

CHAPTER IV

IMĀM MUḤAMMAD B. ‘ALĪ AL-BĀQIR

(This chapter will give) an account of the Imam after ‘Alī b al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, the date of his birth, the evidence for his Imamate, the age he reached, the period of his succession, the time and cause of his death, the place of his grave, the number of his children, and a summary of the reports about him.

Al-Bāqir Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, was out of (all) his brothers the successor of his father, ‘Alī b al-Ḥusayn, his testamentary trustee (*waṣī*), and the one who undertook (*qā'im*) the office of Imam after him. He surpassed all of them through his outstanding merit (*faḍl*) in traditional knowledge (*'ilm*), asceticism and leadership. He was the most renowned of them, the one among them who was most esteemed by both non-Shī'a (*'amma*) and Shī'a (*khāṣṣa*), and the most able of them. None of the sons of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, showed the same ability in knowledge of religion, traditions, the sunna, the knowledge of the Qur'ān and the life of the Prophet (*sīra*), and the techniques of literature, as Abu Ja'far (Muḥammad al-Bāqir) showed. The surviving companions (of the Prophet), the leading members of the next generation (*tābi'ūn*) and the leaders of the Muslim jurists reported the principal features (*ma'ālim*) of religion on his authority. By virtue of his outstanding merit he became a signpost (of knowledge) to his family. Proverbs were coined about him and reports and verses were written to describe him.

Concerning him al-Qurazi says:

O (you) who split open (*Bāqir*) knowledge (making it available) to the people of piety and the best of those who seek to answer the call of the Exalted.

Mālik b. A'yan al-Juhnī said in praise of him, peace be on him:

When the people seek for knowledge of the Qur'ān, Quraysh rely upon him.

If someone asked where is the son of the daughter of the Prophet, you would gain through him the wide branches (of knowledge):

(You are like) stars which shine for night-travellers, (you are) like mountains which have inherited vast knowledge.

He, peace be on him, was born in Medina, in 57 A.H. (676/7). He died in 114 A.H. (732) at the age of fifty-seven. He was a (leading) member of the Hāshimite family within the Hāshimites. He was a (leading) descendant of ‘Alī among the descendants of ‘Alī. He was buried in (the cemetery of) al-Baqī‘ in (Medina) the city of the Apostle, may Allāh bless Him and His Family.

[Maymūn al-Qaddāh reported on the authority of Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, on the authority of his father, peace be on them:]

I (i.e. al-Bāqir) visited Ja‘far b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Anṣari, may Allāh be pleased with him. I greeted him and he returned my greeting. Then he said to me. “who are you?” - That was after he had lost his sight.

“Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them,” I answered.

“My young child, come close to me,” he said. I went closer and he kissed my hand. Then he stooped down to my foot and kissed that. I turned away from him. Then he said to me: “The Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, recites his greeting to you:’

“Peace and Allāh’s mercy and blessings be on the Apostle of Allāh.” I said. “How is that, Jābir?”

He told me: “One day I was with him when he said to me: ‘Jābir, perhaps you will live until you meet one of my descendants called Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, on whom Allāh will bestow light and wisdom. Then recite to him my greetings.’”¹

In the testamentary bequest (*waṣiyya*) which the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him, made to his children, mention was made of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn and of his trusteeship. The Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and his family, named him and caused him to be known as the one who split open (religious) knowledge (‘*ulūm*) as the narrators of tradition (*aṣḥāb al-āthār*) report.²

Thus it is reported on the authority of Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh in a direct (*mujarrad*) tradition: The Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, said to me: “It will happen that you will live until you meet one of my children descended from al-Ḥusayn, peace be on him, called Muḥammad, who will spilt wide open knowledge of religion. When you meet him, recite my greeting to him.”

The Shī‘a give an account of the tablet which Gabriel, peace be on him, brought

1 A similar tradition is reported with a different *isnād* in *al-Kāfi*; cf. *al-Kāfi*, I, 304, tradition no. 4.
2 cf. *al-Kāfi*, I, 469-470, tradition no. 2.

down to the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, from heaven. (The Apostle) gave it to Fāṭima, peace be on her. In it are the names of the Imams after (the Apostle) and in it is Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, the Imam after his father.³

The Shī‘a also reported that Allāh, the Mighty and High, sent down to His Prophet, the blessings and peace of Allāh be on him, a document sealed with twelve seals. He ordered him to give it to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him, and to tell him to break the first seal, and he should act according to what is in (that part of the document). At the time of his death, he should pass it to his son, al-Ḥasan, peace be on him, and tell him to break the second seal and act according to what is in (that part of) the document. At the time of his death he should pass it to his brother al-Ḥusayn, peace be on him. He should tell him to break the third seal and act according to what is below it. Then at his death, he should pass it to his son, ‘Alī b al-Ḥusayn al-Akbār (the elder) and he should instruct him in a similar way. Then Muḥammad should pass it to his son right down to the last of the Imams.

They report also numerous designations (*nuṣūṣ*) of him for the Imamate after his father on the authority of the Prophet, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, on the authority of the Commander of the Faithful and on the authority of al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and ‘Alī b al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them.

The people report (accounts) of his outstanding virtues and accomplishments which would be too numerous to include. We will mention what will be sufficient in meaning for our purposes, if Allāh wills.

[Al-Sharīf Abu Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad informed me: My grandfather (Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan) told me: Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim al-Shaybānī told us: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ṣāliḥ al-Azdī told us on the authority of Abū Mālik al-Juhnī on the authority of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Atā’ al-Makkī who said:]

I have never seen the scholars with anyone so much younger than them as I saw them with Abu Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them. I have seen al-Ḥakam b. ‘Utayba, despite his eminence among the people, conduct himself before him as if he was a young boy conducting himself before his teacher.

Whenever Jābir b. Yazīd al-Ju‘fī reported anything on his authority, peace be on him, he used to say: “The trustee of the trustees (of the Apostle) and the heir of the knowledge of the prophets, Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b al-Ḥusayn, peace be on

3 cf. *al-Kāfi*, I, 527-8. tradition no. 3.

them, told me.”

[Makhūl b. Ibrāhīm reported on the authority of Qays b. al-Rabī‘, who said: I asked Abū Ishāq al-Sabī‘ī about rubbing the two shoes (in the ritual ablution), he said:]

I used to tell people to rub the two shoes (in the ritual ablution instead of rubbing the feet) until I met a man from the Banū Hāshim, whose like I have never seen - Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on him. I asked about the rubbing and he forbade me to do it. He said: “The Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him, never used to rub (the shoes). He used to say: ‘The Book (which does not mention the practice) comes before (the introduction of the practice of) rubbing the shoes.’”

[Abū Ishāq added : I have never rubbed them since he forbade me to do it. And Qays b. al-Rabī‘ said: I have never rubbed them since I heard Abū Ishāq.]

[Al-Sharīf Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad informed me: My grandfather (Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan) told me on the authority of Ya‘qūb b. Yazīd, who said: Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Umayr told us on the authority of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥajjāj, on the authority of Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq), peace be on him, who said:]

Muḥammad b. Munkadir used to say: “I did not use to think that the like of ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, could leave a successor because of the outstanding merit of ‘Alī b al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, until I saw his son, Muḥammad b. ‘Alī. I wanted to advise him but he advised me.”

My companions asked me: “What did he warn you of?” I told them: I went out to one of the suburbs of Medina at a time when it was hot. There I met Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, peace be on him. He was a well built man and he was leaning on two servant boys. Either they were black slaves of his or they were retainers of his. I said to myself: Here is a venerable leader (*shaykh*) of Quraysh out at this time and in these circumstances seeking worldly (advantage). I must warn him. So I approached him and greeted him. He returned my greeting with anger. The sweat was pouring down him.

I said: “May Allāh remove you, a venerable leader of Quraysh, out at this time in these circumstances seeking worldly (advantage). If death came upon you while you were in this condition (what would you do)?”

He made the two servant-boys let go of his hand and held himself up. Then he said: “By Allāh, if death came upon me while I was in this condition, it would

come upon me while I am (fulfilling) an act of obedience to Allāh, by which I make myself withdraw from you and from the (rest of the) people. I would only fear death if it came upon me while I was performing an act of disobedience against Allāh.”

Then I replied: “May Allāh have mercy on you, I wanted to warn you and you have warned me.”

[Al-Sharīf Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad informed me: My grandfather (Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan) told me A *shaykh* from the people of al-Rayy, who was very old, told me: Yaḥyā b ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ḥimmānī told me on the authority of Mu‘āwiya b. ‘Ammār al-Duhnī, on the authority of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them:]

(Muḥammad b. ‘Alī was asked) about Allāh’s words: *Ask the people of remembrance (ahl al-dhikr) if you do not know* (XVI 43).

He said: “We are the people of remembrance (ahl al-dhikr).”

The *shaykh* from al-Rayy said: I asked Muḥammad b. Muqātil about these (words). He spoke about them according to his opinion and he said: “The people of remembrance (*ahl al-dhikr*) are all the religious scholars (*‘ulamā’*).”

I mentioned that to Abū Zur‘a. He was astounded at his words. Then I put before him what Yaḥyā b ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd had told me. He said: “Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, peace be on them, speaks the truth. They are the people of remembrance (*ahl al-dhikr*). By my life, Abū Ja‘far, peace be on him, is one of the greatest scholars (*‘ulamā’*).”

Abū Ja‘far, peace be on him, recounted reports of the beginnings of history (*mubtada’*) and reports of the prophets. Stories of the campaigns of the Prophet (*maghāzī*) were written on his authority. (Men) followed the practices of the Prophet (*sunan*) on his authority and relied on him with regard to the rites of the pilgrimage which he reported on the authority of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family. They (also) wrote a commentary of the Qur’ān on his authority. Both the Shī‘a (*khaṣṣa*) and the non-Shī‘a (*‘amma*) report traditions on his authority. He debated with the exponents of individual reasoning (*ahl al-ārā’*) and the people learnt a great deal of theology (*‘ilm al-kalām*) from him.

[Al-Sharīf Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad informed me: My grandfather (Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan) told me: Al-Zubayr b. Abī Bakr told me: ‘Abd

al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Zuhrī told me.]

Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik made the pilgrimage. He went into the Sacred Mosque leaning on the arm of Sālim, his retainer. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, was sitting in the mosque.

“Commander of the faithful,” Sālim said to (Hishām). “there is Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn”

“The man for whom the people of Iraq are ready to revolt?” he asked.

“Yes,” replied (Sālim).

“Go to him,” (Hishām) told him, “and say to him: The Commander of the faithful (i.e. Hishām) asks you: What is it that the people eat and drink until Allāh has finished judging them on the Day of Resurrection?”

Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad, peace be on him, replied: “The people will gather on (earth which will be) like a loaf of pure bread. There, there will be rivers branching out. They will eat and drink until the account (with Allāh) is settled.”

Hishām realised that (Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad) had overcome him. So he said: “Allāh is greater. Go to him and say to him: (Hishām) says to you: What will keep men away from food and drink on that day?”

“Those in the fire of Hell will be too occupied,” replied Abū Ja‘far, peace be on him, “but they will say to those who have not been distracted from it: *Bestow upon us water and some of what Allāh has provided for you* (VII 50).”

Hishām fell silent and did not reply.

Reports have come down that Nāfi‘ b. al-Azraq⁴ came to Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, peace be on them, and sat before him to ask him questions about what was permitted and what forbidden. Abū Ja‘far, peace be on him, said in the course of his answer: “Say to these deviators (from the true course): How did you make separation from the Commander of the Faithful (‘Alī), peace be on him, lawful when you had earlier shed your own blood on his behalf and in obedience to him and (you were then close) to Allāh through helping him? Then they will answer you: He allowed arbitration with regard to the religion of Allāh. Say to them: Allāh, the Exalted, allowed arbitration in the law (*sharī‘a*) of His Prophet, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, between two of His creatures. For He said:

⁴ Nāfi‘ b. al-Azraq, a prominent Khārijite, was killed in 65 A.H., so this discussion would have to take place when Muḥammad al-Bāqir was only eight. The discussion concerns the reasons for the Khārijite revolt after the Battle of Šiffīn.

Send an arbitrator from his family and an arbitrator from her family if they want reconciliation (to take place) between them with the agreement of Allāh (IV 35). The Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, appointed Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh as an arbitrator over the tribe of Qurayza. He judged them according to what Allāh had accomplished. Did you not know that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him, ordered the arbitrators only to judge according to the Qur’ān and not to go beyond it? He stipulated the rejection of any of the laws of men which opposed the Qur’ān. They said to him: ‘You have appointed as arbitrator over yourself, men who will judge you.’ He replied: ‘I have not appointed a creature as an arbitrator. I have only made the Book of Allāh an arbitrator’. Therefore where do the deviators find the wrong-doing in the matter of arbitration by the Qur’ān, when he stipulated the rejection of whatever opposed it, unless they are persisting in a false accusation?”

“By Allāh”, said Nāfi‘ b. al-Azraq, “these are words which I have never heard before and which have never occurred to my mind. It is the truth, Allāh willing.”

The scholars report that ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd came to visit Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, to test him with questions. He said: “May I be your ransom, what is the meaning of the words of Him, the Exalted: *Do not those who disbelieve realise that the heavens and the earth were ratq and we made them fitq?* (XXI 30) What is this *ratq* and this *fitq*?”

“The heaven was *ratq* (means) that no rain came down from it,” answered Abū Ja‘far, peace be on him. “and the earth was *ratq* (means) that no plants came out of it.”

‘Amr stopped. He could not find any opposition. He went away but then came back.

“May I be your ransom,” he said, “tell me of the words of Him, the Mighty and High: *On whomsoever My anger alights, he falls (to disaster)* (XX 81). What is the anger of Allāh. the Mighty and High?”

“The anger of Allāh, ‘Amr, is His punishment,” replied Abū Ja‘far, peace be on him. “Whoever thinks that anything changes Allāh, is an unbeliever.”

In addition to what we have described of his merit in knowledge (*‘ilm*), headship and leadership and the Imamate, there was the obvious excellence (of the man) to both the Shī‘a (*khaṣṣa*) and the non-Shī‘a (*‘amma*). He was recognised by

all for his nobleness and well-known for generosity and kindness through the abundance of his help to the poor and his moderate temperament.

[Al-Sharīf Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad informed me: My grandfather (Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan) told me: Abū Naṣr told us: Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn told me: Aswad b. ‘Āmir told us: Ḥayyan b. ‘Alī told us on the authority of al-Ḥasan b. Kuthayyir, who said:]

I (i.e. al-Ḥasan b. Kuthayyir) complained to Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, peace be on them, of (my) need and the uselessness of brothers.

“Shame on the brother,” he said, “(who is) a brother who looks after you when you are rich and separates from you when you are poor.”

Then he ordered his servant-boy to take out a pouch in which were seven hundred dirhams.

“Spend this,” he told me, “and when you have used it, tell me.”

[Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn reported: ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr told us: They told us on the authority of ‘Amr b. Dīnār and ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr, who said:]

We (i.e., ‘Amr b. Dīnār and ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Ubayd) never met Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, peace be on them, without him giving us money, gifts and clothes. He used to say: “This is something which had been prepared for you before you met me.”

[Abū Nu‘aym al-Nakha‘ī reported on the authority of Mu‘āwiya b. Hishām on the authority of Sulayman b. Qarm, who said:]

Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, peace be on them, used to pay us five hundred dirhams to six hundred dirhams to a thousand dirhams as gifts. He never tired of bestowing generosity on the brethren, and on those who came to visit him, and on those who placed their hopes and trust in him.

It is reported on his authority, on the authority of his fathers, peace be on them, that the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, used to say: “The best of works are three: Looking after brothers with money, giving the people justice on your own account; and mentioning Allāh in every circumstance.”

[Ishāq b. Maṣṣūr al-Salūlī reported: I heard al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ say:]

I (al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ) heard Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Alī peace be on them, say: “There is not anything that can be mixed with anything better than clemency (mixed) with knowledge.”

It is reported on his authority, peace be on him, that he was asked about traditions which he put forward and did not support with a chain of authorities. He said: “If I report a tradition without giving it a chain of authorities, then my chain of authorities for it is in fact my father on the authority of my grandfather on the authority of his father, on the authority of his grandfather, the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, on the authority of Gabriel, peace be on him, on the authority of Allāh, the Mighty and High.”⁵

He, peace be on him, (also) used to say: “The people cause us great trouble. We summon them but they do not answer us. If we abandoned them, they would be guided by no one.”

He, peace be on him, used to say: “What is it that the people hate in us who are the family of the House of Mercy, the Tree of Prophethood, the Source of Wisdom, (the people) frequented by angels and (those upon whom) inspiration descended?”

He, peace be on him, died and left behind seven sons. Each of his brothers had great merit, even though they did not attain his merit because of his position with regard to the Imamate, because of his rank with Allāh with regard to closeness and love (*wilāya*), and because of his position with regard to succession (*khilāfa*) of the Prophet, may Allāh bless Him and His Family. The period of his Imamate and of his undertaking the position of his father in the succession (on behalf of) Allāh, the Mighty and High, over His servants was nineteen years.

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS BROTHERS AND AN EXTRACT FROM THE REPORTS ABOUT THEM

‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, the brother of Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad, peace be on him, was in charge of the endowments (*ṣadaqāt*) of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, and the endowments (*ṣadaqāt*) of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him. He was a man of merit and a jurist. He reported many traditions on the authority of his fathers, on the authority of the Apostle of Allāh. The people told traditions on his authority and also gave historical reports (*āthār*) on his authority.

Among these is:

[Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Dāwud b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ja‘farī reported on the authority of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Muḥammad al-Darāwardī, on the authority of ‘Umāra b. Ghuzayya, on the authority of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace

⁵ A similar tradition is reported in *al-Kāfi*, I, 53, tradition no. 14, on the authority of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq

be on them:]

He (‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn) said: The Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, said: “The meanest of men is one whom when my name is mentioned by him is unwilling to ask for Allāh’s blessing on myself and my family.”

[Zayd b. al-Ḥasan b. ‘Īsā reported: Abū Bakr b. Abī Uways told us on the authority of ‘Abd Allāh b. Sim‘ān, who said: I met ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, and he told me on the authority of his father, on the authority of his grandfather, on the authority of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him:]

(The Commander of the Faithful) used to have the right hand of the thief cut off for the first theft. If he stole again, he would have his left leg cut off. If he stole a third time, he would put him in prison for life.

‘Umar b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, was a man of merit and of high-standing. He was in charge of the endowments (*ṣadaqāt*) of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, and the endowments (*ṣadaqāt*) of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him. He was pious and Allāh-fearing.

[Dāwud b. al-Qāsim has reported: Al-Ḥusayn b. Zayd said :]

I (Ḥusayn b. Zayd) saw my uncle, ‘Umar b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, stipulate to those who wanted to buy (produce from) the endowments of ‘Alī that if they made a hole in such and such a wall, he would not stop anyone from entering it to take it from there.

[Al-Sharīf Abū Muḥammad informed me: My grandfather told me: Abu al-Ḥasan Bakkār b. Aḥmad al-Azdī told us: Al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn al-‘Uranī told us on the authority of ‘Abd Allāh b. Jarīr al-Qaṭṭān, who said:]

I (‘Abd Allāh b. Jarīr al-Qaṭṭān) heard ‘Umar b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, say: “The one who is excessive in his love for us is like the one who is excessive in his hatred of us. We have a right (to authority) through our relationship with our Prophet, blessing and peace be on him. It is a right which Allāh has given us. Therefore whoever abandons it, abandons (something which is) great. Grant us the position which Allāh has granted us. Do not say things about us which do not exist concerning us. If Allāh punished us, then it would be for our sins. If Allāh has mercy on us, then it is because of His mercy and favour.”

Zayd b. ‘Alī b al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, was the outstanding brother after Abū Ja‘far, peace be on him, and the one with the most merit. He was a devout worshipper, pious, a jurist, Allāh-fearing and brave. He came out in revolt with the sword to enjoin the good and forbid the evil and to demand vengeance for al-Ḥusayn, peace be on him.

[Al-Sharīf Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad informed me: My grandfather (Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan) informed him on the authority of al-Ḥasan b. Yaḥyā, who said: Al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn told us on the authority of Yaḥyā b. Musāwir, on the authority of Abū al-Jarūd Ziyād b. al-Mundhīr, who said:]
I (Abū al-Jarūd) went to Medina. When I began to ask about Zayd b. ‘Alī, peace be on him, I was told: “That man is an ally of the Qur’ān,”

[Hishām b. Hishām reported:]

I (Hishām) asked Khālīd b. Ṣafwān about Zayd b. ‘Alī, peace be on him, when (Khālīd) was reporting traditions on his authority.

“Where did you meet him?” I asked.

“At al-Ruṣāfa.” he answered.

“What kind of man was he?” I asked.

“(He was) just as you have been told.” he said. “He would weep out of fear of Allāh until his tears became mixed with his running nose.”

Many of the Shī‘a believed in his Imamate. The reason for their belief was because of his coming out (in revolt) with the sword calling on support for the one who is acceptable from the family of Muḥammad, may Allāh bless Him and His Family. Therefore they thought that he intended that for himself. However that was not his intention because he knew of the right of his brother, peace be on him, to the Imamate before him, and of his bequest of trusteeship (*waṣīyya*) at his death to Abū ‘Abd Allāh (i.e. Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq), peace be on him.

The reason for Abū al-Ḥasan Zayd b. ‘Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him, coming out (to revolt) is also more than his determination which we have already mentioned, to seek (vengeance) for the blood of al-Ḥusayn, peace be on him. He had visited Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik. Hishām had gathered the Syrians for him and ordered them to press around him in the assembly so that it was not possible for him to come close to him. Zayd said to him: “None of the servants of Allāh are above being warned to show fear towards Allāh, nor can any of them be excluded from showing fear towards Allāh. I am warning you to show fear towards Allāh, Commander of the faithful (i.e. Hishām). So show fear towards Him,”

“You are the one who thinks yourself entitled to the caliphate,” Hishām replied to him. “and (you are) the one who hopes for it. But that is not for you. You have no mother. (At least) your mother was only a servant-girl.”

“I do not know anyone greater in rank with Allāh than a prophet whom He has sent,” retorted Zayd, “(Yet such a prophet) was the son of a servant-girl. So if he had been unable to carry out His purpose, He would not have sent him. (That prophet) was Ismā‘īl b. Ibrāhīm (Ishmael, son of Abraham), peace be on them. Prophethood is greater in rank with Allāh than the mother of the caliphate, Hishām. Furthermore, a man should not be ignored whose father is the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, and who is the son of ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib, peace be on him.”

Hishām jumped up from his assembly. He summoned his servant and said: “Don't let this man spend the night in my camp”

Zayd left saying that he would never have forced anyone to take up the sword if they had not humiliated him. When he arrived at Kūfa, its inhabitants gathered around him and they soon pledged allegiance to fight on his behalf. Then they broke their pledge to him and handed him over. He, may Allāh have mercy on him, was killed and his body (was left) hanging on a cross among them for four years. None of them denounced it, nor did they help him with hand or tongue.

When he was killed, the full report of that was sent to Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Şādiq, peace be on him. He was very sad when it became clear to him (what had happened). He set apart a thousand dīnārs of his own money for the families of those of (Zayd's) followers who were killed with him.

That is reported by Abū Khālid al-Wāsiṭī. He said: Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him, handed me a thousand dīnārs and told me to divide it among the families of those killed with Zayd. Four dīnārs of this reached the family of ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, the brother of Fuḍayl al-Rassān.

His death was on Monday on the 2nd of (the month) of Şafar in the year 120 A.H. At that time he was forty-two years of age.

Al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, was a man of merit and pious. He reported many traditions on the authority of his father ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, and his aunt Fāṭima, daughter of al-Ḥusayn, peace be on him, and his brother, Abū Ja‘far, peace be on him.

[Aḥmad b. ‘Īsā reported: My father told us:]

I (‘Īsā) used to see al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, pray. I would say: “He will not put down his hand until his prayer for all creatures is answered.”

[Ḥarb b. al-Ṭaḥḥān reported: Sa‘īd, the follower of al-Ḥasan b. Ṣālih, told me:]

I (Sa‘īd) never saw anyone with greater fear (of Allāh) than al-Ḥasan b. Ṣālih until I went to Medina and saw al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them. I have never seen greater fear (of Allāh) than his. (It is) as if he had been taken into the fire (of Hell) and then taken out of it because of the intensity of his fear.

[Yaḥyā b. Sulaymān b. al-Ḥusayn reported on the authority of his uncle, Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn, on the authority of his father, al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, who said:]

Ibrāhīm b. Hishām al-Makhzūmī was a governor of Medina. He used to gather us (the family of the Prophet) every Friday near the pulpit. Then he would attack ‘Alī, peace be on him, and curse him. One day I (Al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn) was present. The place was very full so I was close to the pulpit. I dozed off and saw (in a dream) that the grave had opened and out of it had come a man in a white cloak. He said to me: “O Abu ‘Abd Allāh (i.e. al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn), does not what this man is saying make you sad?”

“By Allāh, yes,” I replied.

“Open your eyes,” he told me, “and see what Allāh is doing with him.”

Behold, as he mentioned (the name) ‘Alī, he was thrown from the pulpit and died, may, Allāh curse him.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE CHILDREN OF ABŪ JA‘FAR MUḤAMMAD B. ‘ALĪ, PEACE BE ON HIM, THEIR NUMBER AND THEIR NAMES.

We have mentioned earlier that Abū Ja‘far, peace be on him, had seven children.

1. Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, peace be on them.

He was given his *kunya* by his (father).

2. Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad, peace be on him.

Their mother was Umm Farwa, daughter of al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr.

3. Ibrāhīm

4. ‘Ubayd Allāh

Both died young. Their mother was Umm Hakīm, daughter of Asīd b. al-Mughīra

al-Thaqafi.

5. ‘Alī

6. Zaynab

Both were born of a slave-wife.

7. Umm Salama

She was born of a slave-wife.

No one considered the Imamate to belong to any of the children of Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad, peace be on him, except specifically Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, peace be on them. His brother, ‘Abd Allāh, may Allāh be pleased with him, used to point to him for his outstanding merit and righteousness..

It is reported that he (‘Abd Allāh) came upon one of the Banū Umayya, and the latter wanted to kill him. ‘Abd Allāh, may Allāh have mercy on him, said: “Don't (try to) kill me, for Allāh will be my support against you. Leave me and Allāh will be a support to you”

He meant by that that he was one of those who could intercede with Allāh and that he would do so. However, the Umayyad said to him: “You are not there (in heaven where you can ask Allāh’s help).”

He made him drink poison and he killed him.

CHAPTER V

IMAM JA‘FAR B. MUḤAMMAD AL-ŞĀDIQ

This is an account of the Imam who was in charge (*al-qā‘im*) after Abū Ja‘far MuḤammad b. ‘Alī, peace be on them, (including) who his mother was, the date of his birth, evidence for his imamate, his age, the period of his succession (to the Imamate), the time of his death, the place of his grave, the number of his children and a brief outline of the reports about him.

Al-Şadiq Ja‘far b. MuḤammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Husayn, peace be on them, was out of all his brothers (the one who was) the successor (*khalīfa*) of his father, MuḤammad b. ‘Alī, peace be on them, his testamentary trustee (*waṣī*), who was in charge of the Imamate (*al-qā‘im bi-al-imāma*) after him. He stood out among their group for his great merit (*faḍl*); he was the most celebrated, the greatest in rank and the most illustrious of them in (the eyes) of both the non-Shī‘a (*‘amma*) and Shī‘a (*khāṣṣa*). The people transmitted on his authority the religious sciences which travellers carried with them (around many countries) and thus his fame was spread throughout the lands. The learned scholars have transmitted on the authority of no other member of the House (*ahl al-bayt*) as much as they have transmitted on his authority. None of them met as many of the reporters of traditions (*ahl al-āthār wa-naqalat al-akhbār*) as he did, nor did the latter transmit on their authority to the same extent as they transmitted on the authority of Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Ja‘far b. MuḤammad), peace be on him. The specialists in tradition (*aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*) have gathered together the names of those who narrated on his authority, who were reliable despite differences in views and doctrines and they were four thousand men. The clear evidence for his Imamate, peace be on him, was such that it overcame (men’s) hearts and silenced (the attempts of) an opponent to denigrate it with doubts.

He was born in Medina in the year 83 A.H. (702) and he, peace be on him, died in (the month of) Shawwāl in the year 148 A.H. (765) at the age of sixty-five. He was buried in (the cemetery of) al-Baqī‘ alongside his father, his grandfather and his (great-great) uncle, al-Ḥasan, peace be on them. His mother was Umm Farwa, the daughter of al-Qāsim b. MuḤammad b. Abī Bakr. His Imamate, peace be on him, lasted for thirty-four years. His father, Abū Ja‘far (MuḤammad b. ‘Alī), peace be on him, clearly gave him the trusteeship (of the Imamate) and gave him an explicit designation (*naṣṣ jalī*) for the Imamate.
