Sharḥ al-Akhbār fī Faḍā'il al-A'immah al-Aṭhār

Part Fourteen

In the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Compassionate.

Imam al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him

As for Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon them, he was the successor of his father, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, peace be upon him, and authority passed to him after his father. His father was known by the kunya Abū Jaʿfar.

Jaʿfar was known by the kunya Abū ʿAbd Allāh.

He was the most learned person of his time, and knowledge concerning what is lawful and unlawful branched out from him among both the particular community and the general community.

Among the prominent figures known for jurisprudence among the general community who transmitted from him were Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nuʿmān ibn Thābit al-Kūfī, Mālik ibn Anas al-Madanī, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Shuʿba ibn ʿUyayna, al-Ḥasan ibn Ṣāliḥ, Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī, ʿAmr ibn Dīnār, and many other scholars of the general community.

He was renowned for knowledge, virtue, and piety. No one denied his excellence or was unaware of his standing among either the particular community or the general community.

[1198] Ḥamza ibn Ḥumrān and al-Ḥusayn ibn Ziyād said:

"We prayed in the Mosque of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, and then went to Abū ʿAbd Allāh Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, peace be upon him. We entered his house. He called the prayer, established the prayer, and stepped forward to pray.

"We moved to one side. When he bowed, we said, 'Let us count his glorifications.'

"One of us counted thirty-three glorifications, while the other counted thirty-four glorifications."

[1199] Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad performed the pilgrimage. He came to Jamrat al-ʿAqaba and found the people standing there. He said:

"We belong to God! You are introducing an innovation."

He called for a servant named Saʿīd, who came to him.

He said to him:

"Call out to the people that I say to them: this is not a place for standing."

Saʿīd called out:

“O people! My master Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad says to you: disperse, for this is not a place for standing.”

The people dispersed.

“Ask me before you lose me”

[1200] Ṣāliḥ ibn Abī al-Aswad said:

“I heard Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, peace be upon him, say:

‘Ask me before you lose me, for no one after me will tell you what I tell you until your master rises.’”

Thus the Imams after him likewise concealed themselves through dissimulation (*taqiyya*). None of them publicly established their knowledge, nor did they reveal it, until the Mahdi arose. [1]

The Jaʿfariyyah were attributed to Abū ʿAbd Allāh Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, peace be upon him. They were a community among the Shiʿa. Before this they had professed the Imamate of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, but then differed and subsequently split into many groups. This community held that the Imam in its time was Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, and that Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad succeeded him.

Regarding this, al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī—who had belonged to them—composed poetry:

“I became a Jaʿfarī in the name of God,
And God is greatest.
And I became certain that God pardons and forgives.”

This was part of a longer poem. [2]

He also apologized to Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, blessings of God be upon him, saying:

O rider journeying toward Medina,
Upon a long, swift she-camel that traverses every wilderness, [3]

When God guides you and you behold Jaʿfar,
Say to the Friend of God and son of the purified one:

O Friend of God and son of His Prophet,
I repent to the Most Merciful, and then I return to you,

Of the sin in which I had been deeply engaged,
Striving persistently in it against every reproach.

My words concerning Ibn Khawla were not hidden hostility
Toward the descendants of the purified one.

Rather, we transmitted from the successor of Muhammad—
And he was not to be accused of falsehood in what he said—

That the one entrusted with authority would disappear,
Not be seen for years, like a frightened man watching and waiting,

And that he would distribute the wealth of the deceased,
As though his body had been concealed beneath the raised stones. [4]

So if you say no, then follow your statement,
For what you say is decisive, without stubbornness.

For the one entrusted with authority, the one who rises,
Toward whom my soul eagerly turns,

Has a period of occultation that he must undergo.
May God bless that one who is in occultation."

Explanation of Unusual Vocabulary

Al-jisra (الجسرة): A tall, long she-camel; it can also mean a large one.

Al-marjāna (المرجانة): A swift she-camel.

Al-sabsab (السبسب): A vast desert or wilderness.

Al-muhadhdhab (المهذب): One who has refined himself of his defects; that is, one who has freed himself from them.

The poet said:

"I do not preserve a brother whom you do not reproach for his disorder;
And what man is truly free of defects?"

Al-taʾawwub (التأوب): From *āba*, meaning "to return." It can also refer to returning from a journey or travel. [5]

Al-muṭnib (المطنب): One who is eloquent and elaborate in speech, particularly one who goes to great lengths in praise or condemnation.

Al-muʿatib (المعتب): One who reproaches.

Muʿātaba is mutual reproach between two people, in which each reproaches the other and recalls the grievance between them. The noun for this is *ʿutbā*.

The meaning here is: he had been striving in this matter despite being reproached for it.

Jihād: Fighting. The word derives from *ijtahadat nafsuhu fī al-shayʾ*, "his soul exerted itself to the utmost in something."

By **Ibn Khawla**, he means Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥanafiyya. Khawla was the daughter of Jaʿfar ibn Qays ibn Maslama ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Balgha ibn al-Dawl ibn Ḥanīfa ibn Lujaym. [6]

Some said she was Khawla, daughter of Abū Baṣr ibn Jaʿfar.

Others said she was a woman captured from al-Yamāma who came into the possession of ʿAlī, peace be upon him.

They said that she was not from the noblest branch of Banū Ḥanīfa, and that Khālid ibn al-Walīd had made peace with them concerning the enslaved captives. [7]

Al-ṣafḥ (الصفح) of *ṣifāḥ*: broad stones; the singular is *ṣafāḥa*. They used to place such stones upright in graves so that the dead would be protected from the soil.

Al-manṣab / al-manṣūb: Both have the sense of *mafʿal*.

Those who claimed that Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya was the Imam among the Shiʿa claimed that he was the Mahdi whom the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, had foretold—one who would rise and fill the earth with justice.

When Muḥammad died and this did not happen, they disliked abandoning their claim and retracting it. So they said:

“He did not die. He is in a cave in Mount Riḍwā.”

This was folly and ignorance on their part.

Regarding this, al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, who had supported this belief, said:

O successor, may my soul be your ransom,
You have remained too long in that cave.

You have harmed a people and I reproach you among us,
Yet they call you the caliph and the Imam.

And all the people of this earth have become hostile to you,
While your stay among them has lasted sixty years. [8]

Yet Ibn Khawla has not tasted death,
Nor has the earth concealed his bones.

Rather, he has settled in a valley of Riḍwā,
Where the angels greet him with peace.

There he has a true place of residence,
And gatherings where they converse with him.

May God guide us—or increase your command—
Through which we seek to complete our purpose. [9]

The rebellious ones of al-Mursidī have risen
Until we see our banners following one another in orderly ranks. [10]

Al-Kathīr also composed poetry concerning him, being among those who professed the Imamate of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya:

Surely, the Imams are in Quraysh,
The rulers of authority are four alike:

ʿAlī, and the three from among his descendants—
The grandsons; there is no obscurity concerning them. [11]

One grandson is the grandson of faith and righteousness,
One grandson is the one of occultation at Karbala,

And one grandson shall not taste death
Until he leads the cavalry, with the banner before him.

He will disappear and not be seen among them for a time,
At Riḍwā, where he has honey and water.

This doctrine was adopted from those who held it only after his death, following a considerable period of time.

As for his death, it was not something hidden, nor did he die during an occultation in which he disappeared. Rather, he died in Medina.

[1201] It was narrated from al-Wāqidī, who said:

“Zayd ibn Sāʾib told me:

‘I heard Abū Hāshim ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī say:

“My father died in Muḥarram at the beginning of the year 81 AH.

“When we placed him in al-Baqīʿ so that we might pray over him, Abān ibn ʿUthmān, who was governor at that time, came to pray over him.

“I said to him:

‘You will never pray over him unless you ask us to allow you to do so.’

“Abān said:

‘You have greater right to your funeral, so pray over him whoever among you wishes.’

“We said:

‘Then step forward and pray over him.’

“So he stepped forward and prayed over him.”’

Those who clung to the doctrine they had held concerning him—that he had not died—continued upon this belief.

Then one of their leaders spoke to Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, peace be upon him, about the matter.

He said to him:

“Woe to you! What is this foolishness? Do you know him better than we do, or do we know him better than you? My father, ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, told me that he witnessed his death, washed him, shrouded him, prayed over him, and placed him in his grave.”

The man said:

“The matter was made to appear differently to your father, just as the matter of Jesus ibn Maryam was made to appear differently to the Jews.”

Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, peace be upon him, said:

“Will you make this argument the basis for judgment between you and us?”

He said:

“Yes.”

Muḥammad said:

“Tell me: were the Jews to whom Jesus was made to appear differently his allies or his enemies?”

He said:

“His enemies.”

Muḥammad said:

“Then was my father an enemy of Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, so that the matter could be made to appear differently to him?”

He said:

“No.”

The man was silenced. He abandoned what he had been following and returned to the position of Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī.

Others continued to abandon that belief during the time of Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, peace be upon him, and they became known as the Jaʿfariyya.

With Abū Ḥanīfa

[1202] One day Abū Ḥanīfa, from Iraq, came to Abū ʿAbd Allāh Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, peace be upon him, to listen to him.

Abū ʿAbd Allāh came out leaning upon a staff.

Abū Ḥanīfa said to him:

“O son of the Messenger of God, you have not reached an age at which you need a staff.”

He said:

“That is true. But it is the staff of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, and I wished to seek blessing through it.”

Abū Ḥanīfa leapt toward him and said:

“Let me kiss it, O son of the Messenger of God.”

Abū ʿAbd Allāh Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad uncovered his forearm and said to him:

“By God, you know that this is part of the skin of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, and that this is some of his hair. Yet you did not kiss it, while you would kiss a staff!”

[1203] Mālik ibn Anas used to listen to Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, peace be upon him, and frequently mentioned what he had heard from him.

He would sometimes say:

“The trustworthy one told me,”

meaning Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad.

[1204] Sufyān al-Thawrī entered upon him one day and heard words from him that impressed him.

He said:

“By God, O son of the Messenger of God, this is a jewel!”

Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad said to him:

“Rather, this is better than a jewel. What is a jewel except a stone?”

[1205] al-Ḥasan ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn Ḥayy and his companions came to him one day.

He said:

“O son of the Messenger of God, what do you say concerning the saying of God, Mighty and Glorious:

‘O you who believe, obey God, obey the Messenger, and those vested with authority among you’ [1]

Who are those vested with authority whom God, Mighty and Glorious, has commanded us to obey?”

He said:

“The scholars.”

When they left, al-Ḥasan ibn Ṣāliḥ said to his companions:

“We accomplished nothing. Why did we not ask him who these scholars are?”

They returned to him and asked him.

He said:

“The Imams from among us, the People of the Household.”

[1206] It was reported that al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said to Abū Ḥanīfa when he entered upon him:

“Who are you?”

He said:

“Abū Ḥanīfa.”

He said:

“The jurist of the people of Iraq?”

He said:

“Yes.” [2]

Al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said to Abū Ḥanīfa:

“What do you rely upon when giving legal opinions?”

He said:

“The Book of God and the Sunnah of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family.”

He said:

“And when you do not find an explicit text concerning it?”

He said:

“I draw an analogy from what I have found.”

He said:

“Woe to you, O Nuʿmān! The first person to employ analogy was Iblīs, and he was mistaken. He said:

‘You created me from fire and created him from clay.’ [3]

“He therefore regarded fire as nobler than clay and thought that one created from the superior substance should not submit to one created from the inferior substance.”

Then he said:

“O Nuʿmān, which do you regard as purer: urine or semen?”

He said:

“Semen.”

He said:

“Then how has God, Mighty and Glorious, made ablution necessary because of urine, while requiring a full ritual bath because of semen, even though you consider semen purer? Can these matters be determined by analogy?”

He said:

“No.”

He said:

“Which is greater: adultery or murder?”

He said:

“Murder.”

He said:

“God, Mighty and Glorious, has established that when two witnesses testify that a person has committed murder, he is killed if the heir of the slain person demands his killing.

“Yet a person accused of adultery may not be punished on the testimony of fewer than four witnesses.

“If the religion operated according to analogy, then murder [which is the greater offense] would require more witnesses than adultery.” [4]

“And which is greater: prayer or fasting?”

He said:

“Prayer.”

He said:

“The Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, ordered a menstruating woman to make up her fast, but did not order her to make up her prayers.

“If the matter were governed by analogy, then the greater of the two would be the one more deserving of being made up.”

Abū Ḥanīfa fell silent and could find no answer.

From his supplication

[1207] When Dāwūd [1] killed Dāwūd al-Muʿallā ibn Khunays, [2] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, peace be upon him, entered upon him. He had said to his son Ismāʿīl, peace be upon him:

“Bring me my sword.”

He said to Dāwūd:

“You killed my client and took my property?”

Dāwūd said:

“I did not kill him.”

He said:

“Who killed him?”

He said:

“This man”—and he gestured with his hand toward a police officer standing before him.

Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, peace be upon him, said to his son Ismāʿīl:

“Take this one”—meaning the police officer.

Ismāʿīl seized him.

The police officer began saying to Dāwūd:

“You ordered me to kill the man. When I killed him at your command, you said: ‘This is the one who killed him.’”

Abū ʿAbd Allāh said to him:

“You have spoken the truth in what you said. No one killed him except this man.

“And I shall certainly supplicate to God against him.”

Then he left.

Dāwūd said:

“He is threatening us with his supplication.”

Footnotes

[1] That is, Dāwūd ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās, the paternal uncle of al-Saffāḥ and governor of Medina.

[2] Abū ʿAbd Allāh, the client of Imam al-Ṣādiq.

Editorial and Source Notes

[1] The author's intended Mahdi here is the Fāṭimid Mahdi, whom the author believed to be the promised Mahdi referred to by Imam al-Ṣādiq when he said “your master.”

The historically established account, however, is that knowledge and authority passed to his son, Imam Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar, peace be upon him.

[2] The manuscript says “a village of the Shiʿa,” but the editor states that he has not found the name of this village in the books.

[3] A variant in *Iʿlām al-Warā*, p. 279, reads: “a swift she-camel by which we traverse every wilderness.”

[4] A variant in *al-Manāqib* 4/246 reads: “O trustworthy one of God and son of His friend.”

[5] A variant in *Iʿlām al-Warā*, p. 279, reads: “I fought him, striving against every objector.”

[6] A variant in *Iʿlām al-Warā* gives: “the successor of our Prophet.”

[7] *Iʿlām al-Warā* gives the remainder of the poem, including the lines describing the Mahdi's eventual appearance, his filling of the East and West with justice, his march from the House of his Lord, and his defeat of his enemies.

[8] A variant in *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa* reads: “And all the people of the earth have become hostile to you; your stay among them has lasted sixty years.”

[9] A variant reads: “May God guide us when you have deviated from the matter.”

[10] A variant reads: “until we see the banners of our people following one another in orderly ranks.”

[11] The poet is Kathīr ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān.

[12] The manuscript reads “ḥayyā”; the editor has corrected it.

[13] The editor notes that some sources say Khawla was one of the captives of the Ridda wars. Others, including al-Madāʾinī, say she was captured during the Prophet's lifetime. Another group—the editor regards their account as the strongest—say that Banū Asad raided Banū Ḥanīfa during Abū Bakr's caliphate, captured Khawla, and brought her to Medina, where she was sold to ʿAlī. Her people subsequently came to Medina, recognized her, and informed ʿAlī of her position among them. He freed her, gave her a marriage portion, and married her. She bore him Muḥammad, whom he gave the kunya Abū al-Qāsim.

[14] Mount Riḍwā is described as lying between two lions and two leopards, where angels keep him company and leopards guard him.

[15] A variant reads: “Indeed, he has settled in the leafy valley of Riḍwā.”

[16] A variant reads: “May God guide us when you have deviated from the matter.”

[17] The poet is Kathīr ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān.

[18] The editor states that this doctrine was adopted by its proponents only long after his death.

[19] The editor notes that the statement concerning Abū Ḥanīfa is referring to al-Nuʿmān ibn Thābit, who died in 150 AH, was born in Kufa, learned from Imam al-Ṣādiq as mentioned previously, and subsequently established the method of legal analogy (*qiyās*).

[20] The addition “with the two witnesses” is present in the manuscript.

[21] The author identifies Dāwūd as Dāwūd ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās, paternal uncle of al-Saffāḥ and governor of Medina.

[22] Dāwūd al-Muʿallā ibn Khunays was Abū ʿAbd Allāh, a client of Imam al-Ṣādiq.

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Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, peace be upon him, spent that night standing in prayer and supplicating against Dāwūd. Among the words heard from his supplication against him, at the time just before dawn, while he was prostrating, were:

“O Possessor of power and might, O Possessor of overwhelming power, O Possessor of glory, before whom all Your creation has humbled itself, standing in submission: hasten Your seizure of Dāwūd and Your vengeance upon him.”

Dāwūd spent the night wandering about in confusion and had fallen unconscious.

Lubāba, daughter of ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās, said (1): “I arose during the night to check on him. I found him lying on his back, with a snake coiled upon his chest, its mouth placed over his mouth.

“I put my hand into my sleeve and extended it toward him. It turned its mouth toward me.

“I threw it away, and it slithered off toward one side of the house. I awakened Dāwūd and found him bewildered, his eyes having become red. I disliked telling him what had happened to him, so I left him (2).

“I returned to him a second time and found that same snake there again. I did as I had done the first time, and I shook Dāwūd, only to find him dead.

“Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad did not raise his head from prostration until he heard the cries of lamentation (3), and the people were saying: ‘Dāwūd has died.’”

[1208]

It was reported against Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, peace be upon him, to Abū al-Dawānīq. He said to al-Rabīʿ (4), his chamberlain:

“O Rabīʿ, bring me Jaʿfar. May God kill me if I do not kill him.”

So al-Rabīʿ brought him.

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Al-Rabīʿ said: “When he drew near to him, he moved his lips.

“When he entered, [Abū al-Dawānīq] said to him:

‘O Jaʿfar, are you trying to cause sedition? Do you seek to shed the blood of Muslims? Do you seek to undermine my authority and pursue calamities against me?’”

Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad said:

“O Commander of the Believers, I did not do that, nor did I intend it. You have known for a long time what I am upon. So do not accept against me the word of a liar if he lies, or of an informer if he informs against me to you.”

He fell silent.

Then he said:

“O Abū ʿAbd Allāh, by God, I know what you have long been upon, just as you have said. And even if you had done what has been reported to you, Ayyūb was tested, and he was patient; Yūsuf was wronged, and he forgave; and Sulaymān was given [a kingdom], and he was grateful.”

Then he said:

“These are the prophets of God, to whom our lineages ultimately trace themselves. Come up here.”

He raised him toward himself and seated him on his own bed beside him. Then he summoned a man and said:

“Are you not the one who said such-and-such about this man?”

He said:

“Yes, O Commander of the Believers.”

He said:

“Did you hear that from him yourself, or was it reported to you from him?”

He said:

“Rather, I heard it with my own ears.”

He said:

“Will you swear to that?”

He said:

“Yes.”

He said:

“Then say: ‘By God, besides whom there is no deity, the One who seeks and prevails.’”

Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, peace be upon him, said:

“O Commander of the Believers, if you see fit, let me administer the oath to him, and I will make him swear by whatever you wish.”

Then he said:

“O Commander of the Believers, when a servant professes the oneness and glorification of God and then swears, God will not exact vengeance upon him, even if he lies in this world.”

Then he turned to the man and said:

“Will you swear by what I make you swear by?”

He said:

“Yes.”

He said, peace be upon him:

“Fear God for your own sake. Do not swear falsely. Face the Commander of the Believers and speak the truth.”

The man said:

“I have said nothing except what I heard from you, and I will not retract it.”

Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad said:

“O God, You are witness against him and You know what he has said.”

Then he turned toward him and said:

“If you are going to swear, say: ‘I renounce God’s power and strength and surrender myself to my own power and strength, if Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad did not say such-and-such.’” (1)

The man said this, and he had not left his place before he was struck down and died.

Abū al-Dawānīq said:

“Take hold of his legs—may God curse him.”

So they dragged him until they carried him out.

Then Abū al-Dawānīq turned toward Abū ʿAbd Allāh Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, peace be upon him, seeking to appease him. He said:

“Depart, O Abū ʿAbd Allāh. I fear that your family will come to have a bad opinion of us because of what happened to you.”

When he departed, al-Rabīʿ caught up with him and said:

“O son of the Messenger of God, when you entered upon him, I thought nothing other than that he would kill you, because of the anger I saw in him and because of his oath that he would kill you. But when you entered, I saw you move your lips, and then I saw him change from the attitude he had toward you. It seems to me that you supplicated to God. Teach me what you supplicated with.”

He said:

“I supplicated with the supplication of my grandfather al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī, peace be upon him.”

He said:

“And what is it, may I be your ransom?”

He said:

“I said:

‘O my provision in my hardship, O my aid in my distress, guard me with Your eye that never sleeps, and suffice me by Your mercy, which cannot be sought by force.’” (1)(2)

Clarification and Explanation

Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad's statement to Abū al-Dawānīq, “You have long known what I am upon,” and Abū al-Dawānīq's statement that he knew this refers to something he had previously witnessed from him.

This occurred on one of the days of the Umayyads, when they were urging him to rise [in revolt] and speaking of the great number of his supporters. The one who spoke most about this was Abū al-Dawānīq.

Abū ʿAbd Allāh, peace be upon him, struck Abū al-Dawānīq on the thigh and said to him:

“Has the saying of my father to his brother Zayd not reached you, when he was intending to rise [in revolt]:

‘Woe to you, O Zayd. Beware lest tomorrow you be the one crucified at al-Kunāsa. We, the People of the Household, are such that none of us who rises before the appointed time of the rising of our Mahdī will be except like a fledgling bird that rises from its nest before its wings have matured. It does not manage to fly independently once or twice before it falls, whereupon children seize it and play with it.’” (4)

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He said to him:

“When will your Mahdī rise, O son of the Messenger of God?”

He said:

“By God, that will not happen until you and your descendants after you have played with this matter for a very long time.”

Abū al-Dawānīq said:

“Me, O son of the Messenger of God?”

He said:

“Yes, you.”

This was among the things by which God diverted his evil from him.

Thus, whenever someone informed against him to Abū al-Dawānīq and mentioned him to him, this report would be recalled, and he knew that Jaʿfar would not rise against him.

[1209]

One day Abū al-Dawānīq summoned him after someone had informed against him and emphasized the matter to him, having learned of the great number of his followers. When

Abū ʿAbd Allāh, peace be upon him, entered, he moved his lips. Abū al-Dawānīq noticed this and said:

“What are you saying, Jaʿfar? Are you insulting me and cursing me?”

He said:

“No, by God, O Commander of the Believers. I have not insulted you, nor have I cursed you.”

He said:

“Then what did you move your lips with?”

He said:

“I supplicated to God, Mighty and Glorious.”

He said:

“What did you supplicate with?”

He said:

“I said:

‘O God, You suffice against everything, and nothing suffices against You. So suffice me against him, O You who suffice against everything.’”

Abū al-Dawānīq said to him:

“No, by God, a man like you will not be left alone.”

Abū ʿAbd Allāh, peace be upon him, said:

“O Commander of the Believers, I have reached an age that none of my forefathers reached in Islam. I do not think I shall accompany you except for a short while. Nor do I think I shall live to see this year completed. So do not hasten against me, lest you incur my bloodguilt.”

His heart softened toward him, and he released him.

He, peace be upon him, died that same year. His death occurred in Medina in Shawwāl of the year 148 AH. He was sixty-eight years old. (1)

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It is also said that he was sixty-nine.

Mālik ibn Aʿyan al-Juhanī mourned him in verse:

Would that I, then would that I, had witnessed
What I had not witnessed,
So that I might have shared with Jaʿfar in his grief
And witnessed the gentleness of his return.

If it were said, “Give your life,” I would say, “It is the ransom,”
And the hand of death would be held back by what is sealed.

On the evening when guidance was buried in you,
And the foremost flower of the descendants of Aḥmad. (3)

Another said:

O eye, weep for Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad,
The adornment of all the sacred rites and the mosque. (4)

ʿAwnī also said:

Turn the mounts toward al-Baqīʿ al-Gharqad,
And convey the greeting to Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad.

And say: “Son of the daughter of Muḥammad and his successor,
O light of every guidance that has not been denied.

O truthful one whose truthfulness God Himself bore witness to—
And the awe of the Most Glorious, the Possessor of Majesty, is sufficient.

O son of guidance and father of guidance, while you yourself are guidance,
O light of the inward secret of every monotheist.

O son of the Prophet Muḥammad, you are the one
Who made clear the proper purpose of allegiance to the family of Muḥammad.

O sixth of the lights, O standard of guidance,
Whoever loves you yet does not follow your guidance has gone astray.”

Abū Hurayra al-Abbār said:

I say, as they went away carrying him
Upon the shoulders and necks of those who bore him:

“Do you know what you are carrying to the earth?
A mountain like Thabīr, which has fallen from a lofty summit.

On the morning when those who cast earth upon his grave
Threw dust over his resting place,
And it would have been more fitting for it to be upon the foreheads.

O Abū Ṣādiq, son of the truthful ones,
By my purified forefathers, I swear a truthful oath to you:

The Lord of the Throne has truly sworn concerning you among creation,
For God, Lord of the eastern horizons, said:

‘Stars, twelve in number, who preceded
To God according to a prior knowledge from God.’”

Some of the Shiʿa

Jaʿfar had five male children: ʿAbd Allāh and Ismāʿīl, whose mother was Fāṭima, daughter of al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him.

Her mother was Umm Ḥabīb, daughter of ʿAmr ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Her mother was Asmāʾ, daughter of ʿAqīl ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, peace be upon him, did not marry another woman over her, nor did he take a concubine, until she died.

The Ismāʿīliyya

Ismāʿīl was the one of the two whom he loved more and who was more dutiful toward him.

Ismāʿīl had a son, Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl. He reached adulthood during his father's lifetime. His father died during the lifetime of his grandfather, Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, at al-ʿArīḍ. He was carried upon the shoulders of men until he was buried in al-Baqīʿ.

Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, peace be upon him, would order that he be lowered [from the bier], then uncover his face and look at him. He did this repeatedly while the body was being carried toward al-Baqīʿ.

That was one of the reasons [for what followed]. (1)

Some of the Shiʿa said that Ismāʿīl died during the lifetime of his father. They said that his father had designated him [as successor], and that he had in turn designated his son Muḥammad. They have continued upon this belief to the present day, saying that the imamate belongs to his descendants, one after another.

The Fuṭḥiyya

A group of the Shiʿa held that ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar, known as al-Afṭaḥ (1), was the Imam after his father, Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad.

ʿAbd Allāh died seventy days after his father Jaʿfar, peace be upon him. He left no child and no descendant.

Those who held his imamate therefore died out, and no one now holds this position.

After the death of Fāṭima, the mother of ʿAbd Allāh and Ismāʿīl, Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad had three more sons: Mūsā, Muḥammad, and ʿAlī, by an umm walad.

Some people therefore said that Mūsā was the Imam after his father, Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad.

Then they differed after his death. Some claimed that he was alive, had not died, and would not die until he rose and filled the earth with justice.

The Quṭʿiyya

Others among them were certain that he had died and said that his son ʿAlī was the Imam after him. They called him ʿAlī—

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—and this group was called the Quṭʿiyya because they were certain of Mūsā's death.

[This occurred] when Hārūn al-Rashīd imprisoned him and he was poisoned.

Then they differed after his death concerning the son of Mūsā.

[1] Some of them said:

"ʿAlī died and left no adult son. He only left his son Muḥammad as a small child, an infant, who could not be followed as Imam and possessed no knowledge."

[2] Others among them said that he was the Imam and called him Muḥammad al-Taqī al-Naqī.

Then they said that his son ʿAlī was the Imam and called him ʿAlī al-Nāṣiḥ.

Then they said that his son al-Ḥasan was the Imam after him and called him al-Ḥasan al-Fāḍil.

Then al-Ḥasan died without leaving a male child, and those who had followed his authority differed.

Some of them declared for the authority of Jaʿfar ibn ʿAlī and denied that al-Ḥasan had been Imam during his lifetime.

They said:

"We tested him and found no knowledge with him."

When he died without leaving a child, they then argued:

"The Imam cannot be an Imam unless he has a successor and descendants."

Jaʿfar ibn ʿAlī took possession of his brother's inheritance after a dispute, and those who claimed his imamate laid claim to it on the basis of an alleged pregnancy, saying that [al-Ḥasan] had left a child in one of his slave women.

They prevented the inheritance from being distributed until their claims were nullified and their affair became exposed before the particular community, the general community, and the authorities.

Then they divided into many groups.

Some of them, as we have mentioned, maintained the imamate of Jaʿfar ibn ʿAlī and said that after him the imamate belonged to his son ʿAlī and to his sister Fāṭima, daughter of ʿAlī.

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Others said that the imamate belonged to ʿAlī but not to Fāṭima.

Then they differed after the deaths of ʿAlī and Fāṭima, and they went to extremes concerning the Imams.

Some of them claimed that the Imams were gods—exalted is God far above what they say.

Others said that they were prophets, that they knew the unseen, and they multiplied confused and false claims.

Those who had declared for the imamate of al-Ḥasan split into many groups.

[1] One of them said:

"Al-Ḥasan did not die, and it is not permissible that he should die. He had no child, because the earth cannot be without an Imam.

"We have related that the Qāʾim has two occultations. This is one of those two occultations. He will appear and become known, and then he will enter another occultation."

[2] Another group said:

"Al-Ḥasan died, but he will be brought back to life, and he is the Qāʾim."

They said that the meaning of *al-Qāʾim* was "the one who rises after death."

They said:

"Al-Ḥasan died; there is no doubt about that, and he had no child. He will nevertheless be brought back to life after death."

[3] Another group said:

"When al-Ḥasan was overtaken by death, and he had no child, he designated his brother Jaʿfar as his successor."

They therefore held that Jaʿfar was the Imam after al-Ḥasan.

[4] Another group said:

“He was false in his claim to the imamate, and those who claimed his imamate were mistaken.

“Jaʿfar was the Imam during the lifetime of al-Ḥasan and after his death.”

[5] Another group said:

“The Imam is Muḥammad, the brother of al-Ḥasan and Jaʿfar, who died during the lifetime of his father.” (1)

They said:

“We had been mistaken in declaring the imamate of al-Ḥasan because he died and left no descendants.

“Jaʿfar does not deserve the imamate because of the manifest and public immorality we found in him.

“Al-Ḥasan was likewise [unfit].

“When the imamate of both of them was thereby invalidated, we knew that the Imam was Muḥammad, since he had descendants.

“His father had indicated him, and he is the Qāʾim, the Mahdī.”

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[6] Another group said:

“The Imam is al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, and it is not as has been claimed that he died without descendants.

“Rather, al-Ḥasan had a son named Muḥammad, born two years before his death. He is concealed and fearful of Jaʿfar and his other enemies.

“He is the Qāʾim Imam.”

[7] Another group said:

“Rather, he had a son who was born eight months after his death. The child whom those who claim was born to him two years before his death is false, for had such a child existed, he could not have remained hidden.”

[8] Another group said:

“Al-Ḥasan had no child whatsoever, for we investigated this thoroughly and sought him out as far as possible, but we did not find him. Such a claim is impermissible without proof.

“However, he left behind a pregnancy that has been established and known from the reports concerning him, and it will give birth to a male child who will be the Qāʾim Imam.”

[9] Another group said:

“The death of al-Ḥasan has been established, and it has also been established that he had no child. The claim concerning the pregnancy is therefore invalid.

“It is established that there is no Imam after al-Ḥasan.

“It is rationally possible for God to remove the divine proof from the people of the earth because of their disobedience. This is an interval and a period in which there is no Imam, and the earth today is without a proof, just as there was an interval before the appearance of the Prophet, may God bless him and his family.”

[10] Another group said:

“Al-Ḥasan, peace be upon him, died, and his death is established. The people have differed in this way, and we do not know which position is correct.

“However, we do not doubt that he had a child, although we do not know whether the child was born before or after his death. We only know that the earth cannot be without a proof, and that his name is Muḥammad. He is the concealed and hidden successor, and we shall remain attached to this belief until he appears.”

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[11] Another group said:

“Al-Ḥasan died (1), and there must necessarily be an Imam for the people. The earth cannot be without a proof. We do not know whether he is from his descendants or from the descendants of someone else.”

These, then, are the principal groups of the Quṭʿiyya among the Shiʿa.

They were called the Quṭʿiyya because they were certain of the death of Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad.

After him they followed his son ʿAlī.

They did not hold the view of those who claimed that Mūsā was alive and had not died, and that he was the Qāʾim who would fill the earth with justice just as it had been filled with injustice and oppression. (2)

The Kaysāniyya

They were called the Kaysāniyya after Kaysān (3), their leader. It is said that he was a client of ʿAlī, peace be upon him.

He was with al-Mukhtār, pursuing the killers of al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, killing them and destroying their houses. They claimed that Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya had ordered al-Mukhtār to do this.

When Ibn al-Zubayr rose in Mecca, he seized Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya together with fifteen men from the Banū Hāshim.

Al-Mukhtār sent a group of men who would hide during the day and travel by night until they broke open the prison and brought them out. They escorted them to a place where they would be safe.

Al-Mukhtār was an agent of Ibn al-Zubayr.

When news of this reached Ibn al-Zubayr, he removed him from his position (4), summoned him to himself, and al-Mukhtār refused.

He wrote to him:

“From al-Mukhtār ibn ʿUbayd Allāh (5) al-Thaqafī, the successor of the designated successor Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, to ʿAbd Allāh merely in name,”

then he concluded the letter by insulting him and mentioning his faults.

He sent it to him, publicly proclaimed the imamate of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, and they had many disagreements and lengthy reports concerning them.

These go beyond the scope of this book.

Footnotes

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1. In *Biḥār al-Anwār* 47/176, in the narration of Lubāba, daughter of ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās: “Dāwūd spent that night bewildered and had fallen unconscious. I arose...” with slight differences.

2. In *al-Manāqib* 3/357 and *al-Biḥār*: “And I was grieved for him.”

3. In *Biḥār al-Anwār*: “he heard the lamentation.”

4. He is Abū al-Faḍl al-Rabīʿ ibn Yūnus ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Furwa. He was born in 111 AH, lived until the caliphate of the Abbasid al-Hādī, and died in 169 AH.

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1. In *Iʿlām al-Warā*, p. 270: “You seek calamities for me.”

2. The patient prophet whom God mentions in the Noble Qurʾān.

3. Yūsuf ibn Yaʿqūb the prophet, whose story with his brothers is related in the Noble Qurʾān.

4. Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd, to whom God gave kingship and prophethood.

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1. In *Iʿlām al-Warā*, p. 271, an addition reads: "and I took refuge in my own power and strength: 'He indeed did such-and-such, Jaʿfar.'"

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1. In *Iʿlām al-Warā*: "by Your pillar/support."

2. Al-Rabīʿ said: "I memorized this supplication, and whenever any hardship befell me and I supplicated with it, God relieved me of it." (*Iʿlām al-Warā*, p. 271)

3. He is Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr al-Dawānīqī, the second of the Abbasid caliphs. *Dāniq* was a monetary unit that was in circulation at that time, and he was given this name because of his extreme miserliness.

4. The discussion of this report has already appeared in Part Thirteen.

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1. This is how it appears in the original.

2. He was known as Jaʿfar al-Kadhdhāb ("Jaʿfar the Liar"), and after his repentance he was called Jaʿfar al-Tāʾib ("Jaʿfar the Repentant").

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1. He was buried near Sāmarrāʾ, and a magnificent shrine was built over him, known as al-Sayyid Muḥammad.

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2. He is the one known as Jaʿfar al-Kadhdhāb, and after his repentance he was called Jaʿfar al-Tāʾib.

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1. In a copy of the original: "It is al-Ḥasan, and there must..."

2. These were the Wāqifa.

3. I believe he was Abū ʿAmra, Kaysān ibn ʿImrān.

4. Thus we have emended the text; in the original it reads: "from him."

5. Thus we have emended the text; in the original it reads: "ʿAbd Allāh."

6. In manuscript Z: “from al-Mukhtār ibn, the successor of the designated successor.”

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In summary, some of them claimed that the imamate belonged to al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon them.

Then it belonged to Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī—ibn al-Ḥanafiyya. Concerning this, some of them said in verse:

Indeed, the Imams are from Quraysh,
The leaders of truth, four in equal standing:
ʿAlī, and the three from his descendants;
They are the grandsons, and there is no ambiguity concerning them.

One grandson is the grandson of faith and righteousness;
One grandson is the one whose disappearance is at Karbalāʾ;
And one grandson will not taste death
Until he leads the cavalry, with the banner before him.

He will disappear, unseen among them for a time,
At Riḍwā, where he has honey and water.

Others among them rejected the imamate of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon them, and claimed that Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya was the designated successor (*waṣī*) of his father, ʿAlī, peace be upon him.

Then they differed concerning him and concerning those who came after him.

[1] Another group, as we have mentioned, claimed that he was alive and had not died.

[2] Another group said:

“Rather, he died and designated his son Abū Hāshim, whose name was ʿAbd Allāh, as his successor. Abū Hāshim died, but he will return, and he is the Mahdī who will emerge and fill the earth with justice.”

[3] Others said:

“Rather, Abū Hāshim died and designated his brother ʿAlī as his successor. ʿAlī designated his son al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥasan designated his son ʿAlī.”

They claimed that the imamate remained among the descendants of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya and would never pass outside them, and that the Qāʾim, the Mahdī, would be from among them.

[4] Another group among them claimed that Abū Hāshim died and designated ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muʿāwiya ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib (1), who was then a small boy, as his successor.

He entrusted him to Ṣāliḥ ibn Mudrik and ordered him to safeguard him until ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muʿāwiya came of age. He then handed him over to him, and he did so.

This ʿAbd Allāh was the one associated with Iṣfahān (2), whom Abū Muslim killed while he was imprisoned (3).

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[5] Another group among them said:

"ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muʿāwiya is alive and has not died. He is residing in the mountains of Iṣfahān and will not die until he rises. He is the Qāʾim, the Mahdī, whom the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, foretold. He will not die until he assumes authority over the people and fills the earth with justice just as it had been filled with injustice."

[6] Another group among them said:

"ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muʿāwiya died and did not designate anyone as his successor."

They said that the imamate belonged to their leaders.

[7] Another group (1) said:

"Abū Hāshim designated Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās (2) as his successor."

He entrusted the designation to his father, ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās, because Abū Hāshim died while he was with him in al-Sarāt of Syria. Muḥammad was the designated successor.

They said that at that time the designation was given to him while he was still a small boy.

[8] Another group among them said:

"Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī designated his son Ibrāhīm, the companion of Abū Muslim, who had called people to his cause, as his successor."

They claimed that the imamate had passed to his father Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī through Abū Hāshim, and that it had come to Muḥammad among the descendants of al-ʿAbbās through Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya.

They claimed that Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya was the Imam after his father, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him.

The Banū al-ʿAbbās relied upon this claim.

The Zaydiyya

The Zaydiyya were a group among the Shiʿa. They claimed that whoever from the family of Muḥammad called people to obedience to God, Mighty and Glorious, was an Imam whose obedience was obligatory.

They said:

"ʿAlī was an Imam when he called people to himself; then al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn; then Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn; then Zayd ibn ʿAlī; then Yaḥyā ibn Zayd; then ʿĪsā ibn Zayd; then Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan [ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī] ibn Abī Ṭālib." (1)

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These, according to them, were Imams who rose and called people to themselves.

They said:

"Anyone from the descendants of al-Ḥasan or the descendants of al-Ḥusayn, to the exclusion of other people, who rises is a true Imam. It is permissible for him to revolt, rise, call people to himself, and claim the imamate."

According to them, all of them were equal in religious standing: whoever among them rose was an Imam whose obedience was obligatory. Whoever failed to follow him—if, they said, he was capable of rising alongside him—was a disbeliever.

The first to rise upon this doctrine was Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī, and this sect was therefore called the Zaydiyya after him.

Each of those whom we have mentioned among this group had an argument for the position they adopted and described. Refuting them lies beyond the scope of this book, and would require another book of similar length.

We have already mentioned what is sufficient concerning this in the book *Ikhtilāf Uṣūl al-Madhāhib* ("Differences in the Foundations of the Schools"), and in the book *al-Imāma*, as well as other works that I have compiled.

And God is the One who grants success in reaching what is correct, by the bounty of His mercy.

Thus these sects wandered into the abysses of misguidance and became entangled in blindness and ignorance, while the friends of God, the Imams of His religion, were scarcely known except to their particular followers and those whom He had favored by granting them knowledge of them.

This continued until God, Mighty and Glorious is His mention, completed His purpose, the appointed term of the Book was fulfilled, and the Blessed and Exalted One fulfilled His promise and manifested—

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—the proof of His representative, the Mahdī, whom the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, foretold: from the pure stock, the pleasing pillar, from the descendants of al-Ṣādiq Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī [ibn al-Ḥusayn] ibn ʿAlī, peace be upon them.

As for the claims made by the aforementioned sects that he belonged to the person they named, God, Mighty and Glorious, disproved their claims by causing those to whom they attributed these matters to pass away. Nothing of what they had related concerning them appeared, until they claimed that they remained alive after death—an extreme plunge into ignorance and persistence in misguidance—so that they would not contradict themselves concerning what they had claimed about them.

Many of those to whom they attributed these things did not make such claims for themselves. Many others who did make such claims brought about their own destruction by rising in pursuit of something that did not belong to them.

We have already related the story of Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon them, who was the first to rise in this manner and claim the imamate. What happened to him in his killing and crucifixion has already been mentioned. (1)

Yaḥyā ibn Zayd

Then his son Yaḥyā ibn Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn rose after him.

His mother was Rayṭa, daughter of Abū Hāshim ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya.

He set out toward Khurāsān during the reign of al-Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik. Naṣr ibn Bashshār confronted him at al-Jūzjān (2), before he crossed the river.

He fought until he was killed and crucified. Naṣr ibn Bashshār sent his head to Yūsuf ibn ʿUmar with Qays ibn Zayd al-Ḥanẓalī.

Yūsuf ibn ʿUmar sent the head [that is, the head of Zayd, peace be upon him] (4) to al-Walīd—

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—ibn ʿAbd al-Malik and informed him that he had crucified him.

Al-Walīd wrote to him ordering that his body be burned with fire.

His letter said:

“Burn the calf, then scatter its ashes into the sea, scattering them completely.”

The one who carried this out against him was Kharrāsh ibn Ḥawshab ibn Zayd ibn Warīm. (1)

Yaḥyā said the following verse concerning his father Zayd:

Every slain man has a tribe that seeks vengeance for him,
Yet Zayd has no avenger in the two Iraqs. (2)

Abū Hāshim

Then Abū Hāshim ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya (3) rose and claimed the imamate. Sulaymān ibn ʿAbd al-Malik poisoned him, and he died.

The reason was that news of him reached Sulaymān. He sent for him, met him, and outwardly showed him kindness and honor.

When Abū Hāshim intended to leave, he entered upon Sulaymān to bid him farewell. It was an extremely hot day, and his baggage had already gone ahead. Sulaymān detained him to eat with him.

Then he departed to catch up with his baggage. He passed through al-Ḥumayma (4) and, having become thirsty, asked for water. Poison had been prepared for him, and he was given it.

He sent a messenger to Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās, who was there. The messenger came to him, and he attended Abū Hāshim at his death and burial. From this, it was said that Abū Hāshim had designated him as his successor.

Footnotes

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1. His mother was Umm ʿAwn, daughter of ʿAwn ibn al-ʿAbbās ibn Rabīʿa ibn al-Ḥārith ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib.

2. The historical city in Iran now known as Iṣfahān.

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1. They were the Rayāḥiyya.

2. His mother was al-ʿĀliya, daughter of ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib.

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1. The author says in his *Urjūza*, p. 214:

“The Zaydiyya sect put forward
A position that was not approved:

That every man who rises
From the descendants of al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī or al-Ḥasan,

With his sword calling people to advance,
Is the Imam, unlike those among them who do not rise.

And whoever, in his own time, remains concealed,
Withdrawn in his house, is not [the Imam].

They followed Zayd according to what they had arranged
Of these claims, and were attributed to him.

Then, when he was killed, they rose after him
With al-Ḥusayn, when he rose alone.

Then they followed Yaḥyā ibn Zayd when he appeared,
And afterward followed Muḥammad—
I mean the son of ʿAbd Allāh, from the descendants of al-Ḥasan.

All of them remained killed, held fast by death.

These, according to them, are Imams,
And whoever rises after them for the community [is also an Imam].

Everyone besides them is the general populace,
Like the rest of the community, equal among themselves."

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1. In Part Thirteen.

2. Thus we have corrected the text; in the original it reads: "al-Khūrkhān."

3. I suspect that a sentence or word has been omitted from the original, or that there is a scribal error.

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1. In this connection the poet says:

May God curse Ḥawshab and Kharrāsh and Mazīd;
They fought against God and harmed Muḥammad.
O Kharrāsh ibn Ḥawshab,
You are the most wretched of creation tomorrow.

2. This is the final hemistich of three lines attributed to [Yaḥyā addressing] Banū Hāshim:

My two companions, convey from me in Medina
To Banū Hāshim, people of understanding and experience:

How long will you fail to seek vengeance for your slain?
Umayya—indeed, time is full of wonders.

Every slain man has a tribe that seeks vengeance for him,
Yet Zayd has no avenger in the two Iraqs.

3. His mother was an *umm walad* named Nāʾila.

4. Thus we have corrected the text; in the original it reads: “He passed by his yesterday.” Al-Ḥumayma is in the lands of Syria.

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[The main text continues:]

He sent a messenger to Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās, who was there. The messenger came to him, and he attended his death and burial. From this it was said that [Abū Hāshim] had designated him as his successor.

ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muʿāwiya

Then ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muʿāwiya ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn [Abī] Ṭālib (1) rose and claimed the imamate. He is the one whom it is said Abū Hāshim designated as his successor.

He called people to himself in Kūfa, and a group there answered his call. This occurred in the year 127 AH.

Some men from Kūfa said to him:

“Our men have perished because of you, and most of us have been killed alongside you. Go to Fārs, for its people are sympathetic.”

So he went there, settled in Iṣfahān, and called people to himself. Many Arabs and non-Arabs answered his call.

He extracted [the revenues] and gained control of all the land of Fārs, Iṣfahān, and the surrounding regions.

He appointed his brother al-Ḥasan ibn Muʿāwiya over Iṣṭakhr (2), Yazīd ibn Muʿāwiya over Shīrāz, ʿAlī ibn Muʿāwiya over Kirmān, and Ṣāliḥ ibn Muʿāwiya over Qumm.

The Banū Hāshim came to him. Whoever among them wanted an official position, he appointed him; whoever wanted a gift, he gave him one.

Abū al-ʿAbbās and Abū Jaʿfar, the sons of Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās, came to him with them, and he appointed them over some districts.

ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muʿāwiya remained at Iṣṭakhr until ʿĀmir ibn Ṣāliḥ came against him with Dāwūd ibn Zanda. He fought them, but ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muʿāwiya and his companions were defeated.

Ibn Ḍabāra routed them and captured forty of them. Among those captured was ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās.

Ibn Ḍabāra said to him:

“What brought you to Ibn Muʿāwiya, when you knew his opposition to the Commander of the Believers”—meaning Marwān ibn Muḥammad?

He replied:

“I was in debt, so I came to him hoping to obtain something beyond what I owed.”

Ibn Waṭan stepped forward and said:

“He is our nephew.”

So he gave him to him and released him.

Ibn Ḍabāra sent the remaining captives to Ibn Hubayra (1). Ibn Hubayra was taken to Marwān ibn Muḥammad, while Ibn Ḍabāra was at that time in the wilderness of Kirmān (2), seeking ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muʿāwiya.

ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muʿāwiya and his brother continued fleeing until they reached Hazla. Mālik ibn al-Haytham seized them and wrote of their capture to Abū Muslim.

Abū Muslim had by then gained strength in Khurāsān and consolidated his position. He ordered him to kill ʿAbd Allāh, so he killed him.

He also ordered him to send Yazīd and al-Ḥasan ibn Muʿāwiya, the brothers of ʿAbd Allāh, to him. He sent them to him, and Abū Muslim imprisoned them for some time before releasing them.

As for ʿAlī ibn Muʿāwiya, Ibn Ḍabāra killed him.

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh

Then Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him, (3) rose, secretly calling people to himself. He would meet with individuals privately, one after another, concerning this matter, and claim the imamate.

He claimed that he was the Mahdī foretold by the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family.

His father had already made this claim for him when he was born.

He said:

“It has been transmitted from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, that he said: ‘The Mahdī is from my descendants; his name corresponds to my name, and his father's name corresponds to my father's name.’

“This is my son.”

He announced the glad tidings of him and congratulated people upon his birth.

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan had already made his cause public during the days of the Umayyads.

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It is said that a group of men from Banū Hāshim gathered in a house. Among them were Abū al-ʿAbbās, Abū Jaʿfar ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās, Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, and others.

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan [ibn al-Ḥasan] ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him, was also present.

They discussed the Banū Umayya. Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan rose, praised and glorified God, invoked blessings upon the Prophet and his family, and mentioned his virtue and what God, Mighty and Glorious, had honored him with.

Then he said:

“You are a household whom God, Mighty and Glorious, has favored with prophethood and chosen for it. He has increased the descendants of Muḥammad, may God bless him and his family, among you, while the rest of you are his cousins, his descendants, and the people most deserving of fearing God, Mighty and Glorious, lest, if you neglect His command, He take away from you what He has given you, just as He took something similar away from the Children of Israel after they had been the most beloved of His creation to Him, when they neglected His command.

“You can see that the Book of God has been neglected, the Sunnah of His Prophet, may God bless him and his family, abandoned, falsehood alive, and truth dead.

“Which of you considers himself worthy of rising to uphold God's right? We consider ourselves worthy of it, and these are hands extended for his pledge.

“Whoever sees weakness in himself or fears weakness, it is not permissible for him to assume leadership over the community. For he would not be the most knowledgeable of them in religion, nor the most learned in interpretation, in addition to matters which we know and which you do not know.

“I have said what I have said, and I ask God to forgive me and you.”

No one answered him. They remained silent, including Abū Jaʿfar.

Then he said to him:

“May God protect your people through you. You will continue among us to aspire toward good and to be hoped for as someone who can ward off harm (3) as long as you live.”

Then the time for the afternoon prayer arrived, and they went out to pray.

News of Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh's call to himself spread. His brother Ibrāhīm also called people to him, but his cause did not gain control until Abū Muslim defeated Marwān ibn Muḥammad and Abū al-ʿAbbās assumed power.

He then asked about Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, the two sons of ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan. (1)

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They went into hiding.

Their father, ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan, came to him with other members of Banū Hāshim. Abū al-ʿAbbās brought him close, honored him, showed him special favor, and asked about his two sons.

He said that he did not know where they had gone.

Abū al-ʿAbbās repeatedly asked him about them from time to time, and each time he denied knowing where they were.

He mentioned this to his brother al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan, who said to him:

“If he asks you again, tell him: ‘Their whereabouts are known to their uncle.’”

He asked him again, and ʿAbd Allāh said this to him.

Abū al-ʿAbbās sent for their uncle al-Ḥasan and asked him about them.

He said:

“O Commander of the Believers, shall I speak to you in your capacity as caliph, or as a man speaks to his cousin?”

Abū al-ʿAbbās said:

“Rather, as a man speaks to his cousin.”

Al-Ḥasan said:

“I adjure you by God, O Commander of the Believers: if God, Mighty and Glorious, has decreed that Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm should assume some share of this authority, and you and the people of the earth strive to prevent what God has decreed for them, could you prevent it?”

He said:

“No.”

He said:

“Then I adjure you by God: if God has not decreed that they should have any share of it, and you and the people of the earth strive together with them so that they attain something God has not decreed for them, could they attain it?”

He said:

“No.”

He said:

“Then why are you making this old man suffer the loss of the favor you have bestowed upon him?”

Abū al-ʿAbbās said:

“I will not mention them again after today.”

He did not mention them again until he died.

When he died, his brother Abū Jaʿfar assumed power on the very day of his death.

On that day he ordered Ziyād ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥārith to seek Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, the sons of ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon them, and made him responsible for capturing them.

He sent men to Medina, and they arrested their father ʿAbd Allāh and his brothers: al-Ḥasan, Dāwūd, and Ibrāhīm.

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They were brought to Abū Jaʿfar shackled in iron, riding camels without saddles or cushions.

They encountered Abū Jaʿfar on the road to Mecca at al-Rabdha. ʿAbd Allāh asked him to allow him to enter his presence.

Abū Jaʿfar refused and sent them to prison.

ʿAbd Allāh died in prison (1) after three years, and his brothers also died.

Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm remained concealed in the countryside.

Then Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan appeared in Medina on the first day of Rajab in the year 145 AH and entered the Mosque of Medina before dawn.

He preached until the time of prayer arrived. He descended and led the people in prayer.

By then those who were pledging allegiance to him had gathered around him, and the rest of the people pledged allegiance to him voluntarily.

He appointed officials, gained control of Medina, Mecca, and Baṣra, and collected the revenues.

His affair reached Abū Jaʿfar.

His brother Ibrāhīm had gone to Baṣra and was calling people to support him.

Abū Jaʿfar sent ʿĪsā ibn Mūsā with four thousand soldiers.

When Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh realized that he had arrived, he went to the trench of the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, which the Prophet had dug for the Confederates. About one thousand men gathered with him.

When ʿĪsā approached, Muḥammad stood and addressed them:

“O people, this man has approached you with numbers and equipment. I release you from your pledge to me. Whoever wishes to remain and fight, let him remain; whoever wishes to depart, let him depart.”

When they heard this, most of them gradually slipped away.

He remained with only a small group.

ʿĪsā ibn Mūsā encamped at the trench, four miles from Medina, on Saturday, twelve nights into Ramaḍān of the year 145 AH.

He remained there on Saturday and Sunday.

On Monday morning, Muḥammad went out against him with the people of Medina.

When the two forces came into view of one another, ʿĪsā ibn Mūsā personally called out:

“O Muḥammad, the Commander of the Believers has ordered me not to fight you until I offer you, your family, your property, your children, and your companions a guarantee of safety, and you are to surrender such-and-such amount of money, and he will pay your debts and do such-and-such for you.”

Muḥammad shouted back:

“Leave that aside. By God, neither fear draws me away from you, nor greed draws me toward you.”

The fighting became fierce.

The companions of Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan were defeated.

He dismounted and fought. He personally killed a number of men.

Ibn Qaḥṭaba charged him and stabbed him in the chest, knocking him down. He then dismounted, severed his head, and brought it to ʿĪsā ibn Mūsā.

His brother Ibrāhīm had gone to Baṣra at the beginning of the year 143 AH, calling people to support him, and many people answered his call.

Abū Jaʿfar sent ʿĪsā ibn Mūsā (1) against him, and the two forces met and fought.

Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd Allāh was killed on Monday, five days remaining in Dhū al-Ḥijja of the year 145 AH.

His head was brought to Abū Jaʿfar while he was in Kūfa. When it was placed before him, he prostrated.

ʿĪsā ibn Yazīd had been among those who went out with Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan and with his brother Ibrāhīm. Abū Jaʿfar sought him, so he went into hiding.

He died in Kūfa while concealed with al-Ḥasan ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn Ḥayy, fleeing from Abū Jaʿfar.

ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan, known as al-Ashtar, fled. He remained concealed, with no news of him known, until he appeared in Ṭabarestān and called people to himself. He was killed there. (2)

Mūsā ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib had gone to Syria during the lifetime of his brothers Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, calling people to support his brother Muḥammad.

After Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm were killed, Mūsā returned from Syria and went to the house of Banū al-ʿAnab in Baṣra. The governor there at that time was Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān, appointed by Abū Jaʿfar.

He was informed of Mūsā's arrival.

He sent for him, captured him, and brought him to himself, even though Mūsā was his maternal uncle.

Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān said to him:

“May God sever your kinship! What did you intend by coming to a city in which I am governor? If I send you to al-Manṣūr, people will say, ‘He severed his kinship and mistreated his maternal uncles,’ and if—”

“I released you because of the anger of the Commander of the Faithful.”

Then he sent him, along with those who were with him, to al-Manṣūr.

When they reached him, Mūsā ibn ʿAbd Allāh was brought forward, and al-Manṣūr struck him five hundred lashes. Mūsā neither spoke nor moved.

Al-Manṣūr was amazed at his endurance and said:

“The excuse of the people who commit crimes is that they are accustomed to enduring punishment. But how can this young man endure it when the sun has never touched him?”

He replied:

“O Commander of the Faithful, if the people of falsehood can endure for the sake of their falsehood, then we who are upon the truth have greater right to endure.”

When he was released, al-Rabīʿ said to him:

“You had been, in my eyes, one of the men of your family, until I saw you being beaten, and it was as though the blows were falling upon someone else’s skin.”

Mūsā recited this verse:

I am from the people whom hardship only increases
in severity and patience when calamities become severe.

News reached Abū Jaʿfar concerning Ḥamza ibn Isḥāq ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar[1] that he intended to rise against him. So he sent him to Medina, where he was detained, insulted, and imprisoned until he died.

Abū Jaʿfar had appointed al-Ḥasan ibn Yazīd ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib as governor of Medina. He was one of those who assisted against Abū ʿAbd Allāh.

Then word reached Abū Jaʿfar that he intended to rise against him.

So he dismissed him and ordered that he be detained and insulted. His property was confiscated, and his son ʿAlī was imprisoned with him.

As for ʿAlī, he died in prison during his father’s lifetime. Al-Ḥasan remained imprisoned until Abū Jaʿfar died, whereupon his son al-Mahdī released him among those of Banū Hāshim whom he set free.

[The Companion of Fakh]

As for al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan, who was killed at Fakh[2], he had been residing in Baghdad and did not intend to rise until the one called al-Mahdī, the son of Abū Jaʿfar, died and his son, known as al-Hādī, was given allegiance.

A delegation came from Jurjān, and al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī gave them permission to rise. He soon rose against him in Medina. This was in the year 169 AH, and many of the Shiʿa pledged allegiance to him there.

He then went to Mecca and entered it. Sulaymān ibn Abī Jaʿfar—who was in charge of the pilgrimage that year—marched against him. With him was Mūsā ibn ʿĪsā ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh, whom he placed on his left wing; Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān was on his right wing; and al-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad and Sulaymān ibn Abī Jaʿfar were in the center.

When al-Ḥusayn encountered them at Fakh, Sulaymān retreated before him. Al-Ḥusayn and his companions charged him until they descended into the valley. Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān then attacked them from behind and struck them with a single assault. A man from the Turks, called Ḥammād, shot al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī with an arrow and killed him.

Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān gave him one hundred thousand dirhams and one hundred garments. Many of the Shiʿa and the descendants of Abū Ṭālib were killed. This occurred on the Day of Tarwiya in the year 169 AH. His head was carried to Mūsā—known as al-Hādī—and brought into Baghdad at the beginning of the year 170 AH.[1]

Al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan, through al-Ḥakam ibn Jāmiʿ al-Thumālī, through al-Ḥusayn ibn Zayd, through Rayṭa daughter of ʿAbd Allāh, through Zayd ibn ʿAlī, reported:

"The Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, reached the place of Fakh and prayed the funeral prayer with his Companions. Then he said:

'A man from my Household will be killed here, among a company of believers. Shrouds and embalming perfume from Paradise will be sent down for them, and their souls will precede their bodies into Paradise.'"

… the ḥadīth.

Through the same chain, also from al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥid, from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Qāsim, from al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Mufaḍḍal al-ʿAṭṭār, from Muḥammad ibn Fuḍayl, from Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq, from Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, who said:

"The Prophet, may God bless him and his family, passed by Fakh. He dismounted and prayed one rakʿa. When he prayed the second, he began to weep while he was still in prayer. When the people saw the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, weeping, they wept as well.

"When he finished, he said, 'What makes you weep?'

"They said, 'When we saw you weeping, we wept, O Messenger of God.'

"He said, 'Gabriel came down to me when I prayed the first rakʿa and said: "O Muḥammad, a man from your descendants will be killed in this place, and the martyr's reward with him is the reward of two martyrs."'"

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[1] Before the purified heads were sent to Baghdad, they were carried to Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar, who had with him a group of the descendants of al-Ḥasan.

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Salmān ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan and ʿAbd Allāh ibn Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan were also killed with al-Ḥusayn that day; they were killed in the battle.

Among them was al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. He sought a guarantee of safety, and al-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās granted him safety.

He went to him and asked him for water. Water was brought to him, and he was drinking when Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās came up behind him while he was standing and drinking. He struck him with his sword and severed his head.

When he had killed him, Mūsā ibn ʿĪsā attacked him with his sword and said:

“Son of a whore, you killed my maternal uncle after he had been granted safety! God has made your blood lawful.”

Al-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad restrained them until they stopped.

ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm also sought a guarantee of safety, which was granted to him. He was taken to al-Hādī, who imprisoned him. He also ordered that ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan be brought to him. He too was imprisoned. They were eventually released, and all those who had accompanied al-Ḥusayn dispersed after the descendants of Abū Ṭālib who had been killed at Fakh were slain.

As for al-Ḥusayn, none of them said anything except Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar, peace be upon him.

It was said to him:

“This is the head of al-Ḥusayn.”

He said:

“Yes. Indeed, we belong to God and to Him we shall return. By God, he departed as a Muslim and a righteous man, one who fasted much, prayed much, commanded what is right, and forbade what is wrong. There was no one like him among his family.”

They did not answer him.

ʿĪsā ibn ʿAbd Allāh lamented al-Ḥusayn, the companion of Fakh:

I shall surely weep for al-Ḥusayn with a grieving lament,
and for al-Ḥasan and ʿAlī, son of ʿĀtika,
those whom they came upon without shrouds,
leaving them at Fakh at dawn, in their homeland.
They were noble, and so they fell,
neither reckless nor cowardly.
They washed away humiliation from themselves
as clothes are washed of filth.
They guided the servants of God through their ancestors,
and therefore they have favors over mankind.

Another poet said:

O eye, weep with overflowing tears for them,
for you have seen what befell the sons of al-Ḥasan:
slain at Fakh, with the wind passing over them,
its trailing garments and the mornings of the gentle night-travelers,
until their bones were obliterated.
Had Muḥammad witnessed them,
he would have defended them, and then would not have been weakened.

[Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbd Allāh]

Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbd Allāh[1] went to Daylam, where he appeared among its people, called people to himself, gathered forces there, prepared for war, and sought the support of the Daylamites and others.

Hārūn al-Rashīd learned of this and sent al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā ibn Barmak. He appointed him over the cavalry and the frontier districts of Daylam and Ṭabaristān and the regions adjoining them. He also placed under his command a large number of troops from the commanders of Khurāsān and others.

Al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā marched against him and encamped opposite him. He corresponded with him, offering him safety and firm guarantees, and promising him kindness, gifts, stipends, grants of land, and rewards. He encouraged him, and envoys went back and forth between them with these offers until Yaḥyā agreed to accept the safety that had been offered to him and enter into it without war or fighting.

Al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā then brought him before al-Rashīd. Al-Rashīd had been apprehensive about what might result from him, and the seriousness of the matter had alarmed him. He felt deeply the significance of what al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā had done and was pleased by it.

Al-Faḍl treated Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbd Allāh gently and honored him. When al-Rashīd heard of this, he became cold toward al-Faḍl and grew angry with him, until Umm Muḥammad, the daughter of al-Rashīd, interceded with him concerning al-Faḍl, and he became reconciled with him.

After that, al-Rashīd sent Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbd Allāh to Medina and imprisoned him there. He remained imprisoned until he died.[2]

It is also said that he imprisoned him in a well, where he was found dead, having choked while trying to bear its burden.[3]

[1] He was one of the companions of al-Ḥusayn, the companion of Fakh, who escaped being killed. He remained concealed for a period, traveling through various lands and seeking somewhere to take refuge, until he reached Daylam.

[2] Idrīs ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbd Allāh said: “My grandfather was killed by hunger and thirst while in prison.”

[3] Thus it appears in the original manuscript.

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[Idrīs ibn ʿAbd Allāh]

Idrīs ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib had participated with al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī at Fakh. When those events occurred, a client of his named Rāshid took him away in secret and traveled with him to Egypt.

He then brought him out of Egypt and traveled with him to the Maghrib. There he revealed his identity, and the Berbers of the region came to know him. They responded to him and pledged their allegiance to him.

His authority among them continued to grow and increase until word of it reached al-Rashīd. He sent to him a client called al-Mahdī, known as Shammākh, who was an experienced, capable old man. Al-Rashīd ordered him to devise a stratagem against Idrīs and kill him.

Shammākh set out until he reached the Maghrib. He gained access to Idrīs through the practice of medicine, for there was no physician in that region. Idrīs therefore brought him close and became greatly attached to him.

Idrīs then complained to him of an illness. Shammākh prepared a medicine for him and put poison in it. He gave it to him, and Idrīs died.

Shammākh fled, and no one was able to apprehend him. He went to al-Rashīd, informed him of what he had done, and al-Rashīd rewarded him and treated him well.

Idrīs left behind a pregnant umm walad, who gave birth to a son named Idrīs.

He grew up, established the authority, and had a son whom he named Muḥammad. Their descendants multiplied and became numerous in the Maghrib.

[Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā]

Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā ibn Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib went to ʿAbbādān, in the region of Baṣra.

Hārūn was informed that he was preparing to rise there. When Hārūn received the news, he traveled from Kūfa to the City of Peace in the year 185 AH.

He was a rain by which we quenched our thirst,
and like a star by which we found guidance.
When fate shot at us from its bow
and betrayed us at the height of glory,
soon we shall seek his vengeance
through goodness—the avenger who follows guidance.
Indeed, the son of ʿAbd Allāh, Yaḥyā, lies dead,
while glory and nobility lie in his grave.

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He sent orders to the governors to seize him.

Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā ibn Zayd and Ibn Idrīs used to travel back and forth between Baṣra, the districts of Ahwāz, their surrounding regions, and their outskirts.

Al-Rashīd wrote to Abū al-Sāj[1], through his brother al-Rashīd the eunuch, who was governor of Bahrain, and to Khālid ibn al-Azhar, who was in Ahwāz, commanding them to obey ʿĪsā al-Dawrānī.[2]

ʿĪsā was ordered to seek Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā ibn Zayd. He came to Ahwāz and pretended that he had come to apprehend the Zindīqs. Gifts and favors began pouring toward him, the governors came to him, and the people were intimidated by him.

He secretly began asking about Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā.

A Berber man came to him. He used to visit Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā, serve him, and attend to his errands and affairs. He told ʿĪsā that Aḥmad and Ibn Idrīs traveled between ʿAbbādān, other frontier settlements, and Baṣra.

ʿĪsā went to Baṣra. He was told that there was there a man among their Shiʿa who would worship God only through love and allegiance to them, and that he was influential, wealthy, possessed of a large following and resources, and well protected.

He secretly sent a man to them with messages and a letter written in his own hand. The messenger persisted until he gained access to them, learned their location, and established their trust in him. He then informed them about ʿĪsā and warned them against him.

They asked him whether he had any means of escape for them.

He said:

“I can take you to Egypt if you wish, or to the Maghrib if you wish.”

They said:

“Which route will you take us by?”

He said:

“Through Wāsiṭ. Then I shall put you on riding animals and take you by the road to Kūfa.”

The men trusted him and felt secure with him. With them was al-Khiḍr, the secretary of Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd Allāh.

He took them from Baṣra aboard a boat to Wāsiṭ and said:

“I shall go ahead of you and hire mounts for you before you arrive, and I shall have finished arranging your affairs.”

They said:

“Go, in God’s name.”

He went ahead and came to Abū al-Sāj and informed him.

Abū al-Sāj sent some of his trusted men with him and instructed them not to let the travelers know that they had any connection with the authorities until they had taken possession of them.

He went on to the City of Peace[1] and entered upon al-Rashīd. He told him that he had succeeded in finding them and that he had put them aboard the boat. Al-Rashīd sent men to disembark them and bring them to him.

The man returned to them with Abū al-Sāj’s agents and told them that they were traveling people and that he had hired mounts for them.

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When they had proceeded partway along the road,[2] the collectors of alms came to them to take what was due from them.

Abū al-Sāj’s men separated themselves from the group, informed them that they were Abū al-Sāj’s agents, and explained the situation to them. They then left them.

Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā and those with him heard this and realized what had happened to them.

When the noon prayer arrived, they stopped to pray. They slipped away among the palm trees, leaving behind the boat and everything in it, little or much.[3]

When they reached Wāsiṭ, they found the messengers of al-Rashīd whom he had sent to take possession of them. They informed them of what had happened.

Al-Rashīd’s agents took them on, brought them to him, and he beat them severely. He sent them to al-Muṭbaq[4] and ordered Abū al-Sāj to be killed and crucified, saying:

“He has made concessions and shown me false friendliness.”

His brother interceded for him and sought his release, so al-Rashīd spared him.

He ordered that the fugitives be sought. It was established in his presence that al-Khiḍr, Ibrāhīm’s secretary, had died, so he ordered that his grave be opened and his body burned with fire.

The others escaped. Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā and Ibn Idrīs returned to Baṣra and remained concealed there.

Then they went to Kūfa.

Afterward Aḥmad returned to Baṣra and remained hidden there until he died in that state.

He left his two sons, Muḥammad and ʿAlī, concealed.

Muḥammad died in Syria, and al-Nājim in Baṣra traced his lineage to him in the year 255 AH, the one known as al-ʿAlawī.[1]

[1] Thus corrected here; the original has “Ibn Shammākh.”

[1] The City of Peace was a name for the present-day city of Baghdad.

[2] Thus corrected here; the original has a different reading.

[3] I suspect that a word has fallen out here. The men assigned to watch them waited a long time, not knowing what had delayed them. They went out in search of them but did not find them. They followed their tracks and learned what had happened, then returned to the boat disappointed and eventually reached Wāsiṭ.

[4] The dark underground prison.

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[Abū al-Sarāyā]

Then Abū al-Sarāyā—namely al-Sarī ibn al-Manṣūr of Banū Rabīʿa [ibn Dhuʾl ibn Shaybān][1]—rose in the year 199 AH, calling people to Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Ṭabāṭabā, though he did not name him explicitly. He publicly called for allegiance to the successor from the family of Muḥammad and to the Book of God and the Sunnah of His Prophet, may God bless him and his family.

The reason for this was that Abū al-Sarāyā had been among the troops with Harthama[3] ibn Aʿyan. They prevented him from receiving his pay, so he became angry and left until he reached al-Abṣār, where he killed the governor there.

He went to Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm, who was in al-Rashīd’s prison. During the revolt of Muḥammad ibn Rashīda, the prisons were opened, and he went out with those who left toward al-Raqqa with Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar, who had also been imprisoned with him by al-Rashīd.

Muḥammad had traveled toward al-Raqqa calling people to himself, but he died before reaching it. Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Ṭabāṭabā arrived there and attempted to call people to himself, but was unable to do so. He therefore went to Kūfa and remained concealed there until Abū al-Sarāyā entered the city.

Abū al-Sarāyā pledged allegiance to him and rose calling people to him. A great many people responded to him. He advanced with them and took Wāsiṭ and Kūfa, publicly proclaiming the cause of Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Ṭabāṭabā al-ʿAlawī. He marched with them until he reached the Nahr Ṣarṣar.

Ḥasan ibn Sahl sent ʿAbdūs ibn ʿAbd al-Ṣamad and Hārūn ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Khālid[4] with an army against them. They met them but accomplished nothing.

Ḥasan ibn Sahl then sent for Harthama[5], who had been preparing to go to Khurāsān toward al-Maʾmūn. He turned him back and sent him against them—to [the Nahr] Ṣarṣar.

He met them there and defeated them, pursuing them as far as Qaṣr Ibn Hubayra.[6]

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He killed a great many of them, and they were defeated.

They were driven into Kūfa.

Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Ṭabāṭabā al-ʿAlawī died.

Abū al-Sarāyā then appointed in his place a young man from the descendants of ʿAlī, called Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn.

Harthama continued fighting them until they became weakened, and Abū al-Sarāyā fled. Harthama entered Kūfa and remained there for several days, then set out toward al-Maʾmūn, who was in Khurāsān.

Afterward he captured Abū al-Sarāyā and the ʿAlawī whom he had appointed in his place.

He killed Abū al-Sarāyā[1] and took the ʿAlawī to al-Maʾmūn in Khurāsān.

The one responsible for [the killing of] the two of them was Ḥasan ibn Sahl.

Abū al-Sarāyā was cut in half and crucified at the bridge gate.[2] Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn was sent to al-Maʾmūn in Khurāsān.[3]

[Ibn al-Afṭas]

During the reign of al-Maʾmūn, ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan, known as Ibn al-Afṭas, was killed. He had been among those present at the battle of Fakh, had been granted safety, and was subsequently imprisoned. Then Jaʿfar ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khālid ibn Barmak ordered him brought before him and struck off his head.

[Al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Zayd]

Al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him, was killed with Abū al-Sarāyā at al-Tanwīn.

[Zayd ibn ʿAbd Allāh]

Zayd ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan [ibn al-Ḥasan] ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him, was also killed at al-Tanwīn.

[ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh]

ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib was killed in Yemen with Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā.[1]

[Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad]

A group of the ʿAlawīs rose against al-Maʾmūn in the year 200 AH. Among those who rose against him was Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad.

He rose in Mecca, and the people of the Ḥijāz and Tihāma pledged allegiance to him as caliph. They had not previously pledged allegiance to anyone from the descendants of ʿAlī. He claimed the imamate.

One of his eyes had been afflicted by something, and he took this as a good omen.

He said:

"I hope that I…"

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[1] Al-Haytham ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Khathʿamī said in mourning for him:

Ask about those who departed: what did they do,
and where did they settle after their departure?
Would that I knew—and alas, what protection there is—
for the one who hopes for what fate has prevented.
Where did the beloved ones settle,
or can the beloved ones still be expected to return?
The hand of time compelled the riders
to leave their lands and move elsewhere.
… until he says:

O Abū al-Sarāyā, my soul is stricken with grief for you,
and my eye is overflowing with tears.
The one who used to restrain himself patiently for your sake—
my patience for you has been exhausted.
Why did the cowardly mountain not protect you
when the mountain became too narrow for him to contain himself?
Or how did death not fear you,
and how did the final decree of your day not frighten it?
Go forth in praise, for everyone with an appointed term
dies one day when his appointed term is complete.
Death has spread its snares,
and among mankind some escape them while others are caught.

[2] Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī said: "His head was crucified on the eastern side, and his body was crucified on the western side."

[3] He remained there for a short period—forty days—then a poisoned drink was administered to him. His liver and intestines became diseased until he died.**

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[The text continues with the account of] the one known as Ibn al-Afṭas.[1]

He had been among those present at the battle of Fakh and had obtained a guarantee of safety. He was subsequently imprisoned, and then Jaʿfar ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khālid ibn Barmak ordered him brought before him and struck off his head.

[Al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Zayd]

Al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him, was killed with Abū al-Sarāyā at al-Tanwīn.

[Zayd ibn ʿAbd Allāh]

Zayd ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan [ibn al-Ḥasan] ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him, was also killed at al-Tanwīn.

[ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh]

ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib was killed in Yemen with Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā.[2]

[Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad]

A group of the ʿAlawīs rose against al-Maʾmūn in the year 200 AH. Among those who rose against him was Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad.

He rose in Mecca, and the people of the Ḥijāz and Tihāma pledged allegiance to him as caliph. They had not previously pledged allegiance to anyone from the descendants of ʿAlī. He claimed the imamate.

One of his eyes had been afflicted by something, and he took this as a good omen.

He said:

"I hope that I…"

[1] Thus corrected here; the original has: "ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan, known as al-Afṭas."

[2] Another manuscript reads: "Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā killed him in Yemen."

"that I may be the Mahdī, the Qāʾim, for I have heard that he will have something affecting one of his eyes."

Al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl, Hārūn ibn Mūsā al-Musayyab, ʿĪsā ibn Zayd al-Jalūdī, and Waraqāʾ ibn Muḥammad al-Shaybānī were sent against him. They were among al-Maʾmūn's commanders. They attacked his followers in Medina and Mecca and killed many of them. Most of his followers dispersed, and he sought a guarantee of safety and repudiated his claim to the imamate. He was granted safety and taken to al-Maʾmūn in Khurāsān, where he died.

In Baṣra, his son ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar rose, and al-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib established him there.

Then Zayd ibn Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar joined them there. They were all defeated, taken to al-Maʾmūn, and he pardoned them and treated them kindly. They remained with him in Khurāsān.

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[The Appointment of Imam al-Riḍā, peace be upon him, as Heir Apparent]

It is said that a Shiʿi man once came before al-Maʾmūn and disputed with him. The argument was established against al-Maʾmūn, and he was silenced. He showed acceptance of what the man had said and began asking him insistently about the Imam of the Age according to them.

ʿAlī ibn Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar was indicated to him. Al-Maʾmūn thought that he had found what he was seeking. He devised a plan and contrived a stratagem: he would publicly elevate him and call people to him, and then arrange for his death. He did not reveal his true intention to anyone, lest they spread the information about what he had done.

He summoned al-Faḍl ibn Sahl and said to him:

“Can you prevent me from carrying out something I have decided upon?”

He said:

“What is it, O Commander of the Faithful?”

He replied:

“I shall pledge allegiance to a man from the descendants of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him, choose him, and entrust this matter to him.”

Al-Faḍl said:

“You have not done what you intended, O Commander of the Faithful. I am with you in it.”

News of this reached al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl, who objected to what al-Faḍl had said. The two of them went to al-Maʾmūn, who said to al-Faḍl:

“Did you not know, Abū Muḥammad?”

He said:

“Yes, O Commander of the Faithful.”

He said:

“And what did he say about it?”

He replied:

“He recoiled from it, and I objected to him.”

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Al-Ḥasan said:

“May the Commander of the Faithful permit me to speak?”

He said:

“Speak.”

Al-Ḥasan spoke at length, magnifying the power of the Abbasid dynasty and the stature of al-Maʾmūn. He mentioned what he feared might result from the deviation that would follow if he carried out what he had proposed.

Al-Maʾmūn said:

“I have considered it. Let no one among us be foremost in this matter except one who has seen what I have seen.”

He continued, speaking severely and emphasizing his position.

He stated that he had not seen anyone among his family fit for this matter, although he had sworn to God that if he succeeded in overthrowing the one who had been deposed, he would transfer the authority to a descendant of ʿAlī, peace be upon him.

When al-Ḥasan heard this from him and saw his determination, he said:

“My opinion is with yours, O Commander of the Faithful.”

Al-Maʾmūn ordered him to go to Baghdad and gently and honorably bring ʿAlī ibn Mūsā to him.[1] At that time, ʿAlī ibn Mūsā was in Syria.

When al-Ḥasan reached Baghdad, al-Maʾmūn had written a letter to ʿAlī ibn Mūsā and sent al-Ḥasan as his messenger. He sent another letter with him.

This was before those of the descendants of Abū Ṭālib who had risen against him were brought to him. He ordered that they be brought with him. He also wrote to al-Jalūdī ordering him to bring Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar, ʿAlī ibn Mūsā, ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd, Ismāʿīl ibn Mūsā, Ibn al-Arqaṭ, and those others who had risen.

Al-Jalūdī brought them and took them by way of Baṣra. Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mahdī was there, and the news had reached him concerning what was intended for ʿAlī ibn Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar. He mentioned this to those close to him among the Abbasids and others.

Ismāʿīl ibn Jaʿfar ibn Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī advised him to kill ʿAlī ibn Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, but Ibrāhīm was unable to do so.

They proceeded by way of Ahwāz and then went to Fārs, where they met Rajāʾ ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk, who took custody of them from al-Jalūdī.

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He brought them to Marw and to al-Maʾmūn on the tenth day of Jumādā al-Thāniya in the year 201 AH.

They were placed in the house of the square of al-Faḍl, which was called Dār Āsī. ʿAlī ibn Mūsā was lodged alone in one room, while the others were placed together in another room, which was furnished for them.

Al-Faḍl came and entered upon ʿAlī ibn Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar, treating him with great respect. He informed him that he recognized his rights and then explained what he intended for him. He saw that ʿAlī ibn Mūsā was reserved and reluctant.

Then he was brought before al-Maʾmūn, who honored him and praised him for having refrained from opposing the position he had entered into. He said that, because of his age and standing, his position with him was like that of an uncle.

He ordered a cushion to be brought for him, placed it beside him, seated him upon it, and permitted the people to enter so that they might see this. Then he withdrew and later moved them from that house to another.

ʿAlī ibn Mūsā was brought into a chamber in al-Maʾmūn's residence, with only a curtain separating them. Al-Faḍl continued corresponding with him and writing to him, asking him to accept the pledge of allegiance, but throughout all this he refused.

Al-Faḍl then met him personally concerning the matter and said:

"The Commander of the Faithful has made a covenant with God that this authority should pass to the best person he knows, and that is none other than you."

He, peace be upon him, replied:

"I am not that person."

And he refused.

Al-Maʾmūn then brought him into his presence and said:

"O Abū al-Ḥasan, I have made a covenant with God, and I shall not abandon it until I transfer this authority to you after me. You know that ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb included ʿAlī in the council of consultation and ordered that he be killed if he did not submit to its decision."[2]

He continued pressing him until ʿAlī ibn Mūsā agreed, after his arrival, in the month of Ramaḍān of the year 201 AH.

Several days before this, al-Maʾmūn had put on green clothing, clothed his men in green, and ordered the people to wear it. Everyone wore it, including the judge.

Al-Maʾmūn then sat for the pledge of allegiance to ʿAlī ibn Mūsā and gave him the title al-Riḍā.

He ordered two cushions to be brought and had them stuffed so heavily that they reached the level of his bedding. He seated ʿAlī upon them, wearing a turban and carrying a sword.

Then he ordered his son al-ʿAbbās to pledge allegiance to him, followed by the people.

ʿAlī ibn Mūsā raised his hand, turned its back toward himself, and looked at their faces.

Al-Maʾmūn said to him:

“Extend your hand so that the people may pledge allegiance to you.”

He replied:

“The Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, used to do this when he received allegiance.”

The Hāshimites and others among the Companions and commanders pledged allegiance to him.

Al-Faḍl ibn Sahl went out before the people, praised and glorified God, invoked blessings upon the Prophet and his Household, and gave them the good news of what God had granted them through the Commander of the Faithful’s decision to pledge allegiance to al-Riḍā, since he was the son of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him, and the son of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family.

He ordered a year’s allowance to be given to the people.

Then, four days later, on Thursday, al-Maʾmūn sat again and permitted the people to enter.

Al-Riḍā was in the same assembly in which allegiance had been pledged to him. Al-Faḍl sat between them on a chair. Al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Maʾmūn was to his father’s left on a single cushion. Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar was at the beginning of the row on the left, and ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him, was on the right, below Isḥāq ibn Mūsā ibn ʿĪsā ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās.

Beside ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan were al-Faḍl, then ʿAbd al-Ṣamad.

The remaining descendants of Abū Ṭālib and the Abbasids then entered and were seated below these men in the portico, adjoining them.

Two tables were set for the people according to their customary arrangement. Money was brought and bags of coins were poured into the middle of the house.[1]

The orators and poets spoke, praising the Commander of the Faithful and mentioning his virtues in poetry, as well as mentioning the virtues of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him.

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Then Abū al-ʿAbbās stood at the far end of the portico. He began with al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Maʾmūn. Al-ʿAbbās rose and approached his father, kissed his hand, and was told to sit.

Then Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad was called. He did not rise, so al-Faḍl gestured to him to stand.

He stood, approached the Commander of the Faithful, and then proceeded toward his guard. This was their established custom.

When he had reached the middle of the portico, al-Maʾmūn called out to him:[1]

"O Abū Jaʿfar, return to your place."

Then an ʿAlawī and an Abbasid were called in turn until the assembly dispersed.

Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar was given sixty thousand dinars. The same amount was given to ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan, ʿĪsā ibn Yaʿqūb, ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn ʿAlī, Isḥāq ibn Mūsā, and ʿĪsā—sixty thousand dinars to each.

ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan and Zayd al-ʿAlawī were each given forty thousand dinars.

Ismāʿīl ibn Mūsā and other descendants of Abū Ṭālib were each given thirty thousand dinars.

ʿAlī ibn Mūsā sat in al-Maʾmūn's assembly on Friday after the prayer.

The people entered upon him just as they had entered upon al-Maʾmūn. The official textile was embroidered with his name, and coins were struck bearing his name.

Al-Maʾmūn married his daughter Umm al-Faḍl to Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Mūsā.

ʿAlī ibn Mūsā remained in this position with al-Maʾmūn for the remainder of the year 201 AH and for one month and eleven nights of the year 203 AH. Then he was given poison.

[The Martyrdom of Imam al-Riḍā, peace be upon him]

[1210]

Abū al-Ṣalt[3] said to al-ʿIrāqī:

"I entered upon ʿAlī ibn Mūsā after allegiance had been pledged to him. He said to me:

'What do you think of what I have become involved in?'

"I said:

'It is good, God willing.'"

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He said:

“What good is there in this?”

Then I came to him again later, and he said:

“O Abū al-Ṣalt, by God, they have done it”—meaning that they had given him poison.[1]

He fell ill on Sunday, fourteen nights having passed of Ṣafar in the year 203 AH.

Al-Maʾmūn displayed grief over him.

It was claimed that the illness had befallen them both because of food they had eaten together.

Then, on the night of Saturday, when three nights remained of Ṣafar in the year 203 AH, he cried out over ʿAlī ibn Mūsā and sent for Ismāʿīl, Zayd, and Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar. They were brought to him in the middle of the night, and ʿAlī was found dead in the morning.

Al-Maʾmūn went out to the people and said:

“Al-Riḍā awoke in a righteous state, so praise be to God.”

The people departed.

He ordered that the people be summoned to al-Maʾmūn’s residence at midday. They assembled, and his death was publicly announced.

When his bier was brought out, al-Maʾmūn stood weeping.

Then he said:

“I had hoped that God would make me the one who died before you, but God decreed otherwise. Had I not feared that some people would say you had not died, I would not have shown you to the people in your state.”[2]

Then he carried a brick for his grave.

One of those present said to him:

“O Commander of the Faithful, let me carry it.”

He replied:

“Consider this too much for my brother.”

Then he walked to the grave and displayed an extraordinary degree of grief over him.

It is narrated from Manṣūr ibn Bashīr, who said:

“I heard ʿAbd Allāh ibn Bashīr say:

‘I seek God’s forgiveness, and I do not think that He will forgive me.’

“I said:

‘Glory be to God! How is that?’

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“He said:

‘I once entered upon al-Maʾmūn while we were in Khurāsān. He said to me:

“When did you trim your fingernails, O Abū ʿAbd Allāh?”

“I said:

“A week ago.”

“He said:

“Let them grow for two weeks.”

“I did so. Then I came to him and said:

“O Commander of the Faithful, I have done what you ordered me to do regarding letting my fingernails grow.”

“He ordered a servant, who brought a sealed bowl. He broke its seal and uncovered it. Inside was something resembling tamarind.

“He said to me:

“Rub this with your hands.”

“I did so.

“Then he said:

“Leave your hands until they dry.”

“He ordered the lamps to be lit. Al-Riḍā had been ill.

“He mounted his horse to go to him and ordered me to ride with him. I mounted with him.

“When he entered upon him, he asked about his condition, and al-Riḍā began telling him about it.

“He said to him:

“Has none of these attendants come to you?”

“He replied:

“No.”

“Al-Maʾmūn became angry[1] and called out to his servants, saying:

“Have you not given him anything?”

“They said:

“No.”

“He said:

“Then pomegranate water is something you should not be without. Boy, bring ten pomegranates.”

“They were brought, and he threw them to me and said:

“Peel them, O Abū ʿAbd Allāh, and squeeze them.”

“I did so, with my hands remaining as they were.

“Then he took a cup of the pomegranate juice in his hand and gave it to him to drink.[2]

“He did not remain for more than a day before he died.”

[1] In al-Irshād: “Al-Maʾmūn became angry.”

[2] The words in parentheses are from manuscript Z.

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[The Days of al-Muʿtaṣim]

Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿUthmān ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn rose against al-Muʿtaṣim in Ṭāliqān. He called people to himself, and a group responded to him.

Then ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir captured him and sent him to al-Muʿtaṣim in the year 219 AH, bound inside a litter without padding, wearing a woolen cloak.

Al-Muʿtaṣim imprisoned him. He devised a means of escape, broke free from prison, and fled.

ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib rose and called people to himself. He was captured and imprisoned [in Sāmarrāʾ], where he died in prison.

[The Days of al-Mutawakkil]

During the days of al-Mutawakkil, the following among them rose:

Al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd ibn Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib rose in Rayy.

Hārūn ibn al-Ḥusayn—known as al-Karkī—ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Muḥammad, known as al-Arqaṭ, ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib rose.

In the Ḥijāz, Ismāʿīl ibn Yūsuf ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib rose. He was twenty years old.

After him, Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf rose. He was his elder brother by twenty years and was known as al-Akhṣīr.

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ʿAbd Allāh ibn Mūsā [ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib] also rose.

[The Days of al-Mustaʿīn]

Among those who rose during the days of al-Mustaʿīn was Yaḥyā ibn ʿUmar ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who rose in Kūfa.[1]

ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib also rose with him.

Ṣāliḥ and Ibrāhīm, the sons of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

And Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

[The Days of al-Muhtadī]

Among those who rose during the days of al-Muhtadī were:

Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Qāsim ibn Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh [ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī al-Karām ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī][2] ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

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Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Qāsim ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq ibn Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Among those who also rose during the days of al-Muhtadī were:

Mūsā ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Mūsā ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

His son Idrīs ibn Mūsā.

His nephew Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Mūsā.

Aḥmad ibn Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿĪsā ibn Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.[1]

ʿĪsā ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Jaʿfar ibn Ibrāhīm [ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī] ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib.

[The Days of the Abbasid al-Muʿtamid]

Among those who rose during the days of al-Muʿtamid were:

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Mūsā ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿUmar ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.[2]

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ibrāhīm Ṭabāṭabā [ibn al-Ḥasan] ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who was known as Naʿthal.

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Ḥamza ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar ibn al-Qāsim ibn Isḥāq ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī ibn Yaḥyā ibn Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad [ibn Muḥammad] ibn ʿĪsā ibn Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Al-Ḥasan ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Qāsim ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd ibn [ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn] ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd Allāh [ibn] al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, known as al-ʿAṣafī.

Al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥamza ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Qāsim ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim ibn Isḥāq ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib.

ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

ʿAlī and ʿAbd Allāh, the sons of Mūsā ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

ʿAlī ibn Jaʿfar ibn Hārūn ibn Isḥāq ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd [ibn al-Ḥasan] ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib.

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[The Days of the Abbasid al-Muʿtaḍid]

Among those who rose during the days of al-Muʿtaḍid were:

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim ibn Ḥamza ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUbayd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Muḥammad ibn Zayd ibn Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and his son Zayd ibn Muḥammad.

[The Days of the Abbasid al-Muktafī]

Among those attributed with rising during the days of al-Muktafī were:

Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn [al-Ḥasan ibn Jaʿfar ibn ʿUbayd Allāh ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī] ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Muḥammad ibn Ḥamza ibn ʿUbayd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās ibn [al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUbayd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās] ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

These, then, are the names of those among the descendants of Abū Ṭālib who rose claiming the imamate until al-Mahdī bi-llāh, the Commander of the Faithful, rose.

They were as Imam Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, peace be upon him and upon the Imams among his forefathers and descendants, described them:

Like fledglings that rose from their nests
before their wings had become fully formed.
Each fledgling would rise once or twice,
until the boys seized it and played with it.

Some of these men were killed; some were imprisoned and died in prison; and some were overcome, fled, and died pursued and in hiding.

This was their immediate recompense in this world.

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Those who were called by a name other than their own, who sought something that did not belong to them, hastened something that God, Exalted is He, had deferred, and placed the authority in a position where He, Glorified is He, had not placed it.

There were among these men—and among others who rose without the means of authority, but rather through the aggression of some against others and against women—many events whose mention and histories would take too long.

The circumstances into which they fell became divided, and some of them were killed.[1]

Mentioning all of this would exceed the scope of this book because of its length, and if it were included in this book it would divert it from its intended purpose.

We have mentioned only this general account of their histories because of their resemblance to those whom God, Glorious is His Name, alone designated to undertake His rightful authority.

It has already been related that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, described their qualities, circumstances, and appointed times, and that his forefathers likewise indicated them through evidence and warned against anyone claiming his position or advancing ahead of him.

They reported that doing so and claiming such a position would bring about the destruction of whoever did it and claimed it, and whoever undertook something that had no rightful share in it.

What befell these men was confirmation of what the Imams among his forefathers, peace and blessings be upon them, had said.

One after another, they remained concealed because the enemies of God had gained power over them, while they safeguarded the trust of God that had been placed with them: the matter of the imamate, which He had made obligatory upon His servants for them, and the hidden knowledge He had entrusted to them.

They transmitted it from one to another, until it passed from them to him, peace and blessings be upon him.

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[The following pages contain marginal notes/endnotes that do not add substantive text.]

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[The Appearance of the Fatimid Mahdī]

When his appointed time came and the moment of his rising arrived—the time that God, Mighty and Glorious, had alone decreed for him—and the missionaries called people to him, and the one in whose hands the authority had been placed surrendered to him what of that authority had been in his hands, peace be upon him, he arose alone, together with his adherents, while the missionaries pledged allegiance on his behalf. He was solitary and unique, just as the report from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, had foretold concerning him.

His enemies, however, had sought him and ordered that he be apprehended. So he left his home and place of residence by himself. None of his adherents accompanied him, no one was present with him, and the trust of God—the Proof of God and his successor, the one entrusted with authority after him—was not yet in his hands. At that time, that successor was still a small child.

He crossed the wildernesses by himself, traversed places of danger, and plunged into deadly hazards, while spies and watchers were stationed against him. Messengers had been dispatched to every ruler along his route, ordering them to seize and apprehend him, with orders extending from the East all the way to the farthest West. The enemies of God, the usurpers of authority in His earth, had preceded him in their preparations. They had appointed people to seize him and secretly keep watch for him, with their spies observing him and directing their eyes toward him.

Yet despite all this, he was of fine appearance, elegant dress, and evident prosperity, wearing good clothing and riding a noble mount. He was known by the appearance of a poor man, but he did not display any of the characteristics of the lowly. He had with him provisions, money, baggage, camels, and loads, giving the appearance that he was a merchant.

The splendor of his appearance and outward bearing, as well as what was concealed within him, indicated what his inner condition truly was. This became apparent to many who saw and accompanied him, even among those possessing only the slightest discernment.

Some of them mentioned this to him, and they discussed the matter among themselves. The sun cannot be concealed from those who possess sight, nor can the moon be hidden from those who look upon it. He continued in this condition, while God protected him, concealed him,

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guarded him, and warded harm away from him, until He manifested him, strengthened his victory, and fulfilled His promise.

He arose, coming from the West at his appointed time, just as it was related from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family: “The sun will rise from its place of setting at the head of three hundred”—and we shall mention this at the appropriate place in its explanation, God willing.

This occurred through manifest power and glory, from the farthest West to the nearest [lands], while his call, his missionaries, and his adherents spread throughout the East. This encompassed everyone there, both openly and secretly, until God fulfills His promise

concerning the one to whom He has given the right, from his descendants, over the whole earth: that He may make him prevail over the entire religion, even though the polytheists dislike it, just as God, Mighty and Glorious, promised in His Book. (1)

Thus, he will fill the earth with justice, as the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, reported concerning him.

Whatever took place during his lifetime, and whatever will take place afterward through his descendants, is attributed to him, may God bless him. Just as all of this is attributed to the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, because he was the first to bring it, and from him it took root and branched forth.

The Prophet, may God bless him and his family, remained in honor, protection, authority, and strength until he departed this world, after having fulfilled what God had made obligatory upon him: establishing His religion, His Book, and the practice of His Prophet, may God bless him and his family. He was honored in himself, strong in his affairs, humbling his enemies and exalting his adherents.

Everyone whom we have named and mentioned among the members of his Household who claimed his position and rose out of desire to attain that which God, Mighty and Glorious, had singled him out for—none of them rose except after preparing arms and men, gathering wealth, and believing that he would prevail and attain what he sought and pursued.

Yet none of them in this matter did anything except bring destruction upon himself and cast himself into perdition by his own hand. They were utterly destroyed, their forces were scattered, and God honored His representative and manifested him. In the same way, He honored Muḥammad, may God bless him and his family, alone.

Even if these signs, proofs, testimonies, and miracles of his were the only ones, they would suffice for anyone who contemplated them with genuine fairness and submitted to the truth after acknowledging it.

We have mentioned only summaries and brief points concerning his affairs in this chapter, since a full account of them would exceed the limits of this book. We have already mentioned and established them in *The Book of the State* (*Kitāb al-Dawla*).

1. Qur’an, al-Tawba 9:33.

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[The Characteristics of the Mahdī]

We shall now also mention some summaries of what has been related concerning his characteristics and the glad tidings given about him, to the extent that this book permits. Although I previously devoted a separate book to this subject, entitled *Maʿālim al-Hudā*, we shall nevertheless make a chapter in this book in which we mention some of them, God willing.

[Mention of the Characteristics of the Mahdī]

In this chapter, we intend to follow the same approach that we followed throughout this book: limiting ourselves to well-known, sound reports, as I stated at its beginning, while omitting the chains of transmission and setting aside repetitions where numerous reports come through the same route, so that the book does not become excessively long and the chapter may remain concise.

Among the glad tidings concerning the Mahdī, peace be upon him, and among the well-known, transmitted reports concerning him:

[1212]

It is related from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, a report transmitted by both the particular community and the general community, that he said:

"If there remains of the world only a single day, God will surely prolong that day until He sends forth in it a man from my Household who will fill it with justice just as it was filled with oppression."

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[1213]

And from ʿAlī, peace be upon him, something similar is related.

[1214]

And from ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās, who said:

"If there remains of the world only a day and a night, the Mahdī will emerge during it."

[1215]

And from Abū Jaʿfar—Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon him—that he said concerning the saying of God, Mighty and Glorious:

"Know that God gives life to the earth after its death." (1)

He said: "Its death" means the disbelief of its inhabitants.

And the unbeliever is dead. So God, Mighty and Glorious, will give it life through the Qāʾim from among us, the People of the Household. He will give life to the earth and give life to its inhabitants after its death.

[The One Who Resembles the Mahdī]

And concerning the destruction of those who resemble the Mahdī, may God hasten his relief:

[1216]

Among what has been related from Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, peace be upon him, is that he was asked:

“When will relief come?”

He replied:

“God, Mighty and Glorious, says:

‘Then wait; indeed, I am with you among those who wait.’” (3)

Then he said:

“A banner of misguidance will be raised for the family of Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib. Then the family of al-ʿAbbās will raise a banner more misguided and more evil than it. Then the descendants of al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, peace be upon him, will raise banners, but they will amount to nothing. Then the descendants of al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, will raise a banner in which the authority lies.”

[1217]

And from Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, that he said:

“Every one who rises from among us is killed, so do not follow him. If this son of mine”—and he placed his hand upon Abū ʿAbd Allāh Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, peace be upon him—“is the one, then do not follow him until you see what you recognize.”

1. Qur’an, al-Ḥadīd 57:17.
2. Thus we have corrected it; the original reads: “and the unbelievers.”
3. Qur’an, al-Aʿrāf 7:71.

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[1218]

And from ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, that he said:

“No one from among us will rise before the appearance of the Qāʾim except that his example is like that of a fledgling that has flown from its nest before its wings have become fully formed, whereupon the children seize it and play with it.”

[A Report Concerning Waiting]

Among what has been related concerning waiting for the Mahdī, may God hasten his relief:

[1219]

What has been related from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, that he said:

“Whoever restrains himself for the sake of our missionary and waits for our Qāʾim is like one drenched in his own blood, between his sword and his shield, in the path of God.”

[The Merit of the Mahdī, Peace Be Upon Him]

Among what has been related concerning the merit of the Mahdī, may God hasten his relief:

[1220]

It is related from Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, that he said:

“When our Qāʾim, the People of the Household, rises, stinginess and cowardice will be removed from the hearts of our adherents. A man among them will kill one hundred men without being concerned about them. The people of this cause will be honored, and their descendants will be preserved until the world comes to an end.

People will draw near to the Imam by visiting the graves of the believers. The grave of every believer from the time of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, will be visited in the eastern and western parts of the earth.

The believer will stand and say:

‘O my brother, how I wish you had remained alive so that you could witness this state, for you had shown allegiance to its people and opposed its enemy. May God bless you in the state in which you are, and keep us firm upon what you were upon.’”

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[1221]

And from Abū Bashīr, that he said:

“The Mahdī is the equal of our Prophet.”

[1222]

And from al-Mashāʾ (2), that he said:

“David the Prophet wished to catch up with the Mahdī and be among his companions.”

[1223]

Ibrāhīm ibn Maysara said:

“I said to Ṭāwūs: ‘Some people say that ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz is the Mahdī.’

Ṭāwūs said:

‘It is not as they say. When the Mahdī comes, he will increase the reward of the one who does good in his goodness, and lighten the burden of the one who does evil in his wrongdoing. The Mahdī will be generous with wealth, severe toward the officials, and merciful toward the poor.’”

2. Thus in the original.

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[Reports Concerning Following the Mahdī, Peace Be Upon Him, Rising With Him, and Other Reports About Him]

[1224]

It is related from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, that he mentioned the Mahdī and said:

“Whoever sees him should follow him, even if he must crawl upon the snow”—[in one wording, “fire”]—“for he is the vicegerent of God upon His earth.”

[1225]

And from him, peace be upon him, that he said:

“A man from my descendants will rise, preceded by a man called al-Manṣūr, who will prepare the way for him”—or he said, “establish him firmly.” It is obligatory upon every believer to support him”—or he said, “respond to him.”

This is the report of ʿAbd al-Razzāq, with his chain of transmission from the Prophet, may God bless him and his family.

Before the Mahdī, may God bless him, was Abū al-Qāsim, the possessor of the call of Yemen, who was called al-Manṣūr. He prepared the way and established the Mahdī, may God bless him, firmly. From al-Manṣūr, they took this as their model in what they pursued. When he openly proclaimed the call, they followed his example and avoided his actions.

He had made his cause manifest in Yemen; his call became strong and his followers numerous.

Abū ʿAbd Allāh remained with him for a period, then traveled toward the West. God granted victory through his hands, and he prepared those lands for His representative. He then migrated to the region where he was destined to be.

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[1226]

And from the narration of Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā ibn Miskīn al-Qāḍī, through a chain reaching back to Ibn Masʿūd, that he said:

“We were one day with the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, when a group from Banū Hāshim came to him. When he saw them, his face changed and he lowered his head.

We said:

‘O Messenger of God, we see upon your face something that you dislike.’

He said:

‘We are a Household for whom God has chosen the Hereafter over this world. The members of my Household will experience expulsion and dispersion after me until a man from my Household rises and fills it with justice and equity just as it was filled with oppression and injustice. Whoever lives to see him should go to him, even if he must crawl upon the snow.’”

[1227]

And from Mujāhid, through a chain reaching back to the Prophet, in a report mentioning things that will occur, that he said:

“Then the Qāʾim of the family of Muḥammad will be sent forth. Their punishment will be finer in the eyes of the people than kohl. God will open for him the eastern and western regions of the earth.

Indeed, they are the true believers. Indeed, it is the best form of striving at the end of time.”

Likewise, the supporters of the Mahdī, may God bless him, were regarded by the general population as ignorant people, and they looked upon them as few in number and lacking knowledge.

[1228]

And from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, that he said:

“Justice will not remain after me except for a short time, until it is cut off. Whenever some portion of justice is cut off, an equivalent portion of oppression comes in its place, until one is born amid oppression who knows nothing but it. Then God, Mighty and Glorious, will bring justice.

And whenever some portion of justice comes, an equivalent portion of oppression departs, until one is born amid justice who knows nothing but it.”

It was said:

“O Messenger of God, who are the people of oppression?”

He said:

“Our cousins, when the world has submitted itself to them.”

It was said:

“Then who are the people of justice?”

He said:

“We are the People of the Household.”

Thus, according to this, the matter will come about gradually, one stage after another, at the hands of one Imam after another from the Household of Muḥammad, may God bless them. It will not happen all at once.

The cause and key to this, and the first through whose hands it came about, was the Mahdī, may God bless him.

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(361)

[1229]

And from the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, that he said:

“People will continue to diminish until God is mentioned only secretly. When that occurs, God will send one who will fill the earth with justice and equity just as it was filled with oppression and injustice.”

[1230]

And from him, peace be upon him, that he said:

“People will continue to diminish until no one says ‘God’ except secretly. When that occurs, God will send the leader of religion, who will strike with his tail, and they will gather toward him like the scattered clouds of autumn. I do not know the name of their commander, nor the one who comes behind their men.”

[Explanation of Unusual Terms]

“Al-Yaʿsūb” means the commander of the bees, the one to whom they flee and around whom they gather.

“Qazaʿ” is the singular of *qarʿa*, meaning a thin fragment of cloud. In the same way, the clouds of autumn gather piece by piece until they become large.

Thus the Commander of the Faithful, ʿAlī, peace be upon him, compared the gathering of the supporters of the Mahdī to this.

And this was indeed how their affair unfolded. The call to which he migrated, and through which God, Mighty and Glorious, manifested his cause and granted him victory through its people, gathered around the one who carried their call, one after another: first one, then one, then three, until God increased their number, granted them victory, and caused them to prevail over the people of authority, strength, numbers, and preparation who had previously ruled over them and held power over them.

Previously, they had been weak and humiliated under those rulers. Then God, Mighty and Glorious, gave them command of the matter. They killed the tyrants among them with their own hands, and inherited their kingdom, their homes, and their wealth.

In the same manner, God will cause His friends to inherit the earth and all who dwell upon it, just as He, Mighty and Glorious, promised them. He does not break His promise.

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[1231]

And from ʿAlī, peace be upon him, that he said:

“Through us God cuts off falsehood; through us the believer obtains his vengeance; through us the bonds of humiliation are torn from your necks—not through you; and through us it is brought to its conclusion—not through you.”

[Explanation of Unusual Terms]

His saying, “He cuts off”: that is, He severs.

Batr means cutting off the tail and the like completely. One says *batarahu*, “he cut it off,” and *inbatara*, “it was cut off.”

Likewise, the friends of God cut off the falsehood that the oppressors fabricated against God, Mighty and Glorious, and against His Messenger and His friends, through the truth that they brought from God and from His Messenger. In this way, they cut off the lies of the oppressors and the false claims of those who fabricated what was not theirs.

Al-batra means an injustice or wrong suffered in blood or otherwise. Through the friends of God, the believers obtain what was denied them by such injustice, and the friends of God obtain vengeance against those who inflicted such wrong upon their predecessors.

As for his saying, “Through us the bonds of humiliation are torn from your necks”:

Ribq is the plural of *ribqa*. It can also refer to a single cord. It is what is placed around the neck and used to tie a sheep or something similar.

In the report, it is said: “Whoever does such-and-such has removed the bond of Islam from his neck,” meaning that the bonds of Islam are upon his neck.

A sheep is described as *murabbiqa* or *marbūqa* when a cord has been placed around its neck.

Thus, through the friends of God, the bonds of humiliation are removed from the necks of the believers, which the enemies of God had bound with them when they overcame and subjugated them.

[1232]

And from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, who said:

“I heard the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, say:

‘Rejoice in the Mahdī, for he will be sent among my community during severe disagreement among the people and upheavals. He will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it was filled with oppression and injustice. The inhabitants of heaven and the inhabitants of earth will be pleased with him, and through him God will fill the hearts of His servants with a joy encompassed by his justice.’”

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(363)

[1233]

And from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, that he said:

“The Mahdī is from the descendants of Fāṭima, the foremost of the women of this community. Whether the days are long or short, he will emerge and fill the earth with justice and equity just as it was filled with oppression and injustice.”

It was asked:

“When will he emerge, O Messenger of God?”

He said:

“When there are earthquakes in the extremities of the earth, the judges have taken bribes, and the community has become openly immoral, he will emerge from the West. On his leg there will be a birthmark, and between his shoulders there will be a single mark. He will be solitary and a stranger.”

It was asked:

“How will he be solitary and a stranger, O Messenger of God?”

He said:

“Because he will separate himself from his family and become a stranger in his homeland.”

And likewise, he arose solitary and a stranger from the West.

Before his rising there were earthquakes, and he bore the mark that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, had described. He did not rise until the judges had taken bribes and the administration of justice had become such that judgments were accepted in exchange for money, and the community had become openly immoral.

[1233]

And from him, may God bless him and his family, that he said:

“There must be a Qāʾim from the descendants of Fāṭima who rises from the West, between five and seven, who will break the power of the innovators and kill those who have gone astray.”

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And likewise the Mahdī, peace be upon him, rose from the West, and his cause became manifest there after having been concealed, when the bearer of his call reached the West with the assembled forces of his adherents who had responded to his call in the year 296 [AH]. He then reached the seat of his kingdom in the West—in Ifrīqiya—in the following year, 297 [AH].

[1234]

And from Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, may God bless them all, that he mentioned the Mahdī, peace be upon him, and said:

“Black banners will appear.”

He gestured with his hand toward the East.

“And the banners of the Mahdī will appear from here.”

And he gestured with his hand toward the West.

“This will occur during the days of the Umayyads, before the rise of the ʿAbbāsids.”

The black banners did indeed appear from the East, from the direction of Khurāsān. Then afterward the banners of the Mahdī appeared from the West, as he, peace be upon him, had said.

[1235]

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Bakkār al-Aqraʿ al-Qayrawānī said:

“I performed the pilgrimage and entered Medina. I went to the Mosque of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, and saw the people gathered around Mālik ibn Anas, asking him questions and receiving his legal opinions.

I approached him, and there I saw a handsome man present in the mosque, with attendants around him pushing people away from him.

I said to one of those around him:

‘Who is this?’

They said:

‘Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar.’

I left Mālik and followed him. I continued to approach him gently until I came close to him, and I said:

‘O son of the Messenger of God, I am a man from the people of the West, one of your Shīʿa and one who professes allegiance to you before God.’

He said to me:

‘Stay away from me, man, for guards have been appointed over us, and I fear them for you.’

I said:

‘By God, I only wanted to ask you something.’

He said:

‘Ask what you wish.’”

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(365)

I said:

“We have related that the Mahdī is from among you. When will he rise, and where will he rise?”

He said:

“The example of the one about whom you ask is like a pillar that has fallen from heaven, with its head in the West and its base in the East. From which end do you think the pillar will rise when it is raised?”

I said:

“From its head.”

He said:

“That is sufficient for you. He will rise from the West, while his foundation is in the East. There his rising will become established and his affair will be completed.”

And likewise was the Mahdī, peace be upon him: his origin and upbringing were in the East, then he migrated to the West, and he rose from that direction.

His affair will be completed in the East, and from his descendants there will arise one through whom God will complete that matter in that region and cause him to inherit the earth, as He, Mighty and Glorious, says in His clear Book:

“And We have written in the Psalms, after the Reminder, that the earth shall be inherited by My righteous servants.” (1)

All of this is attributed to the Mahdī, peace be upon him, because he is its key, and through his call its cause was extended.

Every one of his descendants who rises after him as a Mahdī has been guided by God, Mighty and Glorious, and through them He has guided His servants to Himself, exalted is He.

They are the rightly guided Imams and the righteous servants whom God mentioned in His Book, saying that He would cause them to inherit the earth. He does not break His promise.

[1236]

Abū Wahhāb, through a chain reaching back to the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, that he said:

“People will emerge from the East, and they will give the Mahdī his authority, calling people to him.”

The call of the Mahdī and the Imams from his descendants, peace be upon them, has spread, by the praise of God, throughout the earth. It has taken root in various regions of the East and West, and it is likely that some of their adherents will rise from the East, calling people to them in order to complete their affair.

They will establish the authority of the Lord of the Age there. God will bring that near and fulfill His promise to His friends, through His grace and mercy toward His servants and through His might and power.

1. Qur’an, al-Anbiyāʾ 21:105.

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(366)

It is also possible that those who emerge from the East are those of the missionaries who emerged from it, just as Abū ʿAbd Allāh, the bearer of the call of the West, and those who were with him had been sent by the missionary of Yemen. I have mentioned their report in *The Book of the State*.

[1237]

Al-Ḥibrī, through his chain of transmission from ʿAlī, peace be upon him, Salmān, and Ḥudhayfa ibn al-Yamān, who attribute it to the Prophet, may God bless him and his family:

"The completion of the affair of the family of Muḥammad, peace be upon them, will occur when banners emerge from Sind."

The call of the Lord of the Age has appeared in Sind. Through his adherents there, a missionary overcame the ruler of Sind, killed him—he had followed the Magian religion—and killed his men.

He destroyed the idol that they worshipped and transformed the entire temple and everything that had been in it into a congregational mosque. His authority became strong.

This occurred through the power and might of God and bears witness to the fulfillment of His promise to His friends, in accordance with what this report says concerning the appearance of the banners of Sind. For the banners of Sind have indeed appeared through the call of the friends of God there, and through its people the authority of the Lord of the Age has become manifest.

[Al-Ṣādiq, Peace Be Upon Him, With a Group of the People of Kūfa]

[1238]

From Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, peace be upon him, that he said to a group of people from Kūfa:

"Your supporters are not like ours. No more than fifty men from Kūfa will rise with our Qāʾim. There is no town from which a group will not rise with him, except Baṣra, for not a single person from among them will emerge with him."

In former times, the people of Kūfa were the greatest supporters of those from the Household of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, who rose claiming the imamate, among those whom we have mentioned previously.

This report contains what necessitates the invalidation of what they claimed in the account mentioned earlier. Today, by the praise of God, the call of the Lord of the Age has appeared, and his missionaries have established themselves in most regions. People in every region of the world have responded to it, and the smallest number today is in Kūfa, as the report states.

As for Baṣra, the dominant position among its people today is the doctrine of the Muʿtazila. It is likely that when the Qāʾim appears in the East, none of them will rise with him, because of the distance of the Muʿtazila from the doctrine of the people of truth, until he overcomes them by force—and others like them—through the power and might of God, if God wills.

1. Sind: with a kasra on its first letter, a sukūn on its second, and ending with an unpointed dāl; a land between India, Kirmān, and Sijistān (*Muʿjam al-Buldān*, 3/267).

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[1239]

And from the narration of Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Qayrawānī, who was a Shīʿī, through a chain reaching back to Sālim ibn Abī al-Jaʿd, that he said:

“I was circumambulating the House with Saʿīd ibn Ḥumayr. We circumambulated as long as God wished, then we came to a gathering in this mosque in which were ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar, Ibn al-ʿĀṣ, Ibn Ṣafwān, and a number of Quraysh.

ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar said:

‘Where are you from?’

We said:

‘From Iraq.’

He said:

‘And from which part of Iraq?’

ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṣafwān al-Jumaḥī said to him:

‘The people of Kūfa and the people of Baṣra are the same.’

ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar said:

‘The people of Kūfa are better than the people of Baṣra, because they are more numerous in following the Mahdī.’”

This is something that ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar did not say from his own opinion or from himself. Rather, it was something he heard from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, or something that had reached him from him. For this and similar matters concern knowledge of what is to come, and such knowledge can only be acquired from the prophets of God.

This corresponds to what we mentioned earlier concerning the people of Baṣra, who continue to hold the doctrine of the Muʿtazila to this day. Because of this, they will fall short in rising with the Lord of the Age when he reaches them, until he prevails over them and over others like them, through the power and might of God.

[1240]

And Sulaymān ibn Jaʿfar related a report through a chain reaching back to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him, that he mentioned the affair of the Qāʾim from the family of Muḥammad, the Mahdī, and what would occur through his hands. Then he said:

“The possessor of this affair is the banished, the wandering, the solitary, the alone.”

And likewise was the Mahdī, peace be upon him. When his call became widespread in the East and his missionaries, his brother's sons, and those who had responded to them became numerous, his enemies resented him. They sought him, and the news reached him.

So he departed from his family, leaving his wealth behind: banished because he feared them, wandering because of what he feared from them, and solitary, with no companion in his migration and no one to comfort him in his isolation.

The one entrusted with authority after him was, at that time, still a small child. He did not take from his family anything except himself, so that he could deliver the trust of God, Mighty and Glorious, to him. His concern and preoccupation with this matter were greater than his concern and preoccupation with himself.

His course in this was like that of his grandfather, the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, when he left Mecca out of fear of the polytheists after they had united in seeking to kill him.

But God willed nothing except the salvation of both of them and their triumph over those who opposed them, and the manifestation of His religion through them and at their hands, even though the unbelievers disliked it.

The fourteenth part of the book *Sharḥ al-Akhbār fī Faḍā'il al-A'imma al-Ṭāhirīn al-Abrār* has been completed.

Praise belongs to God alone, and may His blessings be upon His Messenger, our master Muḥammad, and his pure and immaculate family, and may His peace be upon them all.

Written by our most eminent master, the Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr, may God sanctify his spirit and make him intimate with His presence.

1. Thus in the original.