The Islamic science of hemerology (iḥtiyārāt) was a procedure based on astrological calculations, the aim of which was to ascertain the auspicious or inauspicious nature of specific days of the month. An Arabic example of Islamic hemerology is preserved in Leiden MS Or. 7525 under the title of Iḥtiyārāt Ayyām al-Šahr, its author being given as Ġa'far al-Šādiq (the sixth Shi'ite Imām, who died in A.D. 765).

The Iḥtiyārāt Ayyām al-Šahr is to be found on pages 85 to 89 of the Leiden MS. It has 15 lines to a page, and is written in a careless, somewhat cursive hand which has some features in common with nastā'liq. The date of completion of the MS is given as Saturday, the 22nd Raḡab, 1309 (= A.D. 1891). There are a number of deletions, obvious omissions and some illegible words, and there are several indications of Persian influence in the orthography. The Persian character of the MS is sufficiently shown by the fact that some folios in it, other than those of our piece, are written in the Persian language. Catchwords appear at the foot of each verso. This example of iḥtiyārāt would appear to have survived in no other copy.

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3. The other four MSS listed under the title Iḥtiyārāt Ayyām al-Šahr (and attributed to Ġa'far al-Šādiq) by F. SEZGIN, Geschichte der Arabischen Schrifttums, vol. I, p. 531, are in fact different from the work presented here and different from each other, although they treat of the same matters. The Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) MS 1224/4 (a Mağribī MS, of the seventeenth century) and the Istanbul MS Esaad 3554/3 contain brief works on hemerology which do little more than state whether or not a particular day is auspicious. The work contained in Berlin MS 5903/2 is a similar short composition of the nineteenth century (see J. RUSKA, Arabische Alchemisten, Heidelberg, 1924, p. 36). The Istanbul MS Beyazit 7882/1 contains a much longer work on hemerology, being a composite production attributed to the Prophet Daniel, Salmān the Persian and Ġa'far.
There exist a considerable number of other Arabic works ascribed to Ḥaḍīr al-Ṣādiq in the fields of divination, magic and alchemy. The background to the attribution of these works is given by Tawfiq Fahd, who states that «The particular veneration which, among the Shi'as, the members of the Prophet’s family enjoy, is at the base of the belief that the descendants of Fāṭima have inherited certain privileges inherent in Prophethood; prediction of the future and of the destinies of nations and dynasties is one of these privileges».

The belief that Ḥaḍīr al-Ṣādiq in particular had the power to foretell the future was widespread. Fahd also points out that the Persian origin of many of Ḥaḍīr’s associates, and his own partially Persian ancestry, make his alleged knowledge of the originally foreign occult sciences and alchemy more plausible at the early date at which he lived than it would otherwise have been. However the attribution to Ḥaḍīr of writings connected with the «'ulūm al-‘aǧām» is still a subject for investigation, as is pointed out by F. Sezgin.

Ḩaggi Halifah describes Islamic hemerology as follows: «The science of hemerology, a branch of astrology, is a science which investigates the ruling factors of every moment of time, good and bad times, occasions on which it is necessary to exercise caution in regard to beginning new enterprises, occasions on which undertaking new enterprises is recommended, and occasions on which undertaking new enterprises is to be regarded as being half way between these extremes...».

Islamic astrologers based their hemerological calculations on the house of the zodiac (Arabic burǧ, plural abrāǧ) in which the moon happened to be situated at a particular time. Some Muslim astrologers...