

CHAPTER VI

IMĀM MŪSĀ AL-KĀZIM

This is an account of the Imam who was in charge (*al-qā'im*) after Abū 'Abd Allāh Ja'far b. Muḥammad, peace be on them, (describing) who gave birth to him and the date of his birth. (It includes) the evidence for his Imamate, the age he reached and the period of his succession (*khilāfa*), his death, its cause, the place of his grave, the number of his children and a brief outline of the reports about him.

As we have mentioned before, the Imam after Abū 'Abd Allāh Ja'far, peace be on him, was Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā b. Ja'far, the righteous worshipper (of Allāh), peace be on him, because the qualities of outstanding merit and perfection were gathered in him, because of the designation (*naṣṣ*) by his father of the Imamate (being) for him, and his clear indication of it being his.

His birth took place at al-Abwā' in the year 128 A.H. (745/6). He, peace be on him, died in the prison of al-Sindī b. Shāhik in Baghdād on the 6th of (the month of) Rajab in the year 183 A.H. (799). He was then fifty-five years of age. His mother was a slave-wife named Ḥamīda al-Barbariyya. The period of his succession and occupying the office of the Imamate after his father, peace be on them, was thirty-five years. His *kunyas* were Abū-Ibrāhīm, Abū al-Ḥasan and Abū 'Alī. He is known as al-'Abd al-Ṣālīḥ (the pious worshipper of Allāh) and also he is described as al-Kāzim (the restrained), peace be on him.

THE DESIGNATION (NAṢṢ) OF (IMAM MŪSĀ) FOR THE IMAMATE BY HIS FATHER, PEACE BE ON THEM.

Among the *shaykhs* of the followers of Abū 'Abd Allāh, peace be on him, his special group (*khāṣṣa*), his inner circle and the trustworthy righteous legal scholars, may Allāh have mercy on them, who report the clear designation of the Imamate by Abū 'Abd Allāh Ja'far peace be on him, for his son, Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, are: al-Mufaḍḍal b. 'Umar al-Ju'fī, Mu'ādh b. Kathīr, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥajjāj, al-Fayḍ b. al-Mukhtār, Ya'qūb al-Sarrāj, Sulaymān b. Khālid, Safwān al-Jammāl, and others whom it would make the book too long to mention.

(That designation) is also reported by his two brothers, Ishāq and 'Alī, sons of Ja'far, peace be on him. They were men of merit and piety and (therefore reliable witnesses) in so far as two such men did not differ on it.

[Mūsā al-Şayqal reported on the authority of al-Mufaḍḍal b. ‘Umar al-Ju‘fī, may Allāh have mercy on him, who said:]¹

I (i.e. al-Mufaḍḍal b. ‘Umar al-Ju‘fī) was with Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Ja‘far), peace be on him. Abū Ibrāhīm Mūsā, peace be on him, came in. He was still a boy. Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far, peace be on him, said to me “Indicate to those of your Companions whom you trust that the position of authority belongs to him Mūsā.”

[Thubayt reported on the authority of Mu‘ādh b. Kathīr, on the authority of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far:]²

I (i.e. Mu‘ādh b. Kathīr) said to (Ja‘far): “I ask Allāh, Who provided your father with you for this position, to provide you with one of your offspring for the same position before your death.”

“Allāh has done that,” he answered.

“May I be your ransom, who is it?” I asked.

He indicated al-‘Abd al-Şālīh (the pious worshipper of Allāh) (i.e. Mūsā) to me. He was asleep.

“This one who is sleeping,” he said. He was at that time a boy.

[Abū ‘Alī al-Arrijānī reported on the authority of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Hajjāj, who said:]³

I (i.e. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Hajjāj) visited Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, peace be on them, in his house. He was in such-and-such a room in his house which he used as a prayer-room. He was praying there. On his right hand was Mūsā b. Ja‘far, peace be on them, following his prayer.

“May Allāh make me your ransom,” I said, “you know how I have dedicated my life to you and (you know of) my service to you. Who is the master of the affair (*walī al-amr*) after you?”

He said: “Abd al-Raḥmān, Mūsā has put on the armour and it fitted him.”

“After that, I have no further need of anything,” I replied.

[Abd al-A‘lā reported on the authority of al-Fayḍ b. al-Mukhtār, who said:]⁴

I (i.e. al-Fayḍ b. al-Mukhtār) said to Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far, peace be on him: “Take my hand away from the fire (of Hell). Who is (the Imam) for us after you?” Abū Ibrahim (Mūsā) entered - at that time he was a boy. Then (Ja‘far) said: “This is your leader (*ṣāhib*). Keep close to him.”

1 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 308, tradition no. 4. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

2 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 308, tradition no. 2. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

3 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 308, tradition no. 3. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened. Al-Arrijānī is al-Kulaynī’s reading of the name.

4 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 307, tradition no. 1. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

[Ibn Abī Najrān reported on the authority of al-Manṣūr b. Ḥāzim, who said:]⁵
I (i.e. al-Manṣūr b. Ḥāzim) said to Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him: “(May I ransom you) with my father and mother. There is a great coming and going among men about (the succession). Since that is so, who is it?”

“Since that is so,” replied Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him, “he is your leader.”
He tapped the right shoulder of Abū al-Ḥasan (Mūsā). He was at that time, as far as I know, about five years old. ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far was sitting with us.

[Ibn Abī Najrān reported on the authority of ‘Īsā b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, on the authority of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far, peace be on him:]⁶

I (i.e. ‘Īsā b. Muḥammad) asked (Ja‘far): “If something happened - may Allāh not make me see such a thing - who should I follow?”

(Ja‘far) pointed to his son, Mūsā.

“If anything happened to Mūsā, who should I follow?” I asked.

“His son,” he replied.

“If anything happened to his son?”

“Then his son.”

“If something happened to him,” I went on, “and he left a big brother and a small son?”

“His son; it is always thus,” he answered.

[Al-Faḍl reported on the authority of Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad on the authority of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far, peace be on him:]⁷

I (i.e. Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad) saw (Ja‘far) blaming his son, ‘Abd Allāh, and warning him. He was saying: “What stops you from being like your brother? By Allāh, I see the light in (Mūsā’s) face.”

“Why is that?” asked ‘Abd Allāh. “Is not my father and his father one and the same? Is not my origin and his origin one and the same?”

“He is from my soul and you are my son,” replied Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far, peace be on him.

[Muḥammad b. Sinān reported on the authority of Ya‘qūb al- Sarrāj, who said:]⁸

I (i.e. Ya‘qūb al- Sarrāj) visited Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far, peace be on him. He was standing by the head of Abū al-Ḥasan, Mūsā, peace be on him, who was in

5 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 309, tradition no. 6. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

6 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 309, tradition no. 7. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

7 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 310, tradition no. 10. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

8 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 310, tradition no. 11. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

the cradle. He began to play with him for a long time. I sat down until he had finished. Then I stood up before him. He told me: “Approach your master (*mawlā*) and greet him.”

I went near him and greeted him and he replied to me eloquently. Then he told me: “Go and change the name of your daughter which you gave her yesterday. For it is a name which Allāh dislikes.”

A daughter had been born to me and I had named her al-Ḥumayrā’.⁹

“Pay attention to the command which he gave you,” Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far, peace be on him, told me. So I changed her name.

[Ibn Miskān reported on the authority of Sulaymān b. Khālid, who said:]¹⁰

One day Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far, peace be on him, called for Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā while we were with him. He told us: “It is your duty (to follow) this man after me. By Allāh, he is your leader after me.”

[Al-Washshā’ reported on the authority of ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, on the authority of Ṣafwān al-Jammāl, who said:]¹¹

I (i.e. Ṣafwān al-Jammāl) asked Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far, peace be on him, about the leader of this affair (*ṣāhib al-amr*) (after him). He said: “The leader of this affair is one who does not fool and play.”

Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, approached. He was still small. He had a calf (destined) for Mecca and was saying to it: “Prostrate yourself to your Lord.”

Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far, peace be on him, took him by the hand and embraced him saying: “May I ransom with my father and mother (you) who do not fool and play.”

[Ya‘qūb b. Ja‘far al-Ju‘fī reported: Ishāq b. Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, peace be on him, told us:]¹²

One day I (i.e. Ishāq) was with my father (Ja‘far) when ‘Alī b. ‘Umar b. ‘Alī asked him: “May I be your ransom, to whom shall we and the people turn after you?”

He answered: “To the owner of two yellow clothes and two locks of hair. He who is coming out of the door to you.”

⁹ Ḥumayrā’ was one of the names by which ‘Ā’isha, wife of the Prophet, was known.

¹⁰ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 310, tradition no. 12. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

¹¹ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 311, tradition no. 15. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

¹² *Al-Kāfi*, I, 308, tradition no. 5. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

We did not wait long before two (little) hands appeared pulling the two doors so that they opened. In before us came Abū Ibrāhīm Mūsā, peace be on him. He was still a boy and was wearing two yellow garments.

[Muḥammad b. al-Walīd reported: I heard ‘Alī b. Ja‘far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq, peace be on them, say:]

I (i.e. ‘Alī b. Ja‘far) heard my father, Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, peace be on them, say to a group of his close associates and followers: “Treat my son, Mūsā, peace be on him, with kindness. He is the most meritorious (*afḍal*) of my children and the one who will succeed after me. He is the one who will undertake (*qā’im*) my position. He is Allāh’s proof (*ḥujja*) to all His creatures after me.”

‘Alī b. Ja‘far remained firmly loyal to his brother Mūsā, peace be on him, devoted to him, and enthusiastic in taking the outlines of religion from him. He has a famous (book) *Masā’il* (questions) in which he relates the answers he heard from (Mūsā), peace be on him.

The reports of what we have mentioned are too numerous to be explained and described fully.

AN EXTRACT OF THE PROOFS, SIGNS, INDICATIONS AND MIRACLES WHICH ABŪ AL-ḤASAN MŪSĀ (PRESENTED).

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. Qulawayh informed me, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī, on the authority of Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā, on the authority of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā, on the authority of Abū Yaḥyā al-Wāsiṭī, on the authority of Hishām b. Sālīm, who said:]¹³

I (i.e. Hishām b. Sālīm) and Muḥammad b. Nu‘mān (known as) Ṣāhib al-Ṭāq were in Medina after the death of Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him. The people had agreed that ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far was the leader of the affair (*ṣāhib al-amr*) after his father. We went to visit him and the people were with him. We questioned him about how much poor-tax (*zakat*) had to be paid.

“Five dirhams on two hundred dirhams,” he answered.

“How much on a hundred dirhams?” we asked.

“Two and a half dirhams,” he answered.

“By Allāh, you are declaring the doctrine of the *Murji’a*,” we said.

“By Allāh,” he retorted, “I do not know the doctrine of the *Murji’a*.”

We, Abū Ja‘far al-Aḥwal (i.e. Muḥammad b. Nu‘mān) and myself, left, wandering without knowing where to go. We sat in one of the lanes in Medina

¹³ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 351 tradition no. 7.

weeping. We did not know where we should go or to whom we should turn. We spoke about (joining) the Murji'ites, the Qadarites, the Mu'tazilites, and the Zaydites. We were in this situation when I saw a venerable man whom I did not know. He indicated to me with his hand. I was afraid that he was one of the spies of (the 'Abbāsīd caliph) Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr. There were spies in Medina for him (to find out) who the people agreed on to succeed Ja'far. Then that man (i.e. the Imam) would be captured and executed. I was afraid that that man was one of them.

“Go aside,” I said to al-Aḥwal, “I am afraid for myself. You be careful. He only wants me. He does not want you. Leave me, for you will lead (him) to yourself.” (Al-Aḥwal) went some distance away from me and I went over to the venerable man. That was because I thought that I would not be able to escape from him. As I followed him, I was certain of my own death until he brought me to the door of Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him. Then he left me and went away. There was a servant at the door. He said to me: “Come in, may Allāh have mercy on you.”

I went in. There was Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him. He spoke to me before (I could speak): “To me, to me; not to the Murji'ites, nor to the Qadarites, nor to the Mu'tazilites, nor to the Zaydites.”

“May I be your ransom,” I replied, “your father has gone.”

“Yes,” he answered.

“He has left through death,” I said.

“Yes,” he retorted.

“Then who is in charge of the people after him?” I asked.

“If Allāh wills, He will guide you to that man,” he answered.

“May I be your ransom,” I said, “your brother 'Abd Allāh claims that he is the Imam after his father.”

“‘Abd Allāh intends that Allāh should not be worshipped (properly),” he declared.

“May I be your ransom, who is in charge of us after him?” I asked (again).

“If Allāh wills, He will guide you to that man,” he repeated.

“May I be your ransom, are you him?” I questioned.

“I am not saying that,” he replied.

I thought to myself that I had not used the correct method of questioning. So I said to him: “May I be your ransom, do you have an Imam over you?”

“No,” he replied. Something came to me which only Allāh knew with regard to honouring and showing respect (to Mūsā). So I said to him: “May I be your ransom, may I question you like I used to question your father?”

“Question,” he said. “You will be informed but do not spread (the answer)

around. For if you do spread it around, then slaughter will take place.”

I questioned him. Indeed he was like a sea (of knowledge) which could not be exhausted. I said to him: “May I be your ransom, the Shī‘a of your father is lost (without a leader). May I put this matter to them and summon them (to follow) you? For you have taken (a promise of) secrecy from me.”

“Tell those of them whose righteousness you are familiar with,” he said, “but take (a promise of) secrecy from them. For if it gets spread around, there will be slaughter,” and he pointed to his neck with his hand.

I left him and met Abū Ja‘far al-Aḥwal.

“What happened to you?” he asked.

“Guidance,” I said and I told him the story.

Then we met Zurāra and Abū Basīr. They went to him, listened to his words and questioned him. They asserted his Imamate. We met wave after wave of the people. Everyone who went to him, declared (his Imamate) except for the group of ‘Ammār al-Sābātī. Abd Allāh persisted in his claim but only a few of the people came to him.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. Qulawayh informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb on the authority of ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm on the authority of al-Wāfiqī who said:]¹⁴

I (al-Wāfiqī) had an uncle called al-Ḥasan b. ‘Abd Allāh. He was an ascetic and one of the most pious people of his time. The authorities were wary of him because of his earnestness and his vigour towards religion. Sometimes he would approach the authorities concerning enjoining the good and forbidding the evil because of something which had angered him. They accepted that because of his righteousness. The state of affairs continued until one day he went into the mosque. There was Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him. He beckoned to him and (my uncle) went to him.

(Mūsā) said to him: “Abū ‘Alī, nothing is more pleasing to me and gives me greater joy than the way you behave. Despite that, you do not have true knowledge (*ma‘rifa*). Seek for true knowledge.”

“May I be your ransom,” he said to him, “what is true knowledge?”

“Go so that you may learn,” he told him. “Seek out traditions.”

“From whom?” he asked.

¹⁴ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 352, tradition no. 8. Al-Wāfiqī is al-Kulaynī’s reading. He gives the full name as Muḥammad b. so-and-so Wāfiqī.

“From the jurists of Medina,” he answered, “and then bring the additions to me.”

He went and wrote down (what he learnt). Then he came and read to him. However (Mūsā) invalidated all of it. He told him: “Go and learn.”

The man was concerned about (his own attitude to) his religion. He continued to search for ‘Abū al-Ḥasan until he went to (visit) an estate of his. On the road he met him. He said to him: “May I be your ransom, I have sought for you (by begging) Allāh. Guide me to what is necessary for me to know.”

Then ‘Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him, informed him about the authority and rights of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him, and what it was necessary for him to know. (He told him of) the authority of al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, Muḥammad b. ‘Alī and Ja‘far b. Muḥammad. Then he was silent.

(Al-Ḥasan) said to him: “May I be your ransom, who is the Imam today?”

“If I tell you,” he answered, “will you come close to me?”

“Yes,” he replied.

“I am he,” he said.

“Is there anything by which this could be proved?” he asked.

“Go to that tree,” he said - and he pointed towards one of the trees of Umm Ghaylān, “and tell it that Mūsā b. Ja‘far tells you to draw near.”

[He reported:] I went to it and I saw it furrow through the ground until it stopped in front of him. Then he indicated to it to go back and it went back.

He went up to him and cleaved to silence and worship. No one ever saw him talking after that.

[Ahmād b. Miḥrān reported on the authority of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, on the authority of Abū Baṣīr, who said:]

I (i.e. Abū Baṣīr) said to Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā b. Ja‘far, peace be on them: “May I be your ransom, by what is the Imam known?”

“By special characteristics,” he answered. “The first of them is something by which preference has been given him by his father and an indication (has been made) by his (father) that he should be proof (*ḥujja*) (to the world). When he is asked (anything), he can answer it. If (a person) holds back from speaking to him, he may begin (the conversation) by telling him what will happen tomorrow and speaking to each person in his own tongue.”

Then he said: “Abū Muḥammad (i.e. Abū- Baṣīr) I will give you a sign before you rise to go.”

I did not wait long before a man from the people of Khurāsān entered. The Khurāsānī spoke to him in Arabic and Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him, answered him in Persian.

“By Allāh, what prevented me speaking to you in Persian was that I thought you were not fluent in it,” the Khurāsānī said to him.

“Praise be to Allāh,” he replied, “if I was not fluent enough to reply to you, I would not have the merit over you, by which I am entitled to the Imamate.”

Then he said: “Abū Muḥammad, no speech of the people is hidden from the Imam, nor the language of birds, nor the speech of anything which has a soul.”

[‘Abd Allāh b. Idrīs reported on the authority of Ibn Sinān, who said:]

One day al-Rashīd sent some robes to ‘Alī b. Yaḳṭīn to honour him. Among their number was a black woollen cloak adorned with gold like the robes of kings. ‘Alī b. Yaḳṭīn dispatched those robes to Mūsā b. Ja‘far, peace be on them. Among their number he (also) sent that cloak. He added some money which he had already prepared specifically for him as the fifth of his money (*khums* - tax for the Imams) which he was going to pay him. When that reached Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, he accepted the money and the robes but returned the cloak by the hand of the messenger to ‘Alī b. Yaḳṭīn. He wrote to him: “Keep it and do not let it leave your hands. For an event will occur to you because of it when you will have the need of it with him (al-Rashīd).” ‘Alī b. Yaḳṭīn was suspicious about it being returned to him and did not understand the reason for that. Some time later, ‘Alī b. Yaḳṭīn changed (his attitude) towards a servant who had a special position with him and he left his service. The servant knew about ‘Alī b. Yaḳṭīn’s inclination towards Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him. He was acquainted with the money, garments and other things (‘Alī) had sent to (Mūsā) on every occasion. He (went and) informed on him to al-Rashīd. He told (al-Rashīd) that (‘Alī) maintained the Imamate of Mūsā b. Ja‘far and paid him a fifth of his money each year, and also that he had given him the cloak with which the Commander of the faithful (al-Rashīd) had honoured him at such-and-such a time. Al-Rashīd burned with anger and was furious. He declared: “I will expose this situation. If the matter is as you say, his life will be destroyed.”

He immediately sent for ‘Alī b. Yaḳṭīn to be brought. When he appeared before him, he said: “What have you done with the cloak which I bestowed upon you?”

“Commander of the faithful,” (‘Alī) replied, “I still have it in a sealed chest and there I keep perfume with it. In the mornings I open it and look at it to gain blessings from it. I kiss it and then put it back in its place. Every night I do the same thing.”

“Bring it, immediately,” he ordered.

“Yes, Commander of the faithful,” he answered. He summoned one of his servants and told him: “Go to such-and-such a room in my house. Take the key for it from my custodian and open it. Open such-and-such a box and bring me the sealed chest which is in it.”

It was not long before the servant returned with the chest still sealed. He put it before al-Rashīd and told him to break the seal and open it. When he opened it, he saw the cloak in it folded and laid out in perfume.

Al-Rashīd’s anger became pacified and he said to ‘Alī b. Yaqtīn: “Return it to its place and go away righteously. I will never disbelieve you again on the word of an informer.”

He ordered a magnificent gift to be sent after him and he had the informer flogged with a thousand lashes. After he had been flogged about a hundred lashes, he died.

[Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl reported on the authority of Muḥammad b. al-Faḍl, who said:]

The tradition concerning rubbing the two feet (*mash al-rijlayn*) in the ritual ablution (*wuḍū’*) was a subject of dispute among our companions - whether (it should be done) from the toes to the ankles or from the ankles to the toes. ‘Alī b. Yaqtīn wrote to Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him: “May I be your ransom, our companions are in dispute over rubbing the feet. If you would think fit to write to me in your own handwriting what my practice should be with regard to it, I would carry it out, Allāh, the Exalted, willing.”

Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, wrote back to him: “I have understood what you have mentioned about the dispute concerning ritual ablution. What I order you to do with regard to that is: you should rinse your mouth three times; you should sniff water into your nostrils three times; you should wash your face three times; you should rub between the interstices of the hair of your beard; you should wash your arms from the finger to the elbows; you should rub the whole of your head and the outside and inside of your ears; you should wash your feet up to the ankles three times. Do not transgress that for anything else.”

When the letter came to ‘Alī b. Yaḡṡīn, he was surprised at the details he had given in it which were different from what the group had agreed upon. He said: “My master (*mawḡā*) knows better what he has said and I will obey his command.”

He used to practise it in his ablution and was in conflict with the practice of all the Shī‘a out of submission to the command of Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him.

Information was given to al-Rashīd against ‘Alī b. Yaḡṡīn and he was accused of being a Rāfiḡite,¹⁵ who is opposed to (al-Rashīd). Al-Rashīd said to one of his close associates: “Much talk is coming to me about ‘Alī b. Yaḡṡīn, and the suspicion of him being in opposition to me and being of Rāfiḡite leanings. Yet I cannot see any deficiency in his service to me. I have examined him several times and have not been able to find any suspicious thing about him. I would like to examine his (position) without him being aware of it and thus being able to guard himself against me.”

He was told: “Commander of the faithful, the Rāfiḡite oppose the general view (*jamā‘a*) with regard to ritual ablution and reduce its form. They do not accept washing the feet. Therefore examine him - without his knowledge - on his practice in ritual ablution.”

“Yes,” he replied, “this method will reveal his views.”

He left it for a while. Then when ‘Alī was away at his house doing some work, he came at the time for prayer. ‘Alī b. Yaḡṡīn was alone in one of the rooms of the house in order to perform his ablution and prayer. Al-Rashīd stood behind the wall where he could see ‘Alī b. Yaḡṡīn without him seeing him. He (‘Alī) called for water for the ablution. He rinsed his mouth out three times; he sniffed water into his nostrils three times; he washed his face three times; he rubbed between the interstices of his beard; he washed his arms to the elbows three times; he rubbed his head and his ears; and he washed his feet three times.

Al-Rashīd watched him. When he saw him do that, he could not contain himself from looking down on him from a position where (‘Alī) could see him and calling to him: “‘Alī b. Yaḡṡīn, those who claim that you are one of the Rāfiḡite are liars.”

Thus (‘Alī’s) situation with (al-Rashīd) was restored. A letter came to him from Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him: “Beginning from now ‘Alī b. Yaḡṡīn, you will perform the ablution as Allāh ordered it. Wash your face once as is mandatory

¹⁵ A Rāfiḡite, one of the names for the Shi‘a.

and another time (as a voluntary act) within the ablution; similarly wash your arms from the elbows and rub the front of your head and the outer part of your feet with the remnants of the dampness from the ablutionary water (on your hands). What was feared for you has now been removed. Greetings.”

[‘Alī b. Abī Ḥamza al-Baṭāyinī reported:]

One day Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, left Medina for one of his estates outside the town. I (i.e. ‘Alī b. Abī Ḥamza) accompanied him. He, peace be on him, was riding on a mule and I was on a donkey of mine. As we were going along one of the paths, a lion blocked our way. I stared at it in terror but Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him, went forward without worrying about it. I saw the lion become subdued and mutter before Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him. Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him, stood as if he was listening to the muttering. The lion put its paw on the saddle of his mule. My soul trembled at that and I was absolutely terrified. Then the lion turned away to the side of the road. Abū al-Ḥasan turned his face toward the *qibla* (direction of Mecca) and began to pray. He moved his lips in such a way that I could not understand him. Then he indicated to the lion with his hand that it should go. The lion muttered for a long time and Abū al-Ḥasan said: “Amen, amen.”

The lion went away until it disappeared from our sight. Abū al Ḥasan, peace be on him, went straight on and I followed him. When we were far from the place, I came up to him and said: “May I be your ransom, what was that business of the lion? By Allāh, I was frightened for you and surprised at its attitude towards you.”

“He came out to complain of the difficulty his lioness was having in giving birth,” Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him, told me. “He asked me to ask Allāh to make it easier for her and I did that for him. He asked whether (I knew) in my heart if she would bear a male and I told him that. Then he told me: ‘Go in the protection of Allāh. Allāh will never impose on you, nor on your offspring, nor on any of your Shī‘a, any trouble from wild beasts.’ I said: Amen.”

Reports of this kind are numerous. What we have set out of them is sufficient according to the scheme which has been set out, through the grace of Allāh, the Exalted.

A SAMPLE OF HIS VIRTUES, OUTSTANDING QUALITIES AND MERITS BY WHICH HE WAS DISTINGUISHED FROM OTHERS

Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, was the most religious of the men of his time, the most knowledgeable in law, the most generous and the noblest in spirit.

It is reported that he used to pray supererogatory prayers throughout the night so that he would make them extend until the morning-prayer, then continue them until the sun rose. He would remain prostrating himself before Allāh without raising his head from prayer and praising Allāh until the sun came near to descending (from its midday zenith). Frequently when he used to pray he would say:

O Allāh, I ask of you ease at death and forgiveness on the Day of Reckoning.

He would repeat that. Another of his prayers, peace be on him, was:

How great is sin to You. Therefore let forgiveness seem good to You.

He used to weep so much out of fear of Allāh that his beard would be wet with tears. He was the kindest of men to his family and his kin. He used to search out the poor of Medina during the night and take them a basket, in which was money, flour and dates. He would bring that to them without them knowing in any way that it was from him.

[Al-Sharīf Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā informed me: My grandfather Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan b. Ja‘far told us: Ismā‘īl b. Ya‘qūb told us: Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Bakrī told us.]

I (i.e. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh) came to Medina to ask for repayment of a debt and it made me weary. I said (to myself): “If I had gone to Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, and complained to him.” So I went to him at Naqmā at his estate. He came out to me. With him was a servant carrying a basket in which there was some chopped-up meat. He had no one else with him. He ate and I ate with him. Then he asked me what I wanted. So I told him my story. He went inside and it was only a short time before he came out to me. He told his servant to go and then he stretched out his hand towards me. He gave me a purse in which was three hundred dīnārs. Then he arose and turned away. I mounted my animal and went away.

[Al-Sharīf Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad on the authority of his grandfather (Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan), on the authority of another of his colleagues and teachers, (who said:)]¹⁶

A man from the family of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was in Medina trying to harm Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him. Whenever he saw (Abū al-Ḥasan) he would curse him and curse ‘Alī, peace be on him. One day some of those who used to attend his gatherings said to him: “Let us kill this sinner.”

16 The same story is reported in *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 499-500. Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan is the source.

He forbade them from (doing) that most firmly and rebuked them severely.

He asked about the descendant of ‘Umar and was told that he had a farm on the outskirts of Medina. He rode out to him and found him at his farm. As he entered the farm with his donkey, the descendant of ‘Umar cried out: “Do not tread on my sown land.”

Yet Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him, continued to tread on it with his donkey until he reached him. He dismounted and sat with him. He greeted him with a smile and laughed at him.

“How much have you paid to sow your land?” he asked.

“One hundred dīnārs,” (the other man) answered.

“How much do you hope to acquire from it?”

“I do not know the unknown,” was the reply.

“I only asked you about what you hope it would bring you,” retorted (Abū al-Ḥasan).

“I hope that it will bring me two hundred dīnārs,” he answered.

Abū al-Ḥasan took out a purse in which was three hundred dīnārs and said: “This is (the price) of what you have sown in its present condition (i.e. what you have spent to sow it and what you hope to gain from it.) May Allāh provide you with what you hope for from it.”

The descendant of ‘Umar kissed his head and asked him to forgive his (former) hasty words about him. Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him, smiled at him and went away.

In the evening he went to the mosque and found that descendant of ‘Umar sitting there. When the latter saw him, he called out: “Allāh knows best where to put his (prophetic) mission.”

His companions jumped (in surprise) towards him and said to him: “What is the story (behind what you say), for you used to speak quite differently from this.”

“You have heard what I have said now,” he replied and began to speak on behalf of Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him. They opposed him and he opposed them.

When Abū al-Ḥasan returned to his house, he said to those who attended his gatherings and who had asked about killing the descendant of ‘Umar: “Which was better - what you wanted or what I wanted? I put right his attitude to the extent which you have now become acquainted with. I was sufficient for the evil

that was in him.”

A group of the traditionalists (*ahl al-‘ilm*) mention that Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him, always used to travel with two hundred to three hundred dīnārs to give away. The purses of Mūsā, peace be on him, were proverbial.

[Ibn ‘Ammār and other narrators record:]¹⁷

When al-Rashīd set out to go on the pilgrimage and was approaching Medina, the leading men among the inhabitants met him. Mūsā b. Ja‘far, peace be on them, came out to (al-Rashīd’s group) on a mule.

“What! Is this the animal on which you will meet the Commander of the faithful” al-Rabī‘ asked him. “If you were seeking (something) on it, you would not obtain it and if you were being sought (while you were) on it, you would not escape.”

“It is beneath the vanity of horses and above the lowliness of asses and the best of matters are those which are moderate,” he replied.

When Hārūn al-Rashīd entered Medina, he went to pay a visitation to (the tomb of) the Prophet, may Allāh bless Him and His Family. The people went with him. Al-Rashīd went forward to the tomb of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, and said: “Greetings to you, Apostle of Allāh! Greetings to you, cousin.” He was seeking to show his proud position over the others by that. But then Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him, went forward to the tomb and said: “Greetings to you, Apostle of Allāh! Greetings to you, father.”

(The expression on) al-Rashīd’s face changed and the anger in it became transparently obvious.

[Abū Zayd reported: ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd told me:]

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan asked Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, about attending al-Rashīd while they were in Mecca.

“Is it permitted of the person consecrated as a pilgrim (*muḥrim*) to be shaded (from the sun) by his camel train?” (Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan) asked him.

“It is not permitted for him if there is any choice available for him,” Mūsā, peace be on him, told him.

“Is it permitted for him to walk in the (natural) shade by choice?” Muḥammad

¹⁷ The same story about the mule on the same authority is in *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 484-489.

b. al-Ḥasan asked.
“Yes,” replied Mūsā.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan laughed at that. Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, said: “Does the *sunna* of the Prophet, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, surprise you and are you scoffing at it? The Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, took advantage of the (natural) shade during his state of ritual consecration (*iḥrām*) and walked in the (natural) shade while he was consecrated for the pilgrimage (*muḥrim*). The laws of Allāh, Muḥammad, are not subject to analogy. Anyone who makes analogies of some of them on the basis of others, has strayed from the straight path.”

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan was silent and did not ask any more questions.

The people have reported traditions on the authority of Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, and they have become very numerous; for, as we have said before, he was the most knowledgeable in the law during his time, and the most versed in the Book of Allāh, the best of them in voice for recitation of the Qur’ān. Whenever he recited, those who were listening to his recitation, would become sad and weep.

The people in Medīna named him “the ornament of those who spend nights in prayer” (*mutahajjidīn*). He was also called al-Kāzīm (the one who holds back) because of his restraint of anger and the patience (which he showed) in the face of the acts of the oppressors right up until the time he died, murdered in their prison and bonds.

REPORT ABOUT THE REASON FOR HIM BEING KILLED AND A SAMPLE OF THE ACCOUNTS ABOUT THAT

The reason for al-Rashīd detaining Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, imprisoning him and killing him is (contained in what is mentioned in the following tradition).

[Aḥmad b. ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Ammār reported on the authority of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Nawfalī on the authority of his father; and Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd (reported); and Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā: on the authority of their teachers, who said:]¹⁸

The reason for the arrest of Mūsā b. Ja‘far, peace be on them, was that al-Rashīd had put his son in the care of Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. al-Ash‘ath and Yaḥyā. b.

18 cf. *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 484-489.

Khālid b. Barmak was jealous of that. He said (to himself): “If the caliphate passes on to (the son), my dominion and that of my son will be destroyed.” Therefore he deceived Ja‘far b. Muḥammad - and the latter used to maintain the belief in the Imamate - so that he managed to gain access to him and establish friendly relations with him. His visits to his house were frequent and he became acquainted with his affairs, which he would report back to al-Rashīd and he used to add to these reports that which would make (al-Rashīd) feel hatred towards him.

One day (Yaḥyā. b. Khālid) asked some of those he trusted: “Would you discover for me a member of the family of Abū Ṭālib who is not in comfortable circumstances, and then he would let me know what I need?”

He was directed towards ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far b. Muḥammad. Yaḥyā. b. Khālid took him some money. Mūsā, peace be on him, was friendly with ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far b. Muḥammad and he used to bring him gifts and treat him well.

Yaḥyā. b. Khālid sent to (‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl) requesting him to visit al-Rashīd and drawing his attention to the kind treatment which he had given him. So he decided to do that. Mūsā, peace be on him, was concerned and summoned ‘Alī. “Where are you going, cousin?” he asked. “Baghdād,” was the reply. “Why are you doing that?” he enquired. “I am in debt and I am poor,” he answered. “I will pay your debt and act for you and carry out (what you need),” Mūsā, peace be on him, told him.

He did not pay attention to that and began to set about (preparations for his) departure. Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him, asked him to come and said to him: “Are you leaving?” “Yes,” he replied, “I must do that.” “Look, cousin,” he said to him, “fear Allāh and do not give away any confidences against my children.” He ordered him to be given three hundred dīnārs and four thousand dirhams.

(When he stood up in front of him, Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, spoke to those who were present: “By Allāh, he will strive against my blood and he will confide against my children.”

“May Allāh make us your ransom,” they said to him, “did you know this from his state when you were giving him gifts and being generous to him?”

“Yes,” he said, “my father told me on the authority of his ancestors, on the authority of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, that when kin cut themselves away, then they should be brought back, for if they cut themselves away, Allāh will cut them off. I wanted to bring him back after he had cut himself off from me for if he cuts me off, Allāh will cut him off.)¹⁹

‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl set out until he reached Yaḥyā. b. Khālid. He gave him news of Mūsā b. Ja‘far, peace be on him, and (Yaḥyā. b. Khālid) reported to al-Rashīd and added additional material to it. Then he took him to al-Rashīd. The latter asked him about his uncle and he gave information against him to (al-Rashīd). He told him that money was being brought to him from east and west and that he had bought an estate named al-Yasīr for thirty thousand dīnārs. Its (former) owner had said when he had brought him the money: “I will not accept this kind of currency. I will only accept such-and-such a kind of currency.” Then he ordered that money be brought and then he gave thirty thousand dīnārs of the currency whose coinage he had asked for.

Al-Rashīd listened to that from him and then ordered him to be given two hundred thousand dirhams, with which he sought to make a living in one of the areas. He chose one of the provinces of the east.

His messengers were sent to bring the money and he waited there for its arrival. One day he went into the toilet, when he was suffering from dysentery and as a result of it the whole of his stomach came out. He fell down. They tried to put it back but they could not. He was aware of his situation when the money was brought to him while he was in the pangs of death. He said: “What can I do with it? I am about to die.”

That year al-Rashīd went on the pilgrimage. He began it at Medina and there he had Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, arrested. It is reported that when he came to Medina, Mūsā, peace be on him, received him with a group of the nobles. They had gone out to meet him and then Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him, had gone on to the mosque as was his custom. Al-Rashīd waited until night and then went to the tomb of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and his family. He said: “Apostle of Allāh, I apologise to you for something I want to do. I want to imprison Mūsā b. Ja‘far because he is intending to bring division into your community and to cause the shedding of its blood.”

Then he ordered him to be taken from the mosque and brought before him. He had him put in chains and called for two awnings to be brought. He had (Abū

¹⁹ What is between brackets is not in *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*.

al-Ḥasan) put in one of them on a mule and he had the other awning put on another mule. The two mules left his house carrying the two awnings which were closed. With each one went cavalry. The cavalry divided and some of them went with one of the two awnings on the road to Baṣra and the other on the road to Kūfā. Al-Rashīd only did that in order to confuse the people about what had happened to Abū al-Ḥasan, peace be on him. He ordered the men who were with the awning in which was Abū al-Ḥasan to hand him over to ‘Īsā b. Ja‘far b. al-Manṣūr, who was governor of Baṣra at that time.

He was handed over to him and he kept him in detention with him for a year. (Then al-Rashīd wrote to him demanding (Abū al-Ḥasan’s) blood. ‘Īsā b. Ja‘far summoned some of his close associates and trusted colleagues and sought their advice about what al-Rashīd had written to him. They advised him to hold back from doing that and to ask to be excused from it. ‘Īsā b. Ja‘far wrote to al-Rashīd saying:

The affair of Mūsā b. Ja‘far and his stay under my detention has been going on for a long time. I have become well-acquainted with his situation. I have set spies on him throughout this period and I have not found him (do anything except) open his mouth in worship. I set someone to listen to what he said in his prayers. He has never prayed against you or against me. He has never mentioned us with malice. He does not pray for himself except for forgiveness and mercy. Either you send someone whom I can hand him over to or I will let him free. I am troubled at detaining him.

It is reported that one of the spies of ‘Īsā b. Ja‘far reported to him that frequently he used to hear him say in his prayers while he was detained:

O Allāh, You know that I used to ask you to give me free time to worship You. O Allāh, you have done that. To You be praise.)²⁰

Al-Rashīd directed that he should be handed over by ‘Īsā b. Ja‘far and taken to Baghdād. There he was handed over to al-Faḍl b. al-Rabī‘. He remained with him a long time. Then al-Rashīd wanted him to carry out some matter in (Abū al-Ḥasan’s) affair and he refused. So he wrote to him to hand over to al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā. He received him from the former. (He put him in one of the rooms of one of his houses and set a watch over him. He, peace be on him, was occupied in worship; he used to keep the whole night alive with formal prayer, recitation of the Qur’ān, personal prayer and effort. He would fast most days. His face never turned away from the *miḥrāb* (which showed the direction of prayer towards Mecca.))²¹

²⁰ The section between brackets is not in *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*. However, there is a brief mention of ‘Īsā’s letter.

²¹ The section between brackets is not in *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*.

Al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā made him comfortable and treated him with honour. That was communicated to al-Rashīd while he was at al-Raqqā. He wrote to him denouncing him for making Mūsā, peace be on him, comfortable and ordering him to kill him. He held back from doing that and would not carry it out. At that al-Rashīd became very angry. He summoned Masrūr, the servant, and told him: “Go by the messenger-service (*barīd*) immediately to Baghdād. Then go directly to Mūsā b. Ja‘far. If you find him in comfort and ease, then deliver this letter to al-‘Abbās b. Muḥammad and order him to submit to what is in it.”

He handed another letter to him for al-Sindī b. Shāhik, ordering him in it to obey al-‘Abbās b. Muḥammad. Masrūr set out and arrived at the house of Al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā without anyone knowing what he wanted. Then he went to Mūsā, peace be on him, and found him as al-Rashīd had been informed. He went directly to al-‘Abbās b. Muḥammad and al-Sindī b. Shāhik. He delivered the two letters to them.

The people did not wait long before the messenger went running to Al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā. He rode back with him. He went along perplexed and shocked until he reached al-‘Abbās b. Muḥammad. Al-‘Abbās called for whips and two small platforms (*‘aqābayn*) to be brought.

Then he ordered al-Faḍl to be stripped. Al-Sindī flogged (al-Faḍl) in front of (al-‘Abbās). (Al-Faḍl) left with his colour changed completely from what it had been when he entered. He began to greet the people to right and to left.

Masrūr wrote to al-Rashīd with the news and the latter ordered that Mūsā, peace be on him, should be handed over to al-Sindī b. Shāhik. Al-Rashīd had a large assembly. He said: “People, al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā has disobeyed me and opposed (giving) the obedience due to me. You have seen me curse him so you curse him.”

The people cursed him from every side until the room and the building shook with the (sound of) cursing him.

The news reached Yaḥyā b. Khālid. He rode to al-Rashīd and entered by another door from that which the people used so that he came to him from behind without him being aware. Then he said: “Commander of the faithful, look at me.” Al-Rashīd heard him with great fear, he said: “Al-Faḍl is only a young man and I will take care of him for you in the way you would wish.”

(Al-Rashīd’s) face brightened and he went forward to the people saying: “Al-

Faḍl disobeyed me in something and I have protected myself against him. Now he has repented and returned to obeying me. Therefore now take him as a friend.”

“We are the friends of those you befriend and the enemies of those whom you are against,” they answered. “We have made him our friend.”

Yaḥyā b. Khālīd departed on the messenger-service and reached Baghdād. There the people were disturbed and spreading disquieting rumours. He gave the impression that he had come to improve the administration of the Sawād and to look into the affairs of the tax-collectors. He occupied himself with some of those matters for a few days. Then he summoned al-Sindī b. Shāhik and gave him his instructions with regard to (Mūsā). (He carried out his instructions. What he commissioned al-Sindī to do was to kill him, peace be on him, with poison which he put in the food he brought him. It is said that he put it in dates. (Mūsā) ate some of them and then felt the effect of the poison. He remained for three days in a fever from it and died on the third day.)²²

When Mūsā died, al-Sindī b. Shāhik brought the jurists and notable men of Baghdād in (to see) him. Among them were al-Haytham b. ‘Adī and others. They saw that there was no mark of any wound on him, nor (any evidence) of strangulation. (Al-Sindī) made them give testimony that he had died normally. They testified to that. He was taken out and he was put on the bridge at Baghdād. Then an announcement was made: “This man Mūsā b. Ja‘far, peace be on him, has died. So come and look at him”

The people began to come and look into (Mūsā’s) face while he was dead. For a group had claimed during the life of Mūsā that he was the awaited Imam (*al-Muntazar*) who would continue to undertake the Imamate for the rest of time (*al-qā’im*). They made his imprisonment the period of absence (*al-ghayba*) which had been reported concerning the last Imam (*al-qā’im*).²³ Yaḥyā b. Khālīd ordered it to be announced at his death: “This is Mūsā b. Ja‘far whom the Rāfiḍites claim is the last Imam (*al-qā’im*) who will not die. So (come and) look at him.” The people saw that he was dead. Then he was carried away and buried in the cemetery of Quraysh at the Tin Gate. This cemetery had been used for Banū Hāshim and the nobles of the people for a long time.

It is reported that when he was about to die, he asked al-Sindī b. Shāhik to bring him his retainer (*mawlā*) from Medina who was staying at the house of al-‘Abbās b. Muḥammad at the cane-market (*mashra‘at al-qaṣb*). The latter should wash

22 What is between brackets is not in *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*. The method of killing is different.

23 These are al-Mufīd’s comments.

and shroud his body. (Al-Sindī) did that.

Al-Sindī (later) reported:

I (i.e. al-Sindī) asked him to permit me to shroud him but he refused. He said: “I am a member of the House (of the Prophet). The giving of dowries for our women, the performing of pilgrimages on behalf of those of us who have not made the pilgrimage, and the shrouding of our dead can only be performed by one of our retainers (*mawlās*) who is pure. I already have my shroud and I want the washing and preparation (of my body) to be carried out by my retainer so-and-so.”

That was done for him.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE NUMBER OF HIS SONS AND AN EXTRACT FROM THE REPORTS ABOUT THEM

Abu al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, had thirty-seven children, male and female. They were:

1. ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā, peace be on them.
2. Ibrāhīm
3. al-‘Abbās
4. al-Qāsim

(Their mothers) were slave-wives (*ummahāt awlād*).

5. Ismā‘īl
6. Ja‘far
7. Hārūn
8. al-Ḥasan

(Their mother) was a slave-wife.

9. Aḥmad
10. Muḥammad
11. Ḥamza

(Their mother) was a slave-wife.

12. ‘Abd Allāh
13. Ishāq
14. ‘Ubayd Allāh
15. Zayd
16. al-Ḥasan
17. al-Faḍl

18. al-Ḥusayn
 19. Sulaymān
- (Their mothers) were slave-wives.

20. Fāṭima the elder
21. Fāṭima the younger
22. Ruqayya
23. Ḥakīma
24. Umm Abīhā
25. Ruqayya the younger
26. Umm Ja‘far
27. Lubāba
28. Zaynab
29. Khadīja
30. ‘Aliyya
31. ‘Āmina
32. Ḥasana
33. Burayḥa
34. ‘Ā’isha
35. Umm Salama
36. Maymūna
37. Umm Kulthūm

(Their mothers) were slave-wives.

The most outstanding and celebrated of the children of Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, the greatest of them in rank, the most learned and the one in whom was gathered the most merit was Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍa, peace be on him.

Aḥmad b. Mūsā was noble, exalted and pious. Abu al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be on him, used to love him and showed him preference. He gave him his estate known as al-Yasīra. It is said that Aḥmad b. Mūsā, may Allāh be pleased with him, freed a thousand slaves.

[Al-Sharīf Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā reported: My grandfather (Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan) told me: I heard Ismā‘īl b. Mūsā say:] My father (Mūsā) went out with his children to one of his properties - he named the property but Abū al-Ḥasan Yaḥyā forgot the name. We were in that place and with Aḥmad b. Mūsā were twenty of my father’s servants and retinue. If Aḥmad stood up, they stood up with him. If Aḥmad sat down they sat down with him.

After that my father looked at him with a (loving) concern which could not be ignored. We did not depart until Ahmad went before us.

Muḥammad b. Mūsā was a man of merit and righteousness.

[Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā reported: My grandfather (Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan) told me: Hāshimiyya, a woman retainer of Ruḡayya, daughter of Mūsā, said:]

Muḥammad b. Mūsā was a man of (continual) ritual ablution and prayer. Throughout the night, he used to perform ritual ablutions and pray. The sound of water pouring (for ablution) would be heard and he would pray for some of the night. Then he would be silent for an hour and then sleep. He would, then, rise and again the sound of water being poured for the ablution would be heard. Then he would again pray for some of the night. He would continue in this way until it was morning. I never saw him without remembering the words of Allāh, the Exalted: *They used to sleep only a little of the night* (LI 17).

Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā was brave and noble. During al-Ma'mūn's time he was invested with the governorship of Yemen by Muḥammad b. Zayd b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Abī Ṭālib, peace be on them, to whom Abū Sarāyā had pledged allegiance at Kūfā. He went there and conquered it. He resided there for a time until what happened to Abū Sarāyā happened. Then a safe-conduct was given to him by al-Ma'mūn.

Each of the sons of Abu al-Ḥasan Mūsā had great merit and well-known rank. However, al-Riḍa was the foremost of them in merit as we have mentioned.