

Does the variety of Hazrat Narjis's names prove that Hazrat Mahdi (AS) has never been born?

The group of Mahdavidism

The inquirer: Bahram

The raised doubt:

Ihsan Zahir, a Pakistani Wahhabi, as well as Ghalib 'Awaji, another Wahhabi, argue that the dispute over the name of the mother of the Imam of the Time (May God Hasten His Appearance) casts a shadow on the Hazrat's birth.

Ihsan Zahis has said,

اختلف في اسم الجارية التي قالوا انها ولدته، فقال قائلهم : ان اسمها نرجس، وقيل : اسمها صقيل
أو صيقل، وقيل: حكيمة، وقيل غير ذلك

There is a row over the name of the maid who gave birth to him. Some believe that her name was Narjis and some others have introduced her as Saqil, Seiqal, Hakima and so on and so forth.

Al-Shi'a wa al-Tashayyu', pp. 272-273

Ghalib 'Awaji has echoed the same statement in his Firaq Ma'asira, vol. 1, p. 263.

Analysis:

This doubt is one of those for which all should give a round of applause to the person who raised it and imagined that it was a big discovery! In case such minor disputes can bring the total existence of someone into question, then Sunnis will face a lot of troubles to substantiate the existence of a

number of individuals. We are going to discuss some of them later in the article.

Names and nicknames of the mother of the Imam of the Time (AS)

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ إِسْحَاقَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ : حَدَّثَنَا الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَلِيِّ بْنِ زَكَرِيَّا بِمَدِينَةِ
السَّلَامِ قَالَ : حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ خَلِيلَانَ قَالَ : حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ عَنْ غِيَاثِ بْنِ
أَسِيدٍ قَالَ : وَوُلِدَ الْخَلْفُ الْمَهْدِيُّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ وَأُمُّهُ رِيحَانَةٌ وَيُقَالُ لَهَا تَرْجِسُ وَيُقَالُ صَقِيلُ
وَيُقَالُ سَوْسَنُ إِنَّا أَنَّهُ قِيلَ لِسَبَبِ الْحَمْلِ صَقِيلٌ....

According to Ghiyath Ibn Asid, Hazrat Mahdi (AS) was born on Friday. His name was Reihana but she was known as Narjis. Some say that she was named Seiqal and some others claim that her name was Susan. There is yet another group which has claimed that she was called Saqil (namely bright, illuminating and shining) thanks to the uterus she had in her womb.

Al-Saduq, Abu Ja'far Mohammad Ibn 'Ali Ibn al-Hussein (died in 381 AH), Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mat, p. 432; researched by 'Ali Akbar al-Ghifari; published by Muassissat al-Nashr al-Islami (al-Tabi'at) Li jama'at al-Mudarrisin, Qom, 1405 AH.

'Allame Majlisi (God Bless Him) has explained the sentence of قِيلَ لِسَبَبِ الْحَمْلِ as follows,

بيان قوله إلا أنه قيل لسبب الحمل أي إنما سمي صقيلا لما اعتراه من النور و الجلاء بسبب الحمل المنور يقال صقل السيف و غيره أي جلاه فهو صقيل و لا يبعد أن يكون تصحيف الجمال.

In the sentence of قِيلَ لِسَبَبِ الْحَمْلِ صَقِيلُ (She was called Seiqal because she was pregnant with the Hazrat), the connotation of brightness and lightness was implied, as a matter of fact, to be emanated from her due to holding him in her womb. It is a similar case when one says for example, 'he burnished a

sword'. It is indeed meant to make the sword smooth and shiny. The sentence appears to have meant to describe the lady.

Al-Majlisi, Mohammad Baqir (died in 1111 AH), Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'at Li Durar Akhbar al-Aimma al-Athar, vol. 51, p. 15; researched by Mohammad al-Baqir al-Bihbudi; published by Muassissat al-Wafat, Beirut/Lebanon, the second edition, al-Musahiha, 1403 AH-1983 AD.

According to some dictionaries, الصَّقَّالَة is attributed to the Island of Sicily in Italy.

Mahyar, Reza (Mu'asir), Abjadi Dictionary, p. 556, the stem of Saqal, صَقْل. Based on the suggested meaning, it might have implied that the lady was called Saqil because she had come from Rome or perhaps from the Island of Sicily.

Munawi, a prominent Sunni scholar, has insisted that her name was Narjis.

وأما أمه فاسمها نرجس من أولاد الحواريين

The name of the Hazrat's mother was Narjis. She was one of the disciples of Hazrat Jesus.

Al-Manawi, Mohammad 'Abd al-Rauf Ibn 'Ali Ibn Zayn al-'Abidin (died in 1031 AH), Fayd al-Qadir Sharh al-Jami' al-Saghir, vol. 6, p. 277; published by al-Maktabat al-Tijarat, Egypt, the first edition, 1356 AH.

Was the mother of the Imam of the Time (AS) named Hakima?

Hazrat Hakima Khatun was Hazrat Imam 'Askari's (AS) aunt. She was also considered as the nanny of the Imam of the Time (AS) upon his birth. However, some individuals have added Hakima to the list of his mother's names.

In his Matalib al-Soul, Mohammad Ibn Talha Shafi'i has claimed that Hakima has been reportedly one of the names of the Imam of the Time's (AS) mother.

وأمه: أم ولد تسمى صقيل، وقيل: حكيمة، وقيل: غير ذلك

Al-Sheikh Kamal al-Din Mohammad Ibn Talha al-Shafi'i (died in 652 AH), Matalib Al-Soul fi Manaqib Al al-Rasul (AS), p. 481; researched by Majid Ibn Ahmad al-'Atiyya.

A number of Shia scholars such as late Irbili have quoted the same statement in their books. He has written in his Kashf al-Ghumma,

قال الشيخ كمال الدين بن طلحة رحمه الله الباب الثاني عشر في أبي القاسم محمد الحجة بن الحسن الخالص... أمه أم ولد تسمى صيقل وقيل حكيمة وقيل غير ذلك

Al-Irbili, Abu al-Hassan 'Ali Ibn 'Isa Ibn Abi al-Fath (died in 693 AH), Kashf al-Ghumma fi Ma'rifat al-Aimma, vol. 3, pp. 333-334; published by Dar al-Adwa, Beirut, the second edition, 1405 AH-1985 AD.

In his Ghayat al-Maram, Sayyid Hashim Buhrani and in A'yan al-Shi'a, Sayyid Mohsin Amin have both quoted the same thing from Mohammad Ibn Talha Shafi'i.

Al-Buhrani al-Musaswi, Abu al-Makarim al-Sayyid Hashim Ibn al-Sayyid Ibn al-Sayyid Sulayman Ibn al-Sayyid Isma'il (died in 1107 AH), Ghayat al-Maram wa Hujjat al-Khisam fi Ta'yin al-Imam Min Tariq al-Khas wa al-'Aam, vol. 7, p. 135; researched by al-'Allame al-Sayyid 'Ali 'Ashur.

Al-Imam al-Sayyid Mohsin al-Amin (died in 1371 AH), A'yan al-Shi'a; researched by Hassan al-Amin, vol. 2, p. 64; published by Dar al-Ta'aruf Lil Matbu'at, Beirut.

As shown before, the source of this quotation has been originally from Mohammad Ibn Talha Shafi'i's Matalib al-Soul. He has offered neither a reason nor proof for this quotation. Hence, it lacks the required credibility.

There is a strong possibility that he has confused the name of Imam ‘Askari’s (AS) aunt who was a nanny of the Imam of the Time (AS) upon his birth with her mother.

The variety of names for women at the advent of Islam

A dispute over the name of the Imam of the Time (AS) can never bring the reality of his birth into question. In the past, giving various names to people was very common. Some names were used to be chosen by fathers and some others by mothers. And when girls got married, their husbands’ families used to choose other names for them. It is still common in some Islamic countries now. And some people used to have various nicknames in addition that were used as their names by mistake later in the time. For instance, Hazrat Zahra (AS), the daughter of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), was one of the individuals who had a large number of names and nicknames. Zahra, Fatima, Siddiqa, Mardiyya, Radiya, Zakiyya, Tahira, Tayyiba, Mutahhara, Reihana, Muhadditha, Kamila, Fadila, etc.

There were some other women at the advent of Islam who had a variety of names. The following is what Ibn Athir has written in his al-Ghaba.

سُهَيْمَةُ امْرَأَةَ رِفَاعَةَ الْفَرَزِيِّ . وقد تقدم ذكرها في رِفَاعَةَ، وفي عبد الرحمن بن الزبير . وقيل: اسمها تميمية، وقيل: عائشة.

Suhayma was the wife of Rifa’a. Some say that her name was Tamima and some others insist that she was ‘Aiisha.

Ibn Athir al-Jizri, ‘Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir Abi al-Hassan ‘Ali Ibn Mohammad (died in 630 AH), Asad al-Ghabat fi Ma’rifat al-Sahaba, vol. 7, p. 171; researched by ‘Adil Ahmad al-Rifa’i; published by Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi, Beirut-Lebanon, the first edition, 1417 AH-1996 AD.

He added,

فَاطِمَةُ بِنْتُ حَمْزَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ الْفُرَشِيَّةِ الْهَاشِمِيَّةِ ابْنَةِ عَمِّ النَّبِيِّ . وَقِيلَ: اسْمُهَا أَمَامَةٌ . وَقِيلَ:
عُمَارَةٌ . قَالَ أَبُو نَعِيمٍ، وَتَكْنَى أُمُّ الْفَضْلِ

Fatima was Hamza Ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib’s (AS) daughter and the Prophet’s (PBUH) cousin. Some individuals have said that her name was Imama while some others believe that she was named ‘Ammara. It is what Abu Na’im has said.

Ibn Athir al-Jizri, ‘Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir Abi al-hassan ‘Ali Ibn Mohammad (died in 630 AH), Asad al-Ghabat fi Ma’rifat al-Sahaba, vol. 7, p. 237; researched by ‘Adil Ahmad al-Rifa’i; published by Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi, Beirut-Lebanon, the first edition, 1417 AH-1996 AD.

As part of the biography of Arqam Ibn Abi al-Arqam, he has said,

الأرقم بن أبي الأرقم: واسم أبي الأرقم عبد مناف بن أسد بن عبد الله ابن عمر ابن مخزوم القرشي المخزومي، وأمه أميمة بنت عبد الحارث، وقيل اسمها : تماضر بنت حُذَيْمٍ من بني سهم، وقيل اسمها: صفية بنت الحارث بن خالد بن عمير بن عُبَيْشَانَ الخزاعية..

Arqam Ibn Abi al-Arqam’s mother was Amima, ‘Abd al-Harith’s daughter. Some people say she was named as Tamadur Bint Hathim and according to some others, her name was Safiyya Bint al-Harith.

Ibn Athir al-Jizri, ‘Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir Abi al-hassan ‘Ali Ibn Mohammad (died in 630 AH), Asad al-Ghabat fi Ma’rifat al-Sahaba, vol. 1, p. 94; researched by ‘Adil Ahmad al-Rifa’i; published by Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi, Beirut-Lebanon, the first edition, 1417 AH-1996 AD.

What were Abubakr’s name and his mother’s?

Suuni scholars have been in a long-running dispute over Abubakr’s and his mother’s names.

In his Asad al-Ghabat as part of Abubakr’s biography, Ibn Athir al-Jizri has written,

وأمة أم الخير سلمى بنت صخر بن عامر بن كعب بن سعد بن تيم بن مرة، وهي ابنة عمّ أبي قحافة، وقيل: اسمها: ليلي بنت صخر بن عامر. قاله محمد بن سعد، وقال غيره: اسمها سلمى بنت صخر بن عامر بن عمرو بن كعب بن سعد بن تيم . وهذا ليس بشيء؛ فإنها تكون ابنة أخيه، ولم تكن العرب تنكح بنات الإخوة. والأول أصح....
وقد اختلف في اسمه، فقيل: كان عبد الكعبة فسماه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عبد الله. وقيل: إن أهله سموه عبد الله. ويقال له: عتيق أيضاً.

The name of Abubakr's mother was Umm al-Khayr. She was the daughter of 'Amir Ibn Ka'b and the cousin of Abu Qahafa. According to Mohammad Ibn Sa'd, some individuals have said that her name was Leili Ibn Sakhar. But some others believe that Abubakr's mother was named as Silma, the daughter of Sakhar, the daughter of 'Amir Ibn 'Amar. Such claims are not true because she was Abu Qahafa's niece. And it has never been usual among Arabs for one to marry his niece. The first opinion looks more acceptable, however.

Furthermore, Abubakr's name also has always been the matter of dispute. A group of people says that his name was 'Abd al-Ka'ba; that is why the Prophet (PBUH) named him 'Abdullah. But another group says it was his family which named him 'Abdullah. There is still the other group which claims that his real name was 'Atiq.

Ibn Athir al-Jizri, 'Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir Abi al-Hassan 'Ali Ibn Mohammad (died in 630 AH), Asad al-Ghabat fi Ma'rifat al-Sahaba, vol. 3, p. 315; researched by 'Adil Ahmad al-Rifa'i; published by Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi, Beirut-Lebanon, the first edition, 1417 AH-1996 AD.

A point in Ibn Athir's statement is that some people have said that Abubakr's mother was in fact his cousin. It means that Abu Qahafa had married his niece. But then he dismissed it as a worthless claim, adding that such a custom never existed among Arabs. None the less, Ibn Athir's statement is

by no means compelling because it is a claim made with no proof. In reverse, there seems to be a reason challenging it.

In Mu'jam al-Kabir, Tabarani has said,

حدثنا محمد بن عمرو بن خالد الحَرَّانِيُّ حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي ثنا بن لهيعة عن أبي الأسود عن عروة قال أبو بكر الصديقُّ اسْمُهُ عبد الله بن عثمان بن عامر بن عمرو بن كعب بن سعد بن تيم بن مرة شهيداً بدرًا مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وأمُّ أبي بكر رضي الله عنه أمُّ الخير سلمى بنت صخر بن عامر بن عمرو بن كعب بن سعد بن تيم بن مرة بن كعب بن لؤي بن غالب بن فهر بن مالك

‘Urwa has been quoted as saying that Abubakr’s name was ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Uthman Ibn ‘Amir Ibn ‘Amr. He fought alongside with the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) in the Battle of Badr. His mother was Silmi Bint Sakhar Ibn ‘Amir Ibn ‘Amr.

Al-Tabarani, Abu al-Qasim Sulayman Ibn Ahmad Ibn Ayyub (died in 360 AH), al-Mu’jam al-Kabir, vol. 1, p. 51; researched by Hamdi Ibn ‘Abd al-Majid al-Salafi; published by Maktabat al-Zahra, Mosul, the second edition, 1404 AH-1983 AD.

In follow-up to the narrative, Tabarani has written,

رواه الطبراني وإسناده حسن.

This narrative has been cited by Tabarani. Its chain of transmission is sound.

Al-Heithami, Abu al-Hassan ‘Ali Ibn Abi Bakr (died in 807 AH), Majma’ al-Zawaid wa Manba’ al-Fawaid, vol. 9, p. 40; published by Dar al-Riyan lil Turathl Dar al-Kitab al-‘Arabi, Cairo, Beirut, 1407 AH.

Now therefore, the caliph’s followers have to look for better and more convincing justifications to prove that Abubakr’s mother was not his niece.

Anyway, based on this narrative, there have been a variety of names for Abubakr and his mother. Now on this basis, can one ever claim that Abubakr never existed?

What were the names of Abu Harira and his father?

One of the weirdest rows over names has been about the names of Abu Harira and his father. More than thirty names have been enlisted for him and his father. We preferred to cite it from Ibn Hajar ‘Asqalani’s Taqrib al-Tahtib just because it was brief.

أبو هريرة الدوسي الصحابي الجليل حافظ الصحابة اختلف في اسمه واسم أبيه قيل عبد الرحمن بن صخر وقيل بن غنم وقيل عبد الله بن عانذ وقيل بن عامر وقيل بن عمرو وقيل سكين بن ودمة بن هانئ وقيل بن مل وقيل بن صخر وقيل عامر بن عبد شمس وقيل بن عمير وقيل يزيد بن عسرة وقيل عبد نهم وقيل عبد شمس وقيل غنم وقيل عبيد بن غنم وقيل عمرو بن غنم وقيل بن عامر وقيل سعيد بن الحارث هذا الذي وقفنا عليه من الاختلاف في ذلك...

Al-‘Asqalani al-Shafi’i, Ahmad Ibn Ali Ibn Hajar Abu al-Fadl (died in 852 AH), Taqrib al-Tahtib, vol. 1, p. 680; researched by Mohammad ‘Awama; published by Dar al-Rashid, Syria, the first edition, 1406 AH-1986 AD.

There is long-running dispute over the names of Abu Harira and his father.

1. ‘Abd al-Rahman Ibn Sakhar; 2. ‘Abd al-Rahman Ibn Ghanam; 3. ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Aith; 4. ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Amir; 5. ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar; 6. Sikin Ibn Wadamat Ibn Hani; 7. Sikin Ibn ‘Aith; 8. Sikin Ibn Sakhari; 9. ‘Amir Ibn ‘Abd al-Shams; 10. ‘Amir Ibn ‘Amir; 11. Yazid ‘Ashraqa; 12. Yacid Ibn ‘Abd Nuhum; 13. Yazid Ibn ‘Abd al-Shams; 14. Yazid Ibn Ghanam; 15. ‘Abid Ibn Ghanam; 16. ‘Amr Ibn Ghanam; 17. ‘Amr Ibn ‘Amir; 18. Sa’eed Ibn al-Harith.

These are only the names that I myself could find.

In another book, he has said the following,

وقد اختلف في اسمه اختلافا كثيرا قال بن عبد البر لم يختلف في اسم في الجاهلية والإسلام مثل ما اختلف في اسمه اختلف فيه على عشرين قولاً قلت وسرد بن الجوزي في التلخيص منها ثمانية عشر وقال النووي تبلغ أكثر من ثلاثين قولاً قلت وقد جمعتها في ترجمته في تهذيب التهذيب فلم تبلغ ذلك ولكن كلام الشيخ محمول على الاختلاف في اسمه وفي اسم أبيه معا.

There is a bitter dispute over Abu Harira's name. According to Ibn 'Abd al-Birr, there has not been such a dispute over someone's name during the Ignorance Age and even after the advent of Islam. More than twenty different quotations can be found about Abu Harira's name. Ibn Jowzi has enumerated eighteen names for him in al-Tarqih. And according to Nuwi, there have been over thirty names for him. What I say is that as part of Abu Harira's biography, I did collect the names. But the number was not exactly what has been claimed. It is probable that Nuwi's comment in fact was aimed to convey the extent of disputes over the names of him and his father. Al-'Asqalani al-Shafi'i, Ahmad Ibn Ali Ibn Hajar Abu al-Fadl (died in 852 AH), Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 1, p. 51; researched by Muhib al-Din al-Khatib; published by Dar al-Ma'rifat, Beirut.

Similar arguments have been presented about other individuals such as Umm al-Momenin Umm Habiba, Umm al-Momenin Umm Salama and so on. The differences of opinions about their names are reflected in historical books. But we preferred to address it in a nutshell.

As a conclusion, the variety of the names of Hazrat Narjis can never bring into question the reality of her son's birth. In case such an assumption is acceptable, how can Sunnis prove Abubakr's existence while his name and his father's name are both a matter of dispute? This very rule can be applied about Abu Harira and others as well.

Good Luck

The Group Responsible for Answers to Doubts

Hazrat Wali Asr (AS) Research Institute

