Looking at these gifts, valuables and antiques, one feels himself permeated through the depths of history, since they belong to various periods and eras. Most of these gifts carry the time and names and stature of the donors. The majority of whom were Emperors, Kings, Princes, Statesmen, Tycoons, Scientists and Religious Scholars. Many valuables were looted by tyrant Saddam.

6. Question of Validity of Splendid Masajid & Resplendent Maqsur'at:

Often so-called 'Progressive Muslims' argue that as to why a huge amount of money are vested for decorations of Masajid and Mashhads of Ahl al Bait. Why not the same amount be spent for education, health or upliftment of the poor? If you are busy in charitable mission and time of Salaat approaches then what will you do? Naturally a person will opt to offer his Salaat first. Worldly matters come after it. Will you choose one of them and leave your Salaat and go for welfare projects? It is not just to compare the maintenance expenses of the Shrine with any other charitable purposes. Masajid and Mashhad are power and command centers of Islam; as long as these establishments are secure no one can eliminate the sign of magnificence of the Ummah.

Decorations of Masjid and Mashhad have significant cultural value in Muslim civilization which plays its role in each era. See Muslim architecture, you will find numerous magnificent Masajid and Mashhad, built by monarchs to show their devotion towards Allah and His chosen ones. Empires have disappeared but these signs remind us of their passion towards religion, which encourages us to sacrifice our valuables for Allah and His beloved ones. I ask one question to those who criticize for the sake of criticism that why they don't criticize those who lavishly spend and waste money on entertainment. Decorating the places, where visitors experience blessings of Allah is a kind of Jihad.

In an era, where people are much involved in the materialistic world and the flood of Neo-Khawarijism is overflowing due to heavy funding, much efforts are needed to draw the attention of the public to the contribution of these personalities for the cause of Islam and thus crush the plot of the enemies to hide the merits of Ahl al Bait. It is difficult today to find out a devotee like Syedi Ovais Qarani who broke his teeth in love of Rasulullah(S) when he heard in Yemen that the tooth of his Moula was broken in the Ghazwah. The love of Mohammad and Aale Mohammad should be limitless. Actually these splendid Masajid, Calligraphy of Qur'an engraved with gold inside, precious Maqsurah and magnificent Mashhad all these have meaning. A visit to these sacred places gives you spiritual bliss and a yearning to know something about the place. This feeling allows you an opportunity to learn, guiding you towards the Right Path.

7. He is Ali ibn Abi Talib:

The son of Syedna Abu Talib and Fatemah bint Asad needs no introduction. Kabah was his birth place and Masjid al Kufah was the location from where he started his final journey. Jami says:

[\[42\]](#)

Be Soye Kabah Rawad Shaikh Wa Man Berah e Najaf;

Be Rabbe Kabeh Keh Ainja Mara Ast Haq Betraf

(The Shaikh[Ahl az Zahir] is proceeding towards Kabah and I have selected the road of Najaf; By the Lord of Kabah! I am on Haq in this matter)

Tafawti Keh Miyan e Man Ast wa Ao Ain Ast;

Keh Man Be Soye Guhar Raftam wa Ao Be Soye Sadaf

(The difference between me and the Shaikh is this that I went towards the pearl [Najaf] and he [Shaikh] went towards shell [Kabah])

He was nurtured in Nabavi arms, like a son. During the task of the Dawah of Islam, he alone protected his cousin, Rasulullah(S). Islam remained secured due to his sword Zulfiq'ar. He was the husband of Fatimah bint Rasulullah(S) and proud father of their children Hasan, Husain, Zainab, Kulsum. He trained his son Abbas to sacrifice his life upon Husain at Karbala in such a manner that loyalty became personified by the name of Abbas. Ali was the only hero of all major Ghazw'at of Islam, in which he killed all prominent warriors through the stroke of his sword Zulfiq'ar. It is narrated that Rasulullah(S) had said on many occasions: [43]

“Ali and Haq are inseparable till the Qayamah”

At Ghadir, Rasulullah(S) proclaimed Ali to be his brother; Successor and Amir al Muminin after him, but the people of the time ignored this and chose another leader whilst Ali was busy with the burial rituals for Rasulullah(S).

Showers of Barak'ah are continuing and will continue till the Qayamah upon each Zair of Ali, they are blessed by it, as per their intensity of devotion. Thousands and thousands of people call out to him in their difficulties, and the word "Ya Ali Madad", automatically comes to them. Millions of people visit Najaf annually from different parts of world. Al Dai al Fatemi, Syedna Taher Saifuddin composed a Manqabat in praise of Moula Ali, which Matla is as follows: [44]

Aasamiya Zil Arshil Azim e Aliya;

Ma Kunta illa Noorahul Azaliya

(O the One who is called by the name of the Most High -Ali; you are not but His divine shimmering light)

Aa Mutawajjan Tajan Min al Malakut e wal;

Jabarut e Min Zil Kibriya e Saniyya

(O, who is crowned by Allah with the magnificent crown Divine lordship and sovereignty)

Haza Huwan Noorul ilahil Lazi;

Fi Wajhe Adama Qad Anara Mudiyya

(This is the Divine light of Allah which showed brilliantly in the Face of Adam [A.S])

“Aa Nasim O Balligh Bil Khuzu e Salamana;

Maulal An'ame Iza Balaghta Ghariya”

(O breeze of mourning! Convey humbly our Sal'am to the Moula of the creation, when you pass through Najaf)

8. Amazing Facts of the Mashhad of Ali:

The architectural form is such that if the shadow of the Sun reaches a certain point on the plaza, it indicates mid-day Sal'aat. In addition, the sunrise is directly over the Maqsurah, in summer and in winter. When the Sun shines on the golden tiles of the Mashhad, its dome appears splendidly luminous, making it a glorious sight to behold. What is still surprising is the tactful determination of the sunlight shining over the purified Mashhad. It is adjusted with infinite accuracy and amazing skill. Similarly, the three surrounding walls are made with the same accuracy and tact to denote a phenomenon whose reasons are not known yet. There are still further secrets to be detailed out later in another place.

Countless numbers of people from all over the world flock to this magnificent Mashhad, day after day, to pay their respects and to offer their salutations and to pray to Allah, seeking the intercession of this great lover of Allah.

Millions from all over the world flock to Najaf to pay their respects, to offer Ziyarah and Salaam and Dua and seek Shaf'aat of Amir al Muminin, Ali. Celebrated mystic poet Rumi says: [45]

Aey Bad e Subh Mushkboo Soye Najaf Aawar Tura;

Baan Imam e Deen Begomastan e Salamat me Kunand

(O the morning breeze! With the fragrance of Mushk go towards Najaf and submit in the presence of the Imam of Deen the Salaam of the devotees)

Han Ae Nasim e Mushk bu Suye Najaf Aawar Tu Ru;

Be Saqi e Kausar Begomastan e Salamat me Kunand

(Yes O gentle wind blended with Mushk-turn towards Najaf and submits in the presence of Saqi-e-Kausar the Salaam of the Fidaeen)

9. Necessity of the Protecting the Sanctity of the Mashhad:

The sanctity of the Mashhad of Ali in Najaf should be protected at all costs and the issue is not just a matter of concern for the Muslim World but for all humanity. The Mashhad of Ali belongs to the Muslim community and all human beings and if its sanctity is not respected it will set a bad precedent for the desecration of the holy places of all religions. Defending the sanctity of the Mashhad is a religious as well as humanitarian duty. The attack on the Mashhad is totally unacceptable and unjustified.

American and British military powers are trying their utmost to de-stable the Muslim countries, from Iran to Lebanon to Pakistan to evoke a violent response from the Muslims. They want to stoke the fires of Jih'ad because a religious war is at the heart of the Straussian neocon Master Plan-a "Clash of Civilizations" designed to "Reshape" the Middle East, so as to provide an excuse to invade and conquer not only Iraq but Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and the lesser Arab nations. It is possible that in response to any damage to the sanctity of the Mashhad of Amir al Muminin, the fire of destruction will reach America and thus turn the "ambivalence" of the American people, so abhorred by any such plan.

I humbly request in the Hazrat of Amir al Muminin Ali ibn Abi Talib that O Moula! Help me your Haqir devotee through all means to promote literature of Islam as explained by you and your

children Ahl al Bait. Grant me an opportunity with Sehat and Rizaq to do this Khidmah. I conclude my article with the following verses of the Manqabat of Famous Muslim Saint Bakhtyar Kaki: [46]

Ya Rabb Behaq e Shah e Najaf Murtaza Ali

Ya Rabb Be Haqq e Jumleh Imaman e Peshwa

Az Lutf Yek Nazar Besoye Kaki Figan

Beresan Bezeer e Saye e Shah e Najaf Mara

(O Rabb! In the name of the Lord of Najaf Murtaza Ali

O Rabb! In the name of the Lord of all the Imams

Pay single kind attention towards Kaki [me]

Allow me to reach under the shadow of the Lord of Najaf)

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[4] Assyrian dictionary, published by Chicago University, Kado

[5] "Qasidah al Karrariyyah", Published Mumbai, India

[6] "Qasidah al Ainiyyah", Ibn Abil Hadid al Mutazali, Beirut, Lebanon

[7] "Alal'ush Sharai", Iran

[8] Majlisi, Bihaar ul Anwaar, p. 111

[9] Msanavi Manawi, Jalaluddin Rumi, Iran. Rumi was born in Wakhsh (Tajikistan) under the administration of Balkh on 30 September 1207 in a family of learned theologians. Escaping the Mongol invasion and destruction, Rumi and his family travelled extensively in the Muslim lands and finally settled in Konya, Anatolia, which was part of Seljuk Empire. Rumi succeeded his father Bahauddin Valad in 1231 as Scholar in religious sciences. 24 years old Rumi was already an accomplished scholar. Though Rumi himself was not an Ismaili, he was the disciple of Shams Tabriz, a well known Ismaili Dai.

[10] Please see: Gems Science in Islam, its Medicinal & Mystical Value, Qazi Dr. Shaikh Abbas Borhany <http://www.durrenajaf.com/ScienceofIslam.html>

[11] Majlisi, p.108

[12] Mailisi, P.111

[13] "Maqatil at Talibin", Abul Farj, p.42

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[16] "Umdat at Talib", P: 42; 2- Kitab ul Irshad, Shaikh al Mufid

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- [33] *Ibid*
- [34] “*The Shrine of Imam Ali*”, Hussein Nassir Jabr al Ibadi
- [35] Syedna Taher Saifuddin, *Diwaan*, published Dubai
- [36] *Past of Najaf*. P: 52
- [37] 51st *Al Dai al Fatemi of Ismaili Musta’alavi Dawoodi School*, Dr. Syedna Taher Saifuddin.
- [38] Ibn Abil Hadid (d. 656/1258) was an eminent Mutazili scholar of his era and a writer. Among his books is the famed commentary on the *Nahj al-Balagha*, *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*.
- [39] *Al Himyari*: He was a famous poet and contemporary to Imam al-Sadiq.
- [40] *Hadith*,
- [41] *Hadith*, “*Najaf: the city of knowledge & peace for believers*”, Walid Abdul Amir Alwan
- [42] Nuruddin Abdur Rahman Jami (1414 - 1492), is known for his achievements as a scholar, mystic, writer, composer of numerous lyrics and idylls, historian, and one of the greatest Persian and Sufi poets of the 15th century. Jami was primarily an outstanding poet-theologian of the school of Ibn Arabi and a prominent Khwajagani Sufi. He was recognized for his eloquent tongue and ready at repartee who analyzed the idea of the metaphysics of mercy. Among his famous poetical works are: *Haft Awrang*, *Tuhfat al-Ahrar*, *Layla wa -Majnun*, *Fatihah al-Shabab*, *Lawa'ih*, *Al-Durrah al-Fakhirah*.
- [43] *Hadith*
- [44] *Manqabat Amir al Muminin*, By: 51st *Al Dai al Fatemi*, Syedna Taher Saifuddin
- [45] Rumi's major work is the *Masnawi Manawi (Spiritual Couplets)*, a six-volume poem regarded by some Sufis as the *Qur'an*, in Persian. It is considered by many to be one of the greatest works of mystical poetry. It contains approximately 27000 lines of Persian poetry. The *Masnawi* weaves fables, scenes from everyday life, *Qur'anic* revelations and exegesis, and metaphysics into a vast and intricate tapestry.
- [46] Khwaja Syed Muhammad Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki (born 1173-died 1235) was a renowned Muslim Sufi mystic, saint and scholar of the Chishti Order from Delhi, India. He was the disciple

and the spiritual successor of Moinuddin Chishti as head of the Chishti order. Before him the Chishti order in India was confined to Ajmer and Nagaur. He played a major role in establishing the order securely in Delhi. His most famous disciple and spiritual successor was Fariduddin Ganj Shakar, who in turn became the spiritual master of Delhi's noted Sufi saint, Nizamuddin Auliya, who himself was the spiritual master of Amir Khusro and Nasiruddin Chirag-e-Delhi.

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