

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.

[Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Umayr reported on the authority of Hishām b. Sālim on the authority of Abū ‘Abd Allāh, Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, peace be on them, who said:]¹

When my father was near to death he said: “Ja‘far I give testamentary enjoinder to you (to treat) my followers well.”

“May I be your ransom,” I replied, “by Allāh, I will make them (know their religion so well) that any man among them in the country will not (have to) ask anyone (for advice).”

[Abān b. ‘Uthmān reported on the authority of Abū al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Kinānī, who said:]²

Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad, peace be on him, looked towards his son, Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far, peace be on him, and said (to us): “Do you see that man? He is one of those of whom Allāh, the Mighty and High, said: *We wish to grant a favour to those who have been humiliated in the land and we will make them Imams and inheritors* (XXVIII 5).

[Hishām b. Sālim reported on the authority of Jabir b. Yazīd al-Ju‘fī:]³

Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad, peace be on him, was asked about the one who would take charge (*al-qā‘im*) (of the Imamate) after him. He tapped Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far, peace be on him, with his hand and said: “By Allāh, this is the man among the family of Muḥammad, peace be on them, who will take charge (*al-qā‘im*) (of the Imamate).”

[‘Alī b. al-Ḥakam reported on the authority of Ṭāhir, a follower of Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad, peace be on him, who said:]⁴

I was with (Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad), peace be on him, when Ja‘far, peace be on him approached, Abū Ja‘far, peace be on him, said, “Here is the best of creatures.”

[Yūnus b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān reported on the authority of ‘Abd al-A‘lā, a retainer of the family of Sām, on the authority of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far, peace be on

1 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 306, tradition no. 2. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

2 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 306, tradition no. 1. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

3 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 307, tradition no. 7. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

4 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 306, tradition no. 4. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

him, who said:]⁵

My father, peace be on him, entrusted to me (everything) which was there. When he was near to death, he said: “Call witnesses for me.” I summoned four men from Quraysh, among them Nāfi‘, retainer of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar. (My father said:) “Write this testimony which I bequeath (like) Jacob did to his sons:

My sons, Allāh has chosen the religion for you. So do not die except as Muslims. (II 132). Muḥammad b. ‘Alī makes this last testimony to Ja‘far b. Muḥammad. He orders him to shroud him in the cloak in which he used to perform the Friday prayer, to put on him his turban, to make his grave a square, to raise it the height of four fingers above the ground and to take his shabby clothes away from him at his burial.

Then he said to the witnesses: “Depart, may Allāh have mercy on you.”

“Father” I said to him (after they had gone), “what was in this that there had to be witnesses for it?”

“My son,” he answered, “I was unwilling for you to be overcome and for it to be said that no testimony had been made for him. I wanted you to have proof.”

Reports with the same meaning as this account are numerous. The narration of the report of the tablet (*lawḥ*) with the designation of him, peace be upon him, for the Imamate has already been mentioned. The rational proofs which have been mentioned earlier that the Imam can only be the most outstanding person in merit (*al-afdāl*) also indicate his Imamate, peace be on him, because of the clear demonstration of his outstanding merit in religious knowledge (*‘ilm*), in asceticism, and in practice above all his brothers, the members of his uncle’s family and the rest of the people of his time. The evidence for the invalidity of the Imamate of those who were not protected (from error) like the prophets (were protected) and the clear demonstration of the lack of protection of those others who claimed the Imamate during his lifetime, together with their deficiency in (attaining) complete knowledge of religion, clearly indicates his Imamate. For there must be an Imam who is protected (from error) at all times as we have mentioned before.⁶ The people tell of the clear signs from Allāh which were performed by him, peace be on him, which indicate his Imamate, his true right and the invalidity of the statements of those who claimed the Imamate on behalf of others.

Among those is the report about him which the reporters of history (*naqalat*

⁵ *Al-Kāfī*, I, 307, tradition no. 8. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

⁶ Al-Mufīd has not dealt thoroughly with this subject in this book.

al-āthār) recount about him with al-Manṣūr.⁷ Al-Manṣūr ordered Rabī‘ to bring Abū ‘Abd Allāh, Ja‘far, peace be on him, to him. He brought him. When al-Manṣūr saw him, he said: “May Allāh kill me, if I don't kill you. You are attempting to harm my authority and you are seeking treachery against me.”

“By Allāh, I am not,” retorted Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Ja‘far), peace be on him, “Nor do I want to. If you have been told so, then it is by a liar. However, even if I had done so, then Joseph was treated badly and he forgave, Job suffered tribulation and he was patient, and Solomon received gifts and he gave thanks. These men were prophets and your lineage goes back to them.”

“Indeed,” replied al-Manṣūr, “Come up here.” He went up and then (al-Manṣūr) continued: “So-and-so has informed me about what you have been saying.”

“Bring him, Commander of the faithful,” he replied, “so that he may confront me with that.”

He had the man whom he had mentioned brought and asked him: “Did you (really) hear what you reported about Ja‘far, peace be on him?”

“Yes,” he replied.

“Make him swear to that,” said Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Ja‘far), peace be on him.

“Do you swear to that?” demanded al-Manṣūr.

“I do,” he replied.

“Say: May I be outside Allāh’s power and strength and may I seek refuge in my own power and strength (if I lie that) Ja‘far, peace be on him, did such and such and said such and such,” said Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Ja‘far), peace be on him.

(The man) paused for a moment and then made the oath. It was only a moment later that his leg was struck.

“Drag him by his leg and take him out, may Allāh curse him,” ordered Abū Ja‘far (al-Manṣūr).

Al-Rabī‘ reported: When Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, peace be on them, went in to see al-Manṣūr, I saw his lips moving. As he moved them, al-Manṣūr’s anger (gradually) became quietened, so that when he approached him, he was pleased with him. When Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Ja‘far) peace be on him, came out from Abū Ja‘far (al-Manṣūr) I followed him and said to him: “This man was the angriest

⁷ There are several earlier versions of Ja‘far’s meeting with the second ‘Abbāsīd Caliph. The account in *Al-Kāfi*, II, 562-3 is similar but does not mention the witness and gives a different prayer. In *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 350-3 there is a report of the meeting.

of men towards you. When you went in, you were moving your lips as you went in and when you moved them his anger quietened. With what (words) were you moving them?”

“The prayer of my (great) grandfather, al-Husayn b. ‘Alī, peace be on them,” he replied.

“May I be your ransom,” I said, “what is this prayer?”

He told him:

O my Provision in time of hardship, O my Help in the face of disaster, guard me with Your Eye which never sleeps, surround me with Your impenetrable fortress.

Al-Rabī‘ reported: I learned that prayer and I never fell into hard times without saying it and it relieving me.

(At that time) I said to Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, peace be on them: “Why did you stop the slanderer from (merely) swearing by Allāh?”

“I was reluctant that Allāh should see him praising His unity and glorifying Him,” he answered, “for then He would show forbearance towards Him and delay his punishment. Therefore I made him swear in the way you heard and Allāh struck him fiercely.”

It is reported that Dāwud b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās killed al-Mu‘allā b. Khunays, a retainer of Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, peace be on them, and took his property. Ja‘far, peace be on him, went to him while he was pulling at his cloak.

“You have killed my retainer and taken his property,” (Ja‘far) said to him. “Do you know that a man may sleep when he has suffered the loss of a child but he may not sleep when he is at war? I will pray to Allāh against you.”

“Do you threaten us with your prayer?” he retorted as if he was ridiculing his words.

Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Ja‘far), peace be on him, went back to his house and spent the whole night standing and sitting. Then, at dawn he was heard saying in his private prayer:

O Possessor of mighty strength, O Possessor of fierce enmity, O Possessor of power before which all Your creatures are humble, give me satisfaction against this tyrant and take vengeance on him for me.

It was not an hour before voices were raised in screeching (lamentation) and it was announced that Dāwud b. ‘Alī had just died.⁸

Abū Baṣīr reported: I visited Medina and I had a young slave-girl with me. I had intercourse with her and then I went to the baths. But I met some of our colleagues of the Shī‘a who were heading towards Ja‘far b. Ṣādiq, peace be on them. I was afraid that they would get there before me and I would miss visiting him so I went with them to the house. When I stood before Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Ja‘far), peace be on him, he looked at me and said: “Abū Basir, don’t you know that the houses of prophets and the children of prophets are not suitable places to enter for those who are ritually impure?”

I was ashamed and said: “Son of the Apostle of Allāh, I met out companions and I was afraid that I would miss visiting you with them. I will never do the same thing again,” and I left.

There are innumerable reports about him concerning signs and revealing the unknown similar to those which we have mentioned, which would take too long to recount.

He, peace be on him, used to say: “Our knowledge is of what will be (*ghābir*), of what is past (*mazbūr*), of what is marked in hearts (*nakt fī al-qulūb*), and of what is tapped into ears (*naqr fī al-asmā’*). We have the red case (*jafr*), the white case, and the scroll of Fāṭima, peace be on her, and we have (the document called) *al-jāmi‘a* in which is everything the people need.”

He was asked to explain these words and he said: “*Ghābir* is knowledge of what will be; *mazbūr* is knowledge of what was; what is marked in the hearts (*nakt fī al-qulūb*) is inspiration; and what is tapped into the ears (*naqr fī al-asmā’*) are words of angels; we hear their speech but we do not see their forms. The red case (*jafr*) is a vessel in which are the weapons of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family. It will never leave us until the one (destined) among us members of the House, to arise (*qā’im*), arises. The white case (*jafr*) is a vessel in which are the Torah of Moses, the Gospels of Jesus, the Psalms of David and the (other) Books of Allāh. The scroll of Fāṭima, peace be on her, has in it every event which will take place and the names of all the rulers until the

⁸ cf. *Al-Kāfī*, II, 557, but the prayer is different. Al-Kashshī gives several versions. *Ma‘rifat al-Rijāl*, (Mashhad, 1348 A.H.S.) paras. 707, 708. 710, 711, 713.

(last) hour comes. (The document called) *al-jāmi‘a* is a scroll seventy yards long which the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, dictated from his own mouth and ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, peace be on him, wrote in his own handwriting. By Allāh, in it is everything which people need until the end of time, including even the blood-wit for wounding, and whether a (full) flogging or half a flogging (is due).⁹

He, peace be on him, used to say: “My traditions are my father’s traditions; my father’s traditions are my grandfather’s traditions; my grandfather’s traditions are the traditions of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the Commander of the Faithful; the traditions of ‘Alī the Commander of the Faithful are the traditions of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family; and the traditions of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, are the word of Allāh, the Mighty and High”.¹⁰

[Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī has reported on the authority of Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Ja‘far), peace be on him:]

I heard Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far say: “We have the tablets of Moses, peace be on him, and we have the rod of Moses, peace be on him. We are the heirs of prophets.”¹¹

[Mu‘āwiya b. Wahb reported on the authority of Sa‘īd al-Simmān:]¹²

I was with Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, peace be on them, when two of the Zaydīs visited him. They asked him: “Is there among you an Imam whom it is a duty to obey?”

“No,” he replied.

“Reliable men have told us on your authority that you claim to be him,” they retorted. They named some people and said: “These are men of piety and distinction. They are among those who do not lie.”

Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him, became angry and said: “I have not told them that.”

When the two men saw the anger on his face, they left.

⁹ This seems to be a composite tradition of the traditions contained in *Al-Kāfi*, I, 238-242. The description of the different kinds of knowledge is similar to *Al-Kāfi*, I, 264.

¹⁰ This tradition is given in *Al-Kāfi*, I, 53.

¹¹ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 231, tradition no. 2. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

¹² *Al-Kāfi*, I, 232, tradition no. 1. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

“Do you know those two?” he asked me.

“Yes,” I replied, “they are from the people of our market. They are Zaydīs and they claim that ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan has the sword of Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family.”

“They are liars, may Allāh curse them,” he said. “By Allāh, ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Hasan has never seen it either with both his eyes or even with one of them. O Allāh, not even his father has seen it unless he saw it with ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on him. If they are truthful, (ask them) what is the sign in the hilt and what is the mark on its blade. I have the sword of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family. I have the standard of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, and his breast-plate, his armour and his helmet. If they are truthful (ask them) what is the mark on the breast-plate of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and grant him peace. Indeed the victorious standard of the Apostle of Allāh is with me, as are the tablets and rod of Moses. I have the ring of Solomon, the son of David, and the tray on which Moses used to offer sacrifice and I have (knowledge) of the (greatest) name (of Allāh) which when the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, used to put it between the Muslims and the polytheists no arrow from the polytheists could reach the Muslims. I have the same as what the angels brought. We have the weapons in the same way that the Banū Isrā’īl had the ark of the covenant. Prophecy was brought to any house in which the ark of the covenant was present; the Imamate will be brought to which ever of us receives the weapons. My father dressed in the armour of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and grant him peace, and it made marks on the ground. I put it on and it was (like) it was (for my father). The one (destined to) rise up (*qā’im*) from among us, will fill it (so that it fits him exactly) when he puts it on, if Allāh wishes.”

[‘Abd Al-A‘lā b. A‘yan reported:]¹³

I heard Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Ja‘far) peace be on him, say: “I have the weapons of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, but I will never fight with them.” Then he said: “These weapons are protected, for if they were entrusted to the wickedest of Allāh’s creatures, he would become the best of them.” Then he said, “This matter (i.e. the carrying of the Prophet’s arms in war) belongs to the man, for whom (horses’) reins will be twisted (as men ride in support of him). When Allāh wills it, he will be brought out (into the open). Then people will say: ‘Who is this who has appeared?’ Allāh will give him support (to have power) over his subjects.”

[‘Umar b. Abān reported:]

¹³ *Al-Kāfi*, I, 234. tradition no. 2. Al-Kulaynī’s *isnād* has been shortened.

I asked Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Ja‘far) peace be on him, about what the people were saying that Umm Salama, the mercy of Allāh be on her, had been handed a sealed scroll. He said: “When the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and grant him peace, died, ‘Alī, peace be on him, inherited his knowledge, his weapons and what there was. Then that went to al-Ḥasan, peace be on him, then to al-Ḥusayn, peace be on him.”

“Did it go to ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them, after that, then to his son and now has it come to you?” I asked.

“Yes,” he replied.

The reports with the same meaning are numerous. However, those of them which we have given will be sufficient to indicate what we are trying to show, Allāh willing.

AN EXTRACT FROM THE ACCOUNTS OF ABŪ ‘ABD ALLĀH JA‘FAR B. MUḤAMMAD AL-ṢADIQ, PEACE BE ON THEM, AND FROM HIS WORDS.

I found (this written) in the handwriting of Abū al-Faraj ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfāhānī, in the text of his book known as *Maqātil al-Ṭalibiyīn* (the Martyrdoms of (the family of Abū) Ṭālib):¹⁴

‘Umar b. ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Atkī informed me:

‘Umar b. Shabba told us: Al-Faḍl b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Hāshimī and Ibn Dajā told us:

Abū Zayd (‘Umar b. Shabba) (also) told me: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Amr b. Jabala told me: Al-Ḥasan b. Ayyūb, retainer (*mawlā*) of the Banū Numayr told me, on the authority of ‘Abd al-A‘lā b. A‘yan:

Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Abī al-Kirām al-Ja‘farī told me, on the authority of his father:

Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā told me on the authority of ‘Abd Allāh b. Yaḥyā:

‘Īsā b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. ‘Alī told me on the authority of his father:

The account of some of them has been introduced into the account of the rest (as follows):

A group of the Banū Hāshim met at al-Abwā’. Among them were Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās and Abū Ja‘far al-Manṣūr, Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Alī, ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan, with his two sons Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, and Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. ‘Uthmān.

¹⁴ *Maqātil al-Ṭalibiyīn*, 205

Sālih. b. ‘Alī addressed (them): “You know that you are the ones towards whom the people turn their eyes and that Allāh has brought you together in this place. Therefore give a pledge of allegiance to one from among you, which you should give to him with (genuine dedication) of yourselves. Bind yourselves so that Allāh may bring victory, for He is the best bringer of victory.”

‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan praised and glorified Allāh. Then he said: “You know that this son of mine is the *Mahdī*. Therefore come, let us pledge allegiance to him.”

“Why are you deceiving yourselves?” demanded Abū Ja‘far. “By Allāh you know that there is no one else to whom the people would take greater strides nor greater speed to answer than they would to this man,” meaning Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh.

“True,” they said, “this is he whom we acknowledge.” So they all pledged allegiance to Muḥammad and took him by the hand.

[‘Īsā reported:]

‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan’s messenger came to my father, saying: “Come to us. We are gathered for an (important) affair.” He sent (information) about that to Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, peace be on them.

[Others, not including ‘Īsā, reported:]

‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan said to those present: “You don’t want Ja‘far (here), for we fear that he would cause dissension among you in your affair.”

[‘Īsā b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad reported:]

My father sent me to see what they had gathered for. So I went to them. (Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, peace be on them, sent Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Arqaṭ b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn. We went to them). Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh (b. al-Ḥasan)¹⁵ was praying on a folded carpet from a saddle.

“My father has sent me to you,” I told them, “to ask you why you have gathered together.”

“We have gathered (here),” ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan said, “to pledge allegiance to the *Mahdī*, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh.”

[They (i.e. the other authorities) reported:]

Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, peace be on them, arrived and ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan

¹⁵ What is between brackets has been omitted by al-Mufī’d but is included from *Maqātil al-Ṭalibiyīn*, 207.

made room for him beside him. He repeated what he had said before. However, Ja‘far said: “Don't do it. The time (for the *Mahdī*) has not yet arrived. If you - meaning ‘Abd Allāh - consider that this son of yours is the *Mahdī*, he is not, nor is this the time for him (i.e. the *Mahdī*). Because you are one of our most revered elders we will not forsake you in favour of pledging allegiance to your son, even if you only intend him to rise in anger in Allāh’s cause, to command the good and prohibit the evil.”

‘Abd Allāh became angry and said: “I know that (the facts are) the opposite of what you are saying. By Allāh, Allāh has not acquainted you with (knowledge of) His unseen world. Rather it is envy for my son which prompts you to this (attitude).”

“By Allāh, it is not that which prompts me,” replied (Ja‘far) “but this man, his brothers and his sons.” Then he tapped with his hand on the back of Abū al-‘Abbās and he tapped with his hand on the shoulder of ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan.

“By Allāh, it (i.e. the caliphate) is not for you nor for your two sons,” (Ja‘far) told him, “but it is for them (i.e. the ‘Abbāsids). Your two sons will be killed.” He got up and leaning on the arm of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. ‘Imran al-Zuhrī, he continued, “Do you see the owner of the yellow cloak?” - meaning Abū Ja‘far (al-Manṣūr). “Yes,” he replied.

“By Allāh,” he said, “we have a foreboding that he (Abū Ja‘far) will kill him (Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh).”

“Will he kill Muḥammad?” ‘Abd al-‘Azīz asked him.

“Yes,” he replied.

[‘Abd al-‘Azīz reported:]

I said to myself, “By the Lord of the Ka‘ba, he is envious of him.” But then, by Allāh, I had not left this world before I saw him (Abū Ja‘far) kill both of them.

When Ja‘far said that, the people arose and separated. ‘Abd al-Ṣamad and Abū Ja‘far followed him and asked him, “Abū ‘Abd Allāh, do you really say this?”

“Yes,” he replied, “by Allāh I say it and I know it.”

[Abū al-Faraj reported: ‘Alī b. al-‘Abbās al-Maqānī‘ī told me: Bakkār b. Aḥmad informed us: al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn, on the authority of ‘Anbasa b. Bijād¹⁶ al-

¹⁶ Correct name from Ibn Dāwud, 264.

‘Abīd told us:]

Whenever Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, peace be on them, saw Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan, his eyes would flow with tears and then he would say: “(I would sacrifice) my life for him. The people say that (he is the *Mahdī* while) he is to be killed. He is not in the Book of ‘Alī, peace be on him, as one of the caliphs of this community.”¹⁷

This (second report) is a famous report just like the one before it. The historians do not differ on the accuracy of both of them. They both (clearly) give evidence for the Imamate of Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṣādiq, peace be on him. Indeed miracles were performed by him in order that he might make known things which were unknown and show the existence of things before they came to be, just as prophets, peace be on them, used to make (such things) known. That was one of their signs and indications of their prophethood, and their truthfulness (in speaking) about their Lord, the Mighty and Exalted.

[Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. Qūlawayh told me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Hāshim, on the authority of his father, on the authority of a group of his men (i.e. teachers), on the authority of Yūnus b. Ya‘qūb, who said:]¹⁸

I was with Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Ja‘far), peace be on him, when a Syrian came to him. He said: “I am a scholar (*ṣāhib*) of theology, jurisprudence, and the laws of inheritance. I have come to dispute with your followers.”

“Is your theology from the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, or from yourself?” Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Ja‘far), peace be on him, asked.

“Partly from the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, and partly from myself,” replied (the other man).

“Then are you a partner of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family?” enquired Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Ja‘far).

“No,” he answered.

“Have you heard inspiration (*wahy*) (direct) from Allāh?”

“No,” he replied.

“Is obedience to you required as is obedience to the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh

17 What is between brackets is omitted by al-Mufid but is included from *Maqātil al-Ṭalibiyīn*, 208.

18 *Al-Kāfi*, I, 171-3.

bless Him and His Family?”

“No,” was the answer.

Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him, turned to me and said: “Yūnus b. Ya‘qub, this man has contradicted himself before he has begun (the real business) of discussing.” Then he said: “Yūnus, if you were good at theology, you should speak to him.”

[Yūnus remarked:]

How sad it was, for I said to him: “May I be your ransom, I have heard you forbid (taking part in) theology and say: Woe to the theologians who say that this follows and that this does not follow; that this is entailed and that this is not entailed; that this we accept as rational and this we do not accept as rational.”

“I only said,” Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him remarked, “woe to them, if they abandon what I say and adopt their own wishes.” Then he told me: “Go out to the door and look for any of the theologians you can see, and bring them in.”

I went out and found Ḥumrān b. A‘yan who was good at theology, and Muḥammad b. al-Nu‘mān al-Aḥwāl, who was a theologian, and Hishām b. Sālim and Qays b. al-Māṣir, both theologians. I brought them (all) in to him. After he had settled us in the assembly - we were in the tent of Abū ‘Abd Allāh at the top of a mountain on the edge of the sanctuary (of Mecca) (*ḥaram*) and that was (a few) days before the days of the pilgrimage, Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him, put his head out of the tent. There appeared at that moment a camel dashing along. He cried out: “Hishām, by the Lord of the Ka‘ba!”

We thought that it was Hishām, one of the sons of ‘Aqīl, who loved him greatly. But behold, it was Hishām b. al-Ḥakam who came. He still only had the first traces of his beard on his face. All of us there were older than him. Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him, made room for him and said: “(Here is) one who helps us with his heart, his tongue and his hand.”

He told Ḥumrān: “Debate with the man” - meaning the Syrian. Ḥumrān debated with him and overcame him. Then (Abū ‘Abd Allāh) said: “O Ṭāq, debate with him.” So Muḥammad b. al-Nu‘mān debated with him and overcame him. Next he said: “Hishām b. Sālim, debate with him.” So they both argued together. He then told Qays b. Māṣir to debate with him and he did so. Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him, began to smile at their discussion as the Syrian sought to escape in front of him. He told the Syrian: “Debate with this lad” - meaning Hishām b. al-Ḥakam.

“Yes,” replied the Syrian and said, “lad, ask me about the Imamate of this man” - meaning Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him.

Hishām was so angry that he trembled but then he said: “Fellow, does your Lord look after His creatures or do they look after themselves?”

“Indeed,” replied the Syrian, “my Lord looks after His creatures.”

“What does He do to look after their religion for them?”

“He gives them duties and provides them with proof (*hujja*) and evidence for the things which He has required of them. He removes any weaknesses they might have about that.”

“What is the evidence which He has established for them?” Hishām asked him.

“It is the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family,” the Syrian answered.

“What after the Apostle of Allāh?” enquired Hishām.

“The Book and the *sunna*.”

“Do the Book and the *sunna* benefit us today in our differences so that the differences are removed from us and we are able to agree?” asked Hishām.

“Yes,” replied the Syrian.

“Then do we differ from you,” retorted Hishām, “so that you have come to us from Syria to dispute with us? You claim that personal judgement (*ra’y*) is the method (of establishing the practices) of religion while you acknowledge that personal judgement does not bring people who differ together in one doctrine.”

The Syrian was silent as if he was thinking. So Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him, asked him: “Why aren’t you debating?”

“If I say: We do not differ,” he answered, “I would be (merely) being obstinate. If I say: the Book and the *sunna* remove our differences, I would be wrong because the two bear (different) interpretations. However, I could use the same argument against him.”

“Ask him, then,” Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him, told him. “You will find him competent.”

So the Syrian asked Hishām: “Who looks after His creatures, their Lord or themselves?”

“Indeed their Lord looks after them,” replied Hishām.

“Does He establish for them someone who will harmonise their doctrine, remove their differences and explain the true from the false to them?” demanded the Syrian.

“Yes,” replied Hishām.

“Who is that?” asked the Syrian.

“At the beginning of the *sharī‘a*, it was the Apostle of Allāh but after the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, it was someone else.”

“Who is it other than the Prophet, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, who takes his place (*al-qā’im maqāmahu*) in being His (i.e. Allāh’s) proof?” the Syrian asked.

“Now or before?” Hishām responded.

“At the present time,” answered the Syrian.

“This man who is sitting here,” said Hishām - meaning Abū ‘Abd Allāh. “He is the one to whom you travelled; he is the one who tells us about heaven and is the inheritor from father and grandfather.”

“How would I have knowledge of (the truth of) that?” asked the Syrian.

“Ask him about anything which occurs to you,” Hishām told him.

“You have stopped (any) excuse of mine but I do have a question,” the Syrian declared.

“I will dispense with your questioning,” Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him, told him. “I will tell you about your travel and your journey. You left on such and such a day. Your road was such and such. You passed so and so and such and such (a man) passed you.”

Every time he told him anything about his affair, the Syrian would say: “True, by Allāh.” Then the Syrian said to him: “At this moment I have submitted (*aslamtu*) to Allāh.”

“Rather at this moment you have faith (*āmanta*) in Allāh,” said Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him. “*Islām* (submission to Allāh) is before *īmān* (faith in Allāh). On the basis of the former (*Islām*) they arrange inheritance and marriage: on the basis of faith (*īmān*) men are rewarded.”

“True,” replied the Syrian, “at this moment I testify that there is no God but Allāh, that Muḥammad is the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, and that you are the (present) trustee (*waṣī*) (of Allāh) among the trustees

(appointed by Allāh).”

Abū ‘Abd Allāh approached Ḥumrān and said: “Ḥumrān, conduct theology on the basis of traditional knowledge (*āthār*) and you will be correct.” He turned to Hishām b. Sālīm and said: “You want to use traditional knowledge but you don’t know it” Then he turned to al-Aḥwal and said: “You are a man who uses *qiyās* and is evasive, a man who refutes falsehood with falsehood, even though your false argument is stronger.” Then he turned to Qays b. Māṣir and said: “When you debate, the nearer you are to truth and traditions (*khābar*) on the authority of the Prophet, the further you are from it: you mix up the truth with what is false. A little truth suffices for much which is false. You and al-Aḥwal are skilful (verbal) gymnasts.”

[Yūnus b. Ya‘qūb remarked:] By Allāh, I thought he would say to Hishām something close to what he had said to them.

Then he said: “Hishām, you are hardly likely to fall, for you tuck in your legs (like a bird): when you are about to fall to the earth, you fly. Therefore a person like you should debate with the people. Guard against slipping and intercession will be behind you.”

This report, together with what it contains of rational proof and evidence for the Imamate, also includes the content of the two previous reports’ evidence of the miraculous ability of Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him. It agrees with them in the (full) significance of proof.

[Abū al-Qasim Ja‘far b. Muḥammad al-Qummī informed me on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī, on the authority of ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Hashim, on the authority of his father on the authority of ‘Abbās ‘Amr al-Faqīmī:]¹⁹ Ibn Abī al-‘Awjā’, Ibn Ṭālūt, Ibn al-A‘mā and Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ with a group of Zindiqs were gathered in the Sacred Mosque during the season of the pilgrimage. Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far b. Muḥammad, peace be on them, was there giving legal decisions to the people, explaining the Qur’ān to them and answering their questions with arguments and proofs. The group said to Ibn Abī al-‘Awjā’: “Can you induce this man sitting here to make a mistake and question him about what would disgrace him in front of those who are gathered around him? For you can see the fascination of the people for him; he is (supposed to be)

19 The tradition in this form does not seem to appear in *al-Kāfī* despite the inclusion of al-Kulaynī’s name in the *isnād*. However cf. Ibn Bābawayh, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*. (Tehran 1387 AH) 253-4.

the great scholar of his time.”

“Yes,” replied Ibn Abī al-‘Awjā’. He went forward and the people moved aside. He said: “Abū ‘Abd Allāh, gatherings for discussion are things to be taken care of. Everyone who has a cough must cough, so will you permit me to ask a question?”

“Ask, if you want to,” Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him, answered him.

Then Ibn Abī al-‘Awjā’ asked him: “For how long will you tread on this threshing-floor and go round this stone? For how long will you worship this house made of bricks and mud and amble around it like a camel when it is scared? Whoever thinks about this and considers it, realises that it is the action of an unintelligent and unthinking man, so explain (it) as you are the principal exponent (lit. head and hump) of this affair, and your father was its founder and support.”

“Those whom Allāh leads astray and whose hearts He blinds find the truth unwholesome and will never taste its sweetness,” retorted al-Şādiq, peace be on him. “The devil is the friend and lord of such a man. He will lead him to the watering places of destruction and never let him come from them. This is a house where Allāh’s creatures seek to worship Him in order that their obedience in coming to it may be well known. Therefore He has urged them to magnify it and to visit it and He has made it the place of His prophets and the direction of prayer for those who pray to Him. It is a part of Paradise and a path which leads to His forgiveness. It is set up at the seat of perfection and at the meeting point of majesty and glory. Allāh created it over two thousand years before the earth was laid out. The most worthy to be obeyed in what He orders and to have His prohibitions refrained from is Allāh the Creator of souls and forms.”

“You have only spoken and referred (me) to someone who is not present, Abū ‘Abd Allāh,” retorted Ibn Abī al-‘Awjā’.

“Shame on you,” retorted al-Şādiq, peace be on him. “How could One Who is present with His creatures and closer to them than a vein in the neck, Who hears their words and knows their secrets, be someone who is not present.”

“Is He in every place or isn’t He?” asked Ibn Abī al-‘Awjā’. “If He is in Heaven, how can He be on earth? And if He is on earth, how can He be in Heaven?”

“You described something which is created,” retorted Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him, “which when it moves from one place, and when another place is

occupied by it, and when (the former) place is without it, then, in the place which it has come to, it does not know what happens in the place in which it was. As for Allāh, the Mighty, (the Dignified, the Ruler, the Judge,)²⁰ there is no place without Him and no place occupied by Him. He is not nearer to one place than He is to another. In that way the traces of Himself (which He gives) bear witness to Him and His actions give evidence for Him. He whom He has sent with precise signs and clear proofs, Muḥammad, may Allāh bless Him and His Family, has brought us this (form of) worship. If you have any doubts about any of His commandments, ask about it and I will explain it to you.”

Ibn Abī al-‘Awjā’ became stupified and did not know what to say. He left his presence and said to his companions: “I asked you to find me some wine (to enjoy myself with) and you threw me on to a burning coal.”

“Shut up,” they told him. “You have disgraced us by your bewilderment. We saw no one today more humiliated than you in his discussion.”

“Are you saying this to me?” he replied. “He is (only) the son of a man who shaved the heads of those whom you see.” He indicated with his hand towards the people gathered for the pilgrimage.

[It is reported:]²¹

One day Abū Shākir al-Daysānī stood in a discussion group of Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him, and said: “You are one of the shining stars, your fathers were wonderful full moons and your mothers were graceful discreet women. Your lineage is the most noble of lineages. When learned men are mentioned, it is for you that the little finger is bent (i.e. he is the first to be counted). So tell me, O bountiful sea, what is the evidence for the creation of the world?”

“The easiest evidence for that is what I will show you (now),” answered Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him. Then he called for an egg and put it in the palm of his hand. “This is a compact protective container; inside it is the thin (substance of an) egg which is surrounded by what could be compared with fluid silver and melted gold. Do you doubt that?”

“There can be no doubt about that,” replied Abū Shākir.

“Then it splits open showing a form like (for example) a peacock,” continued Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him. “Has anything entered into it other than what

²⁰ What is between brackets is omitted by al-Mufid and included from Ibn Bābawayh, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, 253-4.

²¹ This tradition is reported by Ibn Bābawayh, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, 292-3.

you knew (to be there already)?”

“No,” he replied.

“This is the evidence for the creation of the world.”

“You have explained, Abū ‘Abd Allāh,” he said, “and you have made it clear. You have spoken and brought improvement. You have described it and spoken concisely. You knew that we would not accept anything which we could not realise with our eyes, or hear with our ears, or taste with our mouths, or smell with our noses, or touch with our skin.”

“You have mentioned the five senses,” said Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him, “but they will not bring any benefit in rational deduction except as evidence, just as darkness cannot be removed without light.”

He, peace be on him, means by that that the senses without reason will never lead to the understanding of things which are not present, and that what he had shown with regard to the creation of the form was a concept whose recognition (*ilm*) was based on sense-perception.

(The following is an example) of what has been recorded on his authority, peace be on him, concerning the necessity of knowing Allāh the Most High and His religion: He said: “I have found the knowledge of all the people (encompassed) by four things:

1. You should know your Lord;
2. You should know what He has done for you;
3. You should know what He wants from you;
4. You should know what would make you abandon your religion.

These four divisions include (all) the requirement of things which should be known because the first thing that a man should do is to know his Lord, may His Majesty be exalted. When he knows that he has a Lord, it is necessary that he must know what He has done for him. When he knows what He has done for him, he knows of His blessings. When he knows of His blessings, it is necessary that he should thank Him. When he wants to carry out his thanks, he must know what He wants so that he may obey Him in his actions. Since obedience to Him is necessary, it will be necessary for him to know what would cause him to abandon his religion so that he might avoid it, and in that way keep pure his obedience to his Lord and his thanks for His blessings.”

(This is an example) of what was recorded on his authority peace be on him, concerning the unity of Allāh and the denial of anthropomorphism.

He said to Hishām b. al-Ḥakam: “Allāh, the Exalted, should not be compared to anything, nor should anything be compared to Him. Whatever comes to the imagination is other than Allāh.”

(The following is an example) of what was recorded on his authority, peace be on him, concerning his words on justice: He said to Zurāra b. A‘yan: “Zurāra, shall I give you a summary of (the doctrine of) decree (*qaḍā*) and destiny (*qadar*)?” “Yes, may I be your ransom,” replied Zurāra.

“When it is the Day of Resurrection and Allāh has gathered His creatures together, He will ask them about what He enjoined upon them but He will not ask them about what He had decreed for them.”

(This is an example) of what was recorded on his authority concerning wisdom and exhortation.

He said: “Not everyone who intends something is able to do it. Not everyone who is able to do something will be granted success in it. Not everyone who is granted success in something will do it in the right place. When intention, ability, success and correctness come together, there happiness is perfected.”

(This is an example) of what has been recorded of him, peace be upon him, urging consideration of Allāh’s religion and the acquisition of knowledge about the friends (*awliyā*) of Allāh.

He said: “Give close consideration to things which you cannot afford to ignore, be true to yourselves and fight against your (inclinations) so that you may find out those things which it is inexcusable not to know. These are the basic elements of Allāh’s religion. If a man ignores them, he will gain no benefit (no matter) how intense is his striving in pursuit of the outward form of worship. On the other hand, no harm will come to a man who knows them and abides by them with moderation (in his behaviour). There is no way for anyone except through the help of Allāh, the Mighty and High.”

(The following is an example) of what has been recorded on his authority, peace be on him, urging repentance:

He said: “To delay repentance is to be heedless; to lengthen the time of putting

off (religious duties) is (to create) confusion (in one's mind); to attempt to justify oneself before Allāh is (to bring about one's own) destruction; persisting in sin makes (a person) feel secure from Allāh's devising. *Only people who are lost feel secure from Allāh's devising.* [VII 99]"

The reports about what has been recorded on his authority, peace be on him, concerning knowledge, wisdom, asceticism, exhortation and all the branches of learning are too numerous to be enumerated in one speech or to be included in one book. What we have set out is enough for the purpose of what we intended. Allāh is the bringer of success for what is right.

(The poet) al-Sayyid Ismā'īl b. Muḥammad al-Ḥimyarī, may Allāh have mercy on him, withdrew from the doctrine of the Kaysaniyya²² which he had professed, when he was informed of Abū 'Abd Allāh's peace be on him, denial of this doctrine and of his prayers for him and he (returned) to the system of the Imamate. He said of him, peace be on him:

O (you) who ride a tall, strong camel to Medina, on which (you) cross every broad land,

If Allāh guides you, you will look to Ja'far. So speak to the friend (*walī*) of Allāh, the son of the man who was well-educated (in the learning of Allāh):

Friend of Allāh and son of the friend of Allāh, I repent before the Merciful and then I return

To you from the wrong which I used to hold while I was constantly striving against all who obviously expressed (the truth).

Yet my words concerning the son of Khawla²³ were not meant to be rebellious against the offspring of the celebrated one.

Rather they were spoken on the authority of the trustee (*waṣī*) of Muḥammad - and he was not a liar when he said

That the master of the affair (*walī al-amr*) would disappear without being

22 The Kaysaniyya believed in the Imamate of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya. They held that he had not died and that he was in occultation until he would return as the *Mahdī*.

23 Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya's mother.

seen for years like a man afraid.

The possessions of the missing man will be distributed as if his concealment were in the high heaven.

Say, “No,” and the truth is what you say, and what you say is final without me adding any fanaticism.

I testify to my Lord that your words are a proof (*hujja*) to all creatures, whether obedient or sinful,

That the master of the affair (*wali al-amr*) and the one who will arise (al-qā'im) whom my soul (now) looks towards and who excites it to joy,

That He will have concealment (*Ghayba*) where it is inevitable that he will conceal himself. May Allāh bless him as one who will be concealed.

He will delay for a time then his authority will come to dominate and he will fill all (the lands) from East to West with Justice.

In this poetry there is clear evidence for the withdrawal of al-Sayyid, may Allāh have mercy on him, from the beliefs of the Kaysaniyya, and for his holding the doctrine of the Imamate of al-Ṣadiq, peace be on him. (There is also evidence) for the existence of a clear call on the part of the Shī'a during the time of Abū 'Abd Allāh to (accept) his Imamate and to hold the doctrine of the concealment of the leader (for the rest) of time (*ṣāhib al-zamān*), the blessings and peace of Allāh be on him. This (poem) is a clear indication of (al-Sayyid's belief) and it is a clear statement of (the doctrine of) the Twelver-Imamites (*Imāmiyya ithna 'ashariyya*).

The Number of Abū 'Abd Allāh Ja'far's Children, their Names and an Extract of the Reports about them.

Abū 'Abd Allāh, peace be on him, had ten children. They were

1. Ismā'il
2. 'Abd Allāh
3. Umm Farwa

The mother of these (three) was Fāṭima, daughter of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn.

4. Mūsā

5. Ishāq
 6. Muḥammad
- (all of these three were born) to a slave-wife

7. Al-‘Abbās
8. ‘Alī
9. Asmā’
10. Fāṭima

They had different mothers.

Ismā‘īl was the eldest of his sons. Abū ‘Abd Allāh loved him very much, and was very kind to him. Some of the Shī‘a used to think that he would take charge (of the Imamate) (*qā’im*) after his father and would be his successor after him, since he was the oldest in years and because of his father’s inclination towards him and compassion for him. However, he died at al-‘Arḍ during the life-time of his father, peace be on him, and he was carried on the shoulders of men to his father in Medina and he was buried in (the cemetery) of al-Baqī‘.

It is reported that Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him was very grieved and saddened by his (death). He led his litter barefoot and without a cloak. He ordered his litter to be put on the ground many times before he was buried, and he uncovered (Ismā‘īl) face and looked at it.

His intention in doing that was to establish the fact of (Ismā‘īl) death to those who had thought that he was to succeed after him, and to remove from them any mistaken belief with regard to him (still) being alive.

When Ismā‘īl, may Allāh have mercy on him, died, those of his father’s followers who had thought and believed in Ismā‘īl Imamate after his father, abandoned that doctrine. However, a small group maintained that (Ismā‘īl) was still alive (and was the successor). This group was not from the close associates of his father (*khāṣṣa*) nor from those who report on his authority. Such men (who held Ismā‘īl to be still alive) were distant and extremists.

When al-Ṣādiq, peace be on him, died, a group of the latter then moved across to declare the Imamate of Mūsā b. Ja‘far, peace be on him, after his father, peace be on him. The rest divided into two (main) divisions. One of them withdrew from the doctrine that Ismā‘īl was still alive and maintained the Imamate of his son Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl because of their view that the Imamate had belonged to Ismā‘īl (as successor) and that a son has more right to the Imamate than a brother

has. The other group maintained their position that he was still alive. However, today, they are extremely rare and there is not any knowledge of anyone of them who can be pointed out. Both these groups are called the Ismā‘īlyya. Those of them who are known now, are the ones who claim that the Imamate after Ismā‘īl belonged to his son and the sons of his son to the end of time,

‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far was the eldest of his brothers after Ismā‘īl but he did not have a position of honour with his father similar to the rest of his father’s sons. He was suspected of opposing his father’s teaching and it is said that he used to mix with the Hashwiyya and was inclined towards the beliefs of the Murji’a. He claimed the Imamate after his father and argued that he was the eldest of the surviving brothers. A group of the followers of Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him, followed him in his declaration. Later most of them went back to the doctrine of the Imamate of his brother, Mūsā, peace be on him, when they perceived the weakness of his claim, and the strength of the authority of Abū al-Ḥasan (i.e. Mūsā), peace be on him, together with the evidence for the right of the latter and the clear proofs of his Imamate. However, a small number of them, continued in their belief and professed the Imamate of ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far. They are the sect which is nick-named al-Faṭḥiyya. This name is only attached to them because of their doctrine of the Imamate of ‘Abd Allāh, for he was flat-footed (*aftah*) in both feet. It is (also) said that they were called that because of the propagandist for the Imamate of ‘Abd Allāh was called ‘Abd Allāh b. Aftah.

Ishāq b. Ja‘far was one of the men of merit, righteousness, piety and striving (after Allāh) (*ijtihād*). The people relate traditions and reports on his authority. When Ibn Kāsib used to relate a tradition on his authority, he used to say: “The reliable satisfactory authority, Ishāq b. Ja‘far has told me.”

Ishāq used to uphold the Imamate of his brother, Mūsā b. Ja‘far, peace be on him, and he reported on the authority of his father the designation (*naṣṣ*) of the Imamate on his brother, peace be on him.

Muḥammad b. Ja‘far was generous and brave. He used to fast on alternate days. However, he held Zaydī views concerning coming out (in rebellion) with the sword.

[It is reported on the authority of his wife, Khadīja, daughter of ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥusayn, who said:]

Muḥammad never left us on any day with a cloak without coming back after having put it (on someone else).²⁴ Every day he used to slaughter a ram for his guests. He led a revolt against al-Ma'mūn in the year 199 A.H. (814/5) in Mecca. The Jarūdiyya branch of the Zaydīs followed him. 'Īsā al-Jalūdī came to fight against him. He dispersed (Muḥammad's) groups, captured (Muḥammad) and sent him to Ma'mūn. When he reached al-Ma'mūn, the latter treated him with kindness, made him sit close beside him, and gave him the best of gifts. He resided with (al-Ma'mūn) in Khurasān and rode to him in the procession of his kinsmen. al-Ma'mūn put up with (things) from him which a ruler does not (usually) put up with from his subjects.

However, it is (also) reported that al-Ma'mūn refused to allow him to ride to him with a group of the descendants of Abū Ṭālib, who had revolted against al-Ma'mūn in the year 200 A.H. (815/6) and to whom he had given security. The decree came to them: "Do not ride with Muḥammad b. Ja'far. Ride with 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥusayn." However, they refused to ride and stayed in their houses. Then the decree came: "Ride with whomever you prefer." So when they rode to al-Ma'mūn, they rode with Muḥammad b. Ja'far and then they departed when he did.

[Mūsā b. Salama has mentioned:]

(News) came to Muḥammad b. Ja'far and he was told: "The servants of the man with two offices²⁵ have beaten your servants over a dispute about firewood which they had bought." He went out wrapping himself in two cloaks and (taking) with him a thick stick. He was reciting verse, saying: "Death is better than living in humiliation." The people followed him until he struck the servants of the man with two offices and took the wood away from them. News (of this) got back to al-Ma'mūn and he sent to the man with two offices and told him: "Go to Muḥammad b. Ja'far, peace be on him, apologise to him and give him power to decide what to do against your (servants)." The man with two offices came to Muḥammad b. Ja'far.

[Mūsā b. Salama reported:]

I was sitting with Muḥammad b. Ja'far when he came. (Muḥammad) was told: "Here is the man with two offices."

"He will only sit on the ground," he declared and he and those with him took the carpet which was in the house and threw it aside. There was only the cushion on which Muḥammad b. Ja'far was sitting left in the house.

²⁴ cf. *Maqātil al-Ṭalibiyīn*, 538.

²⁵ The man with two offices (i.e. military and civil administration) was al-Faḍl b. Sahl.

When the man with two offices entered, Muḥammad made room for him on the cushion. However, he refused to sit on it and sat on the ground. He apologised to him and gave him power to decide what to do with his servants.

Muḥammad b. Ja‘far died in Khurāsān (while he was still) with al-Ma’mūn. Al-Ma’mūn rode to attend his (funeral). He met them as they were bringing him out. He looked at the litter, got down, and walked between the two poles of (the litter). He remained between them until it was put down. Then he went forward and said the prayer over him. Then he (helped to) carry it until he went down into the grave. He remained there until (they) began to erect (the tomb) over it. Then he went out of it and stood at the grave until the burial was complete.

‘Ubayd Allāh b. al-Ḥusayn spoke to him and called out to him, “Commander of the faithful, you have become weary today, wouldn’t you prefer to ride?”. “These are bonds of kinship which have been cut for two hundred years,” replied al-Ma’mūn.

[It is reported on the authority of Ismā‘īl b. Muḥammad b. Ja‘far, who said :] I said to my brother who was at my side while al-Ma’mūn was standing at the grave: “If we told him (al-Ma’mūn) about the venerable man’s debts, we would not find anyone closer than him at this time.” Then we began (to mention them) to Ma’mūn.

“How much debt did Abū Ja‘far (i.e. Muḥammad b. Ja‘far) leave?” he asked.

“Fifteen thousand dīnār,” I told him.

“Allāh has relieved him of his debt,” he said. “To whom did he make his will?”

“To his son called Yaḥyā in Medina,” we answered.

“He is not in Medina,” he said. “He is in Egypt and we are aware of him being there. However, we are unwilling to let him know about (our knowledge) of his departure from Medina so that that should not harm him as a result of his knowledge of our dislike of his departure from there”

‘Alī b. Ja‘far, may Allāh be pleased with him, was an important narrator of traditions, correct in method, with intense piety and great merit. He stayed close to his brother Mūsā, peace be on him, and reported many traditions on his authority

Al-‘Abbās b. Ja‘far, may Allāh have mercy on him, was a man of outstanding merit.

Mūsā b. Ja‘far, peace be on them, was the most distinguished, the greatest in rank, and the one most hailed by the people of the sons of Abū ‘Abd Allāh, peace be on him. In this no one was seen who was more generous than him, kinder in spirit and companionship. He was the person most given to worship and the most pious and distinguished, the most knowledgeable in jurisprudence of the people of his time. The members of his father’s Shī‘a agreed on the doctrine of his Imamate, on the greatness of his right and on submitting to his authority. They have reported on the authority of his father numerous designations (*naṣṣ*) of the Imamate on him, and indications of him (being given) the succession. They took the guidelines of their religion from him. They report clear signs and miracles from him through which he has established proof of himself and the correctness of the doctrine of his Imamate.

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.