

CHAPTER VIII

IMĀM MUḤAMMAD B. ‘ALĪ AL-JAWĀD

(This chapter gives) will deal with the Imam after Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā, peace be on them; (including) the date of his birth, the evidence for his Imamate, the period of his succession and his age. (It will also mention) his death and the cause of it, the place of his grave, the number of his children and an outline of the reports about him.

The Imam after al-Riḍā ‘Alī b. Mūsā, peace be on them, was his son Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Riḍā, peace be on them, by virtue of his nomination and indication by his father. Outstanding merit attained perfection in him. He, peace be on him, was born in the month of Ramaḍān, in the year 195 A.H. (811) at Medina and he died in Baghdād in the month of Dhū al-Qa‘da in the year 220 A.H.(835). At that time he was twenty-five years of age. The period of his succession and his Imamate after his father was seventeen years. His mother was a slave-wife (*umm walad*) called Sabīka, she was a Nubian.

AN OUTLINE OF THE NOMINATION AND INDICATION OF ABŪ JA‘FAR MUḤAMMAD B. ‘ALĪ FOR THE IMAMATE BY HIS FATHER

Among those who report the nomination for the Imamate by Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā, peace be on him, of his son Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him, are: ‘Alī b. Ja‘far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq, peace be on them, Ṣafwān b. Yaḥyā, Mu‘ammar b. Khallād, al-Ḥusayn b. Bashshār, Ibn Abī Naṣr al-Bizantī, Ibn Qayāmā al-Wāsiṭī, al-Ḥasan b. al-Jahm, Abū Yaḥyā al-Ṣan‘ānī, al-Khayrānī and Yaḥyā b. Ḥabīb al-Zayyāt. (These are some names) in a group so numerous that to mention them would make the book unduly long.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Hāshim, on the authority of his father and of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Qāsānī, on the authority of Zakariyyā b. Yaḥyā b. al-Nu‘mān al-Baṣrī, who said: I heard ‘Alī b. Ja‘far b. Muḥammad telling al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn: In his account he (i.e. ‘Alī b. Ja‘far) said:]¹

Allāh gave Abū al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā, peace be on him, victory when his brothers and uncles treated him unjustly. [Then he gave a long account until he came to:] I (i.e. ‘Alī b. Ja‘far) arose and seized the hand of Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Alī

¹ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 322-3, tradition no. 14, gives the full tradition.

al-Riḍā and I said to him: “I testify that before Allāh, the Mighty and High, you are my Imam.”

Al-Riḍā, peace be on him, wept and said: “Uncle, did you not hear my father saying: The Apostle, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, said to my father (i.e. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib): The son of the best of the beautiful Nubian maid-servants will be among his descendants. (He will be) pursued, exiled, deprived of his father. His grandson will be the Imam who goes into occultation. It will be said that he has died or had been killed or any such excuse.”

“True, may I be your ransom,” I said.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā on the authority of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Ṣafwān b. Yaḥyā, who said:]²

I (i.e. Ṣafwān b. Yaḥyā) said to al-Riḍā, peace be on him: “We used to ask you before Allāh gave you Abū Ja‘far (about your son) and you would say: ‘Allāh will give me a son.’ Now Allāh has given him to you and we are delighted with him. We ask Allāh never to show us the day (of your death) but if something happened, to whom (will the Imamate belong)?”

He pointed to Abū Ja‘far with his hand while he was standing in front of him. I said: “May I be your ransom, this is a child of three years old.”

“That does not harm him,” he replied. “Jesus gave evidence (of his mission) when he was less than three years old.”

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā on the authority of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā, on the authority of Mu‘ammar b. Khallād, who said:]³

I (i.e. Mu‘ammar b. Khallād) heard al-Riḍā, peace be on him, say when I mentioned something: “What need have you for that? Here is Abū Ja‘far, whom I have brought into my meetings and whom I have made to be my successor.” Then he added: “We are the family of the House. Our young inherit from our old, like one feather (on a wing) followed by the next.”

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of a number of his colleagues, on the authority of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad on the authority of Ja‘far b. Yaḥyā on the authority of Mālīk b. Ashyam. on the authority of al-Ḥusayn b. Bashshār. who said:]⁴

² *Al-Kāfi*, I, 321, tradition no. 10.

³ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 320, tradition no. 2.

⁴ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 320, tradition no. 4.

Ibn Qayāmā al-Wāsiṭī wrote a letter to Abū al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā, peace be on him, in which he asked: “How will you provide an Imam when you have no son?”

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā, peace be on him, replied to him: “What tells you that I will have no son? By Allāh, few days and nights will pass before Allāh provides me with a male child who will distinguish the truth from the false.”

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad told me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of some of his colleagues, on the authority of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, on the authority of Mu‘āwiya b. Ḥukaym, on the authority of Ibn Abī Naṣr al-Bizantī, who said:]⁵

Ibn al-Najāshī asked me (i.e. Ibn Abī Naṣr): “Who is the Imam after your (present) leader?”

I wanted to ask him (i.e. the present Imam) so that I might know. Therefore I went to visit al-Riḍā, peace be on him. And I mentioned it to him. He said to me: “The Imam will be my son. Does a man seem bold who says, ‘My son’, when he does not have a son?”

At that time Abū Ja‘far, peace be on him, had not been born but not many days passed before he was born.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad told me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of Aḥmad b. Mihrān, on the authority of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, on the authority of Ibn Qayāmā al-Wāsiṭī, - he was a Waqifite - who said]⁶ I (i.e. Ibn Qayāmā) visited ‘Alī b. Mūsā (al-Riḍā) peace be on them, and asked him: “Can there be two Imam?”

“No” he replied, “unless one is silent (*ṣāmit*).”

“How is it then that you do not have a silent (Imam)?” I asked.

“Indeed,” he said, “Allāh will bring one who will confirm the truth and those who hold it and deny the false and those who hold it. “

At that time he did not have a child but a year later Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him, was born to him.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad told me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of Aḥmad b. Mihrān, on the authority of al-Ḥasan b. al-Jahm, who said:]⁷

⁵ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 320, tradition no. 5.

⁶ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 321, tradition no. 7.

⁷ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 321, tradition no. 8.

I (i.e. al-Ḥasan b. al-Jahm) was sitting with Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Riḍā), peace be on him. He called for his son who was small and put him to sit on my lap. He told me to strip him and take off his shirt. I took it off. Then he told me to look between the shoulders. I looked and there on one of his shoulders was something like a seal within the flesh. Then he said to me: “Do you see this? A similar mark was in this place on my father, peace be on him.”

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, peace be on him, informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of Aḥmad b. Mihrān, on the authority of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, on the authority of Abū Yaḥyā al-Ṣan‘ānī, who said:]⁸

I (i.e. Abū Yaḥyā al-Ṣan‘ānī) was with Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Riḍā), peace be on him. His son Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him, was brought and he was still a child. (Al-Riḍā) said: “This child, who has been born, is greater than any child born to our Shī‘a.”

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb on the authority of al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad, on the authority of al-Khayrānī, on the authority of his father, who said:]⁹

I (i.e. al-Khayrānī’s father) was standing in front of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā, peace be on him, in Khurāsān. Someone asked him: “My lord, if something happens, to whom (will authority belong)?”

“To Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), my son,” he replied.

The speaker indicated that the age of Abū Ja‘far was too young. So Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Riḍā), peace be on him, replied: “Allāh, may He be praised, sent Jesus, son of Mary, to be an apostle, a prophet, the bringer of a revealed law (*sharī‘a*), to begin (his mission) when his age was younger than that of Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), 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 Sahl b. Ziyād, on the authority of Muḥammad b. al-Walīd, on the authority of Yaḥyā b. Ḥabīb al-Zayyāt, who said: Someone who was sitting with Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Riḍā), peace be on him, told me:]¹⁰

When the people got up, Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Riḍā), peace be on him, said to them: “Meet Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād) and greet him.”

8 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 321, tradition no. 9.

9 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 322, tradition no. 13.

10 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 320, tradition no. 1.

When the people got up, he turned to me and said: “May Allāh have mercy on Mufaḍḍal (b, ‘Umar), since he would have been satisfied without this (explanation).”

AN EXTRACT FROM THE REPORTS, PROOFS AND MIRACLES OF ABŪ JA‘FAR (AL-JAWĀD), PEACE BE ON HIM.

Al-Ma’mūn had a great affection for Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him, because of the great merit he saw in him despite his age, because of his attainment in philosophy and literature and because of his intellectual maturity which none of the scholars of the time equalled. Therefore (al-Ma’mūn) married him to his daughter Umm al-Faḍl. (Abū Ja‘far al-Jawād) took her to Medina with him. Al-Ma’mūn was generous in his honouring and extolling of him and giving him rank and position.

[Al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān reported on the authority of ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Hāshim, on the authority of his father, on the authority of al-Rayyān b. Shabīb, who said:]

When al-Ma’mūn wanted to marry his daughter Umm al-Faḍl to Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Alī (al-Jawād), peace be on them, this news reached the ‘Abbāsīd (family), and shocked them and they were greatly concerned at this. They were afraid that the affair (of the caliphate) would finish up with him as it had done with al-Riḍā, peace be on him. They were very concerned about that. He met the close members of his family and they said to him: “Commander of the faithful, we adjure you before Allāh against persevering in this plan you have decided upon, of marrying the son of al-Riḍā (to your daughter). For we are afraid that you will take away from us power which Allāh has made our possession, and strip away what He has clothed us in. You know what is between us and these people, both of old and recently, and the policy of the rightly-guided caliphs before you to isolate them and belittle them. We were (greatly) afraid of your action with al-Riḍā until Allāh was sufficient for us in that task. O Allāh, do not bring back to us that pain from which we had escaped. Turn aside from your opinion about the son of al-Riḍā and turn towards someone you think appropriate from your own family to the exclusion of anyone else.”

Al-Ma’mūn replied: “You are the cause of (any friction) there is between yourselves and the family of Abū Ṭālib. If you treated these people justly, they would be much closer to you. As for what those who were before me have done to them, it was an act against kinship and I seek Allāh’s protection from it. By Allāh, I do not regret the arrangement of succession which I made with al-Riḍā. I had asked him to undertake the affair and I was (ready to) give it up but he

refused. The decision of Allāh was a decree which had been decreed. As for Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), I have chosen him because of his superiority to all men of merit in knowledge and merit despite his youth, and as a result of his miraculous nature in that. I hope that he shows the people what I know to be in him, and then they will understand why I hold this view with regard to him.”

“This young man, even though he has amazed you, needs direction,” they told him. “He is still a boy without knowledge and understanding. Therefore act with circumspection towards him so that he may become educated and may gain understanding in religion. Then, after that do what you think appropriate.”

“Shame on you!” he retorted. “I know this young man in (comparison with) you. He is from the family of the House whose knowledge is from Allāh, of those who love Him and are inspired by Him. His ancestors were always rich in the knowledge of religion and literature far (beyond) the populace which lacked the range of (their) perfection. If you wish, examine Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād) so that he may make clear to you his condition as I have described”

“We consent to examine him, Commander of the faithful, both for you and for ourselves,” they answered. “So let us assign someone to question him, in your presence, about some matter of jurisprudence. If he gets the answer to it correct, there will be no opposition from us to his affair and it will demonstrate, both to the elite and to the public, the sound view of the Commander of the faithful. However, if he fails in that, we will have been able to give protection in a serious matter with regard to this idea.”

“It is your affair and it (will take place) whenever you want to do it,” al-Ma‘mūn told them.

They left him and agreed to ask Yaḥyā b. Aktham. He was, then, the (outstanding) *qādī* of the time and he would be able to ask a question which (Abū Ja‘far al-Jawād) would not be able to answer. They promised him precious valuables to do that. They returned to al-Ma‘mūn and asked him to choose a day for their meeting. He complied with their request. They gathered on the agreed day and with them came Yaḥyā b. Aktham. Al-Ma‘mūn ordered a seat of honour to be put for Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him, and leather pillows to be put on it for him. That was done. Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him, came out. At that time he was a boy of nine years and a few months. He sat down amid the leather pillows and Yaḥyā b. Aktham sat opposite him. The people stood in their rank while al-Ma‘mūn was sitting in a seat of honour attached to Abū Ja‘far’s, peace be on him.

“Commander of the faithful, do you permit me to question Abu Ja‘far?” Yaḥyā b. Aktham asked al- Ma’mūn.

“Seek permission from him for that,” al-Ma’mūn replied to him.

Then Yaḥyā b. Aktham went forward to him and said: “May I be your ransom, do you permit me to question (you)?”

“Ask if you want to,” Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him, told him.

“May Allāh make me your ransom,” said Yaḥyā. “what would you say about a *muḥrim* (a person in a state of ritual purification for pilgrimage) who killed an animal while hunting?”

“Did he kill it in the area not sanctified or in the sanctuary?” asked Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him. “Did the *muḥrim* do the killing knowingly or in ignorance, deliberately or by mistake? Was the *muḥrim* free or a slave, young or old, inexperienced in killing or practised? Was the animal hunted, winged or otherwise, little or big? Was the man obstinate in his action or regretful? Was the killing of the hunted animal at night or during the day? Was he in a state of ritual consecration for the lesser pilgrimage (*‘umra*) or the greater pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) when he did the killing?”

Yaḥyā b. Aktham became bewildered. Inability and indecision were clear on his face. He began to stutter so that all the people at the assembly were aware of his predicament.

“Praise be to Allāh for this blessing and the success of my judgement,” said al-Ma’mūn. Then he looked at the members of his family and said: “Do you recognise now what you used to deny?”

He went up to Abū Ja‘far, peace be on him, and asked him: “Will you address us, Abū Ja‘far?”

“Yes, Commander of the faithful,” he replied.

“May I be your ransom,” al-Ma’mūn said, “address us on your own account and I am pleased with you on my account. I will marry you to Umm al-Faḍl, my daughter, even though these people object.”

Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him, said: “Praise be to Allāh in confessing His blessing. There is no god except Allāh, unique in His unity. Blessings be upon Muḥammad the lord of His creatures and upon the pure ones from his family. It is the favour of Allāh to His creatures that He has enriched them with the permitted apart from the forbidden.” Then he quoted: “*Marry*

the unmarried among you. And the righteous of your slaves and handmaidens. If they are poor, Allāh will enrich them out of His bounty. Allāh is (all) encompassing, Knowing (XXIV 32). Thus it is that Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Mūsā will become betrothed to Umm al-Faḍl, the daughter of the servant of Allāh, al-Ma‘mūn. He has bestowed as a dowry for her the dowry of his (distant) grandmother, Fāṭima, daughter of Muḥammad, which is five hundred good dirhams. Will you marry him to her for that dowry which has been mentioned, Commander of the faithful?”

“Yes,” replied al-Ma‘mūn, “I will marry you, Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), to Umm al-Faḍl, my daughter, for the dowry which has been mentioned. Do you accept the marriage?”

“I accept it and I consent to it,” replied Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him.

Al-Ma‘mūn ordered the people to sit in the ranks of courtiers and public.

[Al-Rayyān reported:]

It was not long before we heard voices, like the sounds of sailors in their songs. Suddenly (there appeared) slaves pulling a boat made of silver, tied to ropes of silk on carts filled with perfume. Al-Ma‘mūn ordered the beards of the courtiers to be daubed with the perfume. Then it passed on to the general populace and they perfumed themselves with it. Tables were set up and the people ate. Gifts were brought out for all the people in accordance with their position. When the people departed and only some of the courtiers remained, al-Ma‘mūn said to Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him: “May I be your ransom, would you consider telling us the law (*fiqh*) concerning the aspects into which you divided the killing of an animal by a *muḥrim* so that we may learn and benefit by it?”

“Yes,” replied Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him. “If he had killed the animal outside sacred ground and it was winged and large, (an atonement of) a sheep would have been necessary for him. If he had struck it down in the sanctuary, the penalty required of him would be doubled. If he killed a young bird outside sacred ground, then (an atonement of) a lamb which had been weaned off milk would have been required of him. If he had killed it in the sanctuary, then he would have been required (to sacrifice) a lamb and the value of the young bird. As for wild animals, if it was the wild ass, he would have been required (to sacrifice) a cow. If it was an ostrich, the sacrifice of a camel would have been necessary for him. If it had been a deer, then a sheep would have been necessary. If he had killed any of those in the sanctuary, the penalty would have been a doubled sacrifice offered in the Ka‘ba. If the *muḥrim* had struck down anything which required a sacrifice to be made for it and his state of ritual consecration was for the greater pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), he would sacrifice it at Mina. If his state of

ritual consecration was for the lesser pilgrimage (*'umra*), he would sacrifice it in Mecca. The penalties for hunting by one who knows (it to be forbidden) and by one who is ignorant (of that) are the same. If he did it deliberately, it is a sin. He is absolved of its (sinfulness), if it is by mistake. The free man is responsible for the payment of his own atonement while the master is responsible for the payment of his slave's. There is no atonement necessary for a child while it is necessary for an adult. Anyone who regrets his action will escape the punishment of the Hereafter through his regret and anyone who is obstinate will be required to receive punishment in the Hereafter."

"You have done well, Abū Ja'far (al-Jawād), and Allāh has adorned you," al-Ma'mūn said to him. "Now would you see fit to question Yaḥyā as he questioned you?"

"May I question you?" Abū Ja'far (al-Jawād), peace be on him, asked Yaḥyā. "May I be your ransom," he answered, "that is up to you but if you know the answer of what you ask me, then I will gain the benefit of it from you."

Abū Ja'far (al-Jawād), peace be on him, said: "Tell me about a man who looked at a woman at the beginning of the day, and his looking at her was forbidden to him. Yet as the morning continued, she was allowed to him. At noon she became forbidden to him yet in the afternoon she was permitted to him. At sunset she was forbidden to him but when the night came she was allowed to him. In the middle of the night she was forbidden to him but at dawn she was permitted to him. What was the state of this woman and why was she permitted and forbidden to him at different times?"

"Allāh has not guided me to the answer of this question and I do not know the approach to it," Yaḥyā b. Aktbam told him. "Would you think it appropriate to benefit us with it?"

"This woman is a slave-girl of a man among the people." said Abū Ja'far (al-Jawād), peace be on him. "A foreigner looked at her at the beginning of the day and then his looking at her was forbidden to him. As the morning continued he bought her from her owner and she became permitted to him. At noon, he gave her her freedom and then she was forbidden to him. In the afternoon he married her and then she was permitted to him. At sunset he parted from her according to the disapproved formula (*zihār*) - You are to me like my mother's flesh (*zihr*) - and then she was forbidden to him. At night he made atonement for the (*zihār*) and she was permitted to him. Halfway through the night, he divorced her with the first declaration of the three-fold divorce and she was forbidden to him. At

dawn he renounced it and she was permitted to him.”

Then al-Ma'mūn went forward towards those of his family who were present and said to them: “Is there anyone among you who could answer questions in the way this answer (has been given) or expatiate on the answer which has just been given?”

“No, by Allāh,” they replied. “Indeed the Commander of the faithful knows better about the decisions he makes.”

“Shame on you,” he said to them. “This House has been singled out among creatures for the outstanding merit which you have seen. Even youthfulness in years does not prevent them from attaining perfection (of intellect). Don't you realise that the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, began his mission by calling on the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, to follow him when he was only a boy of ten years? And the latter accepted Islam from him and judged his (actions) by it? He did not call on anyone else of his age (to accept Islam) (Again) al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, gave the pledge of allegiance when they were only boys of less than six. He did not require the pledge of allegiance from any boy except those two. Do you not realise now the special way Allāh has singled out these people? They are offspring who follow one another so that the last of them carries out what the first of them did.”

“True, Commander of the faithful,” they replied and then the people rose.

On the next day, the people came and Abū Ja'far (al-Jawād), peace be on him, came. The military leaders, the chamberlains, the Courtiers and the general public came to greet al-Ma'mūn and Abū Ja'far (al-Jawād), peace be on him. Three trays of silver were brought out. On them were nuggets of musk and kneaded saffron. In the middle of the nuggets were pieces of parchment on which was written considerable wealth, annual income and estates. Al-Ma'mūn ordered them to be scattered among the Courtiers. Everyone into Whose hand fell a nugget would take out the piece of parchment in it. He would seek (fulfilment) from him and he would grant it. Bags containing ten thousand dirhams were put down and their contents scattered among the military leaders and others. The people departed and they were rich as a result of the gifts and the salaries. Al-Ma'mūn gave alms to all the poor and he continued to be generous to Abū Ja'far (al-Jawād), peace be on him. and to magnify his position throughout his life, and he recommended him to his children and all his family.

[The people reported:]

Umm al-Faḍl wrote to her father from Medina, complaining about Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him saying: “He has slave-girls in his possession and he makes me jealous.”

Al-Ma’mūn wrote to her: “My little daughter, we did not marry you to Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him, so that we should forbid him what is permitted. Do not mention what you have mentioned again after this.”

When Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him, set out from Baghdād. after leaving al-Ma’mūn, and (taking) Umm al-Faḍl with him and heading for Medina, he came to the street where the Kūfan Gate was, and with him were the people who had come to say farewell to him. He went to the house of al-Musayyib and stayed there. He went into the mosque. In its courtyard, there was a lote-tree which had not borne any fruit. He called for a jug of water and performed the ritual ablution at the roots of the lote-tree. He, peace be on him. stood up and performed the sunset prayer with the people. In the first (*rak‘a* of the prayer) he recited the *sūra* “The Opening” (I) and the *sūra* “The Victory” (CX). In the second (*rak‘a*) he recited: “Sincerity” (CXII). During it he made the personal prayer (*qanūt*) before his bowing. Then he prayed the third (*rak‘a*) and made the declaration of faith (*shahāda*) and the final salutation. He sat for a short time remembering Allāh, may His name be exalted. He stood up without sitting on his heels to make any superogatory prayer. Then he prayed the customary additional prayer of four *rak‘as*, and sat back on his heels to make superogatory prayers. He made two prostrations of thanks and then he departed. When the people went to the lote-tree, they saw that it was bearing good fruit. They were amazed at that. They ate from it and found sweet lotes without stones. They said farewell to him and he departed at that time for Medina.

He remained there until al-Mu‘tasim made him travel to Baghdād at the beginning of the year 220 A.H./835. He resided there until he died at the end of the month Dhū al-Qa‘da in the same year. He was buried behind his grandfather Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad told me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb on the authority of Aḥmad b. Idrīs, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ḥassan, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Khālid, who said:]¹¹

I (i.e. ‘Alī b. Khālid) was at al-‘Askar (Sāmarrā’) and I was told that there was a man in prison who had been brought in chains from the direction of Syria. They said that he had pretended to be a prophet. I went and persuaded the gate-man until I was able to go to him. There (I found him) a man of understanding and intellect. I asked: “Fellow, what is your story?”

¹¹ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 492-3, tradition no 1.

“I was (just) a man in Syria,” he said, “who used to worship Allāh, the Exalted, in the place in which it was said that the head of al-Ḥsayn, peace be on him, was placed. One night I was in my place facing the *miḥrāb*, mentioning Allāh, the Mighty and the High when I saw a person standing in front of me. I looked towards him and he told me to get up. I got up with him and he walked with me a little way. Suddenly we were in the mosque of Kūfa. He asked me: ‘Do you know this mosque?’ I answered: ‘Yes, this is the mosque of Kufa.’ He said: ‘Let us pray.’ I prayed with him. Then he left and I left with him. He walked with me a little way. Suddenly we were in the mosque of the Apostle, may Allāh bless Him and His Family. He greeted the Apostle and prayed and I prayed with him. Then he went out and I went out with him. He walked a little way. Suddenly we were in Mecca. He made the circumambulation of the (Sacred) House and I made it with him. Then he went out and walked a little way. Suddenly we were (back) in the place in which I used to worship Allāh in Syria. The person disappeared from my sight and I was left amazed and dazed at what I had seen.

“The next year I saw that person again. I rejoiced (to see) him. He called me and I answered him. He did as he had done in the previous year. When he was about to leave me in Syria, I said to him: ‘I ask you by the truth which I estimate you to have through what I have seen from you, will you tell me who you are?’ He said: ‘I am Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Mūsā b. Ja‘far, peace be on them.’

“I told one of those who came to me, this report of him (about this) and he brought a charge against me of that to Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Malik al-Zayyāt. He sent for me, arrested me and put me in chains. He took me to Iraq and I was imprisoned as you see now. I was charged with being a cheat.”

I said to him: “I will raise your story with Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Malik al-Zayyāt.”

“Do so,” he told me.

I wrote his story and I explained his part in it and I sent it to Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Malik al-Zayyāt. (It was sent back with) an answer written on it: “Tell the one who in one night took you from Syria to Kūfa, from Kūfa to Medina, from Medina to Mecca and then took you back from Mecca to Syria to take you from your prison.”

[‘Alī b. Khālid reported:]

That troubled me for his affair. I felt ashamed and went away saddened for him. On the next day I went early to the prison to tell him the situation and to encourage him to be steadfast and patient. I found soldiers, guards, warders

and a great crowd of people hurrying to and fro. I asked about the situation and was told: “The man brought from Syria who had pretended to be a prophet disappeared yesterday from the prison. We do not know whether the earth has swallowed him or the birds have snatched him away.”

This man - meaning ‘Alī b. Khālīd - was a Zaydī and then maintained the Imamate when he saw that and his faith became sound.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad told 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 Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ḥamza, on the authority of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Hāshimī, who said:]¹²

I (i.e. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Hāshimī) visited Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, peace be on him, early on the morning of his wedding with the daughter of al-Ma’mūn. During the night I had taken medicine. I was the first person to visit him on that morning. I was seized by a thirst but did not like to ask for water. Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him, looked at my face and said: “I see that you are thirsty.”

“Yes,” I replied.

“Servant, bring us water,” he said.

I said to myself at that time that they would bring him poisoned water and I was grieved at that. The servant approached and with him was the water. (Al-Jawād) smiled into my face and said: “Servant, give me water.”

He gave him the water and he drank it. Then he gave me the water and I drank it. I was with him a long time and I became thirsty again. He called for water. He did the same as he had done on the first occasion and drank and then gave it to me, smiling.

[Muḥammad b. Ḥamza added: Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Hāshimī said to me:] By Allāh, I think that Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād) knew what was in men’s souls just as the Rāfidites claim.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad told me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb on the authority of a number of his companions, on the authority of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, on the authority of al-Hajjāl and ‘Amr b ‘Uthmān, on the authority of a man from Medina, on the authority of al-Miṭrafī, who said:]¹³
Abū al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā, peace be on him, died while owing me (i.e. al-Miṭrafī)

¹² *Al-Kāfi*, I, 495-6, tradition no. 6.

¹³ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 497, tradition no. 11.

four thousand dirhams. No one knew about it except myself and him. Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him, sent for me on the next day to come to him. On the next day, I went to him. He said to me: “Abū al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā, peace be on him, died while owing you four thousand dirhams.”

“Yes,” I answered.

He lifted up the prayer-mat which was under him. Behold under it were (a number of) dīnārs. He gave them to me and their amount was at that time equivalent to four thousand dirhams.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad told 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, who said:]¹⁴

The death of his father occurred while Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād) was still a young man. I (i.e. Mu‘allā b. Muḥammad) examined his size in order to describe his stature to our companions. He sat still and then said: “Mu‘allā, Allāh has given proof for the Imamate in the same way as He gave proof for prophethood. For He said: *We gave him the law while still a boy* (XIX 12)”.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad told me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, on the authority of Sahl b. Ziyād, on the authority of Dāwud b. al-Qāsim al-Ja‘fari, who said:]¹⁵

I (i.e. Dāwud b. al-Qāsim al-Ja‘fari) visited Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād), peace be on him. I had with me three pieces of parchment without names on them and I was doubtful about (whose they were) and as a result I was grieved. He took one of them and said: “This is the parchment of Rayyān b. Shābib.” Then he took the second of them and said: “This is the parchment of so-and-so.”

“Yes,” I replied.

I looked at him in surprise. He smiled and took the third. He said: “This is the parchment of so-and-so.”

“Yes, may I be your ransom,” I replied.

He gave me three hundred dīnārs and told me to take them to one of his uncles. He said: “He will say to you: Show me an artisan who will sell me furniture. Show him one.”

I took the dīnārs to him and he said to me: “Abū Hāshim, show me an artisan who will sell me furniture.”

¹⁴ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 494, tradition no. 4. Al-Kulaynī’s version is slightly longer and the eye-witness ‘Alī b. Asbāṭ is missing from al-Mufīd’s version.

¹⁵ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 495, tradition no. 5.

“Yes,” I said.

[Abū Hāshim reported:]

A camel-driver spoke to me on the road and asked me to discuss with (al-Jawād) the introduction of one of his companions into his affairs. I visited (al-Jawād) to speak with him and I found him eating. With him was a group of people so that I could not speak with him.

He said to me: “Eat, Abū Hāshim.”

He put in front of me the food from which he had eaten and then said to me: “Begin without questioning. Servant, see to the camel-driver whom Abū Hāshim has brought to us and join him to your group.”

[Abū Hāshim reported:]

One day I went into an orchard with (al-Jawād). I said to him: “May I be your ransom, I have a desire to eat clay. Pray to Allāh for me.”

He was silent. Some days later he said to me: “As from now, Abu Hāshim, Allāh has taken away (your desire) to eat clay from you.”

[Abū Hashim reported:]

Today nothing is more hateful to me than it.

Reports conveying these ideas are numerous. What we have given is sufficient for our purpose, if Allāh wills.

THE DEATH OF ABŪ JA‘FAR (AL-JAWĀD), PEACE BE ON HIM, ITS CAUSE, THE PLACE OF HIS GRAVE AND THE ACCOUNT OF HIS CHILDREN

He died in Baghdād. The reason for that was that al-Mu‘tasim made him leave Medina. So he came to Baghdād, two days before the end of the month of al-Muḥarram in the year 220 A.H. (835). He died there in the month of Dhū al-Qa‘da in the same year. It was said that he died as a result of poisoning but in my view no report has established that, and I bear witness to that. He was buried in the cemetery of Quraysh behind his grandfather, Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā b. Ja‘far, peace be on them. He died at the age of twenty-five and some months. He was described as “the chosen one” and “the one who has given pleasure (to Allāh)”

He left among his children ‘Alī, his son, the Imam after him, and Mūsā, and his two daughters Fāṭima and Imāma. There were no other male children except those we have mentioned.

CHAPTER IX

IMĀM ‘ALĪ B. MUḤAMMAD AL-HĀDĪ

(This is) an account of the Imam after Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, peace be on him, (describing) the date of his birth, the evidence of his Imamate, and (giving) a survey of the reports about him, the period of his Imamate and the age he reached. (It also) records his death, the reason for it, the place of his grave, the number of his children and a selection of reports about him.

The Imam after Abū Ja‘far, peace be on him, was his son, Abū al- Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, peace be on them, by virtue of the qualities of the Imamate, which were united in him, and the complete nature of his outstanding merit (*fadl*). The fact is that no one could succeed to the position of his father except him because of the corroboration of his father’s nomination of him to the Imamate and the (clear) indication of his father of his succession. He was born at Ṣurya in Medina, the city of the Apostle, in the middle of the month of Dhū al-Ḥijja in the year 212 A.H. (828). He died at Sāmarrā’ in the month of Rajab in the year 254 A.H. (868). At that time he was forty-one years and some months. Al-Mutawakkil had made him come from Medina to Sāmarrā’ with Yaḥyā b. Harthama b. A‘yan, where he resided until he died. The period of his Imamate was thirty-three years. His mother was a slave-wife called Sumāna.

AN EXTRACT FROM THE REPORTS OF HIS NOMINATION FOR THE IMAMATE AND OF HIS BEING INDICATED FOR SUCCESSION

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm, on the authority of his father, on the authority of Ismā‘īl b. Mihrān, who said:]¹

When Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād) left Medina for Baghdād on the first of the two occasions in which he did so, I (i.e. Ismā‘īl b. Mihrān) said to him at his departure: “May I be your ransom, I am afraid for you with regard to this situation. To whom does the affair (of the Imamate) belong after you?”

He turned his face towards me, laughing, and said to me: “It is not as you think this year.”

When he was summoned to al-Mu‘taṣim, I went to him and said: “May I be your ransom, you are outside (our normal reach). To whom does this affair belong after you?”

¹ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 232, tradition no. 1.