

CHAPTER X

IMAM AL-ḤASAN B. ‘ALĪ AL-‘ASKARĪ

(In this chapter there will be) an account of the Imam undertaking the office (*al-qā'im*) after Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad (al-Hādī), peace be on them. (It will give) the date of his birth, the evidence for his Imamate and his nomination by his father, his age, and the period of his succession. (It will) mention his death, the place of his grave and a survey of reports about him.

The Imam after Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad (al-Hādī), peace be on them, was his son Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī (al-‘Askarī) by virtue of the occurrence in him of the qualities of outstanding merit, and by his precedence over the rest of the people of his time in terms of knowledge, asceticism, perfection of reason, infallibility (*isma*), bravery, nobility and the great number of his works which brought him close to Allāh, may His name be extolled, all of which required his Imamate and necessitated his leadership. In addition (he was the Imam) because of the nomination of him by his father and the latter's indication of him for the succession.

He was born in Medina in the month of Rabī‘ al-Ākhir in the year 232 A.H. (846). He, peace be on him, died on Friday 8th of the month of Rabī‘ al-Awwal in the year 260 A.H. (873). At that time he was twenty-eight years of age. He was buried in his house at Sāmarrā'. (It was) the house in which his father, peace be on him, was buried. His mother was a slave-wife called Ḥadīth. The period of his succession (to the Imamate) was six years.

A SURVEY OF THE REPORTS PUT FORWARD CONCERNING HIS NOMINATION BY HIS FATHER, PEACE BE ON THEM, AND THE INDICATION OF HIM FOR THE IMAMATE AFTER HIM

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nahdī, on the authority of Yaḥyā b. Yasār al-‘Anbarī, who said:]¹ Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad (al-Hādī), peace be on him, made his testamentary bequest to his son four months before his death. He indicated that the affair (of the Imamate) would belong to him after himself. He made me (i.e. Yaḥyā b. Yasār al-‘Anbarī) and a group of servants (*mawālī*) witness that.

¹ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 325, tradition no. 1.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Ja‘far b. Muḥammad al-Kūfī, on the authority of Bashshār b. Aḥmad al-Baṣrī, on the authority of ‘Alī b. ‘Umar al-Nawfālī, who said:]²

I (i.e. ‘Alī b. ‘Umar al-Nawfālī) was with Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī), peace be on him, in the courtyard of his house. Muḥammad, his son, passed us and I said to (al-Hādī): “May I be your ransom, is this our leader after you?”

“No,” he replied, “your leader after me is al-Ḥasan.”

[With the same chain of authorities (*isnād*), on the authority of Bashshār b. Aḥmad, on the authority of ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī, who said:]³ Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī), peace be on him, said to me (i.e. ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī): “Your leader after me is the one who will say the prayer over me (at my funeral).”

We did not know that it would be Abū Muḥammad (al-‘Askarī) before that. But after his death Abū Muḥammad (al-‘Askarī) came out and said the prayer over him.

[With the same chain of authorities (*isnād*), on the authority of Bashshār b. Aḥmad, on the authority of Mūsā b. Ja‘far b. Wahb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Ja‘far, who said:]⁴

I used to attend Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī), peace be on him. When his son, Muḥammad, died, he said to al-Ḥasan (al-‘Askarī): “My son, give thanks to Allāh, for Allāh has made an (important) matter (rest) in you.”

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Mu‘allā b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Marwān al-Anbarī, who said:]⁵

I (i.e. ‘Abd Allāh b. Marwān al-Anbarī) was present at the death of Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Alī. Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī) came. A chair was put for him and he sat on it. The members of his House were around him. Abū Muḥammad (al-‘Askarī), his son, peace be on him, was standing at the side. When the affairs (concerned with the death) of Abū Ja‘far were finished, he turned to Abū Muḥammad (al-‘Askarī), peace be on him and said: “My son, give thanks to Allāh, the Exalted, for He had made an (important) matter (rest) in you.”

2 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 325-6, tradition no. 2. Al-Mufīd’s *isnād* has been corrected.

3 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 326, tradition no. 3.

4 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 326, tradition no. 4.

5 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 326, tradition no. 5.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qalānisī, on the authority of ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Amr, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Mahziyār, who said:]⁶

I (i.e. ‘Alī b. Mahziyār) said to Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī), peace be on him: “If an event takes place and I seek refuge in Allāh (from that), to whom (does the Imamate belong)?”

“My nomination (‘*ahd*) is to the eldest of my (surviving) sons,” he said, meaning al-Ḥasan, peace be on him.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Abū Muḥammad al-Astarābādī, on the authority of ‘Alī b. ‘Amr al-‘Aṭṭār, who said:]⁷

I visited Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī), peace be on him, while his son Abū Ja‘far (Muḥammad) was still alive. I thought that he was the successor after him. I said to him: “May I be your ransom, who is the specified one among your sons?” “Do not specify anyone until my command comes to you,” he said.

I wrote to him later about who would have the affair (of the Imamate). He wrote to me: “(It belongs) to the eldest of my (surviving) sons.”

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā and another, on the authority of Sa‘d b. ‘Abd Allāh, on the authority of a group of the Banū Hāshim, among whom was al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn al-Aṭṭas:]⁸

They (i.e. the group of Banū Hāshim) were present on the day in which Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad died, in the courtyard of the house of Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī), peace be on him, and the people were sitting around him.

[They said:]

We estimated that there were a hundred and fifty men from the family of Abū Ṭālib, the Banū ‘Abbās and Quraysh, excluding his retainers and the rest of the people. Then al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī (al-‘Askarī), peace be on them, looked at (us). He had come wearing a coat rent (with grief). He stood at his right and we did not recognise him. Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī), peace be on him, looked at him after he had been standing for an hour and said to him: “My son, give thanks to Allāh, for he has made an (important) matter (rest) in you.”

6 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 326, tradition no. 6.

7 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 326, tradition no. 7.

8 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 326-7, tradition no. 8.

Al-Ḥasan (al-‘Askarī) wept and repeated the formula - We belong to Allāh and to Him we return. Then he said: “Praise be to Allāh, Lord of the worlds. To Him do I request the perfection of His bounty upon us. We belong to Allāh and to Him we return.”

We asked about him and we were told: “That is al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, his son.”

We reckoned him to be twenty years of age or the like at that time. On that day we knew him and we understood that (al-Hādī) had indicated him for the Imamate and to take his place.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Ishāq b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā, who said:]⁹

I visited Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī), peace be on him, after the death of his son, Abū Ja‘far, and paid my condolences to him. Abu Muḥammad (al-‘Askarī), peace be on him, was sitting (with him). Abū Muḥammad wept and Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī), peace be on them, approached him and said: “Allāh has made succession (rest) with you from Him. Therefore praise Allāh.”

[Abū al-Qāsim (Ja‘far b. Muḥammad) informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Ishāq b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Abū Hāshim al-Ja‘farī, who said:]¹⁰

I (i.e. Abū Hāshim al-Ja‘farī) was with Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī), peace be on him, after the death of his son, Abū Ja‘far (Muḥammad). I was thinking to myself that I wanted to say that they were both - I mean Abū Ja‘far (Muḥammad) and Abū Muḥammad (al-‘Askarī), peace be on him - like Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, and Ismā‘īl, the two sons of Ja‘far b. Muḥammad (al-Ṣādiq), peace be on them. Indeed the former two’s story was like the latter two’s story. Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī) approached me before I could speak and said: “Yes, Abū Hāshim, Allāh has revealed (His will) concerning Abu Muḥammad (al-‘Askarī) after Abū Ja‘far (Muḥammad) (has suffered) what no one could have known, just as He revealed (His will) concerning Mūsā after the death of Ismā‘īl revealed his state. It is just like you were saying to yourself. Even though the falsifiers may dislike it, my son Abū Muḥammad (al-‘Askarī) is the successor after me. He has the knowledge which is needed. He has the equipment of the Imamate.”

[With the same chain of authorities (*isnād*) on the authority of Ishāq b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Darriyyāt, on the authority of Abū Bakr al-Fahfakī, who said:]¹¹

9 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 327, tradition no. 9.

10 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 327, tradition no. 10.

11 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 327-8 tradition no.11. AI-Mufīd’s *isnād* has been corrected.

Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī), peace be on him, wrote to me (i.e. Abū Bakr al-Fahfakī): “Abū Muḥammad, my son, is the soundest of the family of Muḥammad in excellence and the firmest of them as a proof. He is the eldest of my (surviving) sons. To him is the Imamate directed and our laws. Whatever you used to ask me about, ask him. He has (everything) which is needed.”

[With the same chain of authorities (*isnād*) on the authority of Ishāq b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Shāhawayh b. ‘Abd Allāh, who said:]¹²

Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī), peace be on him, wrote to me (i.e. Shāhawayh b. ‘Abd Allāh) in a letter (in reply to a letter where) I wanted to ask about the successor after (the death of) Abū Ja‘far (Muḥammad), peace be on him, and I had become anxious because of that. (He wrote:) “Do not be anxious. Allāh does not lead people astray after He has guided them until He has made clear to them what they should fear. Your leader after me is Abū Muḥammad (al-‘Askarī), my son. He has (everything) which they need. Allāh brings forward whatever He wishes and delays whatever He wishes. *We do not cause a verse to be abrogated or forgotten without providing a better one or the like of it* (II 106). In this is a clear explanation and convincing proof for one who has a watchful mind.”

[Abū al-Qāsim (Ja‘far b. Muḥammad) informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, on the authority of a man who mentioned it, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-‘Alawī, on the authority of Dāwud b. al-Qāsim (Abū Hashim) al-Ja‘farī, who said:]¹³

I (i.e. Dāwud b. al-Qāsim Abū Hashim al-Ja‘farī) heard Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī), peace be on him, say: “The successor after me is al-Ḥasan, peace be on him. But how will it be for you with regard to the successor after the successor?”

“May Allāh make me your ransom, why?” I asked.

“You will not see his person,” he said, “nor will the mentioning of his name be permitted to you.”

“Then how will we refer to him?” I enquired.

“Say ‘the proof from the family of Muḥammad’,” he told me.

Reports of this kind are so numerous that they would (unduly) lengthen the book.

A SURVEY OF THE REPORTS ABOUT ABŪ MUḤAMMAD (AL-‘ASKANĪ, PEACE BE ON HIM, HIS VIRTUES, SIGNS AND MIRACLES.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of

¹² *Al-Kāfi*, I, 328, tradition no. 12

¹³ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 328, tradition no. 13

Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Ash‘arī and Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā and others, who said:]¹⁴

Aḥmad b. ‘Ubayd Allāh b. al-Khāqān was in charge of estates (*diyā‘*) and the land-tax in Qumm. During his assembly one day the ‘Alawites (i.e. family of ‘Alī) and their beliefs were mentioned. He was violently anti-Shī‘a and far away from (favouring) the House, peace be on them. He said: I have not seen or known in Sāmarrā’ a man from the ‘Alawites like al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Riḍā in his manner, his quietness, his self-restraint, his nobility and his greatness in the eyes of all the House (*ahl al-bayt*) and the Banū Hāshim, so that they gave him precedence over those older than him and those of importance. His situation is the same with the military commanders, the ministers and the common people. I remember that one day I was standing beside my father - and it was the day of his assembly for the people - when his chamberlains came in. They told him that Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), the descendant of al-Riḍā was at the door. He said in a loud voice: “Give him permission to enter.” I was amazed at what I had heard from them at their daring to give a man his *kunya* (i.e. to call him Abū -) in the presence of my father. For in front of him only a caliph was given his *kunya*, or an heir-apparent or a man whose authority (entitled him) to be given his *kunya*. A brown man entered. He was well-built, handsome, with an excellent physique and young in years. He had dignity and a fine appearance. When my father looked at him, he rose and walked some steps towards him. I have not known him do this to any other member of Banū Hāshim and the military commanders. When he was near him, he embraced him, kissed his face and breast. He took him by his hand and sat him down on his prayer-mat which he had been sitting on. He sat beside him facing him and began to speak to him and to use the honorific expression - may I be your ransom. I was amazed at what I saw. Then the chamberlain entered and said al-Muwaffaq had come. When al-Muwaffaq visited my father, his chamberlains and the special men among his military commanders preceded him and erected between the assembly of my father and the door two curtains until he came and left. My father continued to face Abū Muḥammad (al-‘Askarī) until he saw the servants of the court. Then he said to him: “If you please, may I be your ransom.” Then he said to his chamberlains: “Take him behind two curtains so that this man does not seem him” - meaning al-Muwaffaq. Then he stood up and my father stood up and embraced him and he went. I said to my father’s chamberlains and servants: “Shame on you, who is this man whom you have called by his *kunya* in the presence of my father and with whom my father has behaved in this manner?” They said: “This is an ‘Alawite called al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī who is known as Ibn al-Riḍā (ie. a descendant of al-Riḍā).” I grew more astonished. I continued, (in a way) which indicates anxiety, to think about his affair and my

¹⁴ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 503-6. tradition no. 1

father's affair and what I had seen until it was night. It was his custom to say the late night prayer and then to sit and consider what plans he needed to make and whom he should raise to (positions of) authority. After he had prayed and sat down, I went and sat before him. No one else was with him and he said to me: "Aḥmad, you want something?"

"Yes, father," I replied, "if you will permit me, I will ask you about it."

"You have my permission," he answered.

"Father, who was the man to whom, this morning, I saw you give (so much) respect, honour and glory - using the phrase - may you ransom him with yourself and your parents?"

"My son, that was the Imam of the Rāfiḍites, al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī who is known as Ibn al-Riḍā," he replied. Then he was silent for a time and I was silent. Then he said: "My son, if the Imamate was to be taken from our caliphs, the Banū 'Abbās, none of the Banū Hāshim would be more entitled to it than him because of his great merit, his self-restraint, his modesty, his asceticism, his devotion (to Allāh), his high morality and his righteousness. If you had seen his father, you would have seen a good, noble, excellent man."

I grew more anxious, thoughtful and distressed at my father and what I had heard from him concerning (that man). I had seen his behaviour towards him. My sole concern after that was to seek out information about him and to study his affair. I did not ask anyone from the Banū Hāshim, the military commanders, the secretaries, the judges, the religious jurists and the rest of the people without finding that he was given by them eminence, greatness, distinguished position, kind words and precedence. (This was) over all his House and scholars. His rank was so magnified to me since I never saw a friend or an enemy of his except that he had good words and praise for him.

One of the Ash'arites who was present at (my father's) assembly asked him: "Have you any information about his brother, Ja'far, and how his position was?"

"Who is Ja'far," he said "that he should be asked about or compared with al-Ḥasan? He is a public sinner, a profligate, a winebibber. He is one of the least worthy men whom I have seen, the most shameful in himself and insignificant in himself."

Yet he came to authority and to have followers at the time of al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī's death. What I found surprising in him and did not think that he would do was this. When (al-Ḥasan) was ill, he sent to my father that Ibn al-Riḍā was ill. He (my father) rode to the Caliph's palace. Then he returned quietly with five close

trusted servants of the Commander of the faithful. Among them was Naḥrīr. He ordered them to stay at al-Ḥasan's house and to investigate reports about him and his condition. He sent to a number of medical specialists and ordered them to go to him and to supervise him morning and night. Two or three days later, he was informed that he was weak. He ordered the medical specialists to stay at his house. He sent to the chief *qāḍī* (judge) and made him attend his assembly. He told him to choose ten men who were trustworthy in religion, piety and in loyalty. He sent them to the house of al-Ḥasan, peace be on him, and ordered them to stay with him day and night. They remained there until he died, peace be on him. When the news of his death spread around, Sāmarrā' became one uproar. The markets were empty. Banū Hāshim, the military leaders, the secretaries, the judges, the attestators and the rest of the people (all) rode to his funeral. On that day Sāmarrā' seemed like the (day of) Resurrection. When they had finished the preparations for him, the authorities sent to Abū 'Īsā b. al-Mutawakkil and ordered him to say the (funeral) prayer over him. When the bier was put down for the prayer (to be said) over it, Abu 'Īsā came up to it. He uncovered (al-Ḥasan's) face and showed it to the Banū Hāshim, both the 'Alawites and the 'Abbāsids, the military leaders, the secretaries, the judges and the attestators. He said: "This is al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b, Muḥammad b. al-Riḍā, peace be on them. He has died. He departed from life on his bed. So-and-so and so-and-so attended him from among the servants of the Commander of the faithful, so-and-so and so-and-so from among the judges, and so-and-so and so-and-so from among the medical specialists."

Then he covered (al-Ḥasan's) face and said the prayer over him and ordered him to be taken (to be buried). After he had been buried, Ja'far b. 'Alī, his brother, came to my father and said: "Give me the rank of my brother and I will let you have twenty thousand dīnārs each year."

My father repelled him roughly and made him hear what was (even) unpleasant to me. He said to him: "You fellow, you ignorant one, the Caliph, may Allāh make his life long, has unsheathed his sword against those who claim that your father and your brother were Imams in order to bring them back from that (view). He has not succeeded in this. If you were an Imam in the eyes of the Shī'a of your father and your brother, you would have no need of the Caliph to give you their rank, nor of anyone else. If you do not have this position according to them, you will not gain it through us."

At that my father dismissed him and humiliated him. He ordered that he should be excluded and he never gave him permission to enter until he died.

We had gone out while he was still in that situation. The authorities were demanding an investigation for clues about the son of al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī at that time. They did not find any means of (finding out about) that. Yet his Shī‘a persist in maintaining that when he died, he left a son who would take his place in the Imamate.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā b. Ja‘far, who said:]¹⁵

Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him, wrote to Abū al-Qāsim Ishāq b. Ja‘far al-Zubayrī about twenty days before the death of al-Mu‘tazz: “Keep to your house until the event takes place.”

When Burayha was killed, (Abū al-Qāsim Ishāq) wrote to him: “The event has taken place. What do you command me to do?”

(Al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) wrote (back) to him: “This was not the event. It is another event.”

Then there happened to al-Mu‘tazz what happened.

[(Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl) added:]

He wrote to another man that Muḥammad b. Dāwud would be killed ten days before his murder. On the tenth day he was killed.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, known as Ibn al-Kurdī, on the authority of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā b. Ja‘far, who said:]¹⁶

Circumstances became difficult for us and my father (‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā) said to me: “Come with me to this man - meaning Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) - for he has been described as being generous.”

“Do you know him?” I asked.

“I do not know him,” he answered, “nor have I ever seen him.”

We set off. While my father was on the road, my father said to me: “What we need is that he should order for us five hundred dirhams: two hundred dirhams for clothing, two hundred dirhams for flour and a hundred for expenses.”

I said to myself: “Would that he would order for me three hundred dirhams: one hundred dirhams to buy a donkey with, one hundred dirhams for expenses and one hundred dirhams for clothing. Then I could go to al-Jabal.”

15 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 506, tradition no. 2.

16 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 506-7, tradition no. 3.

When we came to the door, his servant came out to us: “Enter ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm and his son, Muḥammad .”

We entered and he greeted us. He said to my father: “‘Alī, what has kept you from us until this time?”

“My lord,” he answered, “I have been ashamed to meet you in these circumstances.”

When we left him, his servant came to us and gave my father a purse. He said: “This is five hundred dirhams: two hundred for clothing, two hundred for flour and a hundred for expenses.”

He gave me a purse and said: “This is three hundred dirhams. Use one hundred for the price of a donkey, one hundred for clothing and one hundred for expenses. But do not go to al-Jabal. Go to Suwār.”

[Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Kurdī added:]

He (i.e. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī) went to Suwār and married a woman there. His income today is two thousand dīnārs but he still believes in the Waqf (i.e the last Imam was Mūsā). I (i.e. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Kurdi) have said to him: “Shame on you, do you need anything clearer than that?”

“True,” he replied, “however we hold a doctrine which has been passed down through our (family).”

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm, who said: Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith al-Qazwīnī told me:]¹⁷

I (i.e. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith al-Qazwīnī) was with my father at Sāmarrā’. My father was employed as a veterinary surgeon in the stable of Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) peace be on him. Al-Musta‘īn had a mule whose like in beauty and stoutness has never been seen. Yet it refused (to have anyone on) its back and (to have) reins. The trainers had tried to make it comply but they did not have any trick by which they could ride it. One of his bosom companions said to (al-Musta‘īn): “Commander of the faithful, send for al-Ḥasan the descendant of al-Riḍā to come, either he will ride it or it will kill him.”

He sent for Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him. My father went with him. When Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) entered the palace, I was with my father. Abu Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him, looked at the mule standing in the courtyard of the palace. He went straight up to it and put his hand on its buttocks. I looked at the mule and it was sweating so that the sweat was pouring off it. Then he went to al-Musta‘īn and greeted

¹⁷ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 507, tradition no. 4.

him. The latter welcomed him, brought him close to his seat and said: “Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), put reins on this mule.”

“Put reins on it, servant,” Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) told my father. “You, rein it,” al-Musta‘īn said to him.

Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) put on his cloak. Then he rose and put the reins on it. He went back to his place and sat down

“Abū Muḥammad ,” said al-Musta‘īn, “saddle it.”

“Servant, saddle it,” he said to my father.

“You, saddle it,” al-Musta‘īn said to him.

He rose a second time and saddled it. Then he returned.

“Do you think that you could ride it?” (al- Musta‘īn) asked him.

“Yes,” answered Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī).

Then he mounted it without it resisting him. He galloped it through (the courtyard of) the palace. He made it canter at a gentle pace and then it walked beautifully. Then he came back and dismounted.

“How did you find it, Abū Muḥammad ?” al-Musta‘īn asked him.

“I have not seen its like in beauty and liveliness,” he answered.

“The Commander of the faithful gives it to you,” al-Musta‘īn told him.

“Servant, take it,” Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) ordered my father.

My father took it and lead it away.

[Abū Aḥmad b. Rashīd reported on the authority of Abū Hāshim al-Ja‘fari, who said:]¹⁸

I (i.e. Abū Hāshim al-Ja‘fari) complained to Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī (al-‘Askarī), peace be on them, about my needs. He rubbed his whip on the ground. He took out from it an ingot which (was worth) five hundred dīnārs.

“Take it, Abū Hāshim,” he said, “and forgive us.”

[Abū al-Qāsim (Ja‘far b. Muḥammad) informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Abū ‘Abd Allāh b. Ṣāliḥ, on the authority of his father, on the authority of Abū ‘Alī al-Muṭahharī:]¹⁹

He (i.e. Abū ‘Alī al-Muṭahharī) wrote to him (i.e. al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) from al-Qādisiyya to inform him of the people’s desertion of going on the pilgrimage and that they were afraid of thirst if they went. He (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) wrote to him: “Go and have no fear, Allāh willing.”

¹⁸ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 507, tradition no. 5. Al-Mufīd’s *isnād* is shortened.

¹⁹ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 507-8, tradition no. 6.

Then those who had held back departed in safety.

[Abū al-Qāsim (Ja‘far b. Muḥammad) informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, on the authority of ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Faḍl al-Yamānī, who said:]²⁰

A great crowd of the supporters of Ja‘far (al-Mutawakkil) descended on the area around the river (known as) al-Ja‘farī and a man did not have sufficient means to oppose them. He wrote to Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him, complaining of that. He wrote back: “You will have enough for them, Allāh willing.”

Then that man went against them with a small group while the people were more than twenty thousand souls. He was with less than a thousand but he managed to defeat them.

With the same chain of authorities (*isnād*), on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-‘Alawī, who said:]²¹

Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him, was detained by ‘Alī b. Awtāmish. The latter was violent in his hostility to the family of Muḥammad, peace be on them, and severe on the family of Abū Ṭālib. He was told to treat him (badly) and he did so. Yet (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) was only with him for a day and he began to treat him with humility. He did not raise his eyes to him out of respect and honour. He would come from him and he had become the most perceptive of men in respect to him and the best of them in his words about him.

[Ishāq b. Muḥammad al-Nakha‘ī reported: Abū Hashim al-Ja‘fari told me:]²²

I complained to Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) about the oppressiveness of prison and the harshness of the chains. He wrote to me: “You will pray today’s noon prayer in your own house.”

I was released at noon and prayed the noon prayer in my house as he had said.

I was in a distressed state and I wanted to ask him for help in a letter which I had written to him but I was ashamed to send it. When I went to my house, he sent me a hundred dīnārs and he wrote to me: “When you are in need, do not be ashamed and do not refrain. Ask for it and you will be given what you need, Allāh willing.”

[With the same chain of authorities (*isnād*) on the authority of Aḥmad b.

20 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 508, tradition no. 7

21 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 508, tradition no. 8.

22 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 508, tradition no. 10.

Muḥammad al-Aqra‘, who said: Abū Ḥamza Naṣīr al-Khādīm told me:]²³

I (i.e. Abū Ḥamza) heard Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) speaking on more than one occasion to his servants in their own languages. Among them were Turks, men from Byzantium and from Ṣaḡālība (in the Caucasus). I was amazed at that and I said: “This man was born in Medina. He did not show himself to anyone until Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Hādī) died, and no one saw him. How is this?”

I was saying this to myself. He came up to me and said: “Allāh has separated His proof (to the world) from the rest of His creatures and has given him knowledge of everything. He knows languages, genealogies and events. If it wasn’t for that, there would be no difference between the proof and those who are given the proof.”

[With the same chain of authorities (*isnād*): Al-Ḥusayn b. Zārīf told me:]²⁴

Two problems occupied my mind and I (i.e. Al-Ḥusayn b. Zārīf) wanted to write to Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) peace be on him, about them. I wrote to ask him about how when the one who would undertake (the Imamate for the rest of time) (*al-qā’im*) would undertake his office, he would give his judgements and how his assembly would be in which he gave judgements between the people. I (also) wanted to ask him about something for the quotidian fever. I forgot to mention the fever. The answer came: “You asked about the one who will undertake (the office of the Imamate for the rest of time) (*al-qā’im*). When he undertakes his office, he will give judgements among the people through his knowledge just as David judged without asking for evidence. You wanted to ask about the quotidian fever but you forgot. Write on a paper and hang it over the person with the fever: *O fire, be cold and a place of safety for Abraham* (XXI 69).” I wrote down that and hung it over the person with the fever. He woke up recovered.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Iṣḥāq b. Muḥammad al-Nakha‘ī, who said: Ismā‘īl b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-‘Abbās told me:]²⁵

I (Ismā‘īl b. Muḥammad) sat waiting for Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him, at the side of the road. When he passed me, I complained to him of a need (which I had). I swore to him that I did not have a dirham, nor any more than it, nor had I had any breakfast or supper.

²³ *Al-Kāfī*, I, 509, tradition no. 11.

²⁴ *Al-Kāfī*, I, 509, tradition no. 13.

²⁵ *Al-Kāfī*, I, 509-10, tradition no. 14.

“You swear by Allāh as a liar,” he said. “You have buried two hundred dīnārs. However, I am not saying this as a way of not giving you anything. Servant, give him what you have with you.”

His servant gave me a hundred dīnārs. Then he came towards me and said to me: “You will be denied the dīnārs which you buried at a time when your need for them will be much greater than at present.”

He, peace be on him, spoke the truth. In fact, I spent what he gave me. Hard necessity forced me to pay for something and the means of gaining provision (from the authorities) were closed to me. I dug for the dīnārs which I had buried and I did not find them. I looked. One of my sons knew where they were. He had taken them and fled. I could not do anything.

[With the same chain of authorities (*isnād*), on the authority of Ishāq b. Muḥammad al-Nakha‘ī, who said: ‘Alī b. Zayd b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn told us]²⁶ I (i.e. ‘Alī b. Zayd) had a horse and as a result of it being frequently mentioned in assemblies I was pleased. One day, I visited Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him. He asked me: “What is your horse doing?” “It is with me,” I answered. “Here it is at your door. I have just dismounted it.” “Exchange it before evening if you can find a purchaser and don’t delay,” he told me.

A visitor came in and the conversation came to an end. I got up thinking and went to my house. I told my brother and he said to me: “I do not know what to say about this.”

However, I was jealous of it and regarded people as unworthy to buy it. Evening came. When I had prayed the night prayer, the groom came to me and said: “My master, your horse has just died.”

I was stricken with grief. I knew that (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) had meant this by those words. Some days later, I went to visit Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him. I was saying to myself: “I wish that he would replace it for me with (another) animal.”

I sat down and before I could speak, he said to me: “Yes, boy, we will replace it for you. Servant, give him my dark bay horse.” Then he said: “This is better and firmer-footed and longer living than your horse was.”

[With the same chain of authorities (*isnād*) Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Shammūn

²⁶ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 510, tradition no. 15.

told us: Aḥmad b. Muḥammad told me:]²⁷

I (i.e. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad) wrote to Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him, at the time al-Muhtadī began to kill the slaves (*mawālī*): “My master, praise be to Allāh Who has distracted him from us. I have heard that he is threatening you and saying: ‘By Allāh, I will drive them from the face of the earth.’”

Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) signed the reply in his own handwriting. (It was as follows:) “There is only a short time for him (i.e. al-Muhtadī) to live. Count from the day you (receive this) five days and he will be killed on the sixth day after humiliation and degradation of his rank.”

It happened as he, peace be on him, said.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā b. Ja‘far, who said:]²⁸

The ‘Abbāsids went to Ṣāliḥ b. Waṣīf when Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) peace be on him, was imprisoned. They told him: “Be hard on him. Don’t give him any ease.”

“What can I do with him?” Ṣāliḥ asked them, “I entrusted him to two of the vilest men I could find. They have become (men) of worship, prayer and fasting to an amazing extent”

Then he ordered those two men who had been put in charge of (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) to be brought. He said to them: “Shame on you! What is your involvement in the affairs of this man?”

They answered: “What can we say about a man who fasts through the day and stands (in prayer) through the night, who does not speak and occupies himself with nothing except worship? When he looks at us, our limbs shake and within us is (a feeling) which we have never had.”

When the ‘Abbāsids heard that, they left in despair.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, on the authority of a group of our colleagues, who said:]²⁹

Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him, was handed over to Naḥrīr. He was hard on him and did harm to him. A woman said to him: “Fear

27 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 510, tradition no. 16.

28 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 512, tradition no. 23.

29 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 513, tradition no. 26.

Allāh, you do not realise who is in your house.” She told him about (al-Ḥasan’s) righteousness and devotion (to Allāh) and said: “I fear for you as a result of him.” “By Allāh, I’ll throw him to the wild animals,” he declared.

He asked permission to do that and it was granted. He threw him to them. (The authorities) were not disturbed by (wild animals) eating him. They looked at the place in order to find out the situation. They found him, peace be on him, standing in prayer with (the wild animals) around him. (Naḥrīr) ordered him to be taken back to his house.

Reports on these matters are numerous. Those we have given are sufficient for our purpose, Allāh willing.

THE ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF ABŪ MUḤAMMAD AL-ḤASAN B. ‘ALĪ (AL-‘ASKARĪ), PEACE BE ON HIM, THE PLACE OF HIS GRAVE AND THE REPORT ABOUT HIS SON

Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al- al-‘Askarī), fell sick on the 1st on the month of Rabī‘ al-Awwal in the year 260 A.H. (873). He died on Friday, 8th of that month in the same year. At the time of his death he was twenty-eight years old. He was buried in the house in which his father was buried - the house for both of them was in Sāmarrā’. He left behind his son - the one who is awaited (to bring about) the state of truth. He had concealed his birth and hidden his affair because of the difficulties of the times and the intensity of the search by the authorities of the time for him. This activity by them to enquire into his affair was because of what circulated among the adherents (*madhhab*) of the Shī‘a of the Imamites concerning him, and because of what was known about their awaiting him. (Al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī) did not make his son publicly known during his life-time and the ordinary people were not able to recognise him after his death.

Ja‘far b. ‘Alī, the brother of Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him, took it upon himself to seize what (al-Ḥasan al- al-‘Askarī) had left. He strove to detain the women slaves of Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him, and to imprison his wives. He made vicious insinuations against (al-Ḥasan’s) followers for awaiting his son, for affirming his existence and for maintaining his Imamate. He harassed the people so that he made them afraid and scared them away. Because of that, all this terrible treatment in terms of detention, imprisonment, threats, disparagement, degradation and humiliation occurred for those who were left by Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him. Yet the authorities did not gain any information. Ja‘far took public

possession of (the property) which Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him, had left. He strove to take his place in the eyes of the Shī‘a. However, none of them would accept that nor believe him with regard to it. He went to the authorities of the time seeking the position of his brother. He offered them a great deal of money. He offered them everything by which he thought that he could advance himself. Yet he convinced no one of that.

There are numerous reports of Ja‘far to this effect, which I feel it appropriate not to mention for reasons whose explanation does not concern this book . They are well-known among the Imamites and those who know the account of the general populace (‘*āmma* - non-Shī‘a). We seek help from Allāh.

CHAPTER XI

THE TWELFTH IMAM

(This chapter) deals with the one who undertook (the office of the Imamate) (*al-qā'im*) after Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him, the date of his birth and the evidence for his Imamate. It will mention an extract from the reports about him, his occultation (*ghayba*), his life at the time of his appearance (*qiyam*) and the period of time of his state.

The Imam after Abū Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī), peace be on him, is his son who is named with the name of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, and given his *kunya*. His father did not leave a son who was publicly acknowledged or secretly, except him. He was left behind away from view (*ghā'ib*) and secretly as we have already mentioned. He was born on the night of 15th of Sha‘bān in the year 255 A.H. (869). His mother was a slave-wife (*umm walad*) called Narjis. At the time of the death of his father, he was five years old.

Allāh endowed him with wisdom and the distinction of speech. He made him a sign to the worlds. He endowed him with wisdom as He had endowed John the Baptist while still a boy. He made him an Imam while still in the state of apparent childhood just as He made Jesus, son of Mary, a prophet in the cradle. The nomination of him had been given earlier to the community of Islam by the Prophet of guidance, peace be on him, then by the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, peace be on him, and the Imams, consecutively one after another, down to his own father, al-Ḥasan (al-‘Askarī), peace be on him, had nominated him. His father had nominated him in front of the trusted and close members of his Shī‘a. Information about his occultation (*ghayba*) was established before his existence. (Information) about his state was widespread before his occultation (*ghayba*). He is the leader with the sword (*ṣāhib al-sayf*) from the Imams of guidance, peace be on them, the one who will undertake the achievement of truth (*al-qā'im bi-al-ḥaqq*), the one who is awaited (*al-muntazar*) to (bring about) the state of faith.

Before his appearance (*qiyām*), he will have two occultations. One of them will be longer than the other as is reported in the traditions. The shortest of them was from the time of his birth to the end of the period of direct representation (*sifāra*) between him and his Shī‘a, and the end of the representatives (*sufarā'*) through death. As for the longer (occultation), it will be after the first and at the end of it