THE IMAMI - SHI'I MOVEMENT IN THE TIME OF MUSA AL-KAZIM AND 'ALI AL-RIDA

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MEHMET ALI BUYUKKARA
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Abstract

The present study aims to identify the main events related to the Imāmi-Shi‘i movement in the time of the Imāms, Mūsá al-Kāzim and `Ali al-Ridā (148-203 / 765-818). The thesis consists of four chapters following an introduction which surveys briefly the main sources used in the study, and gives some background information about the religio-political party which is the central subject of the work.

Chapter One outlines the crisis that the Imāmi party lived through after the death of al-Ṣādiq. Four splinter groups; the proto-Ismā‘ilīyya, the Aftāhiyya, the Nāwūsiyya and the Shumaytiyya are examined in the chapter. How they emerged, their leaders and prominent figures, their principle doctrines and finally their destinies are the main themes analysed in detail.

Chapter Two is devoted to the life of the Imam al-Kāzim. A critical biography is presented. The process in which he stood out as a leader and then was proclaimed as the successor to al-Ṣādiq is explored. His political attitude towards the present `Abbāsid regime, and the latter’s policy towards all the Shi‘i elements in general and al-Kāzim’s party in particular are outlined. Al-Kāzim is also treated in the chapter as a traditionist and ascetic. His alleged link to some early sufis is briefly examined.

Chapter Three is concerned with the period of `Ali al-Ridā. The Wāqifi group which was a serious challenge to the continuity of the line of the Imāms is investigated in detail. The main focus in the chapter is the caliph al-Ma‘mūn’s remarkable decision to nominate al-Ridā as his heir apparent. A detailed discussion about this matter throws some light on the factors which drove al-Ma‘mūn to propose it. The importance of this event in `Abbāsid history is also traced. The Imām’s sudden death and speculations concerning it are other matters of investigation presented in the chapter. Like al-Kāzim, al-Ridā is also treated as a traditionist and saint. The chapter also provides information about al-Ridā’s policy towards ghulāt elements and their ideas.

Chapter Four traces the dimensions of the Imāmi infiltration into governmental ranks of the `Abbāsid state. It also attempts to unearth the underground activities of the two Imāms and examine the structure and the functions of the system of wakāla in their times. The chapter includes a section in which some foremost rijāl of the two Imams, such as Hishām b. al-Hakam and ‘Ali b. Maytham, are introduced.

In the conclusions, there is a summary of the findings of the study. The thesis also contains an appendix which describes works attributed to al-Kāzim and al-Ridā. The second appendix reveals the Ismā‘ili version of the argument about what led al-Ma‘mūn to nominate al-Ridā as his heir.
Abbreviations

BSMESB  British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin
BSOAS  Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
EI1  Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1st edition (Leiden 1913-1938)
EI2  Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edition (Leiden 1960-)
IC  Islamic Culture
IJMES  International Journal of Middle East Studies
JAOS  Journal of the American Oriental Society
JRAS  Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland
MW  Muslim World
SI  Studia Islamica
The article is written as "al-" even when used before sun letters and after vowels, e.g. Abū al-Riḍā (not Abū r-Riḍā or Abū l-Riḍā).

Vowels

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INTRODUCTION

The present thesis attempts to identify the main events in the time of the Imams Musa al-Kazim and ‘Ali al-Rida. The information about these events, which was brought together from fragmentary information in the works of history, biographical dictionaries and the books of tradition, has formed a chronological framework for a limited historical period. This study should be identified as a work which tries to inquire historically and study critically a period when a continuing political-religious party was guided by the two Imams who are at the centre of this thesis. This work has been constructed mainly on historical reports and traditions. Because it is not an attempt to examine the historical evolution of the Imami-Shi'i thought or jurisprudence, dogmatic, doctrinal and juridical traditions have only been considered when the history deals with them. However, the critical proof of the historical information related to this period, which is one of the aims of this work, can help further researchers, who want to seek knowledge of the evolution of the early Imami doctrine, to reach their objectives within an accurate historical background. We have also striven to distinguish what the Imams really did and said from what they are attributed to have done and said. In addition, we have tried to provide information in some areas about what was ascribed to them. This shows how the followers exalted their Imams.

I have faced, during my research, like many students of the early stages of Shi’ism, the particular difficulty of what should be the criteria to appraise Shi'i reports which carry a great risk of being spoiled by later contributions or being totally fabricated by later apologists. Therefore, a great deal of caution must be exercised in accepting the real nature of the events described. Firstly, we have tried to be extremely cautious with regard to information which critical history cannot accept as true. In the
course of this, however, the historical traditions bearing fictitious elements have not been completely disregarded because they may indicate some real historical points but have been subjected later to embellishments of different legends and miracles. But we have tried to show the unacceptable sides of this information. Secondly, we have presented Shi'i-originated reports comparatively, i.e. alongside other non-Shi'i accounts on the same matter, in the hope of presenting a more accurate picture.

We prefer to use the term "Shi'a" to identify generally all the groups and individuals upholding a privileged position for the descendants of the Prophet in the political and religious leadership of the Muslim community. This term includes proto-'Alids or proto-Shi'is who were individuals ambitious to gain power using Shi'i movements as a vehicle for their own aspirations. The use of the name "Imamiyya" refers to the certain group of proto-Shi'is who followed al-Šādiq, al-Kazim or al-Riḍā as their religious or political leaders in their times. "The Ja'fariyya" also refers to the adherents of Ja'far al-Sādiq; it is not used to indicate the law school which is accepted to have been found by him. As well as these names, since the followers of the Imams constituted an important movement as a religious sect, the word "party" is also largely preferred to identify them. When the subject deals with a time after the Occultations (after 260/874, especially after 329/941), the name "Imamiyya" is applied as the synonym of the Ithna' ashariyya or the Twelver Shi'a.

Before passing on to the main topics of the thesis, a brief survey of the main sources used in the study is presented in this introduction. It is followed by another section which gives background information about early Shi'i movements, in general, and the Imami party, in particular.
I - Survey of the Sources

1 - 'Uyūn Akhbar al-Riḍā

The most important source of this research is 'Uyūn Akhbar al-Riḍā ("The Sources of Information about al-Riḍā"), a work which was intended to collect all the traditions relating to the life of the Imam 'Ali al-Riḍā. It also includes useful information about the arrest of the Imam Muṣā al-Kāẓim and his death. As well as historical materials, it contains numerous traditions attributed to al-Riḍā about different subjects from theology to medicine.¹ The author of the book is Ibn Bābūya Muḥammad b. 'Ali al-Qummi (d.381/991), well-known as al-Shaykh al-Ṣaduq, who was the foremost Imāmī scholar and traditionist of his time and whose listed works reach about three hundred.

Ibn Bābūya is also the author of another four books about 'Ali al-Riḍā: Jami' Ziyārat al-Riḍā,² Zuhd Abi al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā,³ Masā'īl al-Riḍā,⁴ and al-Miṣbaḥ al-Ḥadi 'ashar Dhikr man Rawa 'an Abi al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā.⁵ 'Uyūn seems to be written subsequently, and thus it probably includes most, perhaps all, of the contents of the above-mentioned non-extant books. For example, the traditions in 'Uyūn about the merit of visiting al-Riḍā's grave and other information

¹ As the result of E. Kohlberg's investigation, the version of the 'Uyūn as we have it is incomplete. Kohlberg has found that four of six excerpts from 'Uyūn cited by 'All b. Muṣā Ibn Tawus in some of his books are missing from the lithographs and printed editions of 'Uyūn, see A Medieval Muslim Scholar, p.379.

² al-NaJaší, p.277; al-Tihrami, xii, p.78.

³ al-NaJaší, p.278; al-Tihrami, xii, p.65.

⁴ al-NaJaší, p.279; al-Tihrami, xx, p.349.

⁵ al NaJaší, p.278.
concerning the Imam’s tomb in Mashhad 6 were probably derived from the book Jāmi’ Ziyārāt al-Riḍā.

In the introduction of ‘Uyun, Ibn Bābüya says that he wrote this book to present to Abū al-Qāsim Ismā’il ibn ‘Abbād, the vizier and man of letters of the Būyid period, known as Kāfī al-Kufāt or more frequently al-Sāhib (d.385/995). 7 He added his hope that his book would remain well-preserved in Ibn ‘Abbād’s excellent library. 8 He also explained as follows why he chose ‘Uyun particularly among all of his books to present to Ibn ‘Abbād:

"Because I have found nothing more preferable in his (Ibn ‘Abbād’s) view and more impressive in his mind than the knowledge about the Ahl al-Bayt by virtue of his affectionate attachment towards them, his loyalty to their (right of) leadership, his belief in the necessity of obedience to them, his acceptance of their imāma and his kindness towards their descendants; may Allāh make permanent his support and beneficence to their adherents...". 9

Ibn Bābüya then quoted two qasidas of Ibn ‘Abbād which he had written in memory of al-Riḍā. After the qasidas, he related a hadīth attributed to the Imam al-Ṣādiq that whoever recited a verse of a poem about Ahl al-Bayt, God would build a house for him in Paradise. 10

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6 see ‘Uyun, ii, pp.271-92.


8 For some information about this library, see Kohlberg, A Medieval Muslim Scholar, pp.73.

9 ‘Uyun, i, p.2.

10 ‘Uyun, i, pp.25.
After this short introduction, Ibn Babuya starts to relate traditions classifying them in different chapters (bāb). There are sixty-nine chapters in the book. The titles of the chapters clearly indicate the contents of the traditions related in each chapter. The classification of the chapters follows a historical and logical order. The title of the first chapter is "the reason why 'Ali b. Mūsā was named al-Ridā". The other chapters concerning the birth of al-Ridā and the death of his father al-Kazim follow it. The last chapter contains stories about the blessedness of al-Ridā's tomb in Mashhad, people's extraordinary experiences which occurred there and examples of prayers which were answered by God after being said in this tomb. Some of the chapters were probably made up of separate books. Masā'il Muhammad b. Sinan al-Zāhirī (d.220/835)12, 'Ilal (al-Fadl) Ibn Shādhan (d.260/873)13 and Kitab Maḥd al-İslām wa Sharā'i al-Din which is attributed to al-Ridā14 appear to be preserved respectively in chapters thirty-three, thirty-four and thirty-five.15

Ibn Babuya apparently utilised some other early Shi'i works, which are not extant now, when he compiled 'Uyūn. We frequently encounter the names of some early Shi'i rāwīs in the sanads of the traditions. These rāwīs, in the meantime, were the authors of some books, and the topics of these books are very relevant to those traditions in 'Uyūn which were related on the authority of these authors. For instance, in the two chapters related to the symposia in which al-Ridā debated with

11 The number of chapters is different in other editions of the book, but this does not imply that some manuscripts contain material missing from others, because these different numbers represent different methods of dividing the same material, see Kohlberg, A Medieval Muslim Scholar, pp.378-9.

12 see al-Najashi, p.230; al-Tihrānī, xx, p.349; Fadl Allah, p.200.

13 see al-Najashi, p.216; al-Mamaqani, ii, biography no: 9472; i: Kohlberg, "Imam and Community", p.34; Takim, p.85-6; Fadl Allah, p.200-1.

14 see H.M. al-Hasani, ii, p.427; Fadl Allah, p.199.

15 see 'Uyun, ii, pp.86-126.
several scholars from different religions and sects, the traditions are related on the authority of al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Saḥl al-Nawfali.16 Al-Nawfali is reported to have written the book "Dhikr Majālis al-Rida 'alayhim al-Salām ma'a Ahl al-Adyān".17 As another example, the title of chapter sixty-three is "what was narrated by Abū al-Salt about the death of al-Ridā-peace be upon him".18 Al-Najashi records a book, "Kitāb Wafat al-Riḍā" written by Abū al-Salt 'Abd al-Salām b. Šāliḥ al-Harawi.19 However, Ibn Bābūya never refers to the names of these books in the related chapters.

Ibn Bābūya also quotes much information from some valuable historical works which are not extant now. This fact gives 'Uyūn a considerable value. But, unlike the above-mentioned Shi‘i books, these works are referred to with the names of their authors. The first one of them is Tarikh Khurasan of Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad al-Sallāmī who flourished in the first half of the 4th/10th century.20 Another important work is Kitāb al-Awraq fi Aḥbār Āl al-'Abbās wa Ashārīhim which was written by Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Ṣūlī (d.335/946). Although some parts of this source have reached us, the part containing information about the early 'Abbasid period has been lost.21 Ibn Bābūya also quotes many passages from Tarikh Nisabūr of his younger contemporary al-Ḥākim al-Nisabūrī (d.404/1014), a prominent Khurasānī traditionist and historian. Tarikh Nisabūr was an encyclopaedic work devoted to the biographies of famous personalities who lived in

16 see 'Uyun, i, chapters 12 (p.126) and 13 (p.144).
17 al-Najashi, p.27.
19 al-Najashi, p.172.
20 see Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turath), i. pp.568-9.
21 see Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turath), i. pp.530-1
the city of Nishapur. It seems that since al-Riḍā stayed in Nishapur for a while when he was going to Merv, al-Ḥākim devoted a separate part in his book for him. Ibn Bābūya's quotations were probably from this part.

Ibn Bābūya, when he relates the traditions, does not hesitate to give contradictory narrations one after another. For example, he does not consider anything wrong in relating a narration indicating that al-Riḍā was not killed by the caliph al-Ḥāṣim, a matter which contradicts the official Imāmī opinion. Another example is that, after he quotes al-Sallāmī's report that the vizier al-Fadl b. Sahl was behind al-Ḥāṣim's decision to nominate al-Riḍā as his heir, he says that the fact, in his opinion, is not what al-Sallāmī reported; another narration which is related before it is true and the only one which can be relied upon.

Ibn Bābūya sometimes gives some comments on rāwis in the sanads of the narrations and speaks about the authenticity of these sanads. He also gives some explanation about traditions which might lead the reader to a misunderstanding. For example, when he relates a narration in which al-Riḍā is reported to have accepted some gifts from al-Ḥāṣim, he tries to explain the permissibility of acceptance of gifts from an illegitimate ruler by giving confirmative examples from the times of the Prophet and 'Ali b. Abī Ṭalib.

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22 see Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turāth), i, pp.369-70.
23 see pp.274-6 below.
24 see 'Uyun, ii, pp.243-4.
25 see 'Uyun, ii, p.164.
26 For ex., see 'Uyun, i, p.162, ii, p.240.
27 'Uyun, ii, p.173.

2 - The Monographs Dedicated to the Lives of the Imams

The majority of works dedicated to the lives of the Imams were written by Imami authors. *Kitāb al-Irshād* is the most well-known of these books. It was written by the Baghdadi Imami scholar al-Shaykh al-Mufid (d.413/1022), who was the pupil of Ibn Bābuya and is generally regarded as the first exponent of rationalist Imami scholarship. *Al-Irshād* contains traditions concerning the lives of the Imams, their miracles and outstanding merits as well as the *nusūs* of their designations for the imāma. The majority of the traditions in the chapters related to al-Kāẓim and al-Riḍā seem to be derived especially from al-Kulayni’s *al-Kāfi* and al-İsfahāni’s *Maqātil*. Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥilli, well-known as Ṭālāma al-Ḥilli (d.726/1325), abridged *al-Irshād* and entitled it *al-Mustajād min Kitāb al-Irshād*.

*Tarikh al-A’imma* of the Baghdadi scholar Ibn Abi al-Thalj (d.325/936-7) is one of the earliest books of its kind. In comparison with *al-Irshād*, *Tarikh al-A’imma* is quite small and contains only the accounts of the Imams’ names and *kunyas*, the dates of their births and deaths, the names of their children and the places of their graves. Some accounts are presented with *isnād*. This pamphlet seems

28 *Uyun*, xxxii.

29 see Halm, pp.51-3; Momen, p.79; Moezzi, p.12
to be important as some accounts in it differ from those in other Imami sources. Another Baghdadi scholar, Ibn al-Khashshab (d.567/1171), wrote Tarikh al-Mawalid al-A'imma wa Wafayatihim, a pamphlet, the contents of which are almost the same as Ibn Abi al-Thalj’s, but since there are many disagreements between the records of the two authors, it appears that sources which they utilised were different. A contemporary of Ibn al-Khashshab, al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabarsi (d.548/1154), who is the author of the well-known commentary of the Qur’an, Majma’ al-Bayān, wrote another similar work, Tāj al-Mawalid. Its content is the same again except al-Ṭabarsi additionally gives the details about how long the Imams lived with the previous Imāms and who was the caliph during the course of his imāma. Two Shi‘i calendars also become useful for the subject: Masarr al-Shi‘a of al-Mufid and Tawḥid al-Maqāsid of Muhammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥarīthi (d.1031/1622); they indicate several dates related to the lives of the Imams in addition to the important days and times in the Shi‘a history. There is disagreement on many dates in these two works.

Ithbāt al-Waṣiyya is attributed by al-Najashi to ‘Ali b. al-Ḥusayn al-Mas’ūdī (d.346/957-8), the celebrated geographer and historian who is the author of Murūj al-Dhahab.30 In the words of al-Ṭhirānī, Ithbāt mentions “the nature of the link of divine designation (ḥuẓẓa) between the Prophets from Adam until the last of them, our Prophet. It also mentions the same link between al-Awṣiyā (the Imams) until their Qā’im—peace be upon them.”31 In addition to several nuṣūṣ (the proofs of the designation) for each of the Twelve Imams, there are also many traditions in the book about their actions. The sanads of the traditions were usually omitted. Although Shi‘i authors are unanimous in considering al-Mas’ūdī one of their number

30 al-Najashi, p. 179.
31 al-Ṭhirānī, i. p. 110.
and this was largely accepted by the Sunnis also adding Mu'tazilism to his Shi'ism, it has remained doubtful whether Ithbat al-Wasiyya comes from al-Mas'udi's pen. because this work is not mentioned by any Sunni author and al-Mas'udi also did not indicate it himself in any of his surviving works. Dalâ'il al-Imâma is another book giving information about the Twelve Imams. Its author, Muhammad b. Jarir b. Rustam al-Tabari (d. circa 400/1009-10), must not be confused with Muhammad b. Jarir b. Yazid al-Tabari, the author of the famous Tariikh. Al-Dhahabi describes the former as a "Râfidi". Although Dalâ'il usually gives the traditions with isnâd, it is of little historical value as information on the Imams is buried beneath immense legendary accounts.

Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Mazandarani, known as Ibn Shahrashub (d.588/1192), the prominent Shi'i jurist of Aleppo, is chiefly remembered for his Manaqib Al Abi Ta'lib on the biographies of the Imams. Al-Fadl b. al-Hasan al-Tabarsi's 'I{am al-Warâ and 'Ali b. 'Isa al-Irbili's (d.692/1293) Kashf al-Ghumma fi Ma'rifat al-A'imma also consists of the biographies of the Imams. The traditions in these books were usually quoted from earlier works such as al-Kafi and al-Irshad except Kashf al-Ghumma additionally presents some valuable documents such as the mutual letters of al-Rida and al-Ma'mun, which are absent in the early Imami works.

Apart from these Imami works, another three books written by Sunni authors which are dedicated to the lives of the Twelve Imams are worth mentioning. The first book is Tadhkirat al-Khawass of Sibt ibn al-Jawzi (d.654/1256), a Shafi'i scholar who taught in Aleppo and Damascus. Sibt sometimes quotes passages from the non extant volume of Abu Bakr al-Šuli's Kitab al-Awraq. He confirms the episode of


33 al-Dhahabi, Mizan, iii, p.499.
Ghadir Khumm, which is a tradition confirming 'Ali b. Abi Ṭalib's position as the Prophet's successor. Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī b. Muḥammad, known as Ibn al-Sabbāgh (d.855/1451), a Mālikī jurist resident in Mecca, also cites the hadith of Ghadir Khumm in his al-Fuṣūl al-Muhimma fi Maʿrifat al-Aʿīma; he explicates the hadith, but unlike Sībī b. al-Jawzī, he does not interpret it as a proof of 'Alī's succession to the Prophet. Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh usually refers the traditions to al-Mufīd's al-Īrshād in the chapters related to the lives of al-Kāẓim and al-Riḍā. The last important Sunni work is al-Shādharāt al-Dhahabiyya fi Tarājim al-Aʿīma al-Ithnā 'Ashariyya of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ṭūlūn (d.953/1546). The book is made up of compilations from earlier Sunni works, chiefly from al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi's Tarikh Baghdad.

3 - The Books of Tradition

 Başāʾir al-Darajāt of al-Ṣaffār al-Qummi (d.290/903) is regarded as the oldest large compilation of Imāmī dogmatic traditions known to us. The compiler, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār al-Qummi, was a contemporary of the tenth and eleventh Imams. Başāʾir contains traditions about early Imāmī metaphysics and mystical theology including those related to the knowledge of the Imams and their esoteric possessions. Qurb al-Isnād (the Nearness of the Chain) is another early work of Imāmī hadith. 'Abd Allāh b. Jaʿfar b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥīmyārī (d. after 297/910), described by al-Najashī as the shaykh of the Qummi Shiʿa, is the compiler of the book. The book has three main chapters: Qurb al-Isnād 'an al-Sādiq, 'an al-Kāẓim, and 'an al-Riḍā. Although in the chapters of al-Şadiq and

al-Rida the traditions are presented without any classification. In that of al-Kazim they are arranged under titles about different subjects. 35

Al-Kafi fi 'Ilm al-Din is one of the most important works of the Imami tradition. It is the first of the four major canonical collections of the Imami hadith. It was completed in the period of the Lesser Occultation. The compiler of al-Kafi is Muhammad b. Ya'qub al-Kulayni (d.329/941), who was from the Persian village Kulayn near Qum, but resident in Baghdad. Al-Kafi is a collection of over 15,000 traditions. It arranges the sayings of the Imams by subject and each hadith is provided with an isnad. The first volume deals with Usul al-Din (the Principles of Religion). In this volume, the chapter entitled Kitab al-Hujja (the Book of the Proof) is entirely devoted to the doctrine of the imama and contains much information about the lives of the Imams and the beliefs of the Imamiyya about them.

In addition to 'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida, another three books written by Ibn Babuya were also useful for this research. In Ilal al-Sharai', some traditions explain several factors behind different decisions and actions of the Imams such as the factor behind al-Rida's acceptance of being successor to al-Ma'mun's throne. Amali (the Dictation) contains traditions which were dictated by Ibn Babuya to his students during his visit to Mashhad in the year 368/978-9. There is important information in the book about the relations of al-Kazim and al-Rida with the 'Abbasiid caliphs. The author's Ma'ani al-Akhbar also contains similar narrations concerned with our topic.

Tuhaq al-'Uqul is another book worth mentioning. Its author is al-Hasan b. 'Ali al-Harrani, known as Ibn Shu'ba, who was a contemporary of Ibn Babuya and

35 For Qurb al-Isnad, also see Kohlberg, A Medieval Muslim Scholar p.310.
among the teachers of al-Mufid. The traditions in Tuḥaf mostly deal with the spiritual counsel and admonitory sayings of the Prophet and the Eleven Imams. Al-Iḥtiṣās is attributed to al-Mufid. This book of hadith and al-Fusul al-Mukhtara, another work of al-Mufid, contain useful material about the two Imams. In the last chapters of al-Fusul, al-Mufid introduces different splinter Imami and non-Imami Shi'i sects giving some examples of their traditions and then tries to refute their arguments.

Al-Iḥtiṣāṣ of Ahmad b. 'Ali al-Ṭabarsi (d. early 6th/12th century) largely presents traditions related to the Imams' argumentation and debates with their rivals. 'Ali al-Ridā's debates with several scholars in the symposia arranged by al-Ma'mun take up a large part of the book. Belonging to the same period, Sa'id b. Hibat Allāh al-Rawandi (d.573/1178), a Shi'i scholar from Kāshān, wrote al-Khara'ij wa al-Jara'iḥ which was completely devoted to the miracles of the Prophet and the Twelve Imāms.

Three books from the ghayba literature of the Imamiyya are quite important for the present thesis: Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamam al-Nī'ma of Ibn Babuya, al-Ghayba of Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nu'maṇī (d.360/971) and al-Ghayba of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d.460/1067). Particularly Kamāl and al-Ṭūsī's al-Ghayba contain very useful information about the Shi'i groups which proclaimed the occultation of some Imāms such as the Ismā'iliyya and the Wāqifa. Al-Ṭusi quotes forty-one Wāqifi traditions from an early book written by a certain Wāqifi 'All b. Ahmad al-'Alawi. This should be regarded as precious since no Wāqifi work has reached us.

36 Al-Tibrani discusses whether al-Iḥtiṣāṣ really belongs to al-Mufid, see al-Zar'ī'a, i. pp.358-60.
Biḥar al-Anwar, the voluminous encyclopaedic collection of Imamī hadith which was compiled by Muḥammad Baqir al-Majlisi (d.1111/1700), the foremost Shi'i scholar of the Safawid period, is another important source. The 48th and 49th volumes of Biḥar were devoted only to al-Kāzim and al-Riḍā. Musnad al-Kāzim and Musnad al-Riḍā are not original works. They are the collections of hadith which were related from al-Kāzim and al-Riḍā. The editor of the book 'A. al-'Utaridi compiled these traditions from the early Imamī sources and classified them by subject. These two works help us to trace present information back to the early books of tradition.

4 - The Books of Rijāl and the Fihrists

The earliest surviving book of the Shi'i rijāl (biographies of the scholars and transmitters of the hadith) is al-Rijāl of Ahmad b. Abi 'Abd Allah al-Barqi (d.274-80/887-94). This small treatise gives only the lists of the rijāl according to the Imam with whom they associated. The Rijāl of Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Kashshi (d.340/951) is different from al-Barqi's one. It is a collection of traditions about the members of the early Shi'i movement. Each tradition is presented with isnād. The important point regarding this work is that, unlike later Imamī rijāl literature, al-Kashshi gives many unfavourable remarks by the Imāms against several prominent figures of early Shi'ism. Therefore, this work appears to be the most important source for one who seeks to trace the opinions of the splinter Shi'i groups back to the early period and for one who wants to find out doctrinal and personal disagreements within the community especially between the Imāms and their disciples. The original work of al-Kashshi was entitled Kitāb Ma'rifat al-Naqilin 'an al-A'immāt al-Sadiqīn. This was abridged by Muhammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Tusi under the title of Ikhtiyar Ma'rifat al-Rijāl, which is the version which we have 37

37 For the significance of this work, see A. A. Sachedin, "The Significance of Kashshi's Rijal in understanding the Early Role of the Shi'ite Fuqaha," in Logos
Kitāb al-Rijāl of al-Najashi (d.450/1058) and Fihrist of al-Ṭusi are also biographical works which record important information about the followers of the Imāms. Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥasan b. ‘Ali al-Ḥilli’s (d.647/1249) Kitāb al-Rijāl was a compendium of the early Imāmi books of rijāl. Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl of ‘Abd Allah al-Māmaqānī (d.1933), who was a marja’ al-taqlid in Najaf, is a very extensive encyclopaedia of Shi‘i rijāl. It enables researcher to find out all the traditions and other information about most of the individuals whose names are recorded in the sanads of the Imāmi ḥadīth.

Sunni rijāl books were also helpful in this research. Many Shi‘i rijāl or those rijāl who were suspected of Shi‘i tendencies could be found in the Sunni rijāl works which are devoted to the biographies of da‘if (weak, i.e. unreliable) rāwis. Of these works we have used Kitāb al-Jarh wa al-Ta‘dil of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Razi (d.327/938-9), Kitāb al-Majrūhin of Muhammad ibn Hibbān (d.354/965), Mizan al-l’tidal fī Naqī al-Rijāl of al-Dhahabi (d.748/1348), Lisān al-Mīzan and Tahdhib al-Tahdhib of Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī (d.852/1449). Tahdhib is a much later and more comprehensive work which includes all the early Sunni critics on numerous rāwis. Al-Ansāb of al-Sam‘ānī (d.562/1166-7), another Sunni traditionist, intends to list early rijāl according to their nicknames and family-names. Ibn al-Athir wrote an improved compendia of al-Ansāb, al-Lubāb fī Tahdhib al-Ansāb. Both books have separate sections for the biographies of al-Kāẓim and al-Riḍā.
Ibn Jarir al-Ṭabarî (d.310/923) is worth mentioning as the first author in this regard because of his elaborate and accurate history, *Tārikh al-Rusūl wa al-Mulūk*. These annals cover the whole period with which this thesis is relating. *Tārikh al-Ṭabarî* served as a major source for later historians such as Ibn al-Athīr (d.630/1232), Abū al-Fidā (d.732/1332) and Ibn Kathīr (d.774/1372). Al-Yaʿqūbī (d. after 292/905) is generally accepted as a historian sympathetic to the 'Alids. He sometimes gives some rare information related to our subject in his *Tārikh*. Al-Masʿūdī (d.346/957-8) in his principal surviving work, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, used the topical method of writing history. His narrations and accounts on the symposia which were arranged in the 'Abbāsid court were very valuable for this research. From the earliest sources, *Tārikh* of Khalīfa b. Khayyāt (d.240/854-5) and *Akhbār al-Ṭiwāl* of Abū Ḥanīfa al-Dinawarī (d.282/896), despite the fact that they are quite brief histories in comparison with the above-mentioned ones, provide checks on the dates of events and the names of high state officials. Ibn Aṭham's (d.314/926) *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, a major source for the early history of the Arabs, continues its narrative until the time of Ḫarūn al-Rashīd. *Tārikh al-Mawṣil* of al-Azī (d.334/945), *Kitāb al-Baghdād* of Ahmad b. Ṭāhir b. Ṭayfūr (d.280/833) and *Wulāt Miṣr* of al-Kindī (d.350/960-1) are books of local history. Ibn Ṭayfūr especially gives valuable information about the religious opinions of al-Maʿmūn. Al-Kindī also reports some events which took place in Egypt in connection with the nomination of 'Alī al-Ridā as heir apparent in Khurāsān.

The anonymous book of early 'Abbāsid history, *Akhbār al-Dawlat al-Abbāsiyya*, and *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* of al-Balādhrī (d.299/892-3) are among the early works. Therefore, their information on the 'Alid-'Abbāsid co-operation in the course of the 'Abbāsid revolution and the relationship having developed between them in the post-revolution period are very valuable. Al-Jahshiyārī (d.331/941) wrote the
history of the viziers and secretaries of the Islamic states, Kitāb al-Wuzara' wa al-Kuttāb. His information on the administrative and political activities of the 'Abbāsid viziers gives many indications to us about their relations with the Imams and the state policy carried out towards the Imāms and their followers. Maqātil al-Tālibiyīn is a historical work composed by Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahāni (d.356/966-7). It contains biographies of the descendants of Abū Ṭālib who were asserted to have been killed for political reasons, including those who died in prison or in hiding. In the book there are two chapters dedicated to al-Kāẓim and al-Riḍā. The book also gives detailed accounts of the various rebellions and includes lists of those who participated in them.

Although they are not directly related to the subject of this research, the early books of ādāb are also important. Al-Isfahāni’s al-Aghani, Ibn Qutayba’s (d.276/889) ‘Uyūn al-Akhbār and Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih’s (d.328/939-40) al-‘Iqd al-Farīd have valuable literary materials which give many details about the relationship between the caliphal court and some of the prominent ‘Alids including the Imāms. Ibn al-Tiqṭaqa’s (d.701/1300) al-Fakhri is a much later historical work. The author was a descendant of the prominent ‘Alid family in the second century H., the Banu Tabātabā. This fact seems to have affected his narrative and therefore his information sometimes differs from the others. Ibn al-Tiqṭaqa gives more space to the accounts of Abū al-Sarāyah’s revolt and the nomination of al-Riḍā in proportion to the small size of his book.

Large biographical dictionaries are also important even though their reports are predominantly laudatory. The works of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi (d.463/1072), Ibn al-Jawzī (d.597/1201), Ibn Khallikān (d.681/1282), al-Dhahabi (d.748/1348), al-Safādī (d.764/1363), al-Yāfī’ī (d.768/1367) and Ibn al-‘Imād (d.1089/1678) have sections devoted to the lives of al-Kāẓim and al-Riḍā. Ibn al-Ḥazm’s (d.456/1064) book on the genealogy of the Arabs, Jamharat Ansab al-‘Arab, traces the lineage of famous
personalities who lived in the early centuries of Islam. It gives only little information about historical events related to these persons. Another two works on genealogy belong to the Imami authors al-'Umari (d. mid 5th/11th c.) and Ibn 'Inaba (d. 828/1425). These books, al-Majdi fi Ansāb al-Tālibiyyin and 'Umdat al-Tālib fi Ansāb Al Abi Ṭālib, are devoted only to the lineage of 'Ali b. Abi Ṭālib. However, Ibn 'Inaba has sections giving accounts of the lives of prominent 'Alids such as al-Kāẓim and al-Riḍā.

6 - Heresiographical Works

The most important sources of heresiographical information presented in this thesis are Firaq al-Shi'a of al-Hasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhti (d. 310/922) and al-Maqālāt wa al-Firaq of Sa'd b. 'Abd Allāh al-Qummi (d. 299-301/911-4). These two authors are Imami Shi'is. Al-Nawbakhti was a close relative of al-Husayn b. Rawḥ al-Nawbakhti (d. 326/938), the third safir (agent) of the Hidden Imam. Since many parallels exist between the works of al-Nawbakhti and al-Qummi, it is suggested that al-Qummi used al-Nawbakhti's work and added sources of his own. Also W. Madelung suggests that al-Nawbakhti used Hishām b. al-Ḥakam's Kitāb Ikhtilaf al-Nāṣ fi al-Imama as a source for the first part of his book.38

'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Anbārī, well-known as al-Nāshi' al-Akbar, is a poet and Mu'tazili theologian who died in 293/906. He wrote a heresiographical work, a section of which on the imama is preserved. According to its editor, Joseph Van Ess, al-Nāshi' used sources belonging to an earlier date than the period at which he was writing. Kitāb al-Intiṣār of Abū al-Husayn al-Khayyat (d. circa 300/913), who was the foremost representative of the Baghdad school of the Mu'tazila, is one of the eight books written by the author against Ibn al-Rawandi, an arch-heretic who died in

circa 297/910. From al-Intiṣār we get information about the early Imāmiyya in the words of both al-Khayyāt and Ibn al-Rāwandi. Another Muʿtazili author is ʿAbd Allāh b. Ahmad al-Balkhi (d.319/931), who was a disciple of al-Khayyāt. His work on the Shiʿi sects is preserved in the last volume of al-Qādī ʿAbd al-Jabbār’s famous al-Mughnī.

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī’s (d.324/936) Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn occupies a unique place. Maqālāt not only reports the doctrines of the sects but also gives the detailed views of individual thinkers such as Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and Yūnus b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān, who were the disciples of al-Kāzim and al-Ridā. Al-Tanbih wa al-Radd ‘alā al-Ahwāʾ wa al-Bida’ by Muḥammad b. Ahmad al-Malātī (d.377/987-8), the Shāfīʿī faqīh and specialist in the Qur’ānic readings, gives quite hostile comments on the doctrines of sects and certain individuals, and he often accuses the believers of these doctrines of being heretics. Another Sunni writer is al-Isfaraʾīnī (d.471/1078-9), the Ashʿarī scholar. His al-Ṭabṣīr fi al-Dīn classifies the sects and gives brief accounts of the beliefs which they held. ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d.429/1037-8) also belongs to the Ashʿarī school of thought. His frequently-consulted book, al-Farq bayn al-Firaq, is a polemical work. Al-Baghdādī takes each sect, judges all from the standpoint of the Sunnism and condemns all which deviate from the straight path. Unlike al-Baghdādī, al-Shahristānī (d.548/1153) tries to give plain information about the sects in his outstanding work, al-Mīlāl wa al-Nihāl. However, both authors, since they made the tradition about seventy-three sects, one of which is “the saved one”, a foundation to construct the framework of their books, seem to produce several sect names to ensure the number of seventy-three. For instance, they give the names of the Hishāmiyya, the Zurāriyya or the Yūnusiyya as the Shiʿi sects the founders of which are taken by al-Ashʿarī as individual thinkers. A contemporary of al-Baghdādī, the famous Andalusian Zāhirī scholar Ibn Hazm wrote Kitāb al-Faṣl. Although al-Faṣl is an encyclopaedia of
religions, like al-Shahrastānī's *al-Milāl*, it also deals with heresiography. Ibn Ḥazm concentrates on the theological ideas of the sects rather than their history.

Two little heresiographical treatises written by the celebrated theologian and exegest Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d.606/1210) are worth mentioning. *Muḥassal* deals largely with *kalām*, but one of its sections is dedicated to the opinions of the different sects with regard to the imāma. *Iʿtiqādāt Firaq al-Muslimīn* contains most of the Muslim sects in addition to those of the Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians. There is also a special chapter reserved for the Sufis. F. al-Rāzī points out that he is the only one to regard the Sufis as a sect. *Kitāb al-Mawāʿīz wa al-Iʿtibār*, commonly referred to as *Khīṭāṭ*, written by the Egyptian historian Ahmad b. ʿAlī al-Maqrizī (d.845/1441-2), has a small section in which the Shiʿi sects are classified. Abū ʿIlatīm Ahmad b. Ḥamdān al-Rāzī (d.322/934) was the chief Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* of Rayy. His work, *Kitāb al-Zīna*, intends to find out the origins of the names of the Islamic sects. He sometimes gives useful information about whether these sects still survived at his time.

7 - Western-language Works on the Subject

A monographic study written particularly for the Imām al-Kāzīm and al-Riḍā has yet to appear in the Western languages. Although some academic works have been done for other Imāms, the period of al-Kāzīm and al-Riḍā has not been studied by the critical method of Western scholarship. Rev. C. Sell was perhaps the first Western-language author to write the biographies of the Twelve Imams. He devoted

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two short chapters to the lives of al-Kazim and al-Riḍā in this work. Donaldson followed him writing *The Shi'ite Religion* in 1933. He also devoted two chapters to al-Kazim and al-Riḍā. He seems to have used all the sources available for him at that time including 'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā. The three different entries in the EI1 and EI2 on al-Kazim and al-Riḍā do not give the whole picture of the Imāms' lives and activities. In 1973, M.W. Watt examined the scholarly activities of some of the followers of al-Kazim and al-Riḍā and their impacts on the formative period of Islamic thought. F. Omar, in 1975, briefly discussed the detention of al-Kazim and traced its possible reasons. In 1978, J. Hussain investigated the agent network of al-Kazim and touched on some dimensions of the Imāmi infiltration into the governmental offices, but without giving detailed information. The same author, in 1982, in the *Occultation of the Twelfth Imām*, touched on the same subjects. He also gave information about the crisis of the imama after the death of al-Ṣādiq and al-Kazim, the attitude of the 'Abbāsids towards al-Kazim's party and the position of the latter in revolutionary Shi'i activities especially under the leadership of

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40 Rev. Canon Sell, *Ithna'ashariyya or the Twelve Shi'ah Imams*.
(Madras 1923).


42 Cl. Huart, "'Ali al-Riḍā", EI1, i, pp. 296-7; Strothmann, "Musa al-Kazim", EI1, iii, p. 741; B. Lewis, "'Ali al-Riḍā", EI2, i, pp. 399-400.


al-Riḍā. In 1980, W. Madelung wrote about the activities of Ḥabīb Yaqtīn, who was a secret Imāmī official in the ‘Abbāsid court. In 1984, Sachedina mentioned the agent system of al-Ḵāẓm, emphasising the collection of khums, but he said nothing about the continuation of the system into the time of al-Riḍā. D. Thomas, in 1988, translated the large part of a tradition in which al-Riḍā debates with a Christian scholar in a symposium. He then argued against the historicity of this tradition. H. Algar, in 1990, examined in detail the links found in some sources between al-Ḵāẓm and three early famous mystics.

In three general works on the history of Shi‘ism written by M. Momen, H. Halm and Y. Richard, al-Ḵāẓm and al-Riḍā have received some mention. Moezzi, in 1994, has paid some attention to some of the aspects of the political lives of al-Ḵāẓm and al-Riḍā. Most recently Arjomand has given the sociohistorical perspective of the crisis of the imāma in the history of the early Imāmiyya. On this


occasion, he has made comments on some religio-political events which took place in the time of al-Kāzīm and al-Riḍā.\textsuperscript{53}

The most complete investigation of this period remains the brief entries of E. Kohlberg in the EI\textsuperscript{2} and W. Madelung in the Encyclopaedia Iranica. These articles give very useful information and a large number of references to the student to start a detailed study on the subject.\textsuperscript{54}

Al-Ma'mūn's choice of al-Riḍā as his heir apparent drew the attention of many scholars due to its unique position in the history of Islam. Such scholars as F. Gabrieli, Ḥamdi Ṣidqī, D. Sourdel, M. Watt, M. Zahniser, H. Kennedy, M. Rekaya, J.A. Nawas focused on this subject by suggesting some possible explanations of this unusual step of al-Ma'mūn.\textsuperscript{55} Madelung translated two important documents concerning this historical event and made some useful contribution to the subject by his comments on them.\textsuperscript{56} P. Crone and M. Hinds also translated another document and traced al-Ma'mūn's policy in this regard.\textsuperscript{57}


\textsuperscript{56} W. Madelung, "New Documents Concerning al-Ma'mūn, al-Fadl b. Sahl and 'Ali al-Riḍā", in Studia Arabica et Islamica, Festschrift for Ihsan
It is also worthwhile to mention some Ph.D. theses which deal partially with the period of al-Kāzīm and al-Riḍā. Rajkowski, in his large study, "Early Shi'ism in Iraq", gave some information about the personalities of these Imāms and some of their activities.\(^5^8\) Wardrob, when she has examined the development of the Imāmi organisation, spoke about the Imāmi wakāla system under al-Kāzīm and al-Riḍā.\(^5^9\)

One of the aims of Takim in his thesis is to identify the importance of the rijāl of the Imāms in early Shi'ism. He has given the detailed biographies of the renowned rijāl of al-Kāzīm and al-Riḍā such as Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, Hishām b. Sālim and Yūnus b. 'Abd al-Rahmān.\(^6^0\) Finally Cooperson has examined the biographical representation of four third/ninth century figures, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Bishr al-Ḥāfi, al-Ma'mūn and 'Ali al-Riḍā, in Arabic biographical writings extending from the fourth/tenth to the fourteenth/twentieth centuries. According to the author, these figures espoused a distinct claim to authority based on the prophetic legacy. He has explained that his study exposes the biographical genre as a literary ordering of social and spiritual reality.\(^6^1\)


II - Historical and Ideological Background

One of the main dogmas in Islam is that Prophet Muhammad (d. 13 Rabi' I. 10/8 June, 632) is the seal of all the prophets, therefore no prophet after him would be commissioned by God. After the death of the Prophet, the necessity of a successor to him who undertook his duty as a leader of the Muslim community and the state, and the fact that there did not seem to be any designated successor to him, led the community to choose a new leader. Abū Bakr emerged as the leader (imām or khalīfa) and was accepted by the Prophet’s companions. 'Umar b. al-Khattāb, 'Uthmān b. Affān and 'Ali b. Abī Ta lik succeeded to him respectively, who were also appointed to the post by different procedures. These four leaders (ruled between 10/632 and 40/661) were usually named "Rightly Guided Caliphs" ("Khulafā’ al-Rāshidin").

However, the large part of 'Ali b. Abī Ta lik’s caliphate was involved in civil war, bringing about important religio-political divisions within the Muslim nation (al-umma). The party which gave its support to 'Ali was named "the Shi'a" ("Shi'at 'Ali" = the Party of 'Ali). In their eyes 'Ali occupied a unique position, because he belonged to the Banū Hashim, the Prophet’s own branch of the tribe of Quraysh, and he was a close relative of the Prophet being his cousin, son-in-law and the father of his only surviving descendants, being married Fā tūma, the daughter of the Prophet.

When 'Ali b. Abī Ta lik, who was the first Imām of the Shi'a, was murdered in 40/661, the governor of Syria, Mu'awiya b. Abī Sufyān, who had been an opponent of 'Ali in the civil war, took over the caliphate. The party of 'Ali recognised al-Ḥasan, the eldest son of 'Ali and the grandson of the Prophet, as their new leader

62 "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Apostle of Allah, and the seal of the Prophets". al-Qur'ān: xxxiii. 40.
and also they proclaimed that he was the only legitimate caliph after 'Ali. However, Mu'awiyah prevailed upon al-Hasan to abdicate. Thus, Mu'awiyah gained power. Later nominating his son, Yazid, to the caliphate after him, he established the hereditary rule of the Umayyads (40-132/661-749).

Al-Hasan died in 50/670. His younger and full brother al-Husayn, who had lived in retirement at Medina throughout the reign of Mu'awiyah, refused to acknowledge Yazid. He, relying on the insistent appeals of the Shi'is in Iraq, decided to wrest the caliphate from Yazid. As a reply to the Kufan summons, he set off on a journey from Medina to Iraq in 60/680. However, at Karbala, near Kufa, he was surrounded by the Umayyad troops, and after his refusal to surrender, he was cut down and his relatives and companions were massacred with him on 10 Muharram, 61/10 October, 680.

Al-Husayn was regarded later by the Shi'a as their third Imam, and his heroic struggle against "illegitimate rulers" became a substantial symbol in Shi'i history and ideology. His martyrdom inspired the party with a new religious fervour, which would stir up rebellions in early Islamic history. It also motivated Ahl al-Bayt (the People of the House = the Family of the Prophet) to establish or strengthen their own organisation to protect their honour and regain their lost rights.

Almost all the Shi'i groups agreed on the succession passing from 'Ali to al-Hasan and then to al-Husayn. After the latter's death, the date of the first division within the Shi'ism might be marked. Al-Mukhtār b. Abi 'Ubayd al-Thaqafi, after organising his own pro-'Arid movement, revolted in Kufa in 66/685 against the Umayyad government with a general call to avenge al-Husayn's murder. He

63 Kufa was the capital of 'Ali's caliphate. After 'Ali, the city maintained its importance as the centre of the Shi'i movements.
succeeded in winning a mass support from the Shi'is in Iraq, previously been under the leadership of the group known as \textit{al-Tawwâbûn} (the Penitents) because of their failure to support al-Husayn in his struggle.\textsuperscript{64} Al-Mukhtâr also claimed that Muḥammad b. 'Ali al-Hanafiyya, the son of 'Ali by a woman other than the Prophet's daughter Fatima, was his real leader and the Mahdi (the Divinely Guided One) who would restore justice and equity on the earth. This is the first time that a clear declaration of the characteristic Shi'î doctrine of the Mahdi was used in a messianic context.\textsuperscript{65} Although at its early stage the revolt had been very successful, it was later defeated and al-Mukhtâr was killed. However, the influence of this group lasted for some time. When Ibn al-Hanafiyya died in 81/700-1, many of the partisans of this movement did not accept his death as a reality and they maintained that he would return and fill the earth with justice.\textsuperscript{66} This was the beginning of two central beliefs in the idea of the Mahdi in the Shi'ism: the \textit{ghayba} (occultation) and the \textit{raj'a} (return) of the Islamic Messiah.\textsuperscript{67} As well as the Messianism, the doctrine of \textit{badā'} was also formalised during this period. When al-Mukhtâr, who had promised his followers victory before the revolt, was defeated, he tried to justify his failure by putting forward the doctrine of \textit{badā'}, namely, that God may change His previous decision, so the ultimate decision often appears to men after first having been concealed.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{64} Ibn Khaldûn, \textit{al-'Ibar}, iii, pp. 175-6.

\textsuperscript{65} Lewis, "The Ismâ'îlîtes and the Assassins", p. 100; Sachedina, \textit{Islamic Messianism}, p. 9; Daftary, \textit{The Ismâ'îlîs}, p.52.

\textsuperscript{66} al-Nawbakhti, pp.24-6; al-Baghdadi, p. 48; al-Shahrastani, p. 22.


Meanwhile, a small group of Shi'is preferred to stay quiet during al-Mukhtar's rebellion. It seems that these Shi'is took 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin (the Ornament of the Pious), al-Ḥusayn's sole surviving son (d. 95/713-4), as their model when they withdrew from political activity. 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn, who would be later accepted as fourth Imam by the Imāmis, adopted a quiescent policy towards Umayyad rule and with this attitude he became an ideal precedent which would be followed by his son, al-Baqr, and his grandson, Ja'far al-Ṣadiq. However, the mass support which was reportedly given to Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, who was 'Ali b. Abi Ṭalib's sole surviving son and the eldest 'Alid, being some twenty years older than his nephew 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, could prove that he was considered the head of the 'Alid family, a position which was never publicly challenged by Zayn al-'Abidin.

Another Shi'i challenge against the government was Zayd b. 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin's revolt in 122/740. Zayd was persuaded by Kufan Shi'is to lead them in an anti-government revolt. However, the Kufans again demonstrated their unreliability. They deserted Zayd like they had done 'al-Ḥusayn before in Karbala. The revolt was suppressed and Zayd was executed. Zayd, unlike al-Mukhtar, did not adopt Messianic ideas. Instead, he tried to have the main body of Muslim opinion behind him in order to overthrow the Umayyads successfully and then to rule the caliphate effectively. He took the view of the majority of the Muʿtazili thinkers and the Sunni traditionists that

69 When the Medinan people rebelled against Yazid in 63/681, Zayn al-'Abidin left the city and stayed at a property of his outside Medina (al-Ṭabarī, ii, p. 410). Then he was offered the leadership of the Shi'is by al-Mukhtar. But he refused it and cursed al-Mukhtar publicly in the Mosque of the Prophet because of this inappropriate offer (Muroj, iii, p. 74).

70 F. Daftary cites this argument as the view of some Islamists (The Isma'īlis, p. 59). M. Momen also argues that at that time political considerations such as the subversion of the Umayyad regime were dominant over the religious issue of the identity of an Imam and the rights of the House of 'Ali (An Introduction to Shi'i Islam, p. 64).
Abu Bakr and 'Umar had been legitimate rulers, but adding that 'Ali was superior. It was probably for this reason that he was abandoned by most of Kufan Shi'is who deemed that the first two caliphs had usurped 'Ali's right to succeed the Prophet. It seems that his close association with Wāsil b. Atā' (d. 131/748-9), who is generally regarded as the founder of the Mu'tazila sect, led to his adoption of the opinion that the order to do right and the prohibition to do wrong (amr bi al-ma'rūf wa nahi 'an al-munkar) involved the view that drawing the sword against illegitimate government was obligatory when the repulsion of wrong was impossible without it. This opinion was another different point which contradicted those who offered a politically quietist leadership as well those who were waiting passively for the return of the Mahdi after the death of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya. These new opinions meant the rise of another sect within the body of the Shi'a, which was called "al-Zaydiyya".

Muhammad al-Bāqir, unlike Zayd, his half-brother, meticulously eschewed active political action sticking to his father's principle. Instead, he contented himself with teaching fiqh, interpreting the meanings of the Qur'an and relating hadith. He built up a very good reputation as a scholar and a devout ascetic. Hence, he inherited the affinity between his father and his sincere followers, so he was approved as the new religious leader by them and later the fifth Imam by the Twelver Shi'a.

71 Ibn Khaldūn, al-Muqaddima, i, pp.405-6.
72 al-Nawbakhti, pp.50-1; al-Baghdādi, p.43; al-Shāhrūstānī, pp.132-5. Zayd's son Yahyā also assumed the imama and revolted in Khurāsān, but he shared the same fate with his father being killed in 125/743, see Maqātil, pp.152-8.
73 al-Shāhrūstānī, p.133; Ibn Khaldūn, al-Muqaddima, i, pp.405-6.
Al-Baqir’s time was the hey-day of the ghulât (extremist) Shi’a. Ghulât is a term of disapproval for individual Shi’is accused of exaggeration (ghuluww) in religion and in respect to Shi’i leaders. When the Muslims reached Syria, Iraq, and the Persian Gulf, they found themselves within a milieu in which the effect of ancient civilisations was still influential. Especially in Iraq, Zoroastrianism, Mazdakism, Judaism, Christianity, Gnostic and Indian ideas were introduced to Islam and this resulted in a confrontation between the new religion and those ancient notions. Among religious debates and speculations, new and quite interesting ideas according to the viewpoint of Islam emerged. Because the Shi’a of ‘Ali were numerous in Iraq and among them there were a considerable number of mawāli, originally Persians, who were familiar with such notions, the owners of these extreme ideas adopted this party as the embodiment of their religious speculations and political ambitions although the Shi’is, particularly the family of ‘Ali, usually looked on them with suspicion.

The heresiographers usually regard ‘Abd Allāh b. Saba’ as the first of the ghulât. Especially attributed to him is the wasīyya (testament) doctrine that ‘Ali was the divinely appointed heir after the Prophet. He is also alleged to have claimed ‘Ali’s divinity. The followers of Ibn Saba’ are said to have later joined al-Mukhtār’s movement, which has been mentioned earlier. Al-Mukhtār seems likely to have been impressed by the ideas of these partisans when he developed the ghayba and the raj’ā doctrines. The ideas of al-Mukhtār and his followers, which later became bases

76 Mawāli is the plural of mawlā, a term which means client or freed slave but it was usually used as synonymous with non-Arab converts to Islam.
78 al-Nawbakht, p.19; al-Baghdādī, p.34.
79 al-Nawbakht, p.20; al-Shāhrisāb, pp.150-1.
for a sect called the Kaysāniyya, were more effective in Islamic history than their revolutionary movements. After being quelled, the movement of al-Mukhtar bequeathed its radical sentiments to some Shi‘i groups. M.G. Morony suggests that by the early eight century AD, Kufa and Mada‘in were the main Shi‘i centres where small, extremist subgroups of the Kaysāniyya were formed. There were at least five such groups at Kufa: The followers of Bayān b. Sam‘ān (d. 119/737), of Mughira b. Sa‘īd (d. 119/737), and of Abū Mansūr al-‘Ijli (d. 124/742): the Janaḥiyya who followed ‘Abd Allāh b. Mu‘awiya (d. 129/747), and the circle of Abū al-Khattāb (d. 138/755).80 All these men including ‘Abd Allāh b. Saba‘ were executed by the government forces at different times.81 The heresiographers attribute to these sects the beliefs of anthropomorphism (tashbih), infusion or incarnation (hulūl) and the transmigration of souls (tanāsukh). The public condemnation of the Prophet’s companions (sabb al-sahāba), particularly that of the first two caliphs as the usurpers of ‘Ali’s right, was also among their innovations. The notions that the Imams were divinely protected (maṣūm) against any kind of error and that the Imams possessed a spark of the divine light (al-nūr al-ilahi) inherited from Adam through a line of prophets including Muḥammad were other novelties, which would later enter into the principles of the Twelver Shi‘a.82

Although these ghulāt sects had appeared as the subgroups of the Kaysāniyya which had adopted the imāma of Ibn al-Hanafiyya and then, mostly, that of Abu


Hashim, the latter's son, their leaders showed special interest in the descendants of al-Husayn. For example, Mughira and Abū Mansūr, at first, claimed that they were the agents or the legatees (wukalā': the plural of wakil) of al-Baqir hoping to legitimise their own beliefs and to use the support of the Ḥusayni party to reach their political goals. However, al-Baqir, during his leadership, did not indulge these ambitious extremists and dissociated himself from them.

The propaganda of the 'Abbāsids probably began in the early years of the second century H.. The 'Abbāsids, who were the descendants of al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muttalib, the half-uncle of the Prophet, had learned important lessons from the unavailing revolts of the 'Alids and those who had appeared on behalf of an 'Alid. Therefore, they were very careful not to repeat their mistakes. Accordingly, first, their political movement needed a long period of incubation before implementation. Second, for this activity, a virgin soil had to be chosen. These determinations were carried out in practice. After undergoing a long preparation period, a remote province, Khurasan, became the main recruiting ground of the 'Abbāsid da'wā (propaganda) even though Kufa, the refuge of the Shi'a, still remained the administrative centre of the movement.

During the incubation period of the revolution, the 'Abbāsids always identified themselves with the 'Alids. The sources suggest that at the beginning of the second century H., the Banū Ḥashim, i.e. the descendants of Ḥashim which included the descendants of 'Ali and Ja'far b. Abī Talib and those of their uncle al-'Abbas b. 'Abd

83 Watt, Formative Period, p.51.
84 al-Nawbakhti, p.34; al-Shahristani, p.153.
85 M. Sharon, Black Banners, pp. 45-7.
al-Muṭṭalib, were united.\textsuperscript{86} The well-known meeting in al-Abwa' in which the chiefs of the Banū Hāshim clan had agreed on collective action against the Umayyads was clear evidence of this unity.\textsuperscript{87} Besides, the 'Abbāsid allegation that the headship of the family had passed from Abū Hāshim, the son of Ibn al-Ḥanafīyya, to the 'Abbāsid Muḥammad b. 'Alī by the wasiyya \textsuperscript{88} probably reinforced the 'Abbāsid da'wā acquiring the mass support of the revolutionary Kaysānis and other heterogeneous religio-political factions harboured in Iraq. However, because of the fact that the majority of the Shi’a still persisted in their loyalty to 'Ali's family, it seems that the above-mentioned claim was not the one most favoured, therefore they usually used the slogan "al-Ridā min Al Muḥammad" ("for One well-pleasing [to God] from the House of Muḥammad") referring ambiguously to the one from the family of the Prophet whose imāma would be acceptable to all.\textsuperscript{89}

The success of the 'Abbāsid propagandists in Khurāsān resulted in the dramatic fall of the Umayyad dynasty. The first of the 'Abbāsid caliphs, 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Saffāh (ruled 132-136/749-754), was proclaimed in Kufa, on 12 Rabi' II, 132/ 28 November, 749.\textsuperscript{90} Al-Saffāh took a soft line of approach towards the 'Alids who had been their collaborators in the revolution. The 'Abbāsids invited the 'Alids to the court to take their advice, honour them and also pay them allowances in order to persuade them to accept the present official rule. In this way, figures, who

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{86} al-Suyūṭī, p.277; al-Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār, Tathbit Dalā‘īl al-Nubuwwa, Beirut 1386/1966, i, pp. 16-7 quoted by M. Sharon in Black Banners, p.25.
\item \textsuperscript{87} Akhbar al-Dawla, pp.385-6; Ibn al-Tiqāqa, p.158.
\item \textsuperscript{88} al-Nawbakhti, pp.29-30; al-Shahristānī, p.129; Ibn Taymiyya, ii, p.131; Ibn Khaldūn, al-'Ibar, iii, p.173; idem, al-Muqaddima, i, pp.409-10.
\item \textsuperscript{89} A. Zarrinkūb, "The Arab Conquest of Iran and its aftermath", p.50.
\item \textsuperscript{90} Muruj, iii, p. 251; al-Ya‘qūbī, iii, p.89; Ibn Kathīr, v, pp.40, 52.
\end{itemize}
might stimulate revolt would be soothed and the government could keep them under surveillance. 91

However, after al-Saffāh, his brother Abū Ja'far al-Mansūr, the second 'Abbāsid caliph (ruled 136-158/754-775), changed the former's policy sharply, because he was very anxious about the activities of two 'Alids. They were Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, the sons of 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Ali b. Abī Ṭalib who was said to have been the chief of the Hasani line of the family. 92 According to the reports, al-Mansūr, his father and other leading 'Abbāsids had given their oaths of allegiance to Muḥammad, who was called al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (the Pure Soul), with other Ḥāshimi chiefs to accept him as leader of the revolutionary movement against the Umayyads. 93 Muḥammad had also been introduced as the Mahdi since an early age. 94 When the government passed to the 'Abbāsids, Muḥammad did not accept this, instead, he continued his political activity until his rebellion in 145/762.

Al-Mansūr's effort to catch Muḥammad had failed. However, the imprisonment of his father and some of his relatives precipitated his rebellion. Consequently, in Medina he declared himself prematurely. Although he won a mass of the support of Hijaz over to his revolt, he could not resist the 'Abbāsid army. Eventually he was killed with many of his votaries. Meanwhile, Ibrāhīm, his brother, rebelled in Basra. This was a much more dangerous threat to the government than had

91 H. Kennedy, p.667.

92 Maqātil, p.180.


A. Elad highlights the pro-Hasani and the tendentious character of these reports that seek to justify Muḥammad's revolt against al-Mansūr as necessary in order to claim his legal rights which al-Mansūr had recognised in the past, see "The Siege of al-Wasit (132/749)". pp.84-5.

94 Maqātil, pp.239-244.
been Muhammad’s revolt. Nevertheless this, too, met with the same fate and was suppressed very harshly. The latter revolt had gained the support of the Zaydiyya and the Mu’tazila as well as some ghulāt groups in Kufa. Al-Mughira b. Sa’id, the founder of the Mughiriyya sect, claimed, on Muhammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya’s death, that he had not died, but he was in concealment at one of the hills on the way between Mecca and Najd, and would return. What emerges from this account is that al-Mughira, after al-Baqir had dissociated from him, inclined at this time to be committed to the Hasani cause and supported al-Nafs al-Zakiyya in his case.

The ‘Abbasids only just overcame this dangerous uprising. Even before this expensive experience, they had begun to justify their legitimacy on religious grounds. They called themselves with messianic names such as “al-Manṣūr” (“the Divinely Supported One”), and “al-Mahdi”. They also circulated ahādith which included prophecies concerning the ‘Abbāsid rulers and analogies between the revolution and the rise of Islam. During this process, al-Manṣūr perhaps did his best in the matter using the arguments that the ‘Alids had not been able to carry out their struggle successfully but had always failed. However, the ‘Abbasids had managed to obtain power and revived the honour of the Prophet’s family which had been destroyed by

95 Maqātil, pp.260-299, 315-386; al-Yaqūbī, iii, pp.115-8; Murūj, iii, pp.294-6; al-Ash’arī, i, p.79; Ibn Kathīr, x, pp.82-95; al-Kāmil, v, pp.402-421. 428-437; Ibn al-Tiqāqa, pp.159-161; Kennedy, pp.199-204.

96 al-Nawbakhti, pp.52-4; al-Qummi, pp.76-7; al-Ash’arī, i, pp.6.9, 23-24.


98 al-Suyūtī relates some of these traditions in his Tarikh al-Khulafa’ pp 265-6, 278. Also see Sharon, p.87; Crone, Slaves, p.65.
the Umayyads. Therefore, he said: "If you give the oath of allegiance to someone else, you will not give a better oath to him than to us".99

On the other hand, al-Manṣūr particularly wanted to gain for his caliphate the acceptance of the main body of Muslims who were the traditionists (Aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth) and their adherents.100 This meant the detachment of the ′Abbāsid court from all extremist religious groups who had a tendency to provoke the more moderate elements of the Shiʿa. It seems that al-Manṣūr wanted to found a state religion on the tenets of the Aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth. An attractive example was Abū Hanīfa (d.150/767), who was the renowned jurist and the founder of the Hanafi school of law; he was offered the position of the head judge of the state court. However, he did not accept it.101 On the other hand, many Sunni scholars and jurists recognised the ′Abbāsid legitimacy. They perhaps did not proclaim it publicly, but they showed their recognition either by remaining quietist or by accepting posts which were offered to them. This policy, in the meantime, aimed to reduce the power of independent scholars ('ulamāʾ), who were always able to criticise the government by using their position and reputation. Zaman observes the result of this new legalisation process of the state:

"... the religious system came to be gradually formalised and hardened, an inevitable secularisation came to attend upon the ideological state. By an apparent paradox, the religious pretensions of the ′Abbāsid caliphs came to be the most conspicuous characteristic of this secularisation. "102

99 al-Manṣūr made this speech after he had arrested ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Hasan, see al-Tabari, iii, pp.430-2; Murūj, iii, pp.300-1.

100 Rajkowsk, pp.367-9; Jafri, Early Development, p.277.


102 Zaman, "The ′Abbāsid Revolution . p.149
This structure would continue, at least, until the time of the caliph al-Ma'mūn who would try to reunite the religious and administrative authority by nominating an 'Alid leader and scholar, 'Ali al-Riḍā, as heir to his throne in 201/817.

The Hāshimī claim to the caliphate had materialised after a long struggle with the Umayyads. However, this realisation also had brought about an open confrontation between the two Hāshimī branches, one of which, the 'Alids, considered themselves more appropriate to hold power than the other, the 'Abbāsids. During these crucial years of transition from the Umayyads to the 'Abbāsids, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, the son of the Imām al-Bāqir, was the leader of the party inherited from his father.

Ja'far al-Ṣādiq spent about twenty-three years under his father al-Bāqir. He observed that his father's preference of non-militant leadership benefited his party and led it to prosper. He also witnessed the failure of his uncle Zayd and his cousin Yahyā b. Zayd in their revolts and, as a result, their tragic deaths. When al-Bāqir died in 113/731-2, al-Ṣādiq was in his late thirties and was destined to lead a life as a leader for thirty-five years, longer than any of his descendants, who would later be considered as Imāms by the Twelver Shi'a. For that reason, al-Ṣādiq's time is exceedingly important to understand the development of the pro-Ḥusaynī party of those Shi'is who accepted a non-militant imāma after his death in 148/765.

We do not see al-Ṣādiq among those who gave their oath of allegiance to Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya at the meeting which had taken place in al-Abwā' before the 'Abbāsid revolution. Muḥammad's father, Ḥabū al-'Abd Allāh, had not wanted al-Ṣādiq to come to the meeting, because he had feared that he would have caused disagreement among the sympathisers of his son's affair. However, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq came to the meeting but refused to give the oath of allegiance to Muḥammad. He also
made some remarks in which he favoured the 'Abbāsids over him, for which al-Ṣādiq was accused by 'Abd Allāh of envy for his son.'

Al-Ṣādiq considered the uprising of Muḥammad in 145/762 a sedition (fitna) and declined to give his support to it. This attitude may have been because he believed that he or his branch of the family had the only valid claim for the imāma. However, perhaps, he also feared the disastrous results of such revolts which were attempted without being well-prepared. The traditions attributed to al-Ṣādiq prophesy that the caliphate would pass to the 'Abbāsids, not to the 'Alīids, and the 'Abbāsids would defeat Muḥammad and his brother in their revolts and kill them. These traditions seem to have been fabricated later by the Imāmis to justify the decision of their Imām in Muḥammad's case. It might be thought that these prophecies were believed to have been connected with an alleged book of predictions called al-Jāmiʿa or Jafr among the possessions of al-Ṣādiq which was alleged to contain information about what would happen to the family of the Prophet in general and to certain members of it in particular. This mysterious volume, which was believed by his supporters to have come to al-Ṣādiq as an act of divine grace and would pass to future Imāms from his descendants, would play an important role during the development of the Imāmi sect.

Maqātil, pp. 254-6.

103 Maqātil, p. 248; al-Kāmil, v, p. 422. This also might be evidence for the existence of jealousy between the Ḥasani and the Ḥusayni branches of the family. Another tradition in al-Kāfī also corroborates this jealousy, see al-Kulayni, i, p. 349.

104 As Jafri (Early Development, p. 269) and al-Laythi (Jihād al-Shiʿa, p. 193) observed.

105 Kennedy, p. 200; Watt, Islamic Philosophy, p. 51; Salih, Mahdism, pp. 279-80.


According to some historical narrations, some of the foremost figures of the Hashimiyya movement, which eventually brought the 'Abbāsids to power, are alleged to have contacted al-Ṣādiq and offered him the caliphate. The first of these men is alleged to have been Abū Muslim who was the victorious general of Khurāsān who had led the revolution. He sent a message to al-Ṣādiq asking him to accept the caliphate, but the latter refused the offer. However, this report appears rather late in the evidence. The other man was Abū Salama al-Khalla, the chief propagandist of Kufa and then the first vizier of the new state. He also offered him the same. But, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq burnt the letter without replying. He also warned 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan, who had received the same letter, not to overestimate the 'Alid power in comparison with the 'Abbāsid power and pointed out the weakness of the 'Alid position in Khurāsān. These reports are further confirmation of his quietist policy which he carried out towards the state with prudence. This, with all the above-mentioned arguments, led al-Manṣūr to distinguish him as the noblest of the many 'Alids, setting him up as a perfect example to al-Nafs al-Zakiyya.

The depoliticization of the leadership of the party protected al-Ṣādiq and the partisans from the direct results of the harsh persecution of the 'Alids by the 'Abbāsid state. Besides, the transition from the Umayyads to the 'Abbāsids, which occupied the latter overwhelmingly in establishing the structure of their own state, created a secure and easy atmosphere for the Ja'fari party. In addition to these factors, the time was that of the recording (ta'dwin) of traditions and of the formation of the Islamic


109 al-Ya'qūbī, iii, pp. 92-3; Murūj, iii, pp. 253-5; Ibn al-Tiqtaqa, pp. 147-8; J. Lassner, The Shaping of 'Abbāsid Rule, p. 84; idem., 'Propaganda in Early Islam', pp. 77-8.

110 al-Tabari, iii, p. 213. However, it must not be forgotten that al-Ṣādiq was frequently harassed by al-Mansūr on several occasions according to some reports, see Maqātil, pp. 273, 350-1; al-Kulaynī, i. p. 475; al-Āzdi, p. 196.
schools of law. Therefore it becomes comprehensible why most of the Imāmi traditions and legal decisions are referred back to al-Bāqir’s and al-Šādiq’s time.111

Distinctive Shi‘ī positions in Islamic Law began to appear at al-Bāqir’s and al-Šādiq’s time. It can be seen that al-Šādiq not only had a study circle which his Shi‘ī followers attended, but also had another wider circle containing some prominent doctors of the time who often consulted him such as Abū Ḥanifa, Ṣufyān al-Thawri, Mālik b. Anas, and it is probably therefore that he was accepted in Sunni isnād (chain of traditions), and also he appeared in Sunni tradition to a degree.112 In addition, it is in al-Šādiq’s time that most of Shi‘ī traditions were written. The “Four Hundred Sources” (al-Uṣūl al-Arb’umī’a), 400 collections of traditions which served as a basis for the subsequent Twelver literature, are alleged to have been compiled by al-Šādiq’s disciples.113 It could also be said that the clear enunciation of taqīyya (precautionary dissimulation), which is a distinctive theory in Shi‘ism, might be traced back to the generation of Ja‘far al-Šādiq, because the latter managed to lead his party for more than thirty years without being harmed as far as has been reported by the historical sources.114

According to the reports, Ja‘far al-Šādiq was a specialist not only in theology and religious law but also in positive sciences like chemistry in the form of

111 Fayyad, p.150; Takim, pp.21-2; Buckley, p.249; Nasr, “Introduction” to Tabātabā’i, A Shi‘ite Anthology, trans. by W.C. Chittick, p.9.


114 for this matter, see Madelung, Religious Trends p.78; Kohlberg, “Taqiyya”, p.396; Daftary, The Ismā‘īlis, p.85. For some traditions related on the authority of the Imam al-Šādiq about the necessity of taqīyya, see Ibn Babuya Risāla, pp.110-2.
This peculiarity of al-Ṣādiq as the one who merged in himself religious and worldly knowledge seems to have attracted around him some philosophers such as Zurāra b. A’yan (d. 150/767), Abū Ja’far al-Aḥwal (d. about 150/767) and Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. after 186/803), and even extremists from several ghulāt groups like Abū al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 136/754). These quasi-independent disciples of the Imām largely contributed to the formation of many Shi‘i beliefs. They were also responsible for attributing many creeds to al-Ṣādiq, i.e. extremist beliefs, which he always publicly rejected.\footnote{For Jābir b. al-Ḥayyān, the renowned alchemist, who regarded al-Ṣādiq as his master, see Daftary, The Ismā‘īlis, p. 88; Hodgson, Venture, p. 417}

As a result, Ja’far al-Ṣādiq rightly had a good reputation during his life and after his death as the leader of his followers adopting wisely an appropriate policy at a very crucial time, and as a great scholar founding his own school of theology and law like some of his contemporaries among the Sunnis had done, therefore the title “imām” seems to have been one which he deserved.\footnote{al-Kashshi, pp. 146-150, 290-7; al-Nawbakhti, pp. 37-8; Ivanow, Alleged Founder, pp. 117-24; Lewis, Origins, pp. 32-7; Daftary, The Ismā‘īlis, pp. 88-90; Sachedina, Islamic Messianism, p. 16}
temporal (political) and spiritual (religious) authorities would merge again like had occurred at the time of the Prophet. Hence, as a main duty, the Imam should provide his followers with spiritual knowledge ('ilm), which had been inherited from the Prophet through the previous Imams to the present Imam, and guided them with it to the straight path.117

Although there is no doubt that the doctrine of the wasiyya and the belief of the Mahdi were largely circulated among the intellectual disciples of al-Sadiq and some zealot partisans, there is no clear and sufficient evidence in support of this above-mentioned hypothesis except for several narrations in some collections of traditions of the Shi'a such as al-Kafi of al-Kulayni (d.329/940-1), one of the earliest corpora of the Shi'i tradition which was compiled, at least, some 160 years after al-Sadiq's death.

Al-Isfara'ini says: "Whenever they (the Rifa'da) want to invent an innovation (bid'a) or to fabricate a lie, they attribute it to al-Sayyid al-Sadiq, who is actually free from their attitude".118 Al-Shahristani also agrees on this judgement particularly emphasising the beliefs of ghayba, raj'a and bada'.119 Mc Eoin notes that "such traditions are, for the most part, attributed to Ja'far al-Sadiq, but the probability of their authenticity is, of course, no greater than that for the generality of ahadith.

117 Jafri, Early Development, pp.281-3, 290-1; Sachiedina, Islamic Messianism, pp.14-7; Daftary, The Isma'ilis, pp.84-5; Omar, 'Aspects', pp.174-5. Rajkowski seems to be in doubt whether such tenets belonged to al-Sadiq himself. He points out in several times the activity of the production of tradition carried out by the circle of al-Sadiq's zealot adherents. However, he attributes all such beliefs to al-Sadiq, which he draws from al-Kulayni's al-Kafi, when he expresses the Imam's political attitude, see pp.499, 505-8, 518-9.


119 al-Shahristani, p.142.
ascribed to him and other early Imāms". Modarressi agrees with this point stressing the role of the extremist Shi'is in this activity. One report shows that al-Sādiq did not hesitate to express a high regard for Abū Bakr and 'Umar. This might also indicate that some of his theological views seem to have contradicted most of the late official Shi'i ones. On the other hand, he may have been practising taqiyya.

Accordingly, it seems right to judge that because of his outstanding knowledge, indisputable reputation and leadership lasting successfully for thirty-five years, it was wise for later sectarians to pick Ja'far al-Sādiq out among other Imāms to attribute to him such beliefs. Quoting from Buckley:

"In the last resort, al-Sādiq's contribution to the development of Shi'ism lies perhaps not so much in what he himself did, but rather in what he was perceived as doing, the ultimate validating authority that he became in the eyes of the proto-Shi'a and their spiritual descendants, the Imāms and the Isma'īlis."

Ja'far al-Sādiq's party was called by several names in his time. They were the Shi'at 'Ali, the Turābiyya, the Ja'fariyya and the Rāfida. The name Rāfida was often used by opponents, whereas other names were welcomed within the party. The name Rāfida included all the Shi'i groups as well as ghulāt Shi'is, except for the Zaydis. It is reported that when some zealot Shi'is discussed the question of the

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121 Modarressi, pp.42-3.

122 see Ibn Baṭa, Kitāb al-Sharh wa al-Ibana. Arab. text: pp.43-4; French trans., pp.72-3.

123 Buckley, p.371.

124 Abū Turāb (the father of soil) was the kunya of 'Abi b. Abi Talib.

125 Fayyād, pp.73-4.
imama of Abū Bakr and 'Umar with Zayd b. 'Ali, and noticed that he recognised their imāma and did not renounce them. They deserted (rafada) him in his uprising and did not accept his leadership, therefore they were called al-Rafida.126 The question that when the name Rafida was replaced by the name Imāmiyya is answered by Watt suggesting that the new name came into use about 287/900 though its first employment might be before 236/850.127

The period after the death of the eleventh Imām, al-Ḥasan al-Askari (d.260/874), was the time when the Twelver Imāmi Shi‘ism took explicit shape stopping the number of the Imāms at twelve and, more importantly, defining its creeds.128 Ibn Bābūya (d.381/991), one of the leading doctors of the Twelver Shi‘ism, in his “the Treatise on the Creed”, unfolds the Imāmi belief about the Twelve Imāms as follows after enumerating them:

“Our belief regarding them is that they are in authority (ulū‘l-amr). It is to them that Allah has ordained obedience, they are the witnesses for the people and they are the gates of Allah (abwāb) and the road (sabil) to Him and the guides (dalil pl. adilla) thereto, and the repositories of His knowledge and the interpreters of His revelations and the pillars of His unity (tawḥid). They are immune from sins (khata‘) and errors (zalaf); they are those from whom “Allah has removed all impurity and made them absolutely pure” [33:33]; they are possessed of (the power of) miracles and of (irrefutable) arguments (dalā‘il); and they are for the protection of the people of this earth just as the stars are for the inhabitants of the heavens. They may be likened, in this community, to the Ark of Noah; he who boards it obtains salvation or reaches the Gate of Repentance (ḥitta). They are the most noble slaves of Allah, who “speak not until He hath spoken; they act by his command” [21:27]. And we believe that love for them is true belief (iman) and hatred for them is unbelief (kufr); that their command is the command of Allah, their prohibition

126 Ibn Khaldūn, al-Muqaddima, i, pp.405-6.

127 M. Watt points out that the term “Imamiyya” appears to be used by a Zaydi, Sulayman b. Jarīr (flourished before 200 H.), as is understood from Abī al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī’s citation from him in his Maqalat al-Islāmiyyin, see Watt, “The Rafidites”, p.119. Also see Kohlberg, “From Imamiyya”, p.521.

is the prohibition of Allah; obedience to them is obedience to Allah, and disobedience to them is disobedience to Allah; their friend (wali) is the friend of Allah, and their enemy the enemy of Allah". 129

According to the list of the Imāms of the Twelver Shi'a, after al-Sādiq, the chain of the imāma continues with Mūsā al-Kāzim and 'Ali al-Riḍā as the seventh and eight Imāms of the sect. Of course, the period of these two Imāms was one of the most important times in the formation of Twelver Shi'ism. The deeds of these Imāms and the activities of their party largely influenced not only the Shi'i movements in their times but also the internal affairs of the Islamic state and the caliphate. This period is also marked as one of the most momentous eras in Islamic political and cultural history.

129 Ibn Babuya, Risalat al-l'tiqad, trans. by A. Fyzee as A Shi'ite Creed, p. 96.
CHAPTER ONE

THE CRISIS FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF AL-ṢĀDIQ: THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW SECTS
THE CRISIS FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF AL-ṢADIQ
THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW SECTS

This chapter proposes to outline the crisis that the Imami party lived through after the death of al-Ṣadiq. The party of al-Ṣadiq split into four groups: The proto-Ismāʿiliyya, the Aftahiyya, the Nāwūsiyya and the Mūsawiyya. The latter supported the imāma of Mūsā b. Jaʿfar. It will be examined in the next chapter. The Aftahiyya was formed by the followers of ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar. Some partisans declared the imāma of al-Ṣadiq's deceased son Ismāʿīl and formed the nucleus of today's Ismāʿiliyya. Another group denied al-Ṣadiq's death and proclaimed that he was the Qāʿīm. They were called the Nāwūsiyya. The heresiographers often add to these groups the Shumayṭiyya despite the strong probability that its emergence was later. Following these heresiographers, we also add the Shumayṭiyya to our investigation in this chapter not because it was related to the crisis of succession after al-Ṣadiq, but because its leader Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar and his activities are closely related to the period which this study aims to investigate.

Except for the Ismāʿiliyya, none of the above-recorded groups have been examined in detail in the Western-languages. At best, they have received a somewhat cursory mention in a number of articles and chapters. 1 Friedlaender was perhaps the first author to give some information about them. 1 In 1955, M. Hodgson touched on the rivalries of Jaʿfar al-Ṣadiq's sons in order to indicate the state of confusion among early Imāmis about the idea of the designated imāma. 2 M. Watt paid some attention to the Aftahiyya. The information given by Watt was largely derived from al-Nawbakhti's Fīraqq and al-Tusi's Fihrist. He also gave the names of some Fāthi

1 see I. Friedlaender, The Heterodoxes. JAOS, 1908 (29), pp. 39-41.
rijāl such as ʿAbd Allah b. Bukayr and ʿAli b. Ashāt. M. O. Salih, in his thesis, said that the Aftahiyya and the Nawūsiyya were of little significance to his study because there was a lack of information about their founders and followers and they disappeared shortly after the death of al-Ṣādiq. Sachedina’s main objective in Islamic Messianism is to investigate the Mahdship of the twelfth Imam. He has touched on, as background information, some early Imāmi groups including the Aftahiyya. Momen has listed the splinter Imāmi groups considering after which Imam they split off, following the method of al-Nawbakhti and al-Qummi. In this regard, he has given brief information about the groups which split off from al-Ṣādiq’s party. Finally Modarressi has given brief information about these groups. Some of his suggestions about the identity of the Nawūsiyya are new and quite interesting. Neither the first nor the new edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam has an entry on the Aftahiyya. There is a very brief entry written by the Editorial Committee on the Nawūsiyya in the EI2. On the Ismāʿiliyya, numerous academic works have been done for more than one century. The latest and most comprehensive work among them is F. Daftary’s The Ismaʿilis. Daftary has summarised in his book the historical and heresiographical accounts of Ismaʿil b. Jaʿfar, Muḥammad b. Ismaʿil and their supporters. There is also an article written by the same author, devoted to early


5 A. A. Sachedina, Islamic Messianism, pp. 40, 52.

6 M. Momen, An Introduction, pp. 54-6.

7 see H. Modarressi, Crisis, pp. 54-61.


Ismā'ili movements. It has investigated the period which began with al-Ṣadiq and ended withʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdi, the first Fātimid Imām. 10

The first group which we will start to investigate is the followers of Isma‘il b. Ja‘far or the proto-Ismā‘iliyya.

I - The Followers of Ismā‘il b. Ja‘far and the Proto-Ismā‘iliyya

This section is an attempt to trace three splinter groups 11 which promulgated the imāma of Isma‘il b. Ja‘far and his son Muḥammad after al-Ṣadiq’s death. To provide background information, we also explore the life of Isma‘il b. Ja‘far. The activities of al-Mufaddal b. ‘Umar, as the pioneering efforts to spread the idea of the succession of Isma‘il to his father, are examined too. As well as these historical materials, we also provide brief information about the approach of some Isma‘ili authors to Muṣa al-Kāzim and his imāma presented in later Isma‘ili literature.

Above all, it must be stressed that information about the life of Isma‘il b. Ja‘far, his connections and the movement carried out by his followers is extremely rare. Among the early works, only a few Imami sources give some information about the subject. However, due to open rivalry between the Isma‘iliis and the Imāmis, the


11 According to Daftary, two main Isma‘ili groups emerged after al-Ṣadiq’s death. The Isma‘iliyya al-Khalisa and the Mubarakiyya, see The Isma‘ilis, pp 95-6; idem, “The Earliest Isma‘ilis”, pp. 200-1; idem, “A Major Schism”. p. 126. As a result of our investigation, there should be another earliest Isma‘ili group. These Isma‘ili are reported to have recognised Muḥammad b. Isma‘il as their imām after al-Ṣadiq. They should be distinguished from another group of Muḥammad’s followers, the Mubarakiyya, by their claim that al-Ṣadiq not Isma‘il, designated Muḥammad as his successor, see pp. 62-3 below.
information derived from the Imami books always carries the risk of being one-sided and thus its authenticity is open to doubt. On the other hand, early Isma'ili sources give almost nothing for this period. Some few treatises which are supposed to have been written in that period, as F. Daftary observes, because of being religious and philosophical in their character contain little historical information on the initial period of the sect, and those which have information, because of the views contained in them were in conflict with the official Fatimid doctrines, probably were subjected to later censorship by the Fatimid Isma'ili. An important Isma'ili work is 'Uyun al-Akhbar written by 'Imad al-Din Idris (d. 872/1468), an Isma'ili da'i in Yemen. One volume of this work contains some important historical material relating to Isma'il b. Ja'far and his son Muhammad. According to Ivanow, Idris quoted this information literally from an early work, Sharh al-Akhbar fi Faḍa'il al-A'immah al-Athār, written by the Isma'ili jurist and theologian Abu Ḥanifa Nu'man b. Muhammad al-Tamimi, who is well-known as Qādi Nu'man (d. 363/974). Another work of Idris is Zahr al-Ma'ani. It gives a review of the Isma'ili Imams. But, the information given by Zahr sometimes contradicts 'Uyun al-Akhbar. The third Isma'ili work which should be mentioned is Asrar al-Nuṭaqa' written by Ja'far b. Mansur al-Yaman (d. after 380/990), a contemporary of Qādi Nu'man. One of the main subjects of the book is the proofs of the right of Isma'il to the imāma. As Ivanow says, it contains a strong controversial element directed against the Imāmis. Another two sources also deserve to be mentioned: Tārikh-i Jahan-gushay of 'Alā al-Din 'Aṭa-Malik Juwayni (d. 681/1283) and Jam'i al-Tawārikh of Rashid al-Din Faḍl Allah (d. 718/1318). Juwayni was the high officer of the Mongol conqueror Ilulagu, and Rashid al-Din was the vizier of the Mongol Ilkhans of Iran. Both historians found

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13 Ivanow, "Early Shi'i Movements", pp. 4-5.
14 Ivanow, Rise, p. 18.
opportunity to utilise for their histories local Nizari-Ismā'ili sources, most of which were no longer extant mainly because of the destruction of the Nizari library at Alamut. Accordingly, these works also contain some valuable materials related to the period of the proto-Ismā'īlis. Of the Imāmi sources, the treatises of al-Nawbakhti and al-Qummi give useful information about divisions within the party of al-Ṣadiq which were caused by the Ismā'īli movements. Al-Kashshi's Rijāl also contains some narrations related to Ismā'il b. Ja'far's position in the family and some partisans acting on behalf of him.

Ismā'il b. Ja'far was the eldest son of the Imam Ja'far al-Ṣadiq. His mother, Fāṭima, was the granddaughter of the Imam al-Ḥasan b. 'Ali, who was also the mother of 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far. Ismā'il was called "al-ʿAraj" ("the lame") but whether this nickname really described his handicap is not known. His birth is supposed to have taken place sometime during the initial years of the second century Il. The exact date of his death also remains unknown. From the genealogists, al-'Umari gives the year 132/749-50 as the date of Ismā'il's death whereas Ibn 'Inaba gives it as 133/750-1. According to the historian 'Alā al-Din Juwayni, he died in 145/762-3. Ivanow is of the opinion that he died in 143/760-1.

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15 For Juwayni, Rashid al-Din and their works, see Daftary, The Ismā'īlis, pp.327-9.

16 She is Fāṭima bint al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib (al-Nawbakhti, p.58; al-Qummi, p.80).

17 Ibn 'Inaba, p.263; Sibt, p.347.

18 see Daftary, The Ismā'īlis, p.97; idem, "The Earliest Ismā'īlis", p.223; Ivanow, "Ismailis and Qarmatians", p.57.

19 al-'Umari, p.100.

20 Ibn 'Inaba, p.263.

21 Juwayni, ii, p.643.

22 Ivanow, "Imam Ismail", p.308.
from some obscure Ismā'īlī sources that Ismā'īl's death occurred in 138/755-6 or 158/775. But the last date is probably the record of those Ismā'īlis who believed that Ismā'īl did not die during the lifetime of al-Šādiq but the latter had pretended to show him as being dead.

Apart from these records, according to some Shi'i reports, Ismā'īl was alive in 133/751. When Dāwūd b. 'Ali, the governor of Medina, executed Mu'allā b. Khunays probably because of his agency on behalf of al-Šādiq and his involvement in some revolutionary activities of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, al-Šādiq, as soon as he heard the news of the execution of Mu'allā, went to the governor with his son Ismā'īl and called him to account for this murder. The governor Dāwūd put the blame on his chief of shurtas (the chief of his police force), al-Sayrafi. According to al-Kashshi, al-Šādiq directed Ismā'īl to kill al-Sayrafi, which he did. In Idris's report, al-Šādiq then handed him over to al-Mu'allā's associates and they killed him.

Probably because of his prominent status in his family, Ismā'īl attracted the attention of his father's disciples. Perhaps, as the eldest son of his father, he was thought to have been the next leader. Among these partisans, al-Mufaddal initially stood out. Al-Mufaddal b. 'Umar al-Ju'fi was a prominent supporter of the

23 Tāmir, i, p.117.

24 Dāwūd b. 'Ali's governorship took place in the first three months of the year 133/750, see al-Tabari, iii, p.37.

25 For Mu'allā, see p.399 below.

26 In Idris's 'Uyūn al-Akhbār (p.326), he is called "al-Sarrāqi".

27 al-Kashshi, p.378.

28 Idris, 'Uyūn al-Akhbār, p.327

29 For detailed information about al-Mufaddal, see pp.400-1 below.
extremist Shi'i Abū al-Khaṭṭāb Muḥammad b. Abī Zaynāb al-Asadī. Al-Mufaddal is reported to have addressed Abū al-Khaṭṭāb once as a Messenger (rasūl). He also seems to have adopted some practices of the Khaṭṭābiyya. In a narration of al-Kashshi, it is recorded that he did not perform the morning prayer. Al-Mufaddal used to maintain that Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and the previous Imāms were able to provide people with the means of subsistence (rizq). According to al-Maqrizi, he regarded al-Ṣādiq as God, so the Imām repudiated him and publicly cursed him. Probably after 138/755-6 when Abū al-Khaṭṭāb was crucified because of his unsuccessful rebellion in Kufa, al-Mufaddal, with a group of the Khaṭṭābi remnants, organised a movement which was called al-Mufaddaliyya. However, as far as is understood from some accounts, there occurs a change in al-Mufaddal from extremism to orthodoxy. The Mufaddaliyya, after al-Ṣādiq’s death, became an important group which supported and propagated Mūsā b. Ja'far’s imāma. This is why al-Ash‘ari reports that the Mūsawiyya was also called the Mufaddaliyya and al-Shahristāni states that the Mūsawiyya and the Mufaddaliyya formed one group. Al-Balkhi also records the

30 al-Māmaqānī, ii, biography no: 12084.
31 al-Kashshi, p. 325.
32 al-Kashshi, p. 323.
33 al-Maqrizi, ii, p. 352. Also see al-Shahristāni, p. 155.
34 For this rebellion and its aftermath, see al-Nawbakhti, pp. 59-60; al-Nashi‘, p. 41; al-Ash‘ari, i, p. 11; Ibn Ḥazm, al-Faṣl, iv, p. 187.
36 For a nass confirming Mūsā’s imāma related by al-Mufaddal b. ‘Umar, see al-Kulaynī, i, p. 308; al-Irshad, p. 437.
37 al-Ash‘ari, i, p. 29.
38 al-Shahristāni, p. 144. Al-Maqrizi also makes the same statement, but he adds that the Mufaddaliyya after Mūsā b. Ja'far, recognised Muhammad b. Mūsā as their Imām (al-Maqrizi, ii, p. 351). There was a son of Mūsā called Muhammad. He is known as a man of merit and righteousness (al-Irshad, p. 459). However, there is no
Mufaddaliyya as the sixth group from the Ja'fariyya, who accepted Musa b. Ja'far as their Imam after Ja'far al-Ṣadiq. 39

From some narrations in the Rijāl of al-Kashshi, al-Mufaddal seems to be a man responsible for the proclamation of Ismā'il b. Ja'far's imāma as successor to his father during the latter's lifetime and introducing him to Kufan extremists and their ideas. Ḥamīm b. Uthmān said that al-Mufaddal dedicated himself to Ismā'il ("wa kāna munqāṭi'an ilayhi"). 40 In another narration, Ismā'il b. Ţāmir listed the names of the Imāms in front of the Imām al-Ṣadiq and then said: "after you, Ismā'il". Al-Ṣadiq rejected it. Afterwards, Ismā'il b. Ţāmir explained that al-Mufaddal ordered him to add Ismā'il's name to those of the Imāms. 41 Al-Ṣadiq was very concerned about this relationship of his son with the extremist al-Mufaddal. Once he inveighed against al-Mufaddal: "O infidel, o idolater! What do you want from my son? Do you want to kill him?" 42

A narration shows that, because of his involvement in extremist circles, Ismā'il was nearly executed by the 'Abbāsid government. 'Abdās al-Šārid, the witness of the incident, reports that Ismā'il b. Ja'far and the extremist Bassam 43 were taken before the caliph al-Manṣūr. Bassām was brought out dead. Ismā'il was spared probably due to his father's status. He came out. Ja'far al-Ṣadiq was waiting at the report from other heresiographers that Muhammad declared his own imāma or some people declared it on behalf of him.

39 al-Balkhi, p. 181. In the text of al-Balkhi, the person who gave his name to this group is recorded as al-Mufaddal b. Ţāmir. However, it seems that this name should be corrected to al-Mufaddal b. Ţāmir.

40 al-Kashshi, p. 321.

41 al-Kashshi, pp. 325-6.

42 al-Kashshi, p. 323.

43 Bashām b. Ţāmir. Allāh al-Sayrāfī was a companion of al-Baqir and al-Ṣadiq see al-Maqaqant, biography no: 1236.
gate. He turned to his son; he scolded him and accused him of causing Bassam to be executed.44

On another occasion, al-Ṣadiq forbade Ismā’il from giving his money to "the wine drinker".45 Al-Ṣadiq probably means by this word those extremists who saw the drinking of wine permissible (mubāḥ).46 Other followers were also anxious about Ismā’il’s behaviour and activity. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Sayāba, a Kufan votary of al-Ṣadiq, wrote to the Imam cautioning him about Ismā’il. Al-Ṣadiq wrote back: "The word of Allāh is the truest one: 'No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another' (al-Qur‘ān, xvii : 15). By God, I have no knowledge, I have not ordered (what he has done) and I have not approved (his actions)".47 He said on another occasion that Ismā’il’s character neither looked like his nor any of his fore-father.48

There is no convincing evidence that Ismā’il was designated explicitly to the imama by his father by the rule of the nass.49 There is also no reliable tradition or

44 al-Kashshi, pp.244-5.
45 al-Mamaqani quotes it from a narration related by Ibn Babuya, see v. i, biography no : 794.
46 For the Khatābi idea of libertinism (ibāha), see al-Nawbakhši, pp.38-9; al-Qummi, p.51. There are also some reports and Imāmi narrations that Ismā’il was himself addicted to drink (see al-Kashshi, pp.473-4; Ibn Babuya, Kamāl, i, p.159; al-Rawandi, ii, p.637; Juwaynī, ii, p.642; Rashīd al-Dīn, p.519). However, it remains doubtful whether this was a real fact or whether the Sunnis or other Shi’is fabricated this kind of information to discredit the personality of Ismā’il and the claims of his imama.
47 Al-Kashshi, p.390.
48 Ibn Babuya, Kamāl, i, p.159.
49 According to the Ismā’i’li sources, such a designation occurred. Al-Sadiq said: "He is the Imam after me, and what you learn from him is just the same as if you have learnt it from myself" (Ja‘far b. Mansur, Asrar, trans.: p.292. Arab. text p.93). In another tradition, when Ismā’il was seven years of age, al-Ṣadiq declared his imama. He was separated from his other brothers and kept away from contact with the public. Al-Ṣadiq himself undertook his education (ibid., trans.: p.293. Arab. text p.96). According to the dā’i Idrīs, this declaration was made secretly on the basis of
narration that al-Ṣādiq, because of Ismā'īl’s association with the extremist circle or his addiction to some bad habits, repudiated him and dismissed him from the right of the imāma. But, it is almost certain that, because Ismā'īl was the oldest in years among his brothers and his father’s favourite, the followers largely believed that he would be the next Imām. There were even rumours within the party that al-Ṣādiq nominated him as his heir in the imāma by an explicit designation. Furthermore, according to Idris, these rumours reached al-Mansūr, so he wrote to al-Ṣādiq to send Ismā'īl to him. The Imām did not respond. He went himself to Iraq. After his return, he hid Ismā'īl in his home for a whole year and four months until he died.

It seems that Ismā'īl b. Ja'far unexpectedly died. It is reported that Ismā'īl's body was brought to Medina on men's shoulders from 'Urayd, a village which was six miles away from Medina, where he had died. According to al-Mufid, al-Ṣādiq led the funeral procession, barefoot and without a cloak. He ordered his coffin to be put on the ground many times; he uncovered his son's face and looked at it. Probably in order to indicate that the claim that Ismā'īl was the appointed successor to taqiyya. Only certain selected followers of al-Ṣādiq knew this fact ('Uyun al-Akhbar, pp.332-3).

50 The Imami sources give this kind of narration. According to two different narrations related by al-Kulayni and al-Kashshi, when Ismā'īl b. Ja'far was alive, the Imam al-Ṣādiq started to declare the imāma of his small son Musa, who was five years old or less at the time, and told his followers that Ismā'īl would not be the next Imam as was expected (al-Kashshi, pp.354-5; al-Kulayni, i, p.309). Al-Mufid says that none of the disciples of al-Ṣādiq related a nāṣṣ from the Imam about the declaration of Ismā'īl’s imāma either in an exceptional (shadhdh) or a well-known (ma’rūf) form (al-Fuşul al-Mukhtara, p.250).


52 al-Nawbakhti, p.55; al-Rāzi, p.288.


54 Juwayni, ii, p.643; Rashid al-Dīn, p.521.

55 al-Irshad, p.431. Also see Ibn Bahuya Kamāl, i, pp.160-3. According to a narration in Kamāl, al-Ṣādiq wrote on the edge of Ismā’īl’s shroud: He (Isma’īl) attests that there is no god but Allah (ibid., p.161).
the imāma was invalid by his death and to obviate probable ghulāt-originated rumours that he actually did not die, al-Ṣādiq let Ismā‘īl’s body remain in his house for three days. At this time, the Imām summoned the governor of Medina on behalf of the ‘Abbāsid government and numerous people from the Banū Hāshim and the notables of Medina, and showed them Ismā‘īl’s body. He then took their signatures as a sign of testimony on a document attesting Ismā‘īl’s death. Then he was buried in al-Baqi’ cemetery.56

Al-Nawbakhtī reports that al-Ṣādiq’s party never experienced schism until the time of Ismā‘īl’s death. When Ismā‘īl died, a small group (nafar yasir) who believed that al-Ṣādiq had designated his son to the imāma after him broke away from the main body, maintaining that al-Ṣādiq was not an Imām because a real Imām did not lie and say what would not happen.57 Apparently it can be said that this group probably held an opinion that the order of the Imāms had been divinely prefixed, so due to the fact that al-Ṣādiq had designated Ismā‘īl as his successor and Ismā‘īl had predeceased his father, it became obvious that neither al-Ṣādiq nor Ismā‘īl were real Imāms. It seems that the reintroduction of the early Kaysānī idea of badā’ to the Imāmi Shi‘ism coincided with this time. This break away, despite its insignificant nature, probably made this introduction urgent and necessary in order to preclude a more serious schism within the party.

Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq is reported to have said: “God has never changed His consideration [mā badā li‘liāh badā‘un (or shay‘un)] as much as in the case of


57 Al-Nawbakhtī, p. 55.
my son Ismā'il [kamā badā lahu fi Ismā'il ibnī]. In this way, the change in
the alleged indication (isbāra) or designation (nass) of al-Ṣādiq that Ismā'il would
be the next Imām was also connected with another divine decision. It means that the
previous divine decision on Ismā'il's imāma was changed by a new divine decision
that Ismā'il would die before his father, so al-Ṣādiq's knowledge and the verity of his
imāma should not be questioned on the grounds of this unexpected change. It seems
that this reintroduction of the badā' doctrine attained its object. Although, as al-
Nawbakhti says, the above-mentioned small group was not satisfied by this
explanation and joined different factions of the Zaydiyya; the sources do not
mention any further split within the party.

58 Ibn Bābūya, Kamāl, i, p. 158; al-Majlisi, Biḥār, iv, p. 109. In another
variant of the tradition al-Ṣādiq said: "God has never changed His consideration as
more importantly (a'zam) as in the case of my son Ismā'il". Al-Majlisi quotes it from
"the Book of Zayd al-Nursi" on the authority of 'Ubayd b. Zurāra b. A'yan, see
Biḥār, iv, p. 122.

59 al-Nawbakhti, p. 55.

60 The doctrine of badā' continued to be used by the lmāmīs especially in
times of crisis. Probably after al-Ṣādiq's death, when Mūsā b. Ja'far was proclaimed
as his father's successor, the tradition of badā' was presented with a small change by
Mūsā's supporters against the Ismā'īli groups. According to this version, when the
appointed successor, Ismā'il, was involved in some seditious enterprise, God changed
His decision and ordered al-Ṣādiq to designate Mūsā instead of Ismā'il (see al-Majlisi,
Biḥār, iv, p. 123). The same doctrine was introduced again when Muhammad b. 'Alī,
the son of 'Ali b. Muhammad, the tenth Imām, who was widely believed to have been
designated by his father as the next Imām, unexpectedly died. The Imām 'Alī is
reported to have said: " God has changed His consideration about Muhammad like He
had changed it before in the case of Ismā'il" (see al-Ghayba, p. 121).

However, it seems that, when the supporters of the line of "the Twelve
Imāms" became superior to other Imāmī groups and they eventually formed a united
sect called the lmāmīyya, which coincides with a time about a half century after the
death of the eleventh Imām, al-Ḥasan al-Askari, in 260/874, the official view of the
sect about the badā' doctrine dramatically changed. The theory of the divinely
preordained line of the Twelve Imāms from 'Alī b. Abi Ta'lib to al-Mahdi was now
settled. Because the last Imām al-Mahdi was in Occultation for an unfixed period,
there would be no longer a challenge by a living candidate for the imāma. On the other
hand, at that time Ismā'īli groups were quite influential; they continued to claim that
the right of the imāma after al-Ṣādiq was in the descendants of Ismā'il b. Ja'far and
rejected the badā' doctrine. In addition, especially Sunnī and Zaydi scholars
mercilessly criticised this doctrine on the basis of Islamic theology and described it as
an unbelief in God's unity (tawḥid). Therefore, it seems that the lmāmī doctors had
to make some radical changes in the doctrine (for different traditions about the badā'

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There is no clear evidence that al-Ṣādiq publicly designated another of his sons after Ismā‘il’s death. After al-Ṣādiq had died, his surviving sons, outstandingly ‘Abd Allāh and Mūsā, simultaneously claimed their successions, supporting their claims with several naṣṣ which were said to have been related from al-Ṣādiq. It seems that some other groups which had kept on believing in Ismā‘il’s right to the imāma but had not revealed it during al-Ṣādiq’s life also declared at the same time that the real successor of the previous Imām was Ismā‘il, so there was no right of other sons of al-Ṣādiq to take it over. Juwaynī reports that those who declared Ismā‘il’s imāma had the Kaysānī background. But, as shall be seen, there is no doubt that the most influential groups which took part in the propaganda of Ismā‘il’s imāma after al-Ṣādiq’s death were the subdivided groups of the Khāṭṭābiyya with which Ismā‘il had been in contact when he was alive.

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see al-Kulaynī, i, pp. 146-9). With this change, the early hadith about al-badā‘ attributed to al-Ṣādiq was reconsidered. First of all, they declared that al-Ṣādiq had never designated Ismā‘il to the imāma, so the traditions indicating it must have been inauthentic (see Ibn Bāḥiyah, Kāmil, i, p. 158; al-Mufid, al-Fusūl al-Mukhtāra, p. 250). Then a new variant of the first tradition about badā‘ appeared. In this new version, the word of “my son (iḥbār) Ismā‘il” was changed with the word of “my father (aḥbā‘) Ismā‘il”. Thus, it now referred to the belief that al-Ṣādiq’s predecessor the Prophet Ishmael, the son of Abraham, was saved from being slaughtered by the change of God’s decision although He had previously commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son (for this version, see al-Majlisi, Bihār, iv, p. 109). Furthermore, they narrowed the scope of the badā‘. Al-Mufid cites a consensus among the doctors of the Imāmiyya that the change in God’s consideration does not include the changes in the designations of the Prophets and the Imāms (al-Mufid, al-Fusūl al-Mukhtāra, p. 251). It is interesting to note that the statement of this consensus was exactly the same as what the Ismā‘iliyya had claimed from the beginning in order to refuse the claim of the early Imāmis that Ismā‘il had lost his right to the imāma with the change of God’s decision (see Ja’far b. Mansūr, Asrār, trans.: p. 291, Arab. text: p. 95; Rashīd al-Dīn, pp. 519-20).

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61 Juwaynī, ii, p 643.

62 The Mu’tazili heresiographer al-‘Nāšī calls the believers in Ismā‘il’s imāma al-Khāṭṭābiyya” (p. 47). He records no other particular name such as the Ismā‘iliyya or the Mubarakīyya in other parts of his work.
According to the heresiographical accounts, three different groups emerged proclaiming Isma'îl's imâmâ. One group denied the death of Isma'îl during his father's lifetime. They maintained that his death was just a ruse by al-Ṣâdiq, because he must have declared it in order to save Isma'îl from the 'Abbasid persecution, so he arranged a false funeral assembly to show the Abbasid governor that the death had really taken place. They also believed that Isma'îl was the Mahdi who would return someday to rule over the whole earth. They maintained that his death was just a ruse by al-Ṣâdiq, because he must have declared it in order to save Isma'îl from the 'Abbasid persecution, so he arranged a false funeral assembly to show the Abbasid governor that the death had really taken place. They also believed that Isma'îl was the Mahdi who would return someday to rule over the whole earth. The rumour that Isma'îl was seen in Basra five years after al-Ṣâdiq's death and healed a paralytic person was probably a claim put forward by this group. Al-Nawbakhti and al-Qummi report that this group was formed from the Khâṭṭâbiyya. They also call the members of this group "the Pure Isma'îliyya" ("al-Isma'îliyya al-Khâliṣâ"). Al-Shahristâni, a later heresiographer, designates the same group as "al-Isma'îliyya al-Wâqifa" which refers to those who stopped their line of Imâms with Isma'îl b. Ja'far. It seems that this group could not have become influential and active in the course of time as much as other Isma'îli


64 Juwayni, ii, p. 644; Rashid al-Din, p. 521. According to the Isma'îli sources of the historians Juwayni and Rashid al-Din, this event took place five years after al-Ṣâdiq's death. However, two other Isma'îli authors, Ja'far b. Mansûr and Idris, give an account that it happened when al-Ṣâdiq was still alive. It is reported that when the news that Isma'îl had been seen in Basra reached the caliph al-Mansûr in Baghdad, he immediately summoned al-Ṣâdiq and questioned him about this matter. He showed al-Ṣâdiq the letter in which the Imam had informed the caliph of Isma'îl's death. Then he showed the reports of his spies in Basra. Therefore, al-Ṣâdiq produced the testimony containing the signatures of those who had witnessed Isma'îl's death. So, al-Mansûr was satisfied. He dismissed al-Ṣâdiq also giving him some presents, see Ja'far al-Mansur, Asrar, trans.: p. 302, Arab. text: p. 104; Idris, Zahr, trans.: p. 234; Arab. text: p. 48.

65 al-Nawbakhti, pp. 58-9; al-Qummi, p. 81.

66 al-Nawbakhti, p. 58; al-Qummi, p. 80.

67 al-Shahristani, p. 144.
groups. Al-Mufid (d.413/1022) records that in his time they were extremely rare and there was no knowledge of anyone from them who could be pointed out. 68

The second proto-Ismā’ili group, in contrast to the first group, accepted Isma‘il’s death in the lifetime of al-Ṣādiq. They held that Isma‘il was the rightful successor of al-Ṣādiq. They denied the doctrine of badā‘. In their opinion, it was an important indication of the rightfulness of Isma‘il’s imāma that al-Ṣādiq, following the example of the Prophet in regard to Khadija and that of ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭālib in regard to Fāṭima, never took any wife so long as Isma‘il’s mother was alive, nor took any concubine. 69 This group was known as the Mubarakiyya. Mubarak was the name of the mawlā of Isma‘il, who gave his name to the group as its leader. 70 The Mubarakiyya claimed that, when Isma‘il was alive, he appointed his son Muhammad as his heir and sent his dā‘is to different regions to administer the oath in his name. 71 Another argument they used against the supporters of other sons of al-Ṣādiq was that the right of the imāma must pass from Isma‘il, the father, to Muhammad, the son, because the imāma could not be transferred from brother to brother after al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, the sons of ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭālib 72; for that reason, the claim that Muhammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya was the successor of al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Ali had been rejected by the

68 al-Iršad, p.431.


72 For the Imami traditions and their opinion about this matter, see al-Kulaynī, i, pp.284-6; Ibn Bahuya, ‘Ilāl, pp.207-8; idem, Kamāl, ii, pp.86-9; al-Ghayba pp.133-6.
majority of the Shi'a. According to an account, a group from the Pure Isma'iliyya later accepted the death of Isma'il and joined the Mubarakiyya. After Muhammad b. Isma'il’s death, the Mubarakiyya split into two groups. One of them held an opinion that Muhammad went into concealment; he was the Mahdi and would return someday to set everything right. Nevertheless, the main body of the Mubarakiyya did not stop the line of the Imams with Muhammad, but they transferred the imama from him to some hidden Imams, and after them to those Imams who were publicly known. Al-Shahristani and al-Baghdadi say that they were called the Batinyya (those who believe the so-called “secret meaning of the religion”). Al-Mufid notices that they were those who were known as the Isma'iliyya in his time. Hence, in the light of these records, the theory that it was this group which conveyed the movement of the Isma'ili imama through a series of hidden Imams until the time of 'Ubayd Allah, the first Fatimid caliph, and the latter disclosed it is quite reasonable.

The third proto-Isma'ili group which is recorded by the sources deemed that al-Ṣadiq, not Isma'il, designated Muhammad b. Isma'il as the seventh Imam, and he was the last Imam and the Mahdi who remained alive and would return as the Qā'im. They put forward a tradition as evidence that the seventh Imam was the Qā'im. This group is said to have formed the nucleus of the heretical sect the Qarāmīta which regarded Muhammad as their seventh and last Imam. Al-Nawbakhti mentions some

73 al-Nawbakhti, p. 58; al-Qummi, p. 81; al-Irshād, p. 431.
74 al-Nawbakhti, p. 58-9; al-Qummi, p. 81.
76 al-Baghdadi, p. 65; al-Shahristani, p. 144.
77 al-Irshād, p. 431.
78 For this theory, see Dāftary, “A Major Schism”, pp. 128-9.
Khattabis who, after the death of their leader Abu al-Khattāb, attached themselves to Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il and proclaimed his imāma. They believed that the spirit of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq was inside Abu al-Khattāb and later, in the latter’s concealment, this spirit passed into Muḥammad. However, the connection between those Khattabis and the above-mentioned third proto-Ismā‘ili group is not very clear in al-Nawbakhti’s account.

Muḥammad was the eldest of Ismā‘il b. Ja‘far’s two sons. The name of the other is recorded as ‘Ali. Muḥammad’s mother was a slave-wife (umm al-walad) called Umm Farwa. It is reported that, at the moment of al-Ṣādiq’s death, Muḥammad, except for his full uncle ‘Abd Allāh, was the eldest male member of the family. Idris records that he was twenty-six years old when al-Ṣādiq died, which means that his birth date was 122/740. We know little about the early years of his life. There is no record about Muḥammad’s participation in any anti-‘Abbāsid rebellion. Juwaynī records that, during the ‘Abbāsid persecution carried out against Ismā‘il b. Ja‘far, Muḥammad and his brother ‘Ali were in hiding in Medina. Although the deaths of his grandfather, al-Ṣādiq, and his eldest uncle, ‘Abd Allāh, one after another, gave Muḥammad a chance to proclaim his own imāma on the basis of his seniority in the family, the mass support given to Müsā b. Ja‘far seems to have

80 al-Nawbakhti, pp.60-1.
81 Ibn Hazm, Jamhara, p.60.
82 al-Nawbakhti, p.58; al-Qummi, p.81.
83 Idris, 'Uyun al-Akhbar, p.333. Al-Mufid records an Umm Farwa as the full sister of Ismā‘il b. Ja‘far (al-Irshād, p.430). So, there might be a possibility of confusion in Idris’s record.
84 Ivanow says that this fact is explicitly stated by Abu Ḥatim al-Razi and Qadī Nu‘man, see “Early Shi‘i Movements”, p.17.
85 ‘Uyun al-Akhbar, p.351.
86 Juwaynī, ii. p 644.
discouraged him from doing it publicly. Probably for that reason, he left Medina for Iraq where the Khaṭṭābi partisans had already declared his imāma. Several accounts about his activities and his long journeys as far as Transoxiana or India are provided by some Ismā'īlī sources but with numerous anachronisms. His death is supposed to have taken place in the last quarter of the second c./eight c.

It seems that Mūsā b. Ja'far was not on good terms with Muḥammad in Medina. According to a narration of al-Kashshī, Mūsā tells his brother 'Ali b. Ja'far that their father, al-Ṣādiq, told their older brother, 'Abd Allāh, that he should get his cousins, Muḥammad and 'Ali, the sons of Ismā'il, under his control, because they infuriated him. Al-Ṣādiq also added that they were the partners of Satan. Furthermore, some Imāmī-originated traditions accused Muḥammad of denouncing Mūsā to the caliph al-Rashid. As shall be seen, this caused Mūsā's imprisonment and consequently his death. It can also be understood that Muḥammad's followers were very hostile towards Mūsā and his party. Al-Nawbakhti reports that they interpreted a verse of the Qurʾān (ii: 35) about the reason for Adam's fall to earth that the statement, "eat of the bountiful things therein", meant the attachment for Ismā'il and Muḥammad, and the other statement in the same verse, "do not approach this tree", represented the disavowal of Mūsā b. Ja'far.

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88 Ivanow, "Ismailis and Qarmatians", p.79; Daftary, Assassin, p.16.

89 al-Kashshī, p.265.

90 see pp.131-2 below.

91 al-Nawbakhti, p.63. Also see al-Qummi, p.84.
In general, two contradictory approaches to Musa b. Ja'far and his imama are observed in the later Isma'ili literature. The first approach is quite sympathetic. In Kalam-i Pir, an Isma'ili work attributed to Naṣir-i Khusraw, Musa b. Ja'far is accounted among the Imāms. However, the author says that Musa’s position in regard to the imāma was like that of the Imam al-Hasan after 'Ali b. Abī Ṭalib. Al-Ḥasan had become a mustawda (temporary) Imam between two mustaqarr (real hereditary) Imāms, 'Ali and his son al-Ḥusayn. Musa’s case was a similar one; he was a mustawda Imam between al-Ṣādiq and Imā‘il. He had not the privilege of transmitting nass. It is also mentioned in the same book that since Imā‘il knew that the imāma remained with his own descendants after the mustawda Imam Musa, he agreed to Musa’s imāma, so that they were not opposed to each other. Musa remained loyal to this agreement. He is reported to have prayed in favour of the descendants of Imā‘il, when he was in prison in Baghdad, saying: 'God, do not deprive my descendants of the blessing of the descendants of Imā‘il". These reports, of course, are obviously anachronistic because of the fact that Imā‘il died before his father and brother. Another Isma’ili account recorded by Rashid al-Dīn, although there is nothing in it with regard to matter of the imāma, is also in favour of Musa. It is said that Musa b. Ja‘far gave his life in ransom for Imā‘il and ‘Ali b. Musa did the like in favour of Muḥammad b. Imā‘il. Due to these sacrifices, the real Imāms were prevented from being harmed.

These kinds of statements, in fact, are contradictory to the official and the generally-accepted view of the Isma‘iliyya. It might be thought that these statements were the result of the fact that the two sects became close in some regions of the

92 Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī, Kalam-i Pir, trans.: pp.41, 70, original text: pp. 49-75.
93 Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī, trans.: p.71, original text p.75.
94 Rashid al-Dīn p.531.
Islamic land in later times. Or, as Ivanow observes, it was due to the requirements of *taqiyya* on the part of authors carried out against the Imāmiyya.

On the other hand, in the work of the Ismāʿīlī ḍāʿī Idris, the story is quite different. There is no agreement at all between the two brothers. In contrast, there is an open rivalry between them. According to Idris, al-Ṣādiq actually appointed Musa as a screen (*sitr*) and trustee (*kafil*) for Muhammad b. Ismāʿīl so that the latter’s position might be concealed from his enemies. But Mūsā began to act as a real Imām and claimed that the imama would continue in his progeny until the rise of the Mahdi in the east who would be the twelfth Imām after ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭalib. Idris maintains that God has not proved this claim. This Mahdi has never come. However, the real Mahdi, al-Mahdi bi’llāh (‘Ubayd Allāh), the first Fāṭimid caliph (d. 322/934), arose in the west.

It is a fact that the Ismāʿīliyya has always continued to be a serious rival against the Imāmiyya within the framework of the Shiʿi interpretation of the religion of Islam. Except for certain believers of the imama of Mūsā b. Jaʿfar who would transform the Imāmiyya to the Twelver Shiʿa, the Ismāʿiliyya is the only group which succeeded in surviving until this time among other subdivided groups which had been split from the main body after Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq’s death.

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95 see Khayrkhwah-i Harāu, p. 41, footnote: 1.
II - The Aftahiyya

'Abd Allâh b. Ja'far, the eldest living son of the Imam al-Sâdiq, was acknowledged by the majority of the Ja'fari Shi'a as the successor to his father after the death of the latter. Abd Allâh was the full brother of Ismâ'il, whose mother was Fatima, the granddaughter of the Imam al-Hasan b. Ali. He was flat-headed or flat-footed (aftâh al-ra's or aftâh al-rijlayn). Due to this fact, his followers were named "Aftahiyya" or "Fathiyya". Another account is that the sect derived its name from the name of its leader 'Abd Allâh b. Futayh, a certain Kufan Shi'i. 97

Al-Maqrizi (d. 845/1442) gives the name of the sect as the "Mu'ammariyya", the followers of Mu'ammar, an unknown individual, who were the supporters of the imâma of 'Abd Allâh al-Aftah.98 I. Friedlaender suggests that he was Mu'ammar b. Abbad al-Sulami (d.215/830), a Basran Mu'tazili scholar. 99 But there is no evidence


Rajkowski highlights the name of 'Abd Allâh b Futayh. He suggests that because no such person is quoted among the Shi'i notables, this is only an example of the tendency to attribute the origin of every sect to some particular founder, see Rajkowski, "Early Shi'ism in Iraq", pp.570 (footnote).

Ivanow is of the opinion that 'Abd Allâh b. Ja'far was a half-wit, which was the reason that the Shi'i is accepted Ismâ'il as the proper successor although 'Abd Allâh was older than him (The Alleged Founder, pp.123, 155). Rajkowski's suggestion is that 'Abd Allâh was a dullard, therefore al-Sâdiq appointed Musa as his successor instead of 'Abd Allâh ("Early Shi'ism in Iraq", pp.563-4). These opinions are unlikely to be true. First of all, it is reported that Ismâ'il was the eldest son of al-Sâdiq (al-Irshad, pp.431-2; al-'Umari, p.100; Ibn 'Inaba, p.263; al-Tabarsi, I'lam, p.284). The fact that al-Sâdiq's kunya was Abu 'Abd Allâh does not necessarily mean that 'Abd Allâh was his eldest son. For example, Musa al-Kazim and 'Ali al-Rida were called Abu al-Hasan, but the name of al-Kazim's eldest son was 'Ali and that of al-Rida's one was Muhammad. On the other hand, there is no proof in the sources which indicates that 'Abd Allâh was weak-minded. His being "al-aftah" probably illustrates his physical imperfection rather than a mental handicap.

98 al-Maqrizi, ii, p.351.


67
in the sources to prove Mu‘ammar’s Shi‘ism and his career was probably later than the
time in question. It might be suggested that another Shi‘i sect recorded also by al-
Maqrizi as being named the Mu‘ammariyya, a branch of the Khātabiyya, might have
led al-Maqrizi or copyist into confusion on the name of the Aftahiyya. It is also
possible that the Mu‘ammariyya is a distorted form of the ‘Ammariyya which is
another name for the Aftahiyya.100

Al-Nawbakhti says:
"Upon the death of Ja‘far, the majority of chiefs of the Shi‘a and its
jurists inclined towards this party and the imama of ‘Abd Allāh. They
never doubted the imama of ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far and, after him, that
of his son".101

This big attachment to ‘Abd Allāh’s proclamation was probably the result of
the circulation of some traditions attributed to al-Ṣādiq. Perhaps the most effective
hadith among them was the Imam’s following statement: "The imama should belong
to the eldest son of the Imam".102 Besides this tradition, the custom of the Arabs at
that time required the acceptance of the same principle. According to other reports,
Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq said:

"The Imam is he who sits in my seat", and "No one washes the
Imam, no one prays at the funeral service for him, and no one
removes his seal or buries him except the Imam".

100 see p. 76 below.

101 al-Nawbakhti, p. 66. For other statements indicating the support of the
majority, see al-Qummi, p. 87; al-Kashshi, p. 254; Ibn Taymiyya, ii, p. 133.

102 al-Shahristani, p. 143; al-Kashshi, pp. 154, 254; al-Nawbakhti, p. 65: al-
Qummi, p. 87.

Al-Mufid puts forward that this tradition can only be narrated with its condition
which was related with it, which is "the imama should belong to the eldest son of the
Imam so long as he has no infirmity (‘āḥa)" (al-Kulaynī, i, p. 285). According to al-
Mufid, ‘Abd Allāh was infirm in religion, because he was a Murji‘ī. see al-Fuṣul al-
Mukhtara, p. 253.
Al-Shahristānī reports that it was 'Abd Allāh who did all these things. Furthermore, al-Ṣādiq entrusted something to one of his followers with a direction to hand it over to one who should claim his imāma. No one asked for it save 'Abd Allāh.103

However, some of the prominent doctors of the party did not find what they expected from 'Abd Allāh when they questioned him on some religious matters. One of the questions 'Abd Allāh was expected to answer was how much zakāt had to be paid on a hundred dirhams possessions. He answered that it required two and a half dirhams.104 Accordingly, Abū Ja'far al-ʿAwwal and Hishām b. Sālim, the two most celebrated scholars of the Shi'a, were disappointed in this answer which reflected—in their words—the Murjī'i view although 'Abd Allāh implied that this was his own conclusion and he did not know the doctrine of the Murjī'i. Hishām b. Sālim related that, on their visit to 'Abd Allāh, the latter's insufficient knowledge was perceived and thus they decided to find another Imam. So they went to Musa b. Ja'far with some other notables of the party and acknowledged him.105

103 al-Shahristani, p.143. Also see al-Rāzi, p.287.

104 According to Islamic law, the zakāt is not required for an amount less than 200 dirhams.


Ibn Shahrashub reports a narration about a more serious examination of 'Abd Allāh. According to the story, the Shi'is of Nishapur prepared questions in 70 pages in order to examine the new Imam. An envoy was in charge of the examination. If 'Abd Allāh succeeded in answering the questions, 30,000 dinārs, 50,000 dirhams and 200 pieces of clothes collected in the city would be handed over to him. Unfortunately 'Abd Allāh failed in the examination. Therefore, the envoy went to Musa b. Ja'far; he examined him in the same way, so, upon his correct answers, he delivered the taxes and gifts sent from Nishapur to him, see Manaqib, pp.291-2.

This story is highly improbable. Firstly, it contains some prophecies attributed to al-Kazīm which shake its reliability in advance. Secondly, because of the long distance between Nishapur and Medina, it seems impossible for the envoy to complete this journey in two months, also taking the duration of preparation of questions and collection of gifts into account. As we know, 'Abd Allāh lived only some seventy days after his father's death.

69
Mufid, 'Abd Allah was also said to have mixed with the Hashwiyya. This might have been another handicap for 'Abd Allâh in the eyes of those who followed al-Sâdiq's teachings strictly.

The imama of 'Abd Allâh lasted for a very short period. He died about seventy days after the death of his father, leaving no male progeny behind him. Hence, most of his supporters went over to Mûsâ who had also proclaimed his imama and had already been recognised by some partisans as the legitimate successor to his father.

The unexpected death of 'Abd Allâh probably brought about a situation of confusion in terms of his followers. It seems that a tradition attributed to al-Sâdiq became very prevalent during this crucial time, which is that "the imama never passes from brother to brother after the case of al-Hasan and al-Husayn". Al-Kashshi says

106 al-Irshâd, p.432. The Hashwiyya was the sect of some early traditionists (Ahl al-hadith) who professed anthropomorphic Ideas, see al-Shahristani, pp. 88-92.

107 al-Kashshi, p.254; al-Qummi, p.88; al-Nawbakhti, p.66; al-Razi, p.287. This report shows that 'Abd Allâh died in 148/765. There is also no other indication of his survival after this date. Therefore, al-Isfahâni's report that 'Abd Allâh joined in the revolt of al-Fakhkh in 169/786 is likely to be an error, see Maqatîl, p.466. It has also been repeated by H. Kennedy relying on that report (The Early Abbasid Caliphate, p.206).

108 al-Razi, p.287; Ibn Hazm, Jamhara, p.59; Ja'far b. Mansur al-Yaman, Asrâr, Arab. text: p.83, trans.: p.278; Idris, Zahr, Arab. text: p.50, trans.: p.237; idem, 'Uyun al-Akhbar, p.335. Ibn Hazm states that 'Abd Allâh had only one daughter named Fatima and her second marriage was with her cousin 'Ali b. Ismâ'il b. Ja'far. He also said: "The rulers of Egypt today (the Fâtimids), at first, traced their ancestry to 'Abd Allâh b. Ja'far b. Muhammad, but when the fact that this 'Abd Allâh had left only one daughter became known, they renounced this claim and traced back their ancestry (this time) to Ismâ'il b. Ja'far" (Jamhara, pp.59-60. Also see al-'Umari, p.103). For the letter of 'Ubayd Allâh al-Mahdi, the first Fatimid caliph, in which he claimed an 'Abd Allâh ancestry, see A. Hamdani and F. De Blois, "A Re-Examination of al-Mahdi's Letter to the Yemenites on the Genealogy of the Fatimid Caliphs". JRAS, 1983, pp.175-8.

Daftary suggests that this claim of 'Ubayd Allâh which probably took place after 297/910 may have attracted some Fâthis and led them to convert to Ismâ'îlism, see Daftary, "A Major Schism", SI, 77 (1993), p.137.

that, after the death of 'Abd Allah, his followers, except for a minor group, acknowledged the imāma of Mūsā b. Ja'far. They consulted this tradition and struck the imāma of 'Abd Allah out between those of al-Ṣādiq and Mūsā.\(^{110}\)

However, a certain group maintained the legitimacy of 'Abd Allah's seventy day-imāma though they recognised Mūsā as their next Imam. According to these Shi'is, the above-mentioned tradition was authentic, but, for the vindication of their cause, they claimed that there were many other traditions confirming the imāma of 'Abd Allah and Mūsā one after another and al-Ṣādiq knew that 'Abd Allah would die leaving no son who would be appropriate for the imāma. Therefore, on the grounds of these facts, the tradition about the imāma of two brothers one after another must have been related with the condition that the Imam had to have a son who would succeed to him. If he did not leave a son, like 'Abd Allah, the succession of a brother to the dead Imam must have been legitimised by virtue of dire necessity. The Aḥṭaḥiyya maintained, too, that Mūsā's imāma was substantiated by the testimony of 'Abd Allah, not by the testimony of al-Ṣādiq. They also repeated early Shi'i idea about "al-Imām al-ṣāmit" that Mūsā was the silent (ṣāmit) Imam in the existence of 'Abd Allah who was the real and speaker (nātiq) Imam.\(^{111}\)

If the narrations reflecting controversy between the two groups are examined, it can be clearly seen that this argument became very severe: Mūsā b. Ja'far accused 'Abd Allah of proclaiming his imāma unfairly. According to the former, 'Abd Allah

\(^{110}\) al-Kashshi, p. 254.

\(^{111}\) al-Nawbakhtī, pp. 82, 93; al-Qummt, p. 111. According to many Shi'i sects including the Imamīyya and the Isma'īliyya, the world cannot exist for a moment without an Imam and there can only be a single Imam at the same time although there might be a silent one, as his successor, beside him. See Daftary, The Isma'ilis p. 86.
did this intending that God should not be worshipped properly. It seems that 'Abd Allah's early death and the fact that that the majority of his followers had joined Musa b. Ja'far's party caused the dissension between the two sides to cease. The fact that the traditions about the Aftahiyya in the Imami sources are mostly prophetic and legendary in nature, and also the fact that no serious quarrel between the subsequent Imams and the notables of the Fathi group has been narrated in the sources lead to the possible presumption that antagonistic policy carried out by the Imamiyya against the Aftahiyya and the real controversy against its convictions did not start until the death of al-Hasan b. 'Ali, the eleventh Imam. When the latter died and the supporters of Ja'far b. 'Ali, the brother of the eleventh Imam, put the Fathi belief that brother could succeed brother on the agenda in order to use it for their cause, those who intended to acknowledge al-Hasan's alleged son as their new Imam initiated a hostile campaign against Ja'far's group. To turn back to the time after al-Sadiq's death and to start the ideological debate on the matter of 'Abd Allah al-Aftah's succession to al-Sadiq seemed to be the wisest way to disprove the arguments of the supporters of Ja'far b. 'Ali. It is probable that the activities of the fabrication of hadith against the Aftahiyya coincided with this time. Of course, the other side did not stay behind this, so they also put forward their arguments using the same method to that of those Imams who claimed the occultation of the Twelfth Imam. Hence, it might be suggested that the traditions about the Aftahiyya possessing polemical character developed after 260/874, the time at which schism took place within the Imam party following the death of the eleventh Imam.

The following Imami traditions attributed to al-Sadiq seem to serve the above-mentioned goal. According to one of them, al-Sadiq foretold to Musa that 'Abd Allah would proclaim his imama, and he admonished him neither to try to stop 'Abd Allah

112 al-Irshad, p. 441.
from doing it nor to dispute with him, because the latter would be the first member of
the family who would die after himself.113 In another tradition, al-Šādiq compared
‘Abd Allāh with Mūsā. He asked ‘Abd Allāh what stopped him from being like his
brother (Mūsā). ‘Abd Allāh replied that their fathers and origins were the same, but al-
Šādiq rejected this answer saying: "He is from my soul and you are (only) my
son"."114 Al-Mufid also reports that al-Šādiq, after coming out from the home of ‘Abd
Allāh, told his followers that his son was a Murji’i.115

A miracle attributed to Mūsā al-Kāzim also served the same purpose even
though its substance was contrary to al-Šādiq’s above-mentioned recommendation to
Mūsā. When ‘Abd Allāh made his claim to the imāma, Mūsā ordered that a big heap of
firewood should be collected in the courtyard of his house, where a group of his
followers and also ‘Abd Allāh were invited to assemble. Mūsā commanded that the
firewood be ignited. When the flame of the fire died down and the wood was
transformed into embers, Mūsā stood up and then sat down in the middle of the fire
where he preached to the guests for a while. Afterwards, he returned to his seat
without any injury to him or his clothing and then challenged ‘Abd Allāh to do the
same if he felt that his claim to the imāma was proper. However, the rāwī of the
narration relates that the colour of ‘Abd Allāh changed and he left the assembly
immediately.116

113 al-Kashshi, p.255; al-Qummi, p.87-8; al-Nawbakhtl, p.66; Dala‘il, p.163.
116 Kashf, iii, pp.36-7; al-Rawandi, i, pp.308-10; Donaldson, The Shi‘ite
Religion, p. 154 quotes it from Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi s Khulasat al-Akhbar

73
The sources give the names of the pioneers and the notable figures of the Aftahiyya group. The most famous one of them is Zurara b. A'yan. His real name is 'Abd Allāh b. A'yan b. Sunsun. The grandfather Sunsun was an enslaved Greek monk, who converted to Islam. The father A'yan was a slave of the tribe of the Banū Shaybān. After learning the Qur'ān, he was freed. He was offered the use of his own origin (nisba), but refused it, preferring to stay in his treaty of clientage (wali') with the Banū Shaybān.

Zurara b. A'yan is described as "the greatest man of the Shi'a in jurisprudence, hadith, theology and Shi'i partisanship". He was a devout companion of al-Sādiq. The latter said: "If not for Zurara, I think my father's traditions would have vanished". However, his belief in al-Sādiq's knowledge of the unknown through the divinely imparted 'ilm and his ideas about "God's knowledge" and "al-istiṭā'a" (the capacity to perform act) seem to have annoyed the Imāms. Mūsā b. Ja'far thought that Zurara was "the most hated one of our enemies and (also) the most beloved one of our associates for the sake of God".

It is reported that the followers of Zurara b. A'yan, who were called the Zurāriyya, believed in the imāma of 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far. One of the early heresiographers, al-Balkhi (d.319/931), reports that this group still held this belief in

117 Ibn al-Nadīm, p.220.
119 Ibn Bābūya, Kamāl, i, p.166. For other narrations and detailed information about Zurara, see al-Kashshi, pp.133-161; al-Najashi, p.125; al-Tūsī, Fihrist, p.142; Ibn Shahrashub, Ma'ālim, p.53; al-Māmaqānī, i, biography no: 4213; Takīm, pp.123-140.
120 al-Ash'āri, i, p.28; al-Baghdādi, p.71; al-Shahrāstānī, p.160; al-Isfārānī, pp.24; al-Maqrīzī, ii,p.351.
his time. According to some records, Zurārā, after posing 'Abd Allāh some questions and finding him not well-informed, went over to the imāma of Mūsā al-Kāzīm. Al-Ash'ārī adds to this report the allegation of the Aftahiyya that Zurārā died believing in the imāma of 'Abd Allāh. However, there is actually no report about the journey of Zurārā, who was resident in Kufa where he died in 150/767, to Medina after 148/765 in order to question 'Abd Allāh. On the other hand, there is an account which seems to be more reliable according to the facts about Zurārā's historical and geographical situation that Zurara sent his son 'Ubayd to Medina in order to know the real situation about the acknowledgement of the new Imām among the partisans and reminded him that 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far had already been recognised by some who had complied with the indication of al-Ṣādiq that the imāma should have belonged to the eldest son of the Imām. 'Ubayd went to Medina, but, before his return, Zurārā fell ill seriously. He felt the closeness of his death, so he took the Qurʾān and declared that he accepted all that was revealed in it and his faith and religion was whatever 'Ubayd would bring.

It seems that this uncertain situation of Zurārā encouraged the two parties to show that Zurārā, the great jurist and theologian, had died believing in their sects even though he probably did not recognise any candidate for the imāma during the two years before his death. A rare report from Ibn Ḥazm can corroborate this

121 al-Balkhi, p. 180. If al-Balkhi’s information is true, it is very interesting that a group which held the opinions of Zurārā b. A'yān still existed at the beginning of the fourth century H.


123 al-Ash'ārī, i, p. 28.

124 al-Kashshi, pp. 154-5.

125 The Imām Ibn Bābūya reports that Zurārā acknowledged al-Kāzīm. He also narrates a tradition from al-Riḍā confirming this matter, see Kamāl 1, p 165.
assumption, if it has historical accuracy. According to the report, when Zurara had come back to Kufa after questioning 'Abd Allah in Medina, Shi'is asked him who was his and their new Imam. Zurara, indicating the Qur'an in front of him, declared that it was his new Imam and there was no longer any other Imam for him. 126

'Ammār b. Mūsā al-Sābāi' must be regarded as the protagonist of the Aftahiyya. He gave his name to the sect, so the Aftahiyya also became known as the 'Ammāriyya. 127 'Ammār was a mawlah from Madain (Ctesiphon). He was a disciple of al-Ṣādiq. 128 Although he maintained the legitimacy of 'Abd Allah's imāma after the latter's death, he seems to have been on good terms with Mūsā al-Kāzim. The latter said: "I had wanted 'Ammār from my God, so He gave him to me". 129 There is also no report in the sources related from Mūsā b. Ja'far concerning his censure of 'Ammār. This fact can bear out a suggestion that for Mūsā one's recognition of legitimacy of 'Abd Allah's imāma was unimportant as long as he accepted his imāma; if this person was an influential and learned one like 'Ammār, there was no reason to start a dispute with him unnecessarily.

'Ammār was usually regarded as a reliable (thiqa) rāwi. Al-Ṭusi states the existence of a consensus of the Imāmiyya on giving judgement and acting in the legal area according to 'Ammār's traditions. 130

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126 Ibn Ḥazm, Jamhara, p. 59. Also see al-Balkhi, p. 180.
127 see al-Ash'ari, i, pp. 27-8; al-Balkhi, pp. 180-1; al-Isṭa’ī, p. 23. Al-Shahristani's account that the 'Ammāriyya was the followers of Muhammad b. Ja'far (p. 23) must be a mistake. This group was called the Shumaytiyya, see p. 87 below.
130 al-Mamāqani quotes it from al-Ṭusi (ii, biography no. 8595).
In addition to 'Ammār al-Sābī, al-Kashshi gives the names of other Fāṭih chiefs describing them as "the jurists of our believers. They are al-Ḥasan b. 'Ali b. al-Faḍdāl and his two sons, 'Abd Allāh b. Bukayar, Yūnus b. Ya'qūb and Mu'awiya b. Ḥukaym. Yūnus b. Ya'qūb is reported to have given up his Fāṭih belief and become an agent of al-Kāzim.\(^\text{131}\)

Al-Ḥasan b. 'Ali b. al-Faḍdāl was a Kufan Shi'i from the associates of al-Riḍā. His true devotion to the Imām and his outstanding asceticism, piety and godfearingness are particularly emphasised in the sources.\(^\text{133}\) Al-Ḥasan is reported to have stayed as a Fāṭih until the last days of his life. According to a narration, while al-Ḥasan's funeral rite was being performed, Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Zurāra came to 'Ali b. Rayyān and said that he wanted to announce good news, and then started to narrate that he and his friend, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Jahm, had visited al-Ḥasan in his last days; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan had wanted al-Ḥasan to attest the formula of the Shi'i creed (\textit{shahāda}). Al-Ḥasan had testified to it enumerating the names of the Imams, but he had left 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far out and passed to al-Kazīm from al-Ṣādiq. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan had asked where 'Abd Allāh was and repeated this question three times. Al-Ḥasan had replied that he had looked through the books, but he had found nothing in them about 'Abd Allāh.\(^\text{134}\)

This is the only report which indicates the conversion of al-Ḥasan b. 'Ali b. al-Faḍdāl and seems to show a tendency to rehabilitate him as he was a very prominent figure among the Shi'is and the narrator of many traditions related from the Imām al-

\(^{131}\) al-Kashshi, p. 345.

\(^{132}\) see p. 405 below.


\(^{134}\) al Najashi, p. 25.
Riḍa. When ʿAḥmad b. ʿAl-Ḥasan, the son of Ibn al-Faḍḍāl, heard this story about his father, he refused to accept its authenticity and said that "Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh has distorted (the account of) my father (ḥarrāfa ʿalā ʿabī)". Al-Ḥasan b. ʿAli b. al-Faḍḍāl died in 224/839.

Al-Ḥasan b. ʿAli b. al-Faḍḍāl’s two sons, Aḥmad (d.260/874) and ʿAli, were also among the prominent members of the Aftahiyya. Numerous books were attributed to ʿAli by al-Najashi including "The Book of the Demonstration of the Imāma of ʿAbd Allāh".

Another leading figure of the Aftahiyya was ʿAli b. Asbāṭ al-Muqri, an adherent of al-Riḍa and al-Jawād. Despite being a Kufan, he was reported to have visited al-Riḍa and watched him carefully in order to describe, when he returned to Egypt, the stature of the Imām for the Egyptian Shiʿa. ʿAli was persuaded to abandon his Fāṭhi belief by the letters of ʿAli b. Mahziyār, an Imami scholar, but he is reported to have returned later to his former sect.

ʿAbd Allāh b. Bukayr al-Kūfī was another Fāṭhi. He was probably among early Fāṭhis acting with ʿAmmār al-Sābāṭī.

135 al-Najashi, pp.25-6.
137 al-Kulaynī, i. p.494.
139 al-Kashshi, p.345; al-Tusi, Fihrist, p.188; al-Najashi, p.154; al-Dhahabi, Mizan, ii. p.399.
Mu‘awiya b. Ḥukaym al-Duhni is regarded as a reliable ṭawī. He is reported to have related twenty-four original hadith books (aṣl) written directly from the Imams, which no other ṭawī had related before. No further information is given about him.140

Apart from those Fāṭhis who acknowledged Mūsā and then ‘Ali al-Riḍā after the death of ‘Abd Allāh, another three factions of the Fāṭhiyya are recorded by Sa‘d al-Qummi. The first group stopped the line of the imāma after ‘Abd Allāh and recognised no Imām after him. The second group appeared after the death of al-Kāzim. They claimed that ‘Abd Allāh had a son named Muhammad born to him by a concubine and ‘Abd Allāh had sent him off to Yemen where he grew up and, after his father, left for Khūrasān where he still resided. This Shi‘i group asserted that this Mūhammad was the Qā‘im who would set everything right. They circulated a hadith attributed to the Prophet that "the Qā‘im’s name is my name and his father’s name is my father’s name" and put it forward as evidence for their allegation. Another of their arguments was a tradition ascribed to al-Sādiq that the Imam should not die without leaving any male progeny, so ‘Abd Allāh must have had a son who was the awaited Qā‘im. Al-Qummi states that the number of the followers of this group was very small. They were in Yemen and Iraq but the majority lived in Khūrasan.141

It is very interesting to see that this Shi‘i group went back to the previous Imam and acknowledged his son as their new Imam despite strong Arab and Shi‘i convention that the right of succession should be inherited from the father. There is also no indication in the sources why they did not recognise al-Riḍa or, like the Waqīfa, did not stop their line of imama with al-Kāzim claiming him to be the Qā‘im.

140 al-Najashi, p.293.
141 al-Qummi, p.88.
Despite these obscure matters, however, it might be suggested with some confidence that this group, after about eighty years, inspired some subsequent Shi'i leaders to put the idea that al-Hasan al-'Askari, the eleventh Imam of the Imamiyya, whose son's existence was quite dubious, actually had a son named Muhammad who was born some years before his father's death to a concubine and he was the awaited Mahdi who would restore justice and equity on earth. It is clear that this official belief of the Imamiyya is exactly same as that of this marginal Fath group which emerged after 183/799 and perhaps disappeared or joined another group short time later.

The last Fathi group recorded by al-Qummi was also a small group. They claimed that the imama remained among the progeny of 'Abd Allah until the day of resurrection. There is no report about its fate.

The impact of the main Fathiyya continued for a long time. It played an important role in the period after 260/874 in which the death of al-Hasan al-'Askari, who either had left no son or left one but an infant, threw the Imami community into confusion. It is reported that those who believed the imama of al-Hasan broke up into eleven groups after his death. One of these groups held the Fathi theory that brother could succeed brother and thus they acknowledged Ja'far b. 'Ali, al-Hasan's brother, as their new Imam. They asserted that God had changed His decree (bada') when He had caused Isma'il b. Ja'far to predecease his father and had decreed the imama of 'Abd Allah and then that of Musa; this time He repeated the same in the case of al-

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142 see al-Shahrastani, p.147.

143 al-Qummi, p.88.

144 Ibn Babuya calls this group "the second Fathiyya ("al-Fathiyya al-Thaniyya"), see Ma'ani al-Akhbar, p.65.
Hasan and Ja'far, the sons of Ali, the tenth Imam. Another example of the employment of this theory in the early Shi'i history can be seen in the recognition by some Shi'is of the imamah of Ahmad b. Musa after the death of Ali al-Rida b. Musa who had left a child of seven years of age. However, its effect on the Shi'i community does not seem to be as significant as that of the above-mentioned split after al-'Askari.

Consequently, it seems that the tradition which averted the possibility of the imama being held by two brothers one after another was not kept strictly by many Shi'is. They do not appear to have considered there to be any harm in infringing this principle, especially in the periods of crisis in which the Shi'a needed vitally to find a mature imam to succeed to previous imam who had left an infant or had no issue. Hence, one can suggest that the Shi'i theory that all the Imams were divinely predetermined to succeed one after another did not prevail among the Shi'a during that time and the traditions in which the divinely foreordained Imams were listed were the products of later sectarians who needed to defend the accuracy of their line of imama against the claims of other sects or groups which accepted other lines.

Fathi rijal were usually considered by the Imamiyya as trustworthy transmitters in relating hadith even though they were regarded as fasid al-madhhab (those who have corrupt doctrine). Besides, the Fathis were distinguished carefully from the members of all other Shi'i or non-Shi'i sects. The following statements of al-Mamaqani clearly show how the Imamiyya have made numerous traditions or legal conclusions which had been related on the authority of the Fathi rijal serviceable for use on the grounds of a process of rehabilitation. Al-Mamaqani

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145 al-Nawbakhht, pp. 81-2; al-Qummi, p. 110; al-Shahrastani, p. 147. For this group, also see Sachedina, Islamic Messianism, p. 52. Hussain, Occultation, 59-60.

146 see al-Qummi, p. 93; al-Nawbakhht, p. 72; al-Shahrastani, p. 146.
states that 'the Aftahiyya was the closest Shi'i sect to the truth'. He connects this conclusion with two reasons: Firstly, other sects denied one or some of the twelve Imams despite the fact that the denial of one Imam indeed meant the denial of all the Imams. However, the Aftahiyya accepted all the twelve Imams, but they added 'Abd Allah among them. Therefore, they ascribed the traditions informing the number of the Imams as twelve to the mean that this number did not include the first Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib. Furthermore, the Fāṭhīs died mostly as the believers of the real Imams of their times. However, those Fāṭhīs who died during the seventy days when 'Abd Allah proclaimed his imāma and invited people to accept it, died as unbelievers. Secondly, unlike the Fāṭhīs, all other sects acquired their doctrines and other religious rules from ordinary persons rather than the twelve Imams. Because 'Abd Allah lived only seventy days after his father, there was little chance to a Fāṭhī to relate tradition from 'Abd Allah or ask him his opinion to solve a legal problem. These facts provided the Aftahiyya with a privilege which the Imamiyya did not give to any of the other Shi'i groups.

III - The Nawūsiyya

According to heresiographical accounts, after Ja'far al-Sādiq had died, one group of his followers held that al-Sādiq had not died; he was still alive in concealment and he would stay there until he would reappear as the Qā'im or the Mahdi to fill the earth with justice as it was filled with injustice.

147 According to a well-known hadith attributed to Ja'far al-Sādiq, whoever dies without having acknowledged the true Imam of his time, dies as an unbeliever. See al-Kulaynī, i, pp. 376-7.

148 al-Mamaqanī, i, pp. 193-4. Also see the biography of 'Ammar al-Sabātī, ibid., ii, no: 8595.

The sources cite some sayings of al-Ṣādiq which were used by this group as evidence for their belief. The Imam al-Ṣādiq allegedly said: "If you should see my head rolling down to you from a mountain, do not believe what you see, for I am your master". Another hadith is related on the authority of 'Anbasä b. Muṣ'ab, a Nāwūsī Shiʿi, in which al-Ṣādiq said again: "If somebody comes to you and informs you of me that he nursed me, washed me and shrouded me, do not believe him, for I am your master, the master of the sword".

A man of Basra called Nawūs is reported to have been the head of the group. The name of the sect was derived from his name. Al-Shahristānī also mentions another account that the members of the group belonged to the village of Iʿtiqādat, p.53; idem, Muḥassal, p.242; Friedlaender, "The Heterodoxies", 1908 (29), p.41.


151 al-Nawbakhti, p.57; al-Qummi, p.80; al-Mufid, al-Fusul al-Mukhtara, p.247. According to al-Mufid, al-Ṣādiq might have made this statement just before he went to Iraq in order to make his followers sure that he would certainly come back. In this way, al-Ṣādiq prevented some possible rumours about his death intended to make mischief among people. Al-Mufid also sees it possible that the Imam made these statements to those people whom he knew would predecease him. The final possibility is that al-Ṣādiq might mean that nobody from the ordinary people could wash or shroud an Imam. These works were only the duties of an appointed Imam, see al-Fusul al-Mukhtara, p.249.


153 Other different names given to the sect are: al-Nawusiyya (al-ʿ Ḥarīrī, i, p.25, al-Ṭabarṣī, Il'am, p.286), al-Namusiyya (F. al-Razi, Il'tiqadat, p.53), al-Barusiyya (al-Balkhi, p.169).
Jawusa 154 which was one of the villages around Hit, a town near Baghdad situated on the right bank of the Euphrates.155 The fact that all of the three men reported as the Nawûsis were from Kufa and the fact that the leader of the group was recorded as a Basran evidently show that the group was formed in Iraq.

'Anbasa b. Muṣ'ab al-'Ijli al-Kûfî is reported by al-Kashshi as a Nawûsi.156 He is the transmitter of the hadith in which al-Ṣâdiq tells his followers not to believe in any news of his death.157 Another two Nawûsis are listed by Ibn Dawûd.158 Sa'd b. Ṭurayf al-Ḥanţali al-Kûfî was a shoemaker (iskâf or khaffâf) in Kufa. He was also a famous story narrator (qâṣṣ).159 Al-Ṣâdiq praised Sa'd because of the stories he publicly narrated about the merits of the Imams and their rights to the imâma.160 However, Sa'd al-Iskâf, after al-Ṣâdiq's death, stopped the line of the Imams with al-Ṣâdiq and did not recognise any successor to him.161 The second name recorded as a Nawûsi is Abân b. 'Uthman al-Ahmar al-Bajali.162 He was one of the twelve most learned among the disciples of al-Ṣâdiq.163 Aban was distinguished in his time with his knowledge about ancient Arab poetry, genealogy and the important historical events in the pre-Islamic Arab calendar (a yyâm al-'Arab). He was originally from

154 al-Shahrîstâni, p.143.
155 see al-Yaqût, iv, pp.
156 al-Kashshi, p.365.
158 Ibn Dawûd, Rijâl, Najaf 1392/1972, p.293.
159 al-Najashi (p.127) erroneously records that Sa'd was a qâdi (judge). This seems to be a result of the misreading or misrecording of the word "qâṣṣ".
163 al-Kashshi, p.375.
Kufa and lived there, but he was reported to have frequented Basra.\(^{164}\) Therefore, it might be thought that Abān was the person who provided the link between Kufan members of the group and its leadership in Basra.

Except for these three personalities from al-Šādiq’s circle, no name is assigned to the group. About the activities of the Nāwūsiyya and its fate among other groups divided after al-Šādiq’s death, almost nothing is known. However, a Shi‘i scholar, Abū Tālib ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ahmad b. Abī Zayd al-Anbārī (d.356/966-7), who flourished about 150 years after al-Šādiq’s death, is recorded as a Nāwūsī as well.\(^{165}\) Al-Najāshī simply says that he was a Wāqifī, without any reference about whom he stopped (\textit{waqafa}) the line of the Imāms at. Al-Najāshī also adds that he later returned to the Imāmiyya.\(^{166}\) According to Ibn al-Nadīm’s report, this prolific scholar belonged to the Bābūshiyya sect.\(^{167}\) When we put together these accounts about ‘Ubayd Allāh and take into consideration another record that he was accused of \textit{irtifā‘}\(^{168}\) (literally means elevation, i.e. synonymous with \textit{ghuluww}), it appears that his belonging to the Nāwūsiyya was different from those of the previous Nāwūsīs. He had extremist tendencies and these tendencies were related to Ja‘far al-Šādiq. Maybe the Bābūshiyya was the name of this form of the Nāwūsiyya.\(^{169}\) When Abū Ḥātim al-_RULE (d.322/934) said that no one in his time held the opinions of the Nāwūsiyya,\(^{170}\) he


\(^{166}\) al-Najāshī, p.121.

\(^{167}\) Ibn al-Nadīm, p.198.

\(^{168}\) al-Najāshī, p.121.

\(^{169}\) Another possibility is that, like al-Balkhi recorded the name of the sect as the Ḥūrisiyya (p.169), Ibn al-Nadīm’s record might also be a distorted form.

\(^{170}\) al-Rūzī, p.286.
probably did not mean these extremists. This may be indicated by a rare report from Fakhr al-Din al-Razi which gives more details about the situation of the sect. According to this report, there were two different Nāwūsi groups. One group held that al-Ṣādiq did not die; some of his disciples were able to see him on some occasions and he promised them that he would reappear, but he did not fix any time for this. The second group accepted al-Ṣādiq's death, but they did not recognise any Imām after him. Hence, it can be suggested with some confidence that the first group was those Nāwūsis who held some extremist ideas about Ja'far with the belief that he was alive. 'Anbasa b. Muṣ'ab might be regarded as the prominent figure of this group since he claimed that some hadith about this belief were related from al-Ṣādiq. This form of the Nāwūsiyya seems to survive for a long time and took some different names and forms at much later times. The second group simply stopped the line of the Imāms with al-Ṣādiq. They did not have any belief in al-Ṣādiq's occultation. This group probably took the Sunni line and lost its Shi'i identity in time. However, this group, because they did not continue the line of the Imams after al-Ṣādiq too, was confused by the heresiographers with the other extremist group, so both two groups were classified under one title. Therefore, in this light it makes sense that Aban b. 'Uthmān, who is introduced as a Nāwūsi in the Shi'i sources, is regarded as a trustworthy (thīqa) rāwi in the Sunni rijāl sources. He was among the followers of the Imām al-Ṣādiq, but, after his death, he probably could not have found any knowledgeable personality fitting to fill the place of al-Ṣādiq among the Imāms' sons, so he recognised none of them who proclaimed their imāma.

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172 For Ibn Hibban (d. 354/965)'s judgement for him, see Ibn Hajar, Lisan, i, p. 24. The fact that the name of a famous Sunni scholar, Abu 'Ubayd Qasim b. Sallam (d. 224/839), was recorded as the pupil of Aban b. 'Uthman (ibid.) might be regarded as another indication of his freedom from extremist opinions.

173 Il. Modarressi is of the opinion that some followers of al-Ṣādiq simply considered none of the candidates for al-Ṣādiq's post to be knowledgeable enough to
IV - The Shumayṭiyya

Muslim heresiographers record the Shumayṭiyya as a sect which emerged after the death of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq declaring the imāma of Muḥammad b. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. However, it seems that the emergence of this sect was later time and, for that reason, not related to the time of the crisis when the supporters of the some sons of al-Ṣādiq, namely Ismā'il, ‘Abd Allāh and Mūsā, proclaimed simultaneously the imāma of their leaders. Muḥammad b. Ja'far, who was the youngest full brother of Mūsā b. Ja'far, must have been a teenager or much younger when his father died. Therefore, he would not have been mature enough at that time to attract the followers of the party as a proper candidate to succeed al-Ṣādiq.

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176 H. Modarressi is also of the same opinion. He sees it possible that the belief in Muḥammad b. Ja'far's imāma started with his uprising in 200/815. See Crisis, p.211, footnote: 19.

177 al-Irṣad, p.430; al-Qummi, p.86; al-Nawbakhti, p.64; al-Razi p 286.
Muhammad b. Ja'far was well-known as a traditionist. Some famous traditionists are recorded to have related *hadīth* of al-Ṣādiq from Muḥammad. In 200/815, after the revolt of Abū al-Sarāyā had failed, Muḥammad attempted another rebellion in Hijaz. He adopted the title of "Commander of the Faithful". Although he gained considerable support at the beginning, he was defeated by the 'Abbasid forces and had to apologise publicly for what he had done.

It is not exactly known whether a political group which surrounded Muhammad existed before his rebellion. Al-Mas'ūdi gives the name of the Shumayṭiyya as the group who supported Muḥammad and fought under his leadership in his unsuccessful revolt in 200/815. Since it is also reported that the Ġarūdiyya branch of the Zaydis was an important force in the rebellion, it can be suggested that the Shumayṭiyya was the name of a group from the Ġarūdiyya who supported Muḥammad b. Ja'far against the 'Abbasid government. These Ġarūdis must have been from the one of two subgroups of the sect who saw that the Imam after al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, the sons of 'Ali b. Abī Ṭālib, should belong to a wise and godly man among the children of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn upon whom was agreed by a consultation (*shūrā*), and this man should unsheathe his sword and summon to his faith. The rising of Muḥammad b. Ja'far in arms was in accord with all aspects to this Zaydi faith.

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178 *Maqatil*, p.538.
179 For this revolt and its aftermath, see pp.239-41 below.
180 *Muruj*, iii, p.439.
182 For the Ġarūdiyya sect. see *al-Nawbakhti*, p.19; *al-Qummi*, pp.18-9, 71; *al-Ash'arī*, i, p.67; *al-Baghdādi*, pp.43-4; *al-Shahrastānī*, p.135.
Yaḥyā b. Abī Shumayṭ was known as the leader of the group. The name of the Shumayṭiyya was taken from his name. Almost nothing is known about Yaḥyā. According to Ibn Ḥazm, the Shumayṭiyya was a small group. Al-Masʿūdī says that among the group there were both extremist and moderate factions of the Shiʿa. The moderates then joined the Imāmiyya. The sources give some examples of hadith spread by the Shumayṭiyya for the purpose of the propaganda. According to one of them, while Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar, while still a child, was running, he fell forward on his face. Al-Ṣādiq lifted him, kissed him, cleaned the dirt from his face and embraced him. Then al-Ṣādiq said that his father, al-Ḥāqīq, had told him that when a child, who would look like al-Ḥāqīq, would be born to him, he should have him named Muḥammad, so that he would be like the Prophet and al-Ḥāqīq. In another hadith, al-Ṣādiq says: "The name of your master is the same as that of your Prophet ". It seems that Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar was pleased with these sayings. Maybe he started to believe that he was actually the Mahdi. According to a report in Maqātil, Muḥammad, who had a defect in one of his eyes, which he kept secret, used to say: "I hope to be the Mahdi, for I am informed that he would have something wrong with one of his eyes".  

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184 Ibn Ḥazm, al-Faṣl, iv, p. 93.

185 Murūj, iii, p. 439.


187 al-Shahristānī, p. 144.

188 Maqātil, p. 539. The Ismāʿīli ʿdāʾī Idrīs (d 872/1468) ridicules this argument of Muḥammad. He says that this defect is not that of the Mahdi, but it is the sign of the Dajjāl (the Antichrist) who, it was believed, would fight against the Mahdi in the last days of the world ('Uyūn al-Akhbār, p. 348).
The group probably survived a little longer after their leader had died in 203/818-9 in exile in Khurāsān. Al-ʿUmari reports that the group, after Muḥammad, agreed on the imāma of his son Ismāʿīl.\textsuperscript{189} There is almost no report about Ismāʿīl b. Muḥammad and his activities. Therefore, it could be presumed that the Shumayṭiyya did not find in him what they had expected and, a short time later, his followers were dissolved in other factions of the Muslim community.

\textsuperscript{189} al-ʿUmari, p. 96.
CHAPTER TWO

THE IMĀM MŪSĀ AL-KĀẒIM
THE IMAM MUSA AL-KAZIM

This chapter attempts to present a critical account of the life of the Imam Musa al-Kazim. The process in which he stood out as a leader and then was proclaimed as the successor to al-{Sadik is explored. His political attitude towards the present ‘Abbasi regime, and the latter’s policy towards all the Shi'i elements in general and al-Kazim’s party in particular are outlined. Al-Kazim is also treated in the chapter as a traditionist and ascetic. His alleged link to some early sufis is briefly examined. The chapter starts providing information about Musa b. Ja’far’s kunyas and epithets.

I - Musa's Kunyas and Epithets

Musa b. Ja’far’s kunyas were Abu al-Hasan, Abu Ibrahim, Abu ‘Ali and Abú Isma’il. After his son al-Rida started to use “Abu al-Hasan” as kunya, Musa is said to have preferred to use other kunyas despite the fact that he is usually referred to in hadith as “Abu al-Hasan”. Since the kunyas of al-Rida and ‘Ali b. Muhammad, the tenth Imam, were the same, "al-Awwal" (the first) or "al-Madi" (the prior) were attached to “Abu al-Hasan” Musa in order to distinguish him from the two others. His famous nicknames were al-Kazim (the one who vanquishes anger).

1 Ibn Abi al-Thalj, p.30; al-Irshad, p.436; Maqatil, p.499; Manaqib, vi, p.323; Ibn al-Khashshab, p.192; al-Tabarsi, Taj, p.45; idem, I‘lam, p.286; Alqab, p.63.

2 see Ithbat, p.211.

3 For example, see al-Himyari, p.336.
al-‘Abd al-Sāliḥ (the righteous servant of God), al-Ṣābir (the patient), al-Amin (the honest), al-‘Ālim (the learned), some of which were used in traditions. 

Mūsā is often called al-Kāzim. Al-Mufid says that he was called al-Kāzim because of his restraint of his anger and the patience which he showed in the face of the acts of oppressors right up until his death. According to Ibn al-Sā‘ī and Ibn al-Athīr, Mūsā always used to do good to one who dealt badly with him, which was the reason that he was known as al-Kāzim. Ibn Bābūya gives an interesting report that Mūsā knew those who would stop the line of the imāma with him and reject the imāma of the next rightful Imam, i.e. the Wāqifis, but he always kept his wrath against them under control and never let them see it.

Apart from these explanations, in the Imami belief it is God who named the Imāms. Their nicknames and kunyas were also given by Him. Therefore the respect for these names symbolises the respect for God and the Imāms. These honorary appellations which express a merit also functioned for the Shi‘i followers as code names for the Imams used in correspondence with them and in the aḥādīth which

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4 For the term "al-‘Ālim" see E. Kohlberg, "Imām and Community", pp.25-6.


6 al-Irshād, p.451. Also see Manāqib, iv, p.323.

7 al-Kamil, vi, p.112; Ibn al-Sā‘ī, p.28.

8 Ibn Babuya, 'Uyun, i, p.91; idem, 'Ilal, p.235. In Ma‘ānī al-Akhbār of the same author, this information is foretold by the Prophet in a hadīth related by ‘Ali b. Abī Talib, see pp.64-5.

9 Alqāb, pp.4-5.
they related from them, which were used for reasons of *taqiyya*, as it was deemed best way to conceal the Imāms’ names.\(^{10}\)

## II - The Birth of the Imām and His Early Years

Mūsā b. Ja'far was born on 7 Safar, 128 / 8 November, 745 or 17 Safar, 128 / 18 November, 745 at al-Abwā', a village between Mecca and Medina.\(^{11}\) In addition to the date reported by most authors, another date is given as 129/746-7.\(^{12}\) His mother was a slave-wife (*umm walad*) whose name was al-Ḥamida al-Barbariyya (or al-Andulūsiyya), who was probably brought from North-Africa and was a Berber. It is reported that due to her husband’s calling her "the purified (*al-muṣaffāt*) from the uncleanness like a golden ingot", she was often referred to as "al-Muṣaffāt". She was also the mother of Fātimah, Ishaq and Muḥammad who revolted in Mecca against the ‘Abbāsid government in 200/815.\(^{13}\)

According to a rather fanciful story, al-Baqir delayed giving Ja'far al-Ṣadiq in marriage, because he used to foretell that a Berber slave trader would come over and bring the mother of the future Imām, Mūsā. The anticipated trader came with only two weak and ill slaves. Al-Baqir bought one of them for seventy *dinārs* and gave her to

\(^{10}\) see al-Kulaynī, i, p.308; al-Qummi, p.105.

\(^{11}\) al-Kulaynī, i, p.476; al-Nawbakhšī, p.81; al-Qummi, p.93; al-Īrshād, p.436; al-Khāṭīb, xiii, p.27; Ibn al-Khāṣḥābil, p.188; Manāqib, iv, p.323; al-Ṭabarṣī, Taḥāf, p.46; idem., 'l-lam, p.286; al-Hilli, al-Mustajjād, p.182; Sibt, p.348; Ibn al-'Imad, i, p.304; al-Harthī, p.6; al-Māmacānī, i, 187. For the village of al-Abwā', see Yaqūt, i, pp.99-100.


his son al-Šādiq. Al-Bāqir asked her whether she was virgin, adding, though it was unlikely for those who belonged to a slave trader. Al-Hamīda answered that whenever the trader attempted to have sexual intercourse with her, an old man with white hair and a white beard appeared, he slapped the trader’s face and took him away from her, so she was able to remain a virgin.\textsuperscript{14}

In another extended \textit{hadith} which was probably produced to elucidate the Shi‘ī-Imāmī belief that the designations of the Imāms were a result of God’s predetermination, Ja‘far al-Šādiq narrates the miraculous event of how al-Hamīda conceived Musā al-Kāzim to a group of his disciples who accompanied him on a pilgrimage to Mecca. According to this narration, in the night in which the seed, which was to become Musā, was predetermined to be conceived, a mysterious being came and had al-Šādiq drink something “finer than water, softer than butter, sweeter than honey, colder than snow, and whiter than milk”. It then commanded him to unite with his consort. Thus the seed was conceived. After four months, the spirit was merged in the seed. Then God sended a celestial creature (\textit{hayāwān}) to inscribe on the embryo’s upper arm the verse beginning with the sentence “The word of your Lord finds its fulfilment in truth and in justice” (\textit{al-Qur’an}, vi:115). Immediately after he had been born, Musā spoke to God. God endowed him with the whole of knowledge (\textit{al-‘ilm al-awwal} and \textit{al-‘ilm al-akhir} = the first and the last knowledge).\textsuperscript{15}

Little is known of al-Kāzim’s life in his youth. There are some reports in the Imāmī books showing his great knowledge and ability of discernment in his youth. His comment on the state of the heretic Abū al-Khattāb’s faith fascinated his father and the \textit{rāwi} of the \textit{hadith} because Musa was very young insofar as he used to play

\textsuperscript{14}al-Kulaynī, pp.476-7; \textit{Dala‘il}, p.148-9.

\textsuperscript{15}al-Kulaynī, i, pp.385-7.
with a young goat and it was not expected that such a comment would come from him.\textsuperscript{16} When Abū Hanifa (d. 150/767), the celebrated jurist and the founder of the Ḥanafi law school, visited Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq to ask him some theological matters, he met Mūsā at the gate, when he was still a child. Abū Hanifa was so affected by Mūsā’s answers about some problems on the matter of predestination (qadar) that he cancelled his visit and returned being satisfied as a result of Mūsā’s explanations.\textsuperscript{17} In another tradition, Mūsā, when he was five years old, caused a Jew to convert to Islam following his convincing arguments with him. This incident was regarded by his father as a sign of Mūsā’s imāma after him.\textsuperscript{18} It is obvious that these traditions are tendentious narrations trying to show divine knowledge which was believed to have been bestowed on Mūsā at the beginning of his life. Therefore, they have nothing to do with the reality.

The only serious information about Mūsā’s early life is concerning his participation in the revolt of Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Nafs al-Zākiyya in 145/762. Al-Ḥusayn, the son of the Imām Zayd b. ʿAlī, reports that from the descendants of al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib only four men took part in this revolt: Himself, his

\textsuperscript{16} al-Kulaynī, ii, 418.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibn Shuʿba, 303-4; Manāqib, iv, p. 214. For similar narrations about such meetings between Mūsā b. Jaʿfar and Abū Hanifa, see Dalaʾīl, p. 262; al-Ṭabarsī, Iʿlām, pp. 297-8; al-Mufid, al-Fusul al-Muḥtāra, pp. 43-4; al-Ṭabarsī, al-Iḥtijāj, pp. 387-8. In this narration, Mūsā al-Kāzim tries to prove the dependence of a man’s destiny on his own efforts, which was one of the main views of the Qadariyya sect. Ibn Taymiyya objects to the authenticity of this narration. He says that, as is well-known, neither Abū Hanifa nor the Imāms from Ahl al-Bayt accepted the Qadari principle of human free will, so this narration which relates Mūsā’s defence of this principle and Abū Hanifa’s acceptance of it without any question should be totally discredited. He maintains that, on the other hand, the arguments Mūsā uses in the narration are very simple ones which even “the boys (ṣubūyān) of the Qadariyya” knew and used in their arguments, therefore the fascination of a scholar like Abū Hanifa with such simple explanations is almost senseless (Minḥāj al-Sunna, ii, p. 29).

\textsuperscript{18} al-Ḥimyānī, pp. 317-30.
brother, 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far and Musa b. Ja'far.\textsuperscript{19} If we consider the fact that Husayn b. Zayd and his brother were adopted by al-Ṣādiq after their father had been killed,\textsuperscript{20} we can say that all these four men were from the House of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. It is known that al-Ṣādiq had refused to give the oath of allegiance to Muhammad and had not taken part in his rebellion.\textsuperscript{21} According to another report in al-Iṣḥāhānī's Maqātil, al-Ṣādiq came to Muḥammad and wanted to get permission not to take part in that revolt. Muḥammad gave him permission. Al-Ṣādiq went back but he left his two sons, 'Abd Allāh and Mūsā, there. Muḥammad gave the same permission to them and sent them back to their father. However, al-Ṣādiq did not consent to their return. He said: "Return! I have not wanted to withhold you in addition to myself from him". and sent them back to Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh.\textsuperscript{22}

Al-Ṣādiq is reported to have escaped from Medina and gone to Fur' when the revolt of Muḥammad broke out. He stayed there until the revolt was suppressed.\textsuperscript{23} If the above-mentioned report is true, it might show that, although al-Ṣādiq did not anticipate that the revolt would succeed, he left the door open for that possibility. Therefore he wanted some of his sons to represent him in the revolt so that he would not lose his esteem with the 'Alid family in particular and with other Muslims in general if this possibility turned out to be true. However, this bargain between al-Ṣādiq and Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh must have been kept secret since al-Ṣādiq appears as one of the few Ṭālibī figures who were not harmed by the government after

\textsuperscript{19} Maqātil, p. 389.

\textsuperscript{20} al-Najāshi, p. 38.

\textsuperscript{21} see p. 38 above.

\textsuperscript{22} Maqātil, p. 252.

\textsuperscript{23} Fur' was a large village near Medina on the road of Mecca (Yaqūt, iii, pp. 877-8).

\textsuperscript{24} Sibt, p. 347 quoted from al-Waqīḍī.
the revolt due to their involvement in it. It can also be suggested that the roles of ʿAbd Allah and Mūsā, who was seventeen years old at that time, in the rebellion were non-functional. We cannot find their names in the historical reports among those who faced violent persecution from the caliph al-Mansūr after he had crushed the rebellion. Furthermore, Ibn Athīr's long list containing the famous participants of this incident does not give their names.²⁵

III - Mūsā al-Kāẓim is Proclaimed as the Successor to al-Ṣādiq

We have mentioned the groups which appeared after Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq’s death either claiming the succession of different sons of al-Ṣādiq to the imāma, the Ismāʿiliyya and the Afšahiyya, or stopping their line of the Imāms with al-Ṣādiq, the Nawūsiyya.

Apart from these groups, some of al-Ṣādiq’s disciples followed Mūsā b. Jaʿfar and acknowledged him as their new Imam. It is a fact that the party of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq fell into a state of chaos after the death of their leader who had done his job successfully during thirty-five long and difficult years. The large number of Shiʿi extremists, whom al-Ṣādiq had succeeded to keep within the party thanks to his charisma, although he had always been troubled by them, formed their own group proclaiming the imāma of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿil b. Jaʿfar. On the other hand, at the beginning, many favourites of al-Ṣādiq, as shall be seen, decided to support ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar who had already been declared by some followers as the successor of his father. These developments suggest that Musā b. Jaʿfar was not able to gain the support of the majority of the Jaʿfari Shiʿa at the beginning. One Shiʿa later described

this situation to al-Kazim: 'When al-Ṣādiq died, people were going away from you in all directions (literally left and right)'.

According to a hadith, two leading figures of the party, Muḥammad b. Nuʿmān al-ʿAḥwal, who was well-known as Shayṭān al-Ṭaq 27, and Hishām b. Sālim,28 were in Medina after the death of al-Ṣādiq. The Jaʿfari Shiʿis of Medina had agreed on Ṭābār, b. Jaʿfar as the new Imām. These two men visited Ṭābir, b. Jaʿfar with a group of people in order to question him. However, after the examination, they were disappointed.29 His ʿilm (knowledge) was not sufficient. They lost almost all their hope that the party left by al-Ṣādiq could survive under such a leader, whose capacity was not enough to keep the party united and his ideas contradicted the spirit of Shiʿi ideology. Therefore, they seriously considered joining


27 Abu Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Ṭābir, b. Nuʿmān "al-ʿAḥwal" ["squint-eyed"] was one of the distinguished rijāl of al-Baqir and al-Ṣādiq (for his profile, see al-Kashshī, pp. 185-191; Ibn al-Nadīm, p.176; al-Najashi, p.228; al-Tūṣi, Fihrīst, p.323; Ibn Dawūd, p.394). He was regarded as one of four rukn [literally basis or corner, i.e. the basis of the religion] in favour of whom al-Ṣādiq said that they were the most loved persons by him whether they were alive or dead (al-Kasshī, p.185; Ibn Dawūd, p.394). Al-ʿAḥwal was a money-changer [al-sayrafi]. He had a shop in the bazaar in Kufa under an arch known as Taq al-Mahamil. He was very expert in his job. When a coin was given to him to check, he was able to find out immediately whether it was counterfeit or low quality, therefore he was nicknamed "Shayṭān al-Ṭaq" ["the Devil of the Archway"], which later Shiʿis changed into the less abusive "Muʿmin al-Ṭaq" ["the Believer of the Archway"] (al-Mufīd, al-Iktīsās, p.204). Al-ʿAḥwal was the counterpart of the great Sunni jurist Abu Ḥanīfa. He is reported to have held heated debates with him. Once, when Abu Ḥanīfa reminded him of the death of al-Ṣādiq, al-ʿAḥwal responded that the death of Abu Ḥanīfa's imam had been given respite by God to live until the day of resurrection, meaning Satan these words (al-Kasbshi, p.187; al-Tusi, Fihrīst, p.308). He is reported to have worsted the Kharijī leader al-ʿAḥshāk b. Qays in a dispute (al-Kashshī, p.187-8). Before al-Ṣādiq, he also defended against Zayd b. ʿAbī the legitimacy of al-Baqir's imama (al-Kashshī, p.186). A circle established by him seems to have continued to have held some of his theological ideas after him. For example, his idea that God did not know a thing [shay] until it came into existence was represented by the members of this school which was known as al-Nuʿmāniyya ( al-Shāhristānī, pp.160-1) or al-Shayṭāniyya (al-Baghdādi, pp.72-3; al-Isfāriʿi, p.24; al-Maqrizī, ii, p.353).

28 For him see p.423-4 below.

29 For the questions and ʿAbd Allāh's answers, see p.69 above.
other groups, namely the Qadariyya, the Mu'tazila, the Zaydiyya, and the Murja. They never thought to go to Musa b. Ja'far until they encountered a man who would take them to him. They questioned Musa too. They were satisfied and then acknowledged him as their new leader.30

Another four prominent followers, Zurara b. A'yan, Abu Basir al-Muradi, Burayd and Muhammad b. Muslim, who were described by al-Sadiq as "tent pins (awtād) of the world" 31, were probably not among those who declared their allegiance to Musa b. Ja'far. Zurara, as has been seen, in the year 150/767, two years after al-Sadiq's death, sent his son, 'Ubayd, to Medina in order to know the real situation about the acknowledgement of the new Imam among the followers. However, before 'Ubayd's return, he died having not recognised any successor to al-Sadiq. Or, according to another report, he simply asked for a Qur'an and declared that it was his new Imam and there was no other Imam any longer for him.32

Abu Basir Layth b. al-Bakhtari al-Muradi was an eminent partisan who was promised paradise by al-Sadiq.33 As a learned man who received 'ilm from both al-Baqir and al-Sadiq, he had a distinguished position in the Shi'i community. Probably on this basis, he felt that he had the right to criticise others who claimed knowledge for themselves. Musa b. Ja'far was also criticised by Abu Basir in this regard since he was seen to be contradicting his father: Shu'ayb b. Ya'qub asked Musa about a man who married a woman who was already married. Musa judged that the woman should be stoned to death although for the man punishment was not necessary. Shu'ayb told


31 al-Kashshi, p. 238.

32 see pp. 75-6 above.

33 al-Kashshi, p. 170.
this judgement to Abū Başir. The latter had asked al-Šādiq about the same matter before and he had said that the woman should be stoned and the man be flogged because of his negligence in investigating the woman. Abū Başir put his hand on his chest and said: "I think the knowledge of our companion (sāhibunā, i.e. Mūsā) has not matured yet". 34

It can be seen that serious doubts were raised about the extent of Musā's knowledge. Although there is no report about their refusal of the imāma of Mūsā, another two learned companions, Burayd b. Muʿawiya al-ʿIjli 35 and Muḥammad b. Muslim al-Thaqafi 36, also seem to have withheld their recognition. They are regarded as Apostles (ḥawāri) of al-Šādiq. 37 It is related from al-Šādiq that they were from those "Foremost" ("al-sābiqūn") in the faith and "Nearest" ("al-muqarrabūn") to God. 38 For Muḥammad b. Muslim, it is said that no one among the Shiʿa was more learned (afqah) than him. 39 Despite such fame which they had rightly gained in the community and the fact that both men died in 150/767 40, the absence of any report in the sources showing which side they took in the dispute about the imāma might indicate that they, like Zurāra, did not recognise any Imam after al-Šādiq. There is a report attributed to al-Šādiq, which may indicate the disposition of these three men. He

34 al-Kashshi, p. 172.

35 For his profile, see al-Kashshi, pp. 238-40.

36 For his profile, see al-Kashshi, pp. 161-6.

37 al-Kashshi, p. 10.

38 al-Kashshi, p. 136-7. These terms are referred to al-Qurʾān 1:61: 10-11.


40 al-Najashi, pp. 81, 227.
said: "Those who have claimed leadership (mutara'isun), like Zurara, Burayd, Muhammad b. Muslim and Isma'il al-Ju'fi, will perish".41

Al-Kashshi records Zurara, Burayd, Abu Basir and Muhammad b. Muslim among the "eminent six" scholars from the older generation of al-Sadiq's disciples, whose agreements upon a legal decision are seen as enough to accept it according to the concurrence of the Imamii community (asabah).42 Among another "eminent six" scholars from the younger generation 43, two persons are also reported not to have recognised Musa's proclamation: Aban b. Uthman al-Bajali stopped with al-Sadiq and acknowledged no Imam after him.44 The second person, 'Abd Allah b. Bukayr, was among the supporters of 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far and the pioneers of the Aftahiyya acting with 'Ammar al-Sabati who was the leader of the group.45

Yunus b. Zibyan is another example of a favourite disciple of al-Sadiq who did not follow Musa after him. Al-Sadiq prayed to God to build him a house in paradise.46 Although his name is entered among those follower rawis who reported the designation of Musa to the imama 47, his position was certainly not with Musa. He, after al-Sadiq, shifted his position to extremism. He claimed that he saw Gabriel and received some massages from him. He participated in the funeral of the sister of

41 al-Kashshi, pp.169, 199, 239.
42 al-Kashshi, p.238.
43 see al-Kashshi, p.375.
44 al-Kashshi, p.352. See also pp.84-6 above.
45 al-Kashshi, p.345; al-Tusi, Fihrist, pp.93-4. See also p.78 above.
46 al-Kashshi, pp.363-5.
47 al-Irshad, pp.436-7. For the tradition in which Yunus narrates al-Sadiq's designation of Musa to the imama see al-Kulayni, t. p.309.
the extremist leader Abū al-Khaṭṭāb and addressed her as "the sister of the Apostle of Allāh".48

'Abd Allāh b. Abi Ya'fūr is another name who must be mentioned in this regard. He was the agent of al-Ṣādiq in Kufa.49 He was counted among "the Apostles of al-Ṣādiq" 50, for whom the latter said: "I found nobody who accepts my direction and obeys my command (like) 'Abd Allāh b. Abi Ya'fūr".51 He died in al-Ṣādiq's lifetime.52 He seems to be the closest personality to the Sunnī line among the foremost figures of the Kufan Shi'a. Probably for that reason, his funeral ceremony was performed by a crowd greater than anybody expected. In a Shi'i narration, it is reported that among the participants at his funeral there were a considerable number of "the Murjī'is of the Shi'a".53 This description might fit those Shi'is who did not see the acknowledgement of a certain line of Imams as an essential part of the faith like most of the Shi'is did, and they thought that this did not harm the faith.54 A group called the Ya'fūriyya continued to represent the ideas of 'Abd Allāh b. Abi Ya'fūr.55 This Ja'fari group also did not recognise any Imam after Ja'far al-Ṣādiq like some others. According to Fakhr al-Rāzi's report, the Ya'fūriyya stayed undecided

48 al-Kashshi, pp.363-5.
49 see p.400 below.
50 al-Kashshi, p.10.
51 al-Kashshi, p.246.
52 For his profile, see al-Kashshi, pp.246-50; al-Najashi, p.147; Ibn Dawud, p.197.
53 al-Kashshi, p.247.
54 For the Shi'i-Imamī use of the term of the Murjī'a, see Watt, Formative Period, pp.121-2.
55 see al-Kashshi, p.266.
(tawaggafū) in the matter of whether al-Ṣādiq handed the imāma over to somebody either one of his sons or someone else.  

From all these reports, it is highly likely that al-Ṣādiq did not make any explicit designation for anyone of his sons. Therefore, some partisans discontinued the line of the imāma after him. Most of the extremist partisans proclaimed the imāma of Isma'il b. Ja'far and then of Muḥammad, his son. The majority of the followers acknowledged 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far on the basis that he was the senior member of the family. Only a minority followed Mūsā b. Ja'far. Al-Ash'ārī calls this group al-Mūsawiyya.  

Some Shi'i reports which give the names of the prominent disciples of al-Ṣādiq who recognised the imāma of Mūsā b. Ja'far are unreliable. Al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummi list eight names. Two of them, Abān b. Thaghlab and 'Abd Allāh b. Abi Ya'fur, must be excluded from this list since 'Abd Allāh is reported to have died in al-Ṣādiq's lifetime and the date of Abān's death was given as 141/758-9. Al-Mufid narrates that Zurāra b. A'yān was among those who acknowledged the imāma of Musa in Medina. However, Zurāra's story was quite different and he probably was on his deathbed in Kufa at that time. Al-Kashshi gives the name of al-Mufaddal b. 'Umar

56 F. al-Rāzi, Muḥassal, p.243.
57 see al-Nawbakhtī, p.66; al-Qummi, p.87; al-Kashshi, p.254.
58 al-Ash'ārī, i, p.29.
60 al-Kashshi, p.246.
62 al-Irshad, p.442.
63 see p.75 above.
instead of Zurara in another variant of the same narration.64 This variant is likely be true and the one which should be accepted.

Although Müsä b. Ja'far's group represented a minority at the beginning, unexpected developments helped him later to gain the support of the majority of the party. 'Abd Allâh b. Ja'far's alleged connection with the Murji'a and the Hashwiyya led some followers to leave him.65 The decision of some prominent partisans that 'Abd Allâh's knowledge was not enough for him to undertake the imâma accelerated this break-up. Finally, with the death of 'Abd Allâh a short time later, Müsä got a full chance to attain his ambition. Although some Fâthi, such as 'Ammar al-Sabî, continued to believe in the legitimacy of 'Abd Allâh's imâma after al-Šâdiq this matter does not seem to have disturbed Müsä very much.66

It is noteworthy to mention the assistance of some Mûsawid propagandists, without whom Müsä b. Ja'far might not have succeeded. Hishâm b. Salîm was the man who, after questioning 'Abd Allâh b. Ja'far, claimed him to be inadequate for the imâma and then invited people to recognise the imâma of Müsä.67 For this reason, there were several attempts to beat him by the frustrated Fâthi in Medina.68 Al-Mufaddal b. 'Umar, the former extremist,69 also backed Müsä joining him with his

64 al-Kashshi, p.238. In al-Kulayni's account, the name is al-Fudayl (i. p.352).
65 al-Irshad, pp.432, 440.
66 see p.76 above.
68 al-Kulayni, i. p.352; al-Kashshi, p.284.
69 For him, see pp.52-4 above, pp.400-1 below.
own group, the Mufaddaliyya.⁷⁰ Al-Fayd b. al-Mukhtar al-Ju‘fi ⁷¹ is introduced as a man who heard from al-Ṣadiq the designation of Mūsā for the imāma when the latter was still five years old.⁷² He says that al-Ṣadiq told him that Mūsā with regard to him was in the same position as the Prophet Joseph with regard to the Prophet Jacob, Joseph’s father.⁷³ On another occasion, al-Fayd relates, al-Ṣadiq said to his followers that they were a ship and Mūsā was its captain. Al-Fayd maintains that, upon this remark, he sent his religious tax (khums) which amounted to 2,000 dinārs to both al-Ṣadiq and Mūsā dividing it into two equal parts.⁷⁴ The assistance of Mūsā’s two brothers, Ishaq and ‘Alī, also seem to be noteworthy. Ishaq b. Ja‘far relates that al-Ṣadiq said that the next Imām was the owner of two yellow clothes and two locks of hair, a description which was just like the appearance of Musa when he later came into the room.⁷⁵ It can be suggested, too, that Muḥammad b. Nu‘mān al-Ahwal and Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, as two eminent Shi‘i scholars of Kufa, one of whom was from the elder and the other was from the younger generation of al-Ṣadiq’s circle, should have largely contributed to the propaganda activities carried out for Musa’s imāma as al-Nawbakhti records their names among the pioneers of the Musawid group.⁷⁶

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⁷⁰ See al-Ash‘ari, i, p. 29; al-Balkhi, p. 181; al-Shahristāni, p. 144; al-Maqrizi, ii, p. 351. For the two nūṣūs of the designation of Mūsā related by al-Mufaddal, see al-Kulayni, i, pp. 308-9, no: 4 and 8.

⁷¹ For his profile, see al-Kashshi, pp. 354-6; al-Najashi, p. 220; Ibn Dawūd, p. 274; al-Mamaqani, ii, biography no: 9541.

⁷² al-Kashshi, pp. 354-5.

⁷³ al-Kashshi, p. 356.

⁷⁴ al-Kulayni, i, p. 311.


⁷⁶ al-Nawbakhti, p. 66.
It is plausible to think that the activities of the House of Ja'far started to be watched by the 'Abbāsid government more carefully after al-Ṣādiq's death. It is understood from a tradition that in those days the Shi'i followers in Medina were very worried about the government spies; the leadership problem used to be discussed only among the well-known members of the community. It is reported that when the news of al-Ṣādiq's death reached al-Manṣūr, despite his sadness because of it, he immediately had a letter written to Medina commanding one of his spies to discover the identity of the new leader (the wasī or legatee) of Ja'far's party. It seems that Ja'far al-Ṣādiq had been aware of this dangerous situation and let it be known that he had appointed five successors: The caliph al-Manṣūr, Muḥammad b. Sulayman, 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far, Musa b. Ja'far and al-Ḥamida, his slave-wife. This naming of five successors, including the inclusion of a woman, would have created confusion for those who were anxious for hostile reasons to learn of al-Ṣādiq's successor. Although al-Manṣūr formerly had planned to execute al-Ṣādiq's successor, after taking this information he gave up his plan.

Because of this insecure situation, Musa b. Ja'far acted very prudently when he began the propaganda for his imāma. Shi'i had to swear firmly to keep secret what they heard from him before directing their questions about his leadership. His answers, even to the close companions of his father such as al-Ahwāl and Hisham b.

77 For example see al-Kulayni, i, p.351; al-Kashshi, pp.282-3; al-Irshad, p.441.

78 He was the governor of Kufa at that time, see al-Ṭabari, iii, pp.352-4, 359.

79 In another version, "the mawla of al-Ṣadiq" is counted instead of al-Ḥamida, see al-Kulayni, i, p.310, no: 14. In Iḥbat (p.207), the number of the appointed legatees are four: Al-Manṣūr, 'Abd Allah, Musa and Fatima, the daughter of al-Ṣadiq.

80 al-Kulayni, i, p.310, no: 13; al-Ghayba, p.119, Manaqib, iv, p.320.

81 see al-Kulayni, i, p.380.
Sālim, were full of implications of his dangerous situation. After replying to their questions he said, pointing to his neck: "If you spread it around, then slaughter will take place".\(^82\)


Mūsā b. Ja'far must have been very circumspect in his activities in the early years of his imāma since there is almost no information about any conflict between him and the government of al-Manṣūr who is known to have been an apprehensive, intolerant and violent ruler against opposing movements especially those of the members of the 'Alid family. In sharp contrast, a report shows that they were even on good terms. Ibn Shahrāshūb reports that al-Manṣūr invited Mūsā al-Kāzim to participate in the Nawrūz (Persian New Year's day) celebrations. Al-Kāzim did not approve of this celebration because of its non-Islamic origin. Al-Manṣūr told him that they arranged such celebrations only for reasons of expediency as a policy towards the Persian soldiers employed in the 'Abbāsid army and persuaded the Imām to participate in it. On this occasion, al-Kāzim received many gifts from guests.\(^83\) However, this report must be treated as suspect because it is the only report showing al-Kāzim, in the early years of his leadership, in Baghdad, which seems to have been the only place in which there was such a celebration. Its occurrence in Mecca or Medina seems to be unlikely and al-Manṣūr was never present in these cities between 148/765 and 158/775, the year in which Mūsā's imāma began and the year in which al-Manṣūr died.

\(^82\) al-Kulaynī, i. p.351; al-Kashshī, p.283; al-Irshād, pp.441-2.

In this period, the name of the 'Alid al-Hasan b. Zayd stands out, who is al-Hasan b. al-Hasan b. Zayd b. al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib. He was loyal to the 'Abbasids. Due to this fact, he was always regarded as a traitor among the Alid family. When al-Mansur investigated the hiding place of the rebel Muhammad b. Abd Allah al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, and questioned the members of the Banu Hashim about this, only al-Hasan b. Zayd responded to the caliph's demand and informed him of where Muhammad was in hiding. This favour and his loyalty did not remain unrequited. In 150/767 the governorship of Medina was granted to him. When the head of 'Abd Allah al-Ashtar, the son of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, was sent by al-Mansur to him, he went up onto the pulpit placing the head in front of him and said that God would continue to protect the caliph from anybody who committed outrage and took a different way from the way the caliph pointed out. However, al-Mansur's mind was different. He wanted a governor over Medina like al-Hajjaj who, according to al-Mansur, had never betrayed the caliphs who had entrusted him with power and he had served them very well. He probably saw al-Hasan as unreliable and passive, so he dismissed him from his post in 155/772 and confiscated his possessions. It seems that al-Hasan b. Zayd's appointment to Medina was a conciliatory gesture by the 'Abbasid

84 see al-Kamil, v, pp.390-1; Ibn Kathir, x, pp.81-2. Al-Hasan b. Zayd is also accused by the Imami tradition of setting fire to the house of Ja'far al-Sadiq at the order of al-Mansur (Maqatib, iv, p.236). As al-Hasan took the governorship in 150 H., some two years after al-Sadiq's death, this tradition might be treated as apocryphal. Nevertheless, he was not saved from being stamped in the rijal literature of the Imamiyya as "the weakest of the weak rawis in hadith" (al-Mamaqani, 1, biography no: 2448).

85 al-Tabari, iii, p.358; al-Kamil, v, p.454.

86 Maqatil, p.313.

87 Al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf al-Thaqafi (d. 95/714), the celebrated governor of Iraq for the 'Umayyads. He was called "al-Zalim" (the tyrant) because of his extraordinarily violent attitude against opposing movements.

88 al-Tabari, iii, pp.400-1.

89 al-Tabari, iii, pp.377, 454; al-Kamil, vi, p.4.
government towards the 'Alids after their difficult and grievous years following the rebellion of al-Naf's al-Zakiyya. Perhaps, Musa al-Kazim enjoyed this tolerant conduct of both al-Mansur and al-Hasan b. Zayd in the important early years of his imama.

Abu Ja'far al-Mansur died in 158/775. Muhammad b. Mansur inherited the caliphate as the legal successor of his father. Muhammad had been named al-Mahdi by his father. The latter probably had chosen this title in an effort to derive for his heir the support of those who sought the guide of a "divinely appointed" leader. He, thus, had attempted to use the Mahdism for dynastic interests.90

As well as the caliphate, al-Mahdi also inherited the violent policy carried out by his father against 'Alid elements. Al-Tabari narrates that when al-Mahdi ascended to the throne, the keys of the treasury and secret rooms were handed over to him. One of the keys was a key to a chamber which al-Mansur had instructed should not be opened until after his death. Al-Mahdi opened it and saw a dreadful scene of a collection of corpses belonging to the Talibis. Among them were also children and old men. There were pieces of paper in their ears on which their genealogies were written. Al-Mahdi ordered that a grave be dug and they were buried in it.91

Al-Mahdi does not seem to have acted in the same way as his father. Rather, he seems to have sought ways of reconciliation between the 'Alids and his government, especially in the first years of his rule. His era lasting some ten years reflected, as Mottahedeh observes, "an inevitable shift from the fervour of a revolution

90 It is reported in Maqatil that when al-Mansur heard that al-Naf's al-Zakiyya called himself al-Mahdi, he said: "The enemy of Allah has lied. He (al-Mahdi) is rather my son!" (Maqatil, p.240).

91 al-Tabari, iii, pp.445-6. T. Noldeke cannot bring himself to believe this dire story, see Sketches from Eastern History, p.123.
in which extravagant and ultimately unfulfillable hopes are raised, to a post
revolutionary situation in which an astute government seeks a moderate fulfilment of
some of these hopes in order to survive". 92

The most important of the first operations of al-Mahdi was a general amnesty
declared in 159/775-6. He released all the inmates who were imprisoned by al-Mansūr
except some who were accused of killing. This amnesty was also of use to political
prisoners, most of whom were the Talibis and their supporters. 93 He also returned
wealth confiscated by al-Mansūr to its owners. 94 He made his first visit to the Holy
Cities in the season of the pilgrimage in 160/777. On this occasion, he distributed a
great deal of money to the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina, which is said to have
amounted to 500,000 dinārs and thirty million dirhams. As well as money, 150,000 garments were also distributed. 95 This generosity shown towards the people
of Mecca and Medina, which was not repeated in other cities, should be viewed as part
of a deliberate policy to conciliate the rebellious attitude of these people who were
often dangerous subjects to the government with the mass support given to the 'Alid-
originated rebellions. One report shows that this bounty to the Talibis did not remain
limited to this occasion. They received a regular allowance during al-Mahdi's reign in
addition to other gifts which they occasionally received. 96 For instance, once al-
Ḥusayn b. 'Ali, who was the leader of the 'Alid rebellion in al-Fakhkh in 169/786,
went to Baghdad to request al-Mahdi to help him pay his debts. The caliph gave al-

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92 R. Mottahedeh, "The 'Abbāsid Caliphate in Iran", p. 66.
93 al-Tabari, iii. p. 461.
94 al-Tabari, iii. p. 454.
95 al-Tabari, iii. p. 483.
96 al-Ya'qūbi, iii. p. 142.
Husayn a great deal of money, much more than he needed. Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqa quotes the sum al-Ḥusayn received as 40,000 dinārs.

Al-Mahdi, when he stayed in Medina, continued to conciliate the people. He started works to extend the Mosque of the Prophet. He decided to reduce the height of the pulpit in the mosque and return it to its original state at the time of the Prophet, removing from it what Mu'āwiyah b. Abi Sufyān had added. However, this was not done for technical reasons. He also selected 500 Anṣār and brought them to Iraq to employ them as his personal guards. They were put on a salary and each given property (qatiʿa) around Baghdad. Al-Mahdi thus removed a considerable number of people from Medina where they were potential soldiers for a possible anti-government revolt and made them his own soldiers in the capital.

Ya'qūb b. Dāwūd should be mentioned in this regard as he represented in himself the policy of reconciliation carried out by al-Mahdi towards the 'Alid-Shi'i elements. Dawūd, the father of Ya'qūb, was an official of the Umayyad government in Khurāsān. Despite Ya'qūb's excellent education, Dawūd was not able to find him a government appointment. These circumstances drove them to the 'Alids. They joined the rebellion of the 'Alid Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd Allāh in 145 H. in Basra. Due to this involvement, Ya'qūb was imprisoned by al-Manṣūr. He was set free in the amnesty of al-Mahdi in 159/775-6. When al-Mahdi was looking for a man from the Zaydiyya who was able to give him information about some wanted 'Alid leaders.

99 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p. 483.
100 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p. 483.
101 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p. 507; al-Jahshīyārī, pp. 155-7; al-Kamil, vi, p. 46; Ibn Khaldūn, al-ʿIbar, iii, p. 447; Kennedy, p. 100.
Ya'qūb was introduced to him by the chamberlain al-Raḥi b. Ṭūnus. He gained the confidence of the caliph; he was named by the caliph ‘brother in God’ and then he was made vizier in 163/779-80. 102 He was himself a Zaydi and was reported to have used his position to provide his sectarians with many offices in the administration. Al-Mahdi suspected the possibility of danger from Ya’qūb’s activities. To test him, he handed over to him one of his men, and told him that he was an ‘Alid and that he should kill him. Ya’qūb set him free. Al-Mahdi then asked him about the ‘Alid. He said that he had killed him. However, the man was brought and shown to Ya’qūb. He was immediately put in prison. This occurred in 166/782-3. 103 As shall be seen, his release did not take place until the time of Ḥārūn al-Rašid. He also will be seen as one who was accused in some Imāmi traditions of betraying Mūsa al-Kāẓim to the authorities.

It seems that al-Mahdi, especially after the treachery of his vizier Ya’qūb b. Dāwūd, felt that he had over-indulged the ‘Alid-Shī’i elements and this tolerance might have endangered him and his reign. He also might have been anxious about the organised Shī’i-Zaydi structure in the governmental ranks formed by Ya’qūb b. Dāwūd. It could be suggested, too, that his tolerance remained unanswered. He saw that Shī’i components continued to see themselves as separate from the official structure and that no desired combination of the two could be set up between these opposing communities. The perceptible change in the policy of al-Mahdi from tolerance to harshness towards Shī’i elements in the last four years of his reign could be connected with these attitudes.


103 al-Ṭabarī, iii, pp.512-3; al-Jahshiyārī, pp.160-1. Ibn Kathīr, x, pp.147-8; al-Kamil, vi, pp.47-8; Ibn al-Tiqtaqa, pp.180-3. According to a report in Muruj, Ya’qūb b. Dāwūd was of the opinion that the eldest member of the ‘Abbasid family should become the caliph, which was why al-Mahdi imprisoned him, see Muruj, iii, p.312.
Al-Mahdi took his first step by changing the official 'Abbāsid propaganda that the right of the imāma which they deserved had come to them through the descendants of 'Āli b. Abī Ṭālib. According to the new claim, the testament of the imāma was handed over to al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, their forefather, by the Prophet himself. Therefore, the names of 'Āli b. Abī Ṭālib, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya and his son Abū Ḥāshim were taken out from the list of the 'Abbāsid imāms.104 No common name between them and the Shiʿis in the lists of the Imāms was left, so the 'Alid claim had no basis at all in the opinion of their view of their legitimate state, and any claim or activity which could be started on the basis of 'Āli b. Abī Ṭālib’s right to the imāma was totally illegitimate and should be obliterated.105

The year of 167/783-4 is recorded as the starting date of the harsh policy of al-Mahdi carried out against the Zindiqs (Zanādiqa).106 The term “Zindiq” was a vague term. In a strict sense, it referred to the members of dualist and Manichaean cults. However, nearly all the historians and researchers evidently agree that this term covered all those who disagreed with al-Mahdi’s policy. Al-Mahdi used it as a pretext to kill or intimidate his opponents. It is understood from different historical reports that many victims of this policy were good Muslims.107

104 Akhbār al-Dawlā, p.165; al-Nawbakhti, p.43; al-Qummi, p.65; al-Nāshi’, p.31.
105 When the testament of al-Qāsim b. Mujāshi’ al-Tamimī, one of the nuqāba (agents) of the 'Abbāsids in Khorāsān, was presented to al-Mahdi, he read it until he saw a statement in which 'Ali b. Abī Ṭālib was described as the heir of the Prophet. Then he threw the letter away and did not look at it again, see al-Tabari, iii, p.532.
Al-Suyūtī reports that 'al-Mahdī was the first who commanded the writing of polemical works in refutation of the Zindiqs and the heretics'.

We find its confirmation in an early work, the Rijāl of al-Kashšī. It is reported that, at the request of al-Mahdī, Ibn al-Muq'ād (or Ibn al-Mufaddal) wrote a book about sects. In the book, the author classified the sects under different titles. It included accounts about some of the foremost Imāmi Shi‘is. The Zurāriyya, the ‘Ammāriyya, the Ya‘fūriyya, the Jawāliqiyya and the group of Sulaymān al-Aqṭa were among the sects which were cited in the book. Afterwards, the book was read in public in the main cities including Medina.

As has been seen, all the groups al-Kashšī records are Shi‘i groups and it is likely that many of them were the supporters of Mūsā al-Kāzīm’s imāma. This means that al-Kāzīm’s party was one of the direct targets of the official persecution carried out against the Zanādiq. Due to this insecure situation, Mūsā al-Kāzīm warned

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108 al-Suyūtī, Tārīkh al-Khulafa’, p. 278.
109 It was attributed to Zurār b. A’yan. For him, see pp. 74-6 above.
110 It was attributed to the Fāṭhi leader ʿAmmār al-Sabīt. For him, see p. 76 above.
111 It was attributed to ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Ya‘fur. For him, see pp. 103-4 above and p. 400 below.
112 It was attributed to Hishām b. Sālim al-Jawāliqi. For him, see pp. 423-4 below.
113 He is Abu al-Rabi’ Sulaymān b. Khālid b. Dahqan b. Naṣīlta who was one of the learned disciples of al-Bāqir and al-Sādiq. He is recorded as the only person among the followers of al-Bāqir who took part in the revolt of Zayd b. ʿAlī in Kūf. In the revolt, he lost an arm, therefore he was nicknamed ‘al-Aqṭa’ (‘the one-armed’). He died in the time of al-Sādiq. Al-Sādiq is said to have felt deep grief due to his death. There is no information about his theological ideas as well as his group. For his profile, see al-Kashshī, pp. 356-61; al-Najashi, pp. 130-1; al-Mamāqani, ii, biography no: 5195.
some of his followers, especially those who were present in Kufa and Baghdad.\textsuperscript{115} He sent a letter to Hishám b. al-Ḥakam as well, whose name was not mentioned in the book by Ibn al-Muq'ad, and ordered him to avoid speaking out, reminding him of the dangerous situation. According to one narration, Hishám obeyed this order and did not say anything publicly about the party of al-Kāẓim or his own ideas.\textsuperscript{116} However, in another narration, Hishám was able to keep this command just for a month and then he started to speak out again. Therefore, al-Kāẓim had to send 'Abd al-Rahmān b. al-Hajjāj to him. Hishám defended himself saying that a man like himself should not have been banned from speech. 'Abd al-Rahmān told him, repeating the words of al-Kāẓim:

"O Hishám, (al-Kāẓim) has said to you: " - Do you find easy to share in the blood of a Muslim?" Hishám said: "No". ('Abd al-Rahmān continued to repeat): "How do you share in my blood! If you are not silent, then slaughter will take place!".

However, Hishám turned a deaf ear to all these warnings.\textsuperscript{117} Al-Kashshi quotes from Yūnus b. 'Abd al-Rahmān that this banning-order took place in the time of al-Mahdi.\textsuperscript{118} Therefore, it seems likely that the irresponsibility of Hishám b. al-Hakam brought about the first imprisonment of al-Kāẓim, which occurred in Baghdad in the time of al-Mahdi.

According to some traditions, al-Kāẓim had met al-Mahdi before the latter had him arrested. Once, in Mecca, probably in the season of the pilgrimage of 160/777 in which al-Mahdi distributed a great sum of money to the inhabitants of the city, Mūsā

\textsuperscript{115} For example, he sent a letter for this matter to Hishám b. Sālim, see al Kashshi, p.269.

\textsuperscript{116} al-Kashshi, p.266.

\textsuperscript{117} al-Kashshi, pp 270-1. For another version, see pp.278-9.

\textsuperscript{118} al-Kashshi, p.267
al-Kaẓīm was in the presence of the caliph. Mūsā b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan, the brother of Mūḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakkiyya, came and asked for a guarantee of protection. The caliph gave it to him. Mūsā b. ʿAbd Allāh introduced himself. Then he started to speak about al-Ṣādiq. He mentioned his prudence which had led him not to take part in any ʿAlid revolt, and his predictions concerning the results of the revolts which had happened exactly as he had said. He then indicated: al-Kaẓīm and said that he was the son of this man, al-Ṣādiq. Therefore, al-Mahdi ordered al-Kaẓīm to be given 5,000 dinārs. Al-Kaẓīm gave 2,000 dinārs of the gift to Mūsā b. ʿAbd Allāh.119

In another tradition of al-Kulaynī, al-Mahdi became very pleased with al-Kaẓīm’s answer to his question about the prohibition of drinking and said that this answer was a perfect “fatwā Hāshimiyya” (Hashimi legal opinion).120 As well as this conversation, al-Kaẓīm’s discussion with Abū Yusuf Yaʾqūb b. Ibrāhīm (d.182/798), one of the founders of the Ḥanafi law school, before the caliph al-Mahdi, also seems to have taken place in this pilgrimage season. The subject was whether a pilgrim could shade himself from the sun with something like umbrella. According to al-Kaẓīm, it was not permissible in terms of religion. Abū Yusuf asked what his opinion was about a pilgrim who pitched a tent and came in it. Al-Kaẓīm told him that it was permissible. Therefore, Abū Yusuf said that there was no difference between the two cases. However, al-Kaẓīm gave another example and asked: “What do you think about a woman who did not pray because of her menstruation? Does she compensate later for her prayers?” Abū Yusuf said “No”. Al-Kaẓīm asked again: “What about her fasts?” Abū Yusuf replied that she had to compensate for her fasts

119 For the whole tradition, see al-Kulaynī, i, pp.358-66.

and added that these rules were reported by religious texts (nuṣūṣ). Al-Kāzim said that his opinion about shade from the sun in the pilgrimage was also reported by nuṣūṣ and it was necessary to follow it.

Al-Kāzim's second meeting with al-Mahdi took place at least seven years later, but this time in a quite different way. He was arrested at the caliph's order and taken to Baghdad. Since this incident is supposed to have related to the persecution of the Zindiqs, the arrest probably occurred after 167/783-4. This detention of al-Kāzim seems to have been brief. According to al-Ṭabari, al-Mahdi, when he was performing prayer at night, read this verse of the Qur'ān: "Then it is to be expected of you, if you were put into authority, that you will do mischief in the land and break your ties of kith and kin" (al-Qur'ān, XLVII: 22). The meaning of the verse impressed him very much. He called his chamberlain, al-Rabi' b. Yunus, who was responsible for al-Kāzim, and asked him to release the Imam. According to another version of the narration, 'Ali b. Abi Ṭālib indicates this verse to al-Mahdi in his dream and scolds him for his ill-treatment of Mūsā al-Kāzim, which results in the Imam's release. Al-Mahdi made him promise that neither he nor any of his children would rise in rebellion against him, and sent him back to Medina, giving him 3,000 dinārs.

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121 According to Islamic law, such a woman would have to compensate for her obligatory fasts which she did not perform at their proper times due to her special condition. However, she does not have to compensate for the prayers which she did not perform for the same reason.

122 'Uyun, i, p. 64; al-Ṭabarisi, al-Iḥtijāj, p. 394. For another argument of al-Kazim over the same matter with Muhammad al-Shaybāni, see p. 148 below.

123 al-Ṭabarisi, iii, p. 533; al-Ḥatib, xiii, pp. 30-1; al-Kamil, vi, pp. 56-7.

The caliph al-Mahdi died on 22 Muḥarram, 169 / 4 August, 785. On the same day the oath of allegiance was given to his son, Muṣā al-Hādi, as the new caliph. The historian Ibn al-Tiqtaqa describes al-Hādi as a forceful, extremely violent and bold-hearted man. He continued his father's policy against the Zindiqs. According to al-Yaʿqūbi, he was especially insistent on the pursuit of the Taḥlibis. He cut their regular allowances which had been given by his father. Al-Yaʿqūbi indicates that this harsh policy ensured a suitable atmosphere for the ‘Alids to start a revolt against the ‘Abbāsid government.

The leader of the revolt was al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Ali, who was the grandson of al-Ḥasan b. ‘Ali b. Abī Taḥlib. He was also called Ṣāḥib al-Fakhkh (the commander of al-Fakhkh). According to al-Ṭabarānī, the main reason behind al-Ḥusayn’s revolt was that ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, the governor of Medina, arrested Abū al-Zift al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad, the son of al-Nafs al-Zakīyya, and a number of his friends, accusing them of organising a wine-drinking session. They were beaten as a punishment, and ropes were placed round their necks and then they were paraded around Medina. At this shameful event for the ‘Alid family, al-Ḥusayn went to the governor ‘Umar and demanded that he release them. The governor was eventually persuaded and he released them all. However, when he called them back for inquiry, they were not able to be found. Before their release, the governor had made al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Ali responsible for al-Ḥasan’s appearance, therefore he gave him a time to bring al-Ḥasan.

125 Ibn al-Tiqtaqa, p. 185.
126 see al-Ṭabarānī, iii, pp.548-50.
127 al-Yaʿqūbi, iii, p.142.
129 Al-Fakhkh is the name of the battle area where al-Ḥusayn fought and was killed, which was located between Mecca and Medina, six miles away from Mecca, see Muruj, iii, p.326; al-‘Ash‘ārī, i, p.80; Ibn al-Tiqtaqa, p.187
Al-Ḥusayn and the other members of the family did not know where al-Ḥasan was. As a result, the notables of the family gave to al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ali the oath of allegiance for a rebellion on the basis of the Qurʾān, the Sunna and "the one pleasing [to God] from the House of Muḥammad" ("al-Riḍā min Al Muḥammad").

The rebellion was first proclaimed in the Mosque of the Prophet. It is reported that because of some ignominious behaviour by the rebels like fouling the mosque, the people of Medina largely held back from giving them their support. However, according to al-Īṣfahānī, except for two men, all the members of the Ṭalibi family in Mecca and Medina supported the revolt of al-Ḥusayn. Al-Ḥasan b. Ja'far b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan, the cousin of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ali, requested his exemption from the revolt, but he never repudiated the cause of the revolt. The other man was Mūsā al-Kāzīm. The ṭāwī 'Unayza al-Qašbānī relates that he saw that Mūsā b. Ja'far went to al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ali in the night; he bowed before him like in the ruku and requested him to exempt him from the revolt. Al-Ḥusayn bowed his head in silence, stayed in this state for a long while, and then he raised his head and gave him permission.

In another narration in al-Kāfī, al-Ḥusayn invited al-Kāzīm to give the oath of allegiance. The conversation between them is the following:

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130 al-Ṭabari, iii, pp.552-3. Also see al-Kamil, vi, pp.60-1.

131 see al-Ṭabari, iii, p.556. It can also be suggested that, the dire memory of the previous 'Alid revolt in 145 H. had not been erased from the minds of the people yet, which was why they immediately came to their homes without performing prayer and locked their doors when they saw the rebels gathered in the mosque (see al-Ṭabari, iii, 554-5). In addition, as Kennedy says, the previous caliph al-Mahdi's generosity seems to have won the people of Medina over (Kennedy, p.206).

132 This gesture of al-Kāzīm seems to be only an expression of his veneration for a senior member of the family. I do not suppose that the branches of the Ṭalibi family, especially the Hasanis and the Husaynīs, agreed on any one leader at any time who represented the whole family or some branches together.

133 Maqātil, p 447.
"(al-Kâzim) said: " - O cousin, do not burden me with what your cousin (al-Nâfs al-Zâkiyya) burdened your uncle Abû ‘Abd Allâh (al-Sâdiq). What emerges from me about something which I do not like is like what emerged from Abû ‘Abd Allâh about something which he did not like". 134 Al-‘Ijbas said: " - I proposed a matter to you; if you want, you join in; if you dislike it, I do not impose it on you, (because) Allâh is the (only) one whose help is sought". He then took leave of him. Abû al-Hâsan Mûsâ b. Ja’far, while he was going out, said to him: " - O cousin, you will be killed by a severe blow. The people are extremely sinful; they expose their faith but they hide their polytheism. To Allâh we belong, and to Him is our return. I ask Allâh’s reward for your sacrifice out of our family relationship (‘aṣaba)". 135

This narration clearly shows al-Kâzim’s posture with regard to this rebellion. However, another report contradicts it. Al-Iṣfahâni relates on the authorities of al-‘Ijbas b. ‘Ali and Yahyâ b. ‘Abd Allâh, who was al-‘Ijbas’s right arm in the revolt, that they consulted the members of Ahl al-Bayt including al-Kâzim about the rebellion; the latter ordered them to rebel. 136 If this report is authentic, it is probable that it was rumoured by the leadership of the rebellion so that they gained the support of the partisans and sympathisers of al-Kâzim, because there is no evidence corroborating such support from the Imam.

Al-‘Ijbas b. ‘Ali departed to Mecca and stayed there preparing for his revolt until the pilgrimage season of the year 169/786. After the season, he and his troops met the ‘Abbâsid army in al-Fâkkh where a severe battle took place between the two sides. Finally, al-‘Ijbas was defeated. He and most of his followers were killed. His head was cut off and taken to al-Hâdi. His body was abandoned in the battle area. It is

134 Al-Kâzim means that his attitude against al-‘Ijbas’s revolt will be exactly the same as al-Sâdiq’s attitude against al-Nâfs al-Zâkiyya’s revolt. Al-Sâdiq, as is known, did not approve of that revolt and did not take part in it.

135 al-Kulaynî, i, p. 366.

136 Maqâtil, p. 475.

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reported that nobody dared to bury it, eventually beasts ate it. Before al-Husayn's head was dispatched to al-Hadi, it had been shown to a group of the Alids. Everybody was silent. Only Mūsā al-Kāzīm is reported to have said anything. After praising al-Husayn, he said that there was nobody in Ahl al-Bayt similar to him.

After the revolt had been suppressed, Mūsā b. 'Isā, the commander-in-chief of the 'Abbāsid army, stayed in Medina for some time. According to al-İṣfahānī, he forced the people of Medina to curse the family of Abū Tālib. There was no one in the city who did not carry out this order. Al-İṣfahānī reportedly adds that it was said that only Mūsā b. Ābd Allāh, the brother of al-Nafs al-Zākiyya, did not perform the order. On one occasion, Mūsā b. Ābd Allāh and al-Sāri b. Ābd Allāh met. Al-Sāri showed Mūsā al-Kāzīm as an exemplary 'Alid to Mūsā b. Ābd Allāh who represented in himself the rebellious side of the family. According to al-Sāri, al-Kāzīm

137 al-Tabari, iii, pp.551-60; Maqātil, pp.431-60; Murūj, iii, pp.326-7; al-Ya'qūbi, iii, p.142; al-Ash'arī, i, p.80; al-Kāmil, vi, pp.60-3; Ibn Kathir, x, p.157; Ibn al-Tiqqaqa, p.187.

138 Maqatil, p.453. In the works of some Imāmi authors, al-Husayn b. 'Āli is a likeable personality who is not described in the same way as other 'Alid rebels such as al-Nafs al-Zākiyya and Yahyā b. Ābd Allāh. According to Muḥsin al-Amin, al-Husayn never aspired to the post of the imāma or the caliphate. His summons was merely to the Book of God and the Sunna of the Prophet, which was an appropriate but untimely summons (see A'yan al-Shī'a, xxvi, p.404). Al-Mamaqānī regards him as a martyr and trustworthy (thīqa). He says that al-Husayn's revolt was like Zayd b. 'Āli's revolt, both of which were started after consultations with the Imams although the Imams knew that these uprisings would fail and not attain their objectives. However, sometimes it became necessary to remind people of real principles and justice on account of which it was worthy to be killed. Moreover, if they had succeeded, they would have handed over the right of the leadership to the Imams who were the real holders of this right. Al-Mamaqānī adds that the restraint of al-Kāzīm from supporting al-Husayn was for the reason of taqiyya. But al-Nafs al-Zākiyya's position was apparently different. When he attempted a revolt in 145 H., he yearned for the imāma to which he had no right at all (al-Mamaqānī, Tanqīh i. biography no: 2989).

139 Maqatil, p.454.

140 He is al-Sāri b. Ābd Allāh b. al-Harīth b. Ābd Allāh b. al-Ābdābī b. Ābd al-Muttalib. He was the governor of Mecca between 143/760-1 and 146/763-4. see al-Tabari, iii, p.328.
had never desired what he had no right for and as a result of this attitude he had remained safe, whereas "the infringement of it by other 'Alids had provided them with nothing except humiliation".\(^{141}\)

In spite of this esteem of al-Kāzīm in the eyes of the 'Abbāsids, he does not seem to have been left in peace by them. Probably following the revolt of al-Fakhrkh, al-Hādī intended to arrest al-Kāzīm, accusing him of encouraging al-Ḥusayn in revolt. In al-Majlīsī's report, the caliph was dissuaded by the judge Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb b. Ibrāhīm. Abū Yūsuf told al-Hādī that those who were involved in this revolt were the Zaydis; Mūsā b. Ja'far's well-known policy did not require such an uprising.\(^{142}\) According to Ibn Bābūya's narration, this intention of al-Hādī reached al-Kāzīm, probably through 'Alī b. Yaqūt, a secret Imāmī official in the court, who held the Khaṭīm (the seal ring, i.e. the authority of signet).\(^{143}\) Al-Kāzīm consulted his companions about the situation. They advised him to remove himself and hide. The Shi'i report maintains that al-Kāzīm was content only to curse al-Hādī. Immediately afterwards, the news of al-Hādī's death reached Medina.\(^{144}\)

Indeed, during al-Hādī's life the Imām was not arrested. Al-Hādī suddenly died on 15 Rabi' 1, 170 / 14 September, 786. His brother Harūn, nicknamed al-Rashīd, ascended to the throne. Al-Hīmyāri quotes a letter of condolence written by al-Kāzīm to al-Khayzūran, the mother of al-Hādī and al-Rashīd, which was dated 7 Rabi' II, 170 H.. In the letter, the Imām recommended her to be patient and emphasised the necessity of submission to the decree of God. He also congratulated

\(^{141}\) **Maqatil**, pp. 454-5.

\(^{142}\) al-Majlīsī, XLVIII, pp. 150-1.

\(^{143}\) For 'Alī b. Yaqūt, see pp. 385-90 below.

\(^{144}\) Ibn Bābūya, *Uyun*, i, pp. 64-6; *Amal*, pp. 336-7. The text of the curse was also narrated in the tradition.
her due to her son's ascendance to the throne and wished for a long life for the new caliph.\textsuperscript{145} It is probable that, when al-Kâzîm was detained in Baghdad in the time of al-Mahdî, he established relations with al-Khayzurîn, who was very powerful in the court due to her influence over al-Mahdî and al-Hâdî.\textsuperscript{146} Al-Kâzîm might wish to continue this relationship which might be useful for his interest in the coming years.\textsuperscript{147}

\textbf{V - The Era of al-Rashîd and the Arrest of al-Kâzîm}

\textbf{1 - First Years preceding the Revolt of Daylam}

The first five years of the reign of Hârûn al-Rashîd show some similarities to the first five years of his father al-Mahdî's reign. Like his father, al-Rashîd, as soon as he ascended to the throne, visited Mecca and Medina. He led the pilgrimage of the year 170/787. On this occasion, he granted numerous gifts and a huge sum of money to the inhabitants of the cities.\textsuperscript{148} Also on that journey, he dismissed ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzîz al-ʿUmarî from the governorship of Medina.\textsuperscript{149} The latter had caused the revolt of al-Fakhkh to break out because of his repressive policy against the ʿAlîds, and had been responsible for the demolition of their houses, the burning down of their palm groves

\textsuperscript{145} al-Ḥimyari, pp.306-8.

\textsuperscript{146} For her, see al-Ṭabarî, iii, pp.569-71, 578-80, 590-1, 604.

\textsuperscript{147} Al-Majlisi says after quoting the letter: "Look at the high degree of \textit{taqiyya} in his time, which even compelled him to write such a letter for the death of an unbeliever who did not believe in the Day of Reckoning. This (behaviour of the Imam) makes it possible for you to apply every aspect of \textit{taqiyya} [literally 'This opens for you every gate of \textit{taqiyya}']", see \textit{Bihar}, XI.VIII, p.135.

\textsuperscript{148} al-Ṭabarî, iii, p.605; al-Yaʿqûbî, iii, p.144.

\textsuperscript{149} al-Ṭabarî, iii, p.603.
and the confiscation of their properties.\textsuperscript{150} In this way, al-Rashid wanted to show, still at the beginning of his reign, his benevolence towards the 'Alids and aimed to make them forget the suffering which they had been exposed to after the rebellion of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ali. In the year 173/788-9, al-Rashid confiscated the valuable estates, which amounted to sixty million \textit{dirhams}, of Muḥammad b. Sulayman b. 'Ali after his death. He was one of the victorious commanders of al-Fakhkh.\textsuperscript{151} This probably gave the 'Alids further pleasure.

Meanwhile, al-Rashid took precautionary measures against any potential 'Alid threat which might have been perilous for his government. He ordered all the Talibis living in Baghdad to be expelled to Medina.\textsuperscript{152} It is obvious that an 'Alid rebellion in the capital, directed and supported by the residents of this city, would have seriously undermined the 'Abbasids. To put them altogether in Medina, which was always closely supervised, could be thought as an appropriate step against such a danger.

However, this moderate policy and the precautions that were taken did not prevent another 'Alid uprising. This time it occurred in a remote region of the empire. Yahyā b. ʿAbd Allāh, who was the half brother on his father's side to al-Nafs al-Zakiyya and the second man of the rebellion of al-Fakhkh, had managed to escape from al-Fakhkh.\textsuperscript{153} He reached Daylam\textsuperscript{154} where he started to preach his ideas. He

\textsuperscript{150} al-Ṭabari, iii, p. 563.

\textsuperscript{151} al-Ṭabari, iii, p. 607.

\textsuperscript{152} al-Ṭabarî, iii, p. 606; al-Kamil, vi, p. 79. Al-Laythi's statement that this was an amnesty for the Talibis in prison, which allowed them to return to their home city seems to be an error. Or he confused it with al-Mahdi's general amnesty which took place in 158/775 (see al-Laythi, \textit{Jihad al-Shiʿa}, p. 280).

\textsuperscript{153} al-Ṭabari, iii, p. 562.

\textsuperscript{154} The mountain region of the western part of the Lāburz mountains in Iran.
gained considerable support and finally proclaimed his rebellion against the
government in 176/792.155

2 - Al-Kāzim Disapproves of the Revolt of Daylam

The actual supporters of Yahyā b. 'Abd Allāh were the local Shi'is of Daylam
and provincial capitals other than the leading figures of the Ta'libis of Hijaz and Iraq.
But, of course, he had to win the support of the latter. He probably wrote a number of
letters and sent them to some 'Alid leaders to ask their assistance. He sent a letter to
Mūsā al-Kāzim too. According to a tradition in al-Kāfī, Yahyā asked him to give him
the oath of allegiance. However, al-Kāzim's answer was in the negative. Therefore,
Yahyā wrote back a letter in which he accused the Imām of hampering people's
inclination towards his movement. He said:

"... I consulted about the appeal to "al-Ridā min Al Muḥammad" ("the one pleasing [to God] from the Family of
Muḥammad"). (However), you have withdrawn (from this
consultation or giving the oath of allegiance) like your father had
withdrawn before you. Once you alleged what you had no right to
and you spread your expectations beyond what Allāh did not allow,
so you have been seduced (by this attitude) and overcome by it. I
threaten you with what Allāh has threatened you Himself".

Al-Kāzim wrote a letter in reply. In the letter, he reprimanded Yahyā for his
claims about him and forewarned him about the possible dangers of his rebellion:

"... To continue: I threaten you and myself with Allāh. I also remind
you of His grievous punishment, rigorous penalty and complete
vengeance, and recommend you and myself to fear Allāh because
(this recommendation) is the beauty of the words and the
confirmation of (Allah's) grace. Your letter has reached me. You have
mentioned in it some claims about me and my father before me even
though you did not hear these from me. The statements (of those who
make a claim) will be recorded and they will be called to account
(referring to al-Qur'ān, XI.111 : 19). Desire for the world and

155 see al-Tabari, iii, p.613.
wishes for it do not provide for its inhabitants anything in favour of their hereafter. In contrast, (this desire) spoils their desires for the hereafter in this world. You have mentioned that I obstructed people's inclination towards you by virtue of my desire for your position. If I had a desire for it, what would have driven me to be involved in your situation would have been lack of knowledge of the Sunna and the paucity of insight with proof. However, Allah, the Blessed and the Exalted, has created people by mingling sperm (amshāj) through wonders (ghara'ib) and with instinctive natures (ghara'īz). Tell me about these two words: I ask you what is al-‘atraf in your body and what is al-ṣahlaj in the human being? Then write me about them. I am senior to you, so I caution you against disobeying the caliph, and urge you to be dutiful towards him and obedient to him. I also urge you to seek a safe-conduct for yourself before nails take hold of you. You will be choked from all sides, so you will want to find rest from all directions, but you will get none. Eventually, Allah will grant to you His favour, grace and the friendliness of the caliph - may Allah make it stay -, therefore he will safeguard you, spare you and protect in yourself the kinship of the Apostle of Allah. Peace be upon those who obey the right guidance. It was revealed to us that the punishment is upon those who have disbelieved and turned away”.

It is reported that Hārūn al-Rashid came across this letter; he read it and said that Musa al-Kāżim was completely innocent of all the accusations which were made by some informers. It is more than probable that some parts of this letter were produced later because of the fact that the predictions of al-Kāżim about Yahya’s rebellion and its result happened in exactly the same way as he had described in the letter. Nevertheless, whether this assumption was a fact or not, it was almost certain that the Imāmis were quite happy in the foresight of their Imam who, by not taking part in the ill-planned and untimely rebellions of the ‘Alids, had protected himself and his followers from the disastrous consequences of the rebellions.

156 It probably refers to al-Qur‘an, LXXVI : 2: “We created man from a drop of mingled sperm”.

157 These two words, as the editor of al-Kafi says, seem to be unknown names of some organs, secretions or spiritual elements in a human body. Al-Kazim through asking Yahya these questions, probably wanted to show his own knowledge as well as to reveal Yahya’s ignorance.

158 al-Kulaymi, i, pp.366-7.
Hārūn al-Rashīd sent al-Faḍl b. Yahyā al-Barmāki with 50,000 men against Yahyā b. 'Abd Allāh. Al-Faḍl communicated with him, offering him kindness and threats. This worked and Yahyā asked a safe-conduct. Al-Rashīd agreed to that and had him brought to Baghdad. He installed him in a fine house and ordered him to be given a large sum of money. Then he suspected Yahyā of continuing his suspicious relationship with the 'Alīds and put him in prison. Yahyā died there and there was a suspicion that he had been murdered at the order of the caliph.\textsuperscript{159}

3 - The Confinement of al-Kāẓim

3.1 - Different Accounts about the Cause of the Confinement

The date of Mūsā al-Kāẓim's arrest is most commonly given as 179/795.\textsuperscript{160} It seems that his non-interventionism with regard to the two 'Alīd rebellions which took place in 169/785 and 176/792, and the discreet policy which he carried out in the activities of his party protected him from being disturbed until the end of 170s. The Shi‘ī sources give detailed reports about the background of al-Kāẓim's imprisonment, but they are different. Each story might be one part of the chain of the events which brought about this result. The reports and some comments on them are presented as follows, being classified according to the people who are concerned in the episode. As shall be seen, the first three reports clearly indicate that the Imam’s imprisonment was a result of the vizier Yahyā b. Khālid al-Barmāki’s intrigues and denunciations rather than the caliph's own investigation and decision.

\textsuperscript{159} see al-Ṭabari, iii, pp.613-24; Maqātil, pp.463-86; al-Ya ṣūbī, iii, p.145; Ibn Kathir, x, pp.167-8; Ibn al-Tiqāqa, pp. 190-1.

\textsuperscript{160} al-Kulaynī, i, p.476; al-Nawbakhtī, p.71; al-Qumī, p 93; 'Uyūn, i, p.85; al-Khāṭīb, xiii, p 27; al-Ḳāmīl, vi, p.112; Ibn al-Jawzi, al-Munṭazam, ix, p.88; al-Irblī, Khulāṣa, p.136; al-Majīṣī, XLVIII, p.207.
3.1.1 - The Jealousy between Yahyā al-Barmaki and Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. al-Ash'ath

When Harūn al-Rashid put his son, Muḥammad, who was the future caliph al-Amin, in the care of Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. al-Ash'ath, who was probably the commander of the caliphal guard (ḥarās) in Baghdad at that time 161, Yahyā b. Khālid was jealous of that, because he feared that if Muḥammad became caliph, the privileged position of himself and his children at the court might have been endangered. He established close relations with Ja'far. This friendship led Yahyā to know of Ja'far's inclination towards Shi'ā. Yahyā also pretended to belong to the same Shi'i group in order to gain his confidence. Consequently, Ja'far b. Muḥammad did not see any danger in revealing his secret connection with Mūsā al-Kāzīm. Afterwards, as a part of his plan, Yahyā b. Khālid praised Ja'far in front of the caliph and spoke about his virtues. Therefore, al-Rashid granted him 20,000 dinārs. Some days later, the vizier Yahyā disclosed to al-Rashid the secret connection between Ja'far and al-Kāzīm. He maintained that Ja'far always sent some part of his possessions to his Imām and presumably he did the same with the 20,000 dinārs. Al-Rashid became very angry; he called Ja'far and questioned him about this accusation. He also asked him about the money which he had granted him. However, Ja'far had all the money brought and showed it to the caliph. Al-Rashid was satisfied. As a result, Yahyā b. Khālid's plan failed. 162

Al-Jahshiyārī gives some information about Yahyā b. Khālid which seems to support some of this Shi'i narration. According to al-Jahshiyārī, Yahyā always used to

161 Khallīfah, ii, p.502; al Ya'qūbi, iii, p.166; Crone, Slaves, p.185. For him, also see pp.390-1 below.

162 Uyun, i, pp.57-9; al-Irshad, pp.451-2; al-Ilīlī, al-Mustajad, pp.190-1. As brief, see Maqatīl, pp.500-1.
say that he did not enjoy the world because of three men, one of whom was Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. al-Ash'ath. He also reports that Muḥammad al-Amin, at first, was in the care of Ja'far, but afterwards, al-Rashid put him in the care of al-Fadl b. Yaḥyā al-Barmaki. This led to Yaḥyā's second machination, which will be mentioned: it was successful and he managed to obtain charge of the care of al-Amin for his son, al-Fadl.

3.1.2 - The Denunciations of the Sons of Isma'īl b. Ja'far

According to the continuation of this narration, Yaḥyā b. Khalid sought out a member of the 'Alid family to get information about the financial network of al-Kāẓim's party. He reportedly wanted to find an 'Alid who was not in comfortable circumstances and also had desire for worldly things. Yaḥyā b. Abi Maryam, who was al-Rashid's close companion, indicated to him 'Ali b. Isma'īl b. Ja'far, al-Kāẓim's nephew.

The Shi'i sources reports that al-Kāẓim was friendly with 'Ali b. Isma'īl. He used to trust him and tell him some of his secrets. Yaḥyā b. Khalid sent to 'Ali requesting him to visit al-Rashid. He also sent some gifts. 'Ali accepted this offer and started preparing for his journey. Al-Kāẓim knew of 'Ali's intention and realised that there might some dangerous consequences from this journey for himself. He called him and asked him why he was going. 'Ali b. Isma'īl told him that he was poor and in debt. Although al-Kāẓim guaranteed that he could pay his debt, he was not able to persuade him not to go to Baghdad. Al-Kāẓim could do nothing but warn him not to

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164 al-Jahshiyan, p. 193. Ibn A'tham (d. 314/926) also records that al-Amin was in the care of al-Fadl b. Yaḥyā (Kitab al-Futuh, viii, p. 270).
165 For him, see al-Tahān, iii, pp. 743-4.
bring about his and his children's death by giving information concerning his affairs. Al-Kāzīm also ordered him to be given 300 dinārs and 4,000 dirhams.

‘Ali b. Ismā‘īl went to Baghdad. Firstly he met with Yahya b. Khālid and gave him some news about his uncle. The vizier conveyed this information to al-Rashīd, adding some additional material to it. Immediately afterwards ‘Ali was taken into the caliph’s presence. There ‘Ali spoke of al-Kāzīm’s financial activities. He said that al-Kāzīm was receiving money from all corners of the earth and he had recently bought an estate called al-Busriyya for 30,000 dinārs. Al-Rashīd, after hearing that, ordered ‘Ali to be given 200,000 dirhams and granted him a living in whatever area he chose. However, ‘Ali fell seriously ill. Although the money was brought to him, he did not accept it. According to the narration, he did penance for his denunciation and he was not able to enjoy his new possessions.

Al-Kulaynī and al-Kashshi give the name of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl, the seventh Imām of the Ismā‘iliyya, in place of ‘Ali b. Ismā‘īl’s name as the informer in another tradition. The two stories except for some unimportant details are approximately the same. It seems possible that these two narrations may be merged in another narration related by Ibn Babūya. According to it, when al-Kāzīm knew that ‘Ali was going to Baghdad in the company of al-Rashīd, he tried to persuade him not to, but he failed. So he sent the above-recorded amount of money to ‘Ali b. Ismā‘īl.

166 The other variants: al-Bishriyya, al-Yasiriyya, al-Yasira, al-Taysiriyya. Al-Kazīm then granted this estate to his son Ahmad, see al-Irshād, p.459; al-Ṭabarṣī, I‘lam, p.301; Ibn al-Sabbāgh, pp.224, 228.

167 Maqatīl, pp.501-2; al-Irshād, pp.452-3; ‘Uyun, i, p.59; al-Rawandi, ii, p.945; al-Hilī, al-Mustajad, pp.190-3. Ibn al-Tīqṭāqī also mentions this event, but he did not give the name of the informer. He says that the informer was one of the relatives of al-Kazīm who was jealous of him. He told al-Rashīd that al-Kazīm intended to revolt against the government, see al-Fakhirī, pp.192-3.

with Muhammad b. Ismā'il. 169 It seems that Muhammad went to Baghdad with 'Ali as well or some time later he went and, according to the narration, he said to al-Rashid: "I did not suppose that there could be two caliphs in the world until I saw my uncle Musā b. Ja'far". 170

There is a hint which might give the correct date of this episode. It is stated that the pilgrimage season in which this episode occurred was al-Rashid's last pilgrimage before his pilgrimage in 179/796 in which al-Kāzim's arrest took place. 171 Therefore, if this account is true, this date would be 177/794. 172

Some attempt must be made to analyse the authenticity of these narrations. It is clear that the narrations intend to blacken the two sons of Ismā'il b. Ja'far. For that reason, some modern authorities conclude that they were the products of the hostility of the Twelver Shi'a against the Ismā'iliyya and have nothing to do with the history. 173 In some Ismā'ili sources, the date of the departure of Muhammad and 'Ali from Medina is much later than is stated in these Imāmi narrations. 174 However, these Ismā'ili reports are probably unreliable because they are largely coloured by legends.

169 'Uyun, i, pp.59-60.

170 al-Kulayni, i, p.486; al-Kashshi, p.265. In a similar narration in 'Uyun, it is Muhammad b. Ja'far, the brother of al-Kāzim, who said these words to al-Rashid. He said: "I did not suppose that there could be two caliphs in the world until I saw my brother Musā b. Ja'far", see 'Uyun, i, p.60, no: 2. Al-Irbili (Kasfb, iii, p.42) also records the name of Muhammad b. Ja'far besides Muhammad b. Ismā'il as the one who betrayed al-Kāzim to al-Rashid.

171 'Uyun, i, p.59.

172 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.629; al-Ya'qubi, iii, p.167.


174 According to Idnīs, Muhammad left Medina after al-Kāzim's death, see 'Uyun al-Akhbar, p.152. 'A. Tamīr's record shows the date as 159 H. See Tarikh, i, p.118.

132
Ismaili sources show different locations as the place of the death of Muhammad b. Isma'il. But, Imami sources report that the graves of Muhammad and 'Ali were in Baghdad, substantiating the above-mentioned Imami narrations. As has been seen, there is no reliable evidence which proves whether these traditions are true or false. Perhaps what should be done is to leave them as they are without building any conclusion from them. To reject their authenticity in advance by virtue of the biased features in them does not also seem to be the most acceptable method, for it seems that, especially after Musa al-Kazim had taken over the leadership of the party, the relationship between him and his cousins became very tense. This fact with some other factors such as poverty, as is stated in the narration, might drive one of or both of the brothers to commit such an act.

175 Idris says that Muhammad b. Isma'il died in Farghana ('Uyun al-Akhbar, p. 365). According to Ivanow and Daftary, the place of his death was probably Southern Persia (Ivanow, "Ismailis and Qarmatians", pp. 62-3; Daftary, The Isma'ilis, p. 103; idem, "The Earliest Isma'ilis", p. 227). Ivanow also quotes from an Isma'ili book, Dastur al-Munajjimin, that the Imam Muhammad was buried in Navsari, North of Bombay ("Ismailis and Qarmatians", p. 61). Syria is also given as another place where the Imam died (Tamir, i, p. 119; M. Ghalib, "Introduction" to Idris's 'Uyun al-Akhbar, p. 10). Rashid al-Din mentions little about 'Ali b. Isma'il. He says that 'Ali set forth from Medina for Syria where he died and descendants of some of his kinsmen still lived there (Rashid al-Din, p. 522).

176 al-'Umar, pp. 99-100; Ibn 'Inaba, p. 264. In the appendix of the volume 48 of al-Majli's Bihar, the Imam author Ja'far Al Bahr al-'Ulum mentions in his Tuhfat al-`Alim fi Sharh Khubat al-Ma'alam two graves in Baghdad. One of them belongs to 'Ali b. Isma'il, which was known by the people of Baghdad as the grave of al-Sayyid Sultan 'Ali. The other graves belongs to Muhammad b. Isma'il. The district in which this grave was located was called Mahallat al-Fadl (the quarter of the Eminent), see Bihar, XLVIII, p. 295.

177 Although there is no definite statement in the narrations that 'Ali b. Isma'il or Muhammad b. Isma'il died in Baghdad after their acts of betrayal, some words could indicate this. For example, in the narration of Maqatiil (p. 502), it is said that 'Ali was in the throes of death (yanzi 'u) when the granted money was brought to him. In the narrations of al-Kulayni (v. 1, p. 486) and al-Kashshi (p. 265), Muhammad catches diphtheria or angina (dhubha) from which he became seriously ill.

178 see pp. 63-4 above
3.1.3 - The Role of Hishām b. al-Ḥakam:

Further information concerning the cause of al-Kāzīm's arrest is related to Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, the celebrated Imāmi theologian. The content of the report has it that Yahyā b. Khālid al-Barmaki denounced Hishām to al-Rashid due to his opinions about the imāma and, consequently, al-Kāzīm was arrested because of his connection with Hishām. It has been mentioned that at the time of al-Mahdi, al-Kāzīm had banned some of his companions, including Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, from speaking openly in order to escape from the official persecution carried out against so-called heretical groups. But, Hishām did not seem to follow this ban scrupulously.

Al-Mas'ūdi tells of symposia arranged by the vizier Yahyā al-Barmaki. In these symposia, various theological issues were discussed. He also gives the names of two Imāmi theologians, 'Alī b. Maytham and Hishām b. al-Ḥakam. Al-Mas'ūdi's description shows that these men were on friendly relationship with the vizier.

Two different narrations show how the incidents developed. The first narration is related by al-Kashshi on the authority of Yūnus b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, who was among the audience of the symposium. It is reported that once Hishām had made a speech before al-Rashid about the heritage (irth) of the Prophet and al-Rashid had

179 For him, see pp.415-22 below.
180 al-Kashshi, pp.258-62.
181 see p.116 above.
182 "Haytham" in the text should be "Maytham". For 'Alī b. Maytham, see pp.424-6 below.
183 see Muruj, iii. pp.370-1.
184 Yūnus's cousin, Salim, was the president of Bayt al-Hikma (the House of Wisdom), an academy where these symposia probably took place (see al-Kashshi, p.266).
been very pleased with this. However, the caliph's inclination towards Hisham disturbed the vizier Yahyā. The latter, who knew of Hishām's ideas, told al-Rashid one of Hishām's opinions that the existence of a divinely appointed Imam was necessary and obedience to him was obligatory, but this Imam was not the caliph. Al-Rashid decided to listen to a debate in which Hishām participated, but he hid behind a curtain. Among the participants were the great Mu'tazili thinker Dirār b. 'Amr, the 'Ibādi leader 'Abd Allāh b. Yazid and the foremost Zaydi Sulaymān b. Jarir. The latter, who was the founder of the Sulaymāniyya branch of the Zaydiyya, pressed the point of the necessity of obedience to an Imam. Some of his deliberate questions such as whether it was obligatory to obey an Imam who ordered men to rise in arms put Hishām under stress. Although Hishām tried to escape from such questions with evasive answers, these were enough to exasperate al-Rashid. After the symposium, the caliph ordered his vizier to start a prosecution against Hishām and those who were in contact with him. Yunus says that this episode was one of the reasons which brought about the arrest of al-Ka'īm.

Ibn Bābūya's long narration also seems to relate to this subject. In it, those who trapped Hishām were the Mu'tazili scholars. Yahyā al-Barmaki, as the organiser, explained to al-Rashid that the purpose of such symposia was to get information about the ideas of different sects and groups. Al-Rashid watched the symposium in secret. The Mu'tazili scholars, before the symposium, decided among themselves to discuss with Hishām only the subject of the imāma, because they knew Hishām's opinion about the matter as well as that of al-Rashid and they wanted to trap

185 see al-Nawbakht, pp. 9, 55-7; al-Shahrastāni, pp. 136-7.

186 al-Kashshāl, pp. 258-62. Also see pp. 266-7.

187 The names of these scholars are not given in the narration. Nevertheless, some records from al-Ma'sūdi give some Mu'tazili names with whom Hisham frequently debated. They are Abu al-Hudhayf, al-Nazzam, Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir and Thumamah b. Ashrath, see Muruj, III, p. 371.
him in this way. At first Hisham did not want to enter into this subject. But, after some argumentation, he could not hold himself back. He started to mention the outstanding merits of a real Imam. The Mu'tazilis asked who this Imam was. Hisham prevaricated that the Imam was "the owner of the palace of the commander of the faithful". In secret, al-Rashid asked Ja'far b. Yahya al-Barmaki, who was also with him behind the curtain, who Hisham meant. Ja'far answered that he meant Mūsā al-Kāẓīm. However, Hisham recognised the dangerous situation. He pretended to go to the toilet and fled immediately.\(^{188}\)

The fact that at a meeting 'Ali al-Ridā sought for God's forgiveness for Hishām, after the latter's death, because of his above-mentioned role \(^{189}\) could show that this great theologian continued to be blamed because of his unfortunate part in the death of al-Kāẓīm, which had not been deliberate.

### 3.1.4 - The Role of Ya'qūb b. Dāwūd:

Another Shi'i report accuses Ya'qūb b. Dāwūd of denouncing the Imam to the authorities. After his vizirate, Ya'qūb had been put in prison by al-Mahdi because of his inclination towards Shi'ism which had been so strong that it had made him betray the caliph.\(^{190}\) He stayed in prison until 175/791-2.\(^{191}\) When he was released, he was a blind man. He went to Mecca where he died in 187/803.\(^{192}\)

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\(^{188}\) Ibn Babuya, Kamal, ii, pp. 31-40.

\(^{189}\) al-Kashshi, p. 278.

\(^{190}\) See p. 113 above.


\(^{192}\) al-Ta'bari, iii, p. 688; al-Jahshiyan, p. 162. Ibn al-Tiqtaqa gives the date of Ya'qūb's death as 186/802 (al-Fakhri, p. 183), whereas al-Irbili gives it as 182/798 (Khulasā, p. 133).
Ibn Bābūya states that one of the informers against al-Kāzīm was Ya‘qūb b. Dāwūd, neither giving any evidence nor dating.\footnote{‘Uyun, i, p. 60, no: 2} It is impossible that this affair could have occurred while Ya‘qūb was in prison between 166/782-3 and 175/791-2. After his release, its occurrence seems to have been unlikely again, because he was now a broken and feeble man who had cut off all his relationship with the authorities. Furthermore, he converted to the Imāmiyya some years after his release and the Imāmi traditionists began to relate hadith from him.\footnote{See ‘Uyun, i, p. 60, no: 3.} The possibility that this denunciation took place during al-Ya‘qūb’s vizirate period between 163/779-80 and 166/782-3 is unlikely too. We know that he spent his time during his vizirate on helping the ‘Alids which cost him a nine years of suffering in prison. Therefore this character of his does not seem to indicate a man who would betray Mūsā al-Kāzīm.

3.2 - Shi‘i-originated Activities and the Counter-moves of the ‘Abbasid Government

Whatever the reason for the arrest of al-Kāzīm, it is worth stressing that some disturbing developments caused by some members of the ‘Alid family had started to make the ‘Abbasid regime feel anxiety before this arrest. Three years before the arrest of al-Kāzīm, in 176/792, al-Rashid only put down a dangerous revolt led by Yaḥya b. ‘Abd Allāh in Daylam with difficulty. On the other hand, Yaḥya’s brother, Idrīs b. ‘Abd Allāh, who had escaped from the combat of al-Fakhkh with Yaḥya, went towards the West and reached Morocco with the help of some Shi‘is who were government officials, such as Waḍīḥ (or Waḍḍāḥ), who was a mawlā of al-Manṣūr...
and was in charge of the postal system (*barid*) of Egypt at that time.\textsuperscript{195} Idris established a Shi'i state, which was called the Idrisid Dynasty of Sharifs, in Morocco in 172/788.\textsuperscript{196} He died in 175/791. There was a suspicion that he was poisoned by his physician al-Shammâkh, who was claimed to have been sent by al-Rashid for this purpose. Also Wâdîh was beheaded and then gibbeted because of his part in the escape of Idris.\textsuperscript{197}

When these events happened, al-Rashid showed his determination not to allow any further 'Alid-originated disorders by appointing iron-fisted governors over Medina which was the stronghold of the 'Alid opposition. They seem to have been carefully chosen for this job. The governor 'Abd Allah b. Muṣ'ab was a descendant of al-Zubayr b. 'Awwām, one of the close companions of the Prophet. There was an ancient hostility between the 'Alid and the Zubayri families which dated back at least to the time of the Battle of the Camel in which 'Ali b. Abi Ṭālib's troops had killed al-Zubayr. After 'Abd Allah b. Muṣ'ab, his son Bakkâr became the governor of Medina.\textsuperscript{198} Al-Ṭabarî describes him as a man with a violent hatred for the 'Alids. He used to send reports to the caliph about them and give the worst possible interpretation of their doings.\textsuperscript{199} Al-Iṣfahānī gives the names of two Ṭalibis who were killed at the hands of Bakkâr. He put Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. 'Abd Allâh \textsuperscript{200} in jail where he

\textsuperscript{195} al-Ṭabarî, iii, p.561; Maqātil, pp.487-91; al-Ya'qūbi, iii, p.123; al-Kamil, vi, p.63.
\textsuperscript{196} al-Ṭabarî, iii, pp.560-1.
\textsuperscript{197} al-Ṭabarî, iii, p.561; al-Ya'qūbi, iii, p.142; al-Kamil, vi, p.63.
\textsuperscript{198} al-Ṭabarî, iii, p.739.
\textsuperscript{199} al-Ṭabarî, iii, p.616.
\textsuperscript{200} He is the son of Yaḥyā b. 'Abd Allâh, the rebel of Daylam.
Another man, al-Husayn b. 'Abd Allah, was arrested by Bakkar in Medina and then received a very violent flogging from which he died.

In Baghdad, the opposition to the 'Abbasids by the Shi'is seems to have been more at a scholarly dimension. Therefore, it was different in nature from other continuing Shi'i movements in other regions of the state which were much more involved in military activities. Among the intelligentsia of the capital, the activities of some Imāmi scholars were outstanding. For instance, Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and 'Ali b. Maytham were among the regular participants of the symposia arranged by the vizier Yahyā al-Barmaki. Although they seem to have been in a good relationship with the royal court, in fact, the vizier at first and those around him were probably uneasy at their connections and activities. These Shi'i doctors wrote books about the matter of the imama. For example, Hishām wrote a "Refutation of those who Accepted the Imama of the Inferior (man qāla bi imāma al-mafdūl)". Another of his books was "The Book of the Testament (al-wasiyya) and the Refutation of those who Reject it ". Although we do not know whether these no longer extant books declared that al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāzim were the rightful rulers of the Islamic world as a part of the series of Imāms which began with 'Ali b. Abi Ṭalib, it seems to be that these books were characterised by significant opposition to the legality of the 'Abbasid regime. The legitimacy of the imama of the inferior, which was rejected by Hisham's work, could justify the legitimacy of the 'Abbāsid caliphate, because the caliphs deserved to carry on ruling despite the fact that there might have been someone who was more excellent (afdal) than them, therefore more appropriate to rule.

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201 Maqatil, pp.495-6.
202 He is al-Husayn b. 'Abd Allah b. Isma'il b. 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far b. Abi Ṭalib.
203 Maqatil, p.497.
Hisham b. al-Ḥakam's second book also might be another criticism. It might have criticised the theory which was put forward by the 'Abbasids that Abū Ḥāshim, the son of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya, had designated one member of the 'Abbasid family as his successor or he had appointed him through a testament and this line of Imāms that passed from father to son continued until the caliph al-Mahdi's time including the first two 'Abbasid caliphs. Al-Mahdi reconstructed this theory that this line did not come through 'Ali b. Abī Ṭālib's descendants, but through those of al-'Abbas b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. On the other hand, the insistence on "the testament" and "the designation" means that authority can only be conferred by someone who already has authority and the way of appointment of an Imām must be designation by his predecessor. Therefore, the authority cannot be taken from below such as human electors and the act of allegiance of ordinary people.

As well as Hisham, 'Ali b. Maytham also used to participate frequently in such discussions on several subjects including the imāma. He is described as "the first who theologised about the doctrine of the imāma". He wrote "The Book of the Entitlement" ("Kitāb al-Istīḥqaq"). This work probably considered the subject of who was more deserving of the leadership of the Muslim community.

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205 see p. 114 above.

206 Abu 'Ali al-Sakkāk (or al-Shakkāl), the pupil of Hishām, wrote another book entitled "The Book Against One who Rejects the Necessity of the Imāma through Designation (nass)". see Ibn al-Nadim, p. 176.

207 For a more elaborate examination of the wāsiyya doctrine of Hisham and his friends, the effect of the doctrine in Islamic thought and politics. see Watt, Formative Period, pp. 159-60; idem. "Early Stages", pp. 24-5.

208 Ibn al-Nadim, p. 175; al-'Ṭusi, Fihrist, p 212.
Although these figures were on friendly terms with the vizier and they might not have had any idea of overthrowing the 'Abbāsid dynasty and replacing it with an 'Alid one as Watt says, it does not mean that, as has been seen, they were not serious critics of the regime. The above-mentioned books alone seem to be serious criticisms of the regime. Hishām’s insistent reluctance to enter into the subject of the imāma in the discussions may show his anxiety about consequences which might have put him in jeopardy. From several reports it can be clearly seen that something began to rouse the suspicions of the ruling institution preceding the arrest of al-Kāẓim. Especially after the imprisonment of the latter, conditions became worse for the Shi‘i community. Hishām b. al-Ḥakam had to escape to Kufa where he died in hiding. Then his corpse was displayed and his death was proclaimed in order to stop the official pursuit.

Al-Kashshi gives an undated report that ‘Alī b. Maytham was in prison with another eminent Imāmi, Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Nawfali. It could be the case from the content of this narration that this took place before the escape of Hisham. Another Imāmi scholar, Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Umayr, was also put in prison by al-Rashid. It is reported that the government wanted him to reveal the names and the locations of al-Kāẓim’s followers in Iraq. According to another report, al-Rashid tried to force him to accept the office of judge, but he refused. Therefore, he was violently tortured. His cell-mate in prison was another familiar name, Muḥammad b. Yunus, the son of the Imāmi theologian Yūnus b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān, but why he was in jail is not

209 Watt, Formative Period, p. 159.

210 For example, see Ibn Babuya, Kamal, ii, p. 33.

211 Ibn Babuya, Kamal, ii, pp. 30-1.

212 al-Kashshi, pp. 262-3. For al-Nawfali’s profile, see pp. 426-7 below.

213 For his profile, see pp. 432-4 below.
known. 214 A companion of Yunus, Hishām b. Ibrāhim al-Hamdāni, was also another who was persecuted because of his Shi'ism. He is described as a learned and intelligent man. 215 He had to go into hiding. He was able to escape from the pursuit only after writing a book defending the legitimacy of al-'Abbas b. 'Abd al-Mu'talib's imama after the Prophet. 216 The famous Imami 'Ali b. Yaqtin, who had become a high official in the government, died in prison in Baghdad in 182/798 after four years of incarceration. 217 Another two Imāmis who were reported to have been in prison in the time of al-Rashid are Dāwūd b. Kathīr al-Raqī 218 and Hind b. al-Ḥajjāj. 219 The reason behind their imprisonment was probably the same. An Imami poet was also a victim of this policy. Mansūr b. Salama al-Namari was on good terms with al-Rashid. He used to keep his belief secret. However, it was disclosed to the caliph. His panegyrics about some 'Alids were recited before al-Rashid. Mansūr was in Raqqa at that time. Al-Rashid sent one of his men there commanding him to execute Mansūr, adding that, before it, his tongue should be pulled out as an admonition. However, when the man arrived in Raqqa, he met the funeral procession of Mansūr. He had already died. 220 Although he was not a Shi'i, the Mu'tazili scholar Bishr b. al-

215 For his profile, see p. 316 below.
218 Al-Himyan relates the letter of 'Ali al-Rida written for Dawud in which the Imam prayed for patience for him because of the condition in which he was, see Qurb al-Isnad, p.394.
220 Ibn al-Mu'tazz, Tabaqat al-Shu'ara', p.244.

142
Mu'tamir was imprisoned, too, by al-Rashid for his alleged sympathy towards Shi'ism.221

In addition to Musa al-Kazim and Yahya b. 'Abd Allah who were alleged to have been killed by al-Rashid, al-I'shahani also gives some other names of prominent 'Alids as martyrs who were killed by the caliph. Ishaq b. al-Hasan b. Zayd b. al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib was put in jail where he died.222 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib who was known as Ibn al-Aftas was also jailed for an allegation that al-Husayn b. 'Ali, the rebel of al-Fakhkh, had bequeathed to him the leadership of the revolutionary 'Alid movement. He was beheaded in jail by Ja'far al-Barmaki and his head was sent to al-Rashid.223 Another victim was al-'Abbas b. Muhammed b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib. He spoke boldly before al-Rashid. When the latter shouted at him that he was "the son of a bitch", he replied that al-Rashid's mother, who was a slave-wife, was indeed in the same position, because slave-traders would have used her for their enjoyments. Al-Rashid started to beat al-'Abbas with an iron stick, from which he died.224

221 Ibn al-Murtada, p.52; al-Malai, p.30. Bishr always took a favourable view of 'Ali b. Abi Talib. He was the leader of the Mutazili school of Baghdad and this school is known for its opinion that 'Ali was afdal than the first two caliphs, see Watt, Formative Period, p.164.

222 Maqatil, p.506.

223 Maqatil, pp.493-4.

224 Maqatil, p.498. In addition to these reports which probably reflect the truth, there are also some apocryphal narrations about al-Rashid's anti-'Alid policy which seem to be the product of Shi'i hatred. One indicative example is related by Ibn Babuya in 'Uyun. In the narration, Humayd b. Qahtah, the powerful governor of Khurasan, says that he killed sixty 'Alid prisoners including old men and infants and then threw their corpse in a big well at the order of al-Rashid ('Uyun, i, pp.88-90). However, it is a fact that Humayd died in 152/769, which was some eighteen years before al-Rashid ascended to the throne and seven years after he was born. Nevertheless, J. M. Hussain accepted it as true and reported it both in his book and article, see Occultation of the Twelfth Imam, p.39; "New Light on the Activities of al-Kazim", p.40.
In conclusion, the arrest of Mūsā al-Kāzim could be determined as one of the steps which was taken by the caliphal court as a part of the official anti-'Alid policy.

Before passing to the discussion of the arrest of al-Kāzim, it is worthwhile to make some remarks about two different features of Zaydism at that time. As is known, the sect derived its name from Zayd b. 'Ali, who had led an unsuccessful uprising in 122/740 against the 'Umayyad government. His followers were called the Zaydiyya.

Almost every rebellion which was led by a member of the 'Alid family which aimed to overthrow the present regime was largely supported by this group. A sub-group of the Zaydiyya, the Jārūdiyya, is a good example of these revolutionary Zaydis.225 However, from some reports it seems that, especially at the time of al-Rashid, a group called the Zaydiyya appeared and their ideas were quite different from the well-known form of Zaydism. These new Zaydis were not only non-revolutionary in thought and practice, but also they backed the 'Abbāsid government against other opposing 'Alid-Shi'i movements. The only reason why they were called the Zaydiyya seems to be their point of view that the imama of the inferior (mafdūl) was legitimate and thus the caliphates of Abū Bakr and 'Umar were lawful despite the fact that 'Ali b. Abī Tālib was more excellent (afdal) than them, which was the view of Zayd b. 'Ali. They also did not believe that the imāma should remain in the descendants of al-Hasan and al-Husayn, which was in sharp contrast to the view of the Zaydi group the Jārūdiyya.

The most well-known representative of this form of Zaydism was Sulaymān b. Jarir. Little is known about him. However, al-Shahrastāni mentions a group called the Sulaymaniyya who held the views of Sulaymān b. Jarir.226 Sulaymān seems to have been very close to the royal court. He was a frequenter of the symposia arranged by Yahya al-Barmaki. On one occasion, the vizier demanded that he should debate with Hisham b. al-Hakam on the subject of the necessity of obedience to an Imam, a

225 For this group, see al-Nawbakhtī, pp.48-9; al-Qummt, pp.18-9; al-Ash'arī, p.67; al-Baghdādi, pp.43-4; al-Shahrastāni, p.135.

subject into which Hishām particularly did not want to enter.\textsuperscript{227} A report shows that Sulayman was among those who went to Morocco at the government’s order to kill Idrīs b. ‘Abd Allāh, who had founded there an independent Shi’i state.\textsuperscript{228}

In view of this kind of Zaydism, it becomes easier to explain some historical reports. For example, al-Rashīd put Ibn al-Aftās ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan in prison because he accused him of gathering the Zaydiyya around him to plot to overthrow his government.\textsuperscript{229} However, the same al-Rashīd commissioned a Zaydi, Abū ʿĪṣma, to kill the Imāmi poet Mānṣūr al-Namārī.\textsuperscript{230} As has already been mentioned, when Hishām b. Ibrāhīm went into hiding because of his possible connection with the party of al-Kāzīm, he wrote a book, “The Confirmation of the Imāma of al-ʿAbbās”, and the official prosecution for him was lifted. This book was described in the narration as a “Zaydi book”.\textsuperscript{231} From all this, it appears that while the ‘Abbāsid government made every effort to root out revolutionary Zaydi activities, it used another group called the Zaydiyya for its own interests. This Zaydiyya, accepting the legality of the imāma of the inferior, made a very useful contribution to the religio-political basis on which the ‘Abbāsid regime stood. In their point of view, other Shi‘i parties, both the revolutionary Zaydis who frequently rose in arms to overthrow the regime and the quietist Imāmis who acted secretly but with the much the same aim were in profound error, because, like in the case of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar who became the leaders of the Muslims at the time of the existence of the more excellent ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and this was accepted as lawful by the majority including leading ‘Alids such as Zayd b. ʿAlī.

\textsuperscript{227} see al-Kashshi, p.261.

\textsuperscript{228} Maqatil, p.489.

\textsuperscript{229} Maqatil, p.493.

\textsuperscript{230} Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, p.244.

\textsuperscript{231} al-Kashshi, p.501.
the imāma of the 'Abbāsid rulers should have been accepted as lawful on the same basis. Al-Malāṭi makes the Mu'tazila of Baghdad a sect of the Zaydiyya. It was a fact that the political attitude of the Baghdad school of the Mu'tazila and that of the Sulaymāniyya was very close. This fact explains the cooperation of their representatives in the symposia to worst the Imāmi thinker Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and to force him to reveal his ideas, which has been seen as one of the factors which brought about the arrest of Mūsā al-Kāżim.

3.3 - Al-Kāzim is Arrested and Taken to Basra

There is some information that al-Kāzim met with Hārūn al-Rashid on several occasions before his arrest in 179/795. These meetings seem to have taken place in the seasons of some of al-Rashid's pilgrimages, but there is no indication in the sources to fix their exact dates.

Al-Isfahānī reports that al-Kāzim came to meet al-Rashid when the former was on a mule. The chamberlain al-Faḍl b. al-Rabi' rebuked the Imam because of this disrespectful behaviour. But al-Kāzim explained this comportment as an example of modesty. According to another narration related on the authority of al-Ma'mūn, who was with his father on an occasion of the pilgrimage, in Medina, the people of

232 al-Malāṭi, p.27.

233 For the Baghdad school of the Mu'tazila, see Watt, Formative Period, p.221-5.

234 see pp.135-6 above.

235 The years in which al-Rashid was present in the pilgrimage rite: 170, 173, 174, 175, 177, 179, 181, 186, 188 II., see al-Ya'qubī, iii, p.167.

236 Maqatil, p.500.

237 Al-Ma'mūn must still have been a child when he witnessed this incident as he was born in 170/786. In this narration, al-Ma'mūn claims that al-Kāzim in this
the city were coming into the presence of al-Rashid and introducing themselves. Al-Rashid granted them money amounting to 500,000 dinārs commensurate with their nobility and their forefathers' priority in the Hijra. On this occasion, al-Kāzim came as well on a donkey. Al-Rashid kissed his eyes and had him sat next to him. The caliph asked him about his family. Al-Kāzim responded that his family contained more than 500 persons of which at least thirty were his children and the rest were his mawāli and servants. Al-Rashid asked why he did not give his daughters in marriage. Al-Kāzim complained of his poverty and his debt which reached about 10,000 dinārs. Al-Rashid told that he would pay his debt as well as the expenses for the marriages of his daughters. Al-Kāzim was very pleased; he thanked the caliph and made a short speech about the closeness of their families and the merit of doing a favour for a relative. However, al-Rashid sent him only 200 dinārs. Al-Ma'mun found the sum very little and asked its reason. Al-Rashid said that the poverty of al-Kāzim and his family gave more security to the 'Abbāsids. In this narration, al-Rashid also states that al-Kāzim, in fact, was more deserving to become caliph than him, but he adds: "However, the reign was barren (al-mulk 'aqim)", i.e. the reign meeting told him secretly that he would become caliph in future and added that, when this would happen, he should do favours for his son, 'Ali al-Rida ('Uyun, i, p. 74). Al-Ma'mun also asserts that when he saw his father's reception of al-Kāzim and his veneration of him, he began to love al-Kāzim and his family and this was the reason for his inclination towards Shi'ism (Ibid., i, p. 72). It seems that al-Ma'mun spoke these words in favour of 'Ali al-Rida after he had proclaimed him as his heir apparent in 201/817. Al-Ma'mun went further by saying that his fight with his brother al-Amin and his killing him had been prophesied by al-Kāzim and this fact had been known by al-Rashid. Al-Ma'mun, in this way, probably tried to escape from the guilt of an evil action like killing his own brother by connecting it with a divine predestination. He, at the same time, attributing this prophetic information to al-Kāzim, put him in a sacred position, which also automatically gives esteem to his heir apparent, al-Rida, as he was the son of al-Kāzim. This last narration is related in the two early works written by the non-Shi'i authors, Abu Imanifa al-Dinawari (d 282/896) and Ibn 'Atham (d. 314/926), see Al-Akhbar al-Tiwal, pp. 388-9; Kitab al-Futuh, viii, p 266. 238 'Uyun, i, pp. 72-4.
is the most important so that other values such as kinship or excellency must be sacrificed to seize the reign and protect it. 239

On another occasion, this time in Mecca, in the presence of al-Rashid, al-Kāzim and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 189/805), who was the foremost pupil of Abū Ḥanifa, discussed the permissibility of a pilgrim being shaded by his camel train. 240 Al-Shaybānī applied the method of analogy of reasoning (qiyās) to solve the problem. However, al-Kāzim related a tradition from the Prophet which was contrary to the decision of al-Shaybānī. Therefore, al-Kāzim told him that to judge by qiyās meant to stray from the straight path. 241

From a report related by al-Mufid, al-Kāzim was arrested twice, but on the first occasion, after defending himself in the presence of al-Rashid, he was released. Al-Rashid showed him a report about him. The report alleged al-Kāzim’s connection with extremist Shi‘is. According to it, this extremist group claimed that whoever did not accept al-Kāzim’s imāma and did not send his religious tax (namely ‘ushr, i.e. tenth part of farm produce) to him was an unbeliever. They also saw it as licit to violate woman when the Imam permitted it. They used to declare their freedom from the opinions of previous Muslim scholars (sala) and to curse them in their prayers. Al-Kāzim denied all these accusations and said that there was no connection between him and them. He maintained that the only things he accepted were gifts and khums

239 It is related that, before al-Rashid, this expression was spoken by Musa b. ‘Isa, the ‘Abbasid commander-in-chief in the battle of al-Fakhkh, after he had quelled the rebellion. When he visited the tomb of the Prophet, he said that even if that Prophet disputed with him about the reign, he would strike his neck with his sword, because the reign was barren, see Maqātil, pp. 452-3.

240 According to the Imami tradition, it is not permissible for a pilgrim to be shaded by an instrument like an umbrella (see Ibn Babuya, Ḥal, p. 452, Muṣnād al-Rīda, ii. pp. 223-4), whereas other law schools consider it permissible.

241 al-Irṣād, pp. 450-1; al-Ṭabarānī, al-Iḥtiḥāj, p. 394; Alqāb, p. 64
tax, reminding him that the *khums* was assigned to the family of the Prophet by God in the Qur'an. Therefore, al-Rashid released him and gave him 100,000 *dirhams*. He also asked the Imam to write for him a pamphlet which contained brief knowledge of the *fiqh* of al-Šādiq. This request was accepted by the Imam.²⁴²

An incident which seems to have helped to destroy the good relationship between al-Šādiq and al-Rashid probably took place in one of al-Rashid's visits to Medina. Safwān b. Mihrān, a camel driver who was a disciple of al-Šādiq, used to hire his camels to al-Rashid in his journeys on the pilgrimage. Al-Šādiq forbade him to do so and threatened him that if he continued it, he would go to Hell. Safwān followed this command. But al-Rashid called Safwān and told him that he knew that al-Šādiq had caused him to stop hiring his camels. Safwān denied his connection with the Imam. Al-Rashid was not satisfied and said that if Safwan did not show good companionship towards him, he would kill him.²⁴³

Eventually, in 179/795, al-Šādiq's arrest took place. In this year al-Rashid went to Mecca in the month of Ramaḍān (Nov. -Dec.), and performed an *'umra* as an act of thanksgiving to God because of his suppression of the Khariji rebel al-Walid b. Ṭarif. After the *'umra* he returned to Medina and remained there till the time of the pilgrimage.²⁴⁴ Al-Šādiq's arrest occurred during this pilgrimage.²⁴⁵ According to a


²⁴³ al-Kaššī, pp.440-1.

²⁴⁴ al-Ṭabari, iii, p.638; al-Azdi, pp.282-3. Al-Waqidi states that al-Rashid did not return to Medina; he stayed in Mecca till Dhū al-Ḥijja, see al-Azdi, p. 283.

²⁴⁵ A narration from Ibn Babuya states that in the season of the pilgrimage of 179 in which al-Šādiq was seized, al-Rashid proclaimed the nominations of three of his sons, al-ʾAmin, al-ʾMaʿmūn and al-ʾMuṭamān, respectively, as the heirs of his throne, who, after the death of each, would ascend to the throne (*Uyun*, i, p.57). However, this information must be incorrect since this proclamation took place in 186/802, three years after al-Šādiq's death, according to reliable historical accounts
popular narration, on one occasion al-Rashid encountered al-Kazim at the head of the Prophet’s grave. Whilst the caliph was praying, he greeted the Prophet addressing “O cousin”. Then al-Kazim greeted him as “O my father”. Therefore, al-Rashid got nervous and said: "This is a very strong boast, O Musa!". 246

It is reported that al-Kazim was arrested when he was praying in the Mosque of the Prophet. Before his arrest, al-Rashid went to the tomb of the Prophet and presented there his apology, saying that he had to imprison al-Kazim because he was intending to bring division into the community and cause the shedding of its blood. 247 The following day he sent al-Fadl b. al-Rabi’, his chamberlain, to arrest al-Kazim. He was seized in the mosque and brought before the caliph, shackled. 248

It is unclear whether al-Rashid took the Imam with him on his journey from Medina to Mecca for the pilgrimage. Some sources report that al-Kazim departed under arrest on 10th of Shawwal, 179 H. from Medina to Mecca and then to Basra. 249 According to some other reports, he was sent directly to Baghdad. 250 However, the

(see al-Tabari, iii, pp.651-3; Ibn Kathir, x, 187). Al-Mas‘üdi gives the date of al-Mu’taman’s nomination as 187/803 (Muruj, iii, p.354), whereas al-Ya’qubi gives it as 189/805 (al-Ya’qubi, iii, pp.161-2).


247 In another narration in al-Hilli’s al-Mustajād, when the royal convoy returned from the pilgrimage to Baghdad, al-Rashid and his entourage stayed over night in Kufa. When everybody fell asleep, the caliph went to Akma where the alleged tomb of ‘Ali b. Abi Tālib was situated. He prayed two rak‘as and presented his apology for the Imam’s arrest saying similar things, see al-Hilli, al-Mustajād, pp.30-1.

248 ‘Uyun, i, p.60; al-Irshad, p.453.

249 al-Kulaymi, i, p.476; al-Nawbakhti, pp.71-2; al-Qummt, p.93.


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sources which give the detailed story of this event report that, in Medina, two awnings which were completely covered were prepared on two separate mules and a group of cavalry was assigned in order to accompany each of them. Then al-Kāzim was put in one of them secretly in the dark. He was handed over to Hassan al-Sharawi to be taken to Basra. The other empty awning was sent to Kufa departing on the next day in the morning. It is reported that making two separate awnings proposed to confuse people about what happened to the Imam al-Kāzim.

The troops carrying the Imam arrived in Basra on 7th of Dhū al-Ḥijja (a day before the day of *tarwiya*). Al-Sharawi handed him over to 'Īsā b. Ja'far b. al-Mansūr, the governor of Basra. He kept al-Kāzim for about a year. This detention took place in a room of the governor’s house. A servant was assigned to watch him and fulfil his needs. Although it is reported that the door of his room was always locked and he was allowed only to go to the bath and toilet, information shows that his detention was not so strict. His sympathisers were allowed to visit him. Al-Najashi records a Basran Shi'i, Yasin al-Zayyāt al- Başri, who related *hadith* from the Imam when he was in detention. Afterwards, al-Rashid wrote to 'Īsā b. Ja'far demanding that he should execute al-Kāzim. 'Īsā called some of his trusted associates and sought their advice about this matter. They advised him to refrain from doing that and to ask to be excused from it. Therefore, 'Īsā wrote a letter to al-Rashid. He said that

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251 "Al-Sarawi" in the text of *'Uyun* (i. p. 70) should be "al-Sharawi", who was the freedman of Muhammad b. 'Ali, the father of al-Mansūr. He later became the governor of Mosul, see al-Ṭabarı, iii. p.491.


253 *'Uyun*, i. p. 70. This arrival date shows that al-Kāzim was sent directly from Medina and he was not with al-Rashid during the latter’s pilgrimage.

254 'Īsā b. Ja'far was the governor of Basra under al-Rashid on four separate occasions from 173/789 until 180/786. see al-Ṭabarı’s index.

255 al-Najashi, p.315.
throughout this period he had spies on al-Kāzīm, so he was able to follow his situation very well, but he had never heard from him any word against the caliph or the caliphate. He also added that either al-Rashid should send someone to whom he could hand over al-Kāzīm or he would let him free, because he was troubled at detaining him. After this letter, al-Rashid ordered that al-Kāzīm should be taken to Baghdad and handed over to al-Faḍl b. al-Rabi', his chamberlain.²⁵⁶

3.4 - His Detention in Baghdad

A possible reason behind 'Isā b. Ja’far’s determination not to keep al-Kāzīm in Basra any longer might be his uneasiness about the Shi‘ī population of the city or the sympathisers of the ‘Alīids, who were possibly anxious about the Imam’s detention and his fate.²⁵⁷ The governor might have thought that by getting rid of al-Kāzīm he might avoid possible civic turmoil.

In Baghdad al-Faḍl b. al-Rabi’ received al-Kāzīm. It is reported that the Imam stayed for a long time with al-Faḍl.²⁵⁸

3.4.1 - Which Family is more Entitled to Take over the Imamah

The transfer of the caliphate from the Umayyads to the ‘Abbasids did not make much changes in terms of the ‘Alīids. As they had done in the time of the Umayyads, they continued to promulgate their claims that only the ‘Alīids had a right to rule the

²⁵⁶ ‘Uyun, i, pp. 70-2; Maqātīl, p. 502; al- Irshad, p. 454.

²⁵⁷ The underground activities of the Shi‘a in Basra seem to be quite strong as they were able to succeed in hiding a Zaydi revolutionist, Ahmad b. Isā b. Zayd al-Alawi, for sixty difficult years when he had sought refuge from the persecution of al-Rashid, see Maqātīl, pp. 619-27; al-Ya‘qubi, iii, p. 160.

²⁵⁸ al- Irshad, p. 454.
Muslims. They denied the legitimacy of the 'Abbāsid imāma. The historical sources narrate many debates which took place about this matter between the prominent figures of the two families. According to some sources, a similar discussion about which family was entitled to take over the imāma or the caliphate also took place between the 'Abbāsid al-Rashid and the 'Alid al-Kāzim when the latter was probably under the surveillance of al-Faḍl b. al-Rabi' in Baghdad. Because of the importance of the contrasting arguments put forward by both sides, it is necessary to summarise these discussions. According to one account, al-Rashid has al-Kāzim brought and shows him a large scroll containing offences which put the blame on him and his followers. Al-Kāzim recognises the caliph's anger; he repeats the following hadith attributed to the Prophet: "When kinship touches kinship, (at first) it surges and then tranquillisesthe. Therefore, al-Rashid takes hold of al-Kāzim's hand and embraces him. His anger seems to be over. Al-Kāzim complains that since the Prophet's time Ahl al-Bayt have always been accused of what they have never committed. Al-Rashid asks him about the relationship between the 'Alids and the Zindiqs. The Imam categorically denies this allegation.

Afterwards, al-Rashid says that he wants to ask some questions which have annoyed him for a long time; if he answers them truly, he would release him and no longer accept denunciations about him. He asks firstly why the descendants of 'Ali b. Abi Ṭālib give themselves a precedence over the 'Abbāsids despite the fact that both families are the offspring of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, and the 'Alids' forefather Abu Ṭālib and the 'Abbāsids' forefather al-ʿAbbas are both uncles of the Prophet. Al-Kāzim replies that the Ṭālibis are closer to the Prophet, because 'Abd Allah, the father of the Prophet, and Abu Talib are full brothers, whereas al-ʿAbbas is their half brother. Al-Rashid's second question is more complicated. He asks why the 'Alids claim that they are the heirs of the Prophet although, according to Islamic inheritance law, if an uncle was alive, cousins would not inherit. He maintains that Abu Talib died before the
Prophet, but al-'Abbās was still alive when the Prophet died, therefore 'Ali b. ʿAbi Ṭālib should not have been heir while al-'Abbās, the uncle, was alive. Al-Kāzīm asks for an assurance of protection before answering the question; he told al-Rashīd that otherwise he cannot answer it. The caliph guarantees it. Al-Kāzīm states that al-'Abbās did not emigrate from Mecca to Medina, therefore he had no right to inherit the Prophet, because God says: "Those who believed, but did not emigrate, you owe no duty of protection to them until they emigrate" (al-Qurʾān, viii: 74). He also asserts that to put the uncle in the position of the father in inheritance has no basis either in the Qurʾān or the Sunna; it is a matter of ijtihād which was formulated at the time of the Umayyads. He also gives some names of the judges of al-Rashīd whose ijtihāds are in accord with his own claim.

Another question al-Rashīd asked was how the 'Alīds approved of people addressing them as "the sons of the Prophet" even though they were the descendants of 'Ali b. ʿAbi Ṭālib. Al-Kāzīm makes an analogy: If the Prophet supposedly wanted to marry one of al-Rashīd's daughters, he could do so, because this is permissible in terms of Islamic law. However, the descendants of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn could not give their daughters in marriage to the Prophet, because he is their grandfather and they are his grandsons.

Al-Rashīd asks his last question: Why do the 'Alīds regard themselves as the progeny of the Prophet? He also gives his arguments: The 'Alīds are, in fact, the progeny of Fatīma. She is the daughter of the Prophet. But, the progeny continues only with sons, not with daughters. Al-Kāzīm again asks to be excused from answering this question, but al-Rashīd insists that he should answer it. Al-Kāzīm points out that although Jesus did not have a father, God regarded him as from the progeny of the prophets belonging to the Children of Israel (al-Qurʾān, vi: 84-6), because his mother, Mary, was from this progeny. Al-Kāzīm also indicates this verse
of the Qur'an: "If anyone disputes in this matter (the fact that Jesus had no father) with you, now after knowledge has come to you, say: let us gather together, our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then let us earnestly pray, and invoke the curse of Allâh on those who lie!'" (al-Qur'an, iii: 61).

The Prophet brought to this mutual cursing (mubâhala), which occurred with the Christians from Najrân, al-Hasan and al-Husayn as "our sons", Fatîma as "our women" and 'Ali as "ourselves" in the verse, which is a clear evidence that al-Kâzîm and other 'Alîds are really from the progeny of the Prophet. Al-Rashîd becomes very pleased with these answers 259 and asks al-Kâzîm to tell him his wishes. Al-Kâzîm tells him that his only wish is to go back to Medina. Al-Rashîd says that he will consider it. But al-Kâzîm is not released.260

However, according to some reports, when al-Kâzîm was in the custody of al-Fâdîl b. al-Rabî', he was probably released for a while. Before this release, some of al-Kâzîm's followers offered to use their influence with the authorities in order to provide for his release. The Imam refused it. He said that "to seek the support of people who were created instead of the support of God who is the Creator would cause the support of God to be broken off (literally: the ropes of the skies would be cut off)." 261

259 A rare report from Ibn Tayfur (d.280/893) indicates that al-Rashîd was of the opinion that 'Ali b. Abî Tâlib was more excellent (afdal) than al-'Abbâs b. 'Abd al-Mutta'îlib. According to the narration, when 'Ali b. Abî Tâlib was proclaimed by al-Mâ'mûn as the best of mankind after the Prophet (see al-Tabârî, iii, p.1099), al-Sindî b. Shahîk, who was the former security chief of Baghdad, said that he never supposed to hear such a proclamation from an 'Abbasid caliph. Al Fâdîl b. al-Rabî' responded that this was not so surprising development, because this was the opinion of al-Rashîd as well as al-Mâ'mûn, see Ibn Tayfur, Kitâb al-Baghdad, p.17.


261 al-Ya'qûbî, iii, p.151.
Some narrations confirm that al-Kâzim's release was the effect of God’s assistance which he always used to seek. Most of them contain legendary stories and therefore they have little relevance to the real events behind the release. However, if the legendary elements are disregarded, we learn that, after the release, the caliph used to receive al-Kâzim every Thursday.\(^\text{262}\) It is also reported by two sources that he was allowed to return to Medina, but they give no information about this alleged return\(^\text{263}\) and there is no confirmation of this in any other sources.

The traditions report that al-Rashid released the Imam at some point in consequence of a dream he had. The contents of the dream are reported with different scenarios. One report has it that al-Rashid saw al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ali b. Abi Ṭalib in his dream in which al-Ḥusayn, holding a lance, threatened that if he did not release al-Kâzim at that night, he would kill him.\(^\text{264}\) In another tradition, the one who threatened the caliph was a black man, who is described as huge. He sat on al-Rashid’s chest, grasped his throat and told him that his behaviour against the Imam was completely unjust.\(^\text{265}\) After these nightmares he had the Imam released.\(^\text{266}\) He also gave him a some sum of money\(^\text{267}\) and five robes of honour (khil’a). Al-Kâzim refused all the gifts considering them to belong to the rights of the community (huqûq al-umma).

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\(^{262}\) Ibn Bābūya, Amāli, p.338; 'Uyun, ii, p.77.

\(^{263}\) 'Uyun, i, p.61; Murūj, iii, p.346.


\(^{265}\) 'Uyun, i, pp.61, 76.

\(^{266}\) al-Mas’udi reports that the person who was in charge of the release of al-Kâzim was 'Abd Allah b. Malik al-Khūzā‘i (Murūj, iii, p.346), who was the commander of the security police (shurtā) in Baghdad (al-Tabarī, iii, pp.548, 692. Crone, Slaves, p.181). According to Khalīfa, he was also the commander of the caliphal guards (haras) (Khalīfa, ii, pp.501-2).

\(^{267}\) al-Haytamī, p.125 (300 dirhams); Ibn al-'Imad, i, p.304 (300,000 dirhams); al-Mufid, al-İkhtisâs, pp.59-60 (80,000 dirhams).
He explained this release by the fact that he had said prayers which had been taught to him by the Prophet in a dream.

3.4.2 - Al-Faḍl al-Barmaki Takes over the Custody of al-Kāẓim

Al-Kāẓim’s freedom did not last for long. He was rearrested and imprisoned. Al-Mufid reports that al-Rashid wanted al-Faḍl b. al-Rabi "to carry out some matter in al-Kāẓim’s affair" but al-Faḍl refused. Thereupon, al-Kāẓim was handed over to al-Faḍl b. Yahyā al-Barmaki. He kept him under house arrest. 268 It is noteworthy that the Imam was always treated as a noble prisoner. His detention reportedly took place in the houses of high state officials both in Basra and Baghdad. He was never put in Maṭbaq (or Muṭbaq), the famous dreadful dungeon of Baghdad 269 where many political prisoners including several 'Alids suffered. Sibt b. al-Jawzi, quoting from the historian Abu Bakr al-Ṣūlī, states that when the Imam was in Baghdad, he used to receive an allowance of 300,000 dirhams a year, but it was then reduced to 20,000 dirhams. 270 This information seems to be interesting. If it is true, the accuracy of several reports, especially those of Shi‘i books, about the bad treatment meted out to al-Kāẓim by al-Rashid should be reassessed. According to a report, the Imam had the freedom of correspondence. 'Ali b. Suwayd al-Sā‘i sent the Imam a letter containing questions about some religious and legal matters. Al-Kāẓim wrote back answers to him in a letter, which is narrated by al-Majlisi in his Bihar. 271 He, even during his

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268 al-Irshad, p.454. According to 'Uyun, al-Rashid wanted al-Kāẓim to be executed, see v. i, p.87.

269 See Le Strange, Baghdad During the Abbasid Caliphate, p.27.

270 Sibt, p.355.

271 Bihar, XI, VIII, pp. 242-4. Also see al-Najashi, p.196.
most severe detention in the house of al-Sindi b. Shāhik 272, was able to keep contact to some extent with his sympathisers and teach them. Mūsā b. Ibrahim al-Marwazi, who was the teacher of al-Sindi's children, compiled a book from what he learned from the Imam in his several meetings with him. 273

It is reported that when al-Kāzim was in the custody of al-Faḍl b. Yahya, the latter recognised his outstanding merits: The Imam used to keep awake the whole night occupied in worship such as prayer and the recitation of the Qur’ān, and he used to fast most days. Therefore, al-Faḍl took great care in order to make the Imam comfortable and treat him with honour. 274

In 180/796 Hārūn al-Rashid left Baghdad for Raqqa where he stayed until 184/800. 275 According to a story, in Raqqa, he sent an instruction to al-Faḍl b. Yahya to kill al-Kāzim. Al-Faḍl rejected it. Therefore, al-Rashid sent Masrūr al-Kabīr, his khādīm (chief servant), to Baghdad telling him to go directly to al-Kāzim. If he found him in comfort, he was to deliver a letter to al-ʿAbbas b. Muḥammad. 276 He also handed him another letter for al-Sindi b. Shāhik who was ordered in that letter to obey al-ʿAbbas.

Masrūr arrived at the place where al-Kāzim was detained. He found him as al-Rashid had informed him. He then went directly to al-ʿAbbas b. Muḥammad and al-

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272 Al-Sindi was the mawla of al-Mansūr. He was appointed, probably after al-ʿAbbas b. Muḥammad, as the chief of the shurṭa (Crone, Slaves, pp. 194-5).


274 al-Irshad, pp. 454-5.


276 This person was probably al-ʿAbbas b. Muḥammad b. al-Musayyab b. Zuhayr who was appointed in 180/796 as the chief of the security police (shurṭa) in Baghdad (al-Ṭabarī, iii, p. 639).
Sindi to deliver the letters. Consequently, al-'Abbas had al-Fadl b. Yahya brought to his place where al-Sindi was with him. Al-Fadl was ordered to be stripped. Al-Sindi flogged him in front of al-'Abbās as a punishment for his good treatment of al-Kāzim.

Masrūr wrote the news to al-Rashid, so the latter ordered that al-Kāzim should be handed over to al-Sindi. Al-Rashid also gathered a large assembly in which he ordered people to curse al-Fadl b. Yahya because of his disobedience. When the news reached Yahya b. Khālid, al-Fadl's father who was the vizier, he rode to al-Rashid. He managed to persuade the caliph that his son was still obeying him, adding that al-Fadl was only a young man and he would take care of him for al-Rashid in the way the latter would wish. Hence, al-Rashid stopped the cursing.

As for the continuation of the story, Yahya b. Khālid went to Baghdad where he gave the impression that he had come to improve the administration of the province and to look into the affairs of the tax collectors. But his real aim was different. He summoned al-Sindi b. Shahīk and gave him his instruction to kill al-Kāzim by poison.277

When al-Kāzim was in the house of al-Sindi, his custodian was Bashshar who was the mawlā of al-Sindi.278 He used to watch him with his wife.279 It is also reported that al-Sindi's sister used to look after the Imam during his detention.280 The reports related from these persons about al-Kāzim's supererogatory prayers in his

278 He was probably Bashshar b. Maymun. He later became the chamberlain (hājib) of al-Rashid, see al-Irbili, Khulāsa. p.113.
279 al-Kashshi, p.439.
280 al-Khatib, xiii, p.31; ibn al-Sa'ī, p.28; al-Kamil, vi, p.112; Abu al-Fida, xi, p.15; al-Dhahabi, Siyar, vi, p.273.
prison days are fully cited. According to these reports, when they saw the merit of al-Kāẓim, their wrong opinions about him changed and they began to serve him. 281

It is reported by several Sunni sources that when al-Kāẓim's detention was prolonged, he sent a letter to al-Rashid in which he said: "My time runs out in tribulation, whereas your time runs out in happiness, (but this will continue only) until a time which will not expire, in which the dealers in falsehood will perish!". 282

VI - The Death of al-Kāẓim

The date most commonly given for the death of Mūsa al-Kāẓim is 5 Rajah, 183 / 12 August, 799. 283 Al-Mufid gives it in his al-Irshād as 6 Rajab / 13 August whereas he gives it in his Masarr al-Shi'a as 15 Rajab / 22 August. 284 Another account is 25 Rajab, 183 / 1 September, 799. 285 The place of his death was known as

281 In a long tradition, al-Musayyab b. Zuhayr, the chief of the shurta in 172 H. (see al-Azdi, p. 269), is seen as the custodian of al-Kāẓim and one who witnessed his murder. Al-Musayyab reports that the Imam went to Medina in the twinkling of an eye; he delivered his wasiyya to his son 'Ali as the next Imam and came back (Uyun, i, pp. 81-5). This tradition, as well as its legendary nature, is also full of inaccuracies. The most obvious one is that al-Musayyab died almost eight years before al-Kāẓim's death, in 175/791 (al-Khāb, xiii, p. 137; al-Kamil, vi, p. 84). So this fact completely undermines the story.


284 al-Irshad, p. 436; Masarr, p. 36. Ibn Shahrashub also agrees on 6th of Rajab (Manaqib, iv, pp. 323-4).

285 al-Mamaqant, i, p. 187 Al Masudi's date as 186/802 (Muruj, iii, p. 355) is most likely a mistake because his additional statement that al-Kāẓim was fifty-four when he died points out that he died in 183/799. Other exceptional dates given as the
the House of al-Musayyab or the Mosque of al-Musayyab (probably Musayyab b. Zuhayr) near the Kufa Gate in Baghdad. This residence was probably used by al-Sindi b. Shähik, in whose custody al-Kaẓim died.286

There are several accounts of the cause of al-Kaẓim’s death. Most of the Sunni authors give the report of his death without any comment, whereas some of them cite the Shi’i anecdote that he was murdered, using the passive form (i.e. "qila" and others) and avoiding making definite statements.287 The well-known Imami belief that all the Imams were murdered particularly with poison save ‘Ali b. Abī Talib and his son al-Ḥusayn who were killed by the sword,289 and lots of legendary elements mixed up with reports of murder make us suspicious about the authenticity of the accounts of al-Kaẓim’s death. However, it is always probable that in surroundings in which intrigues, slanders and denunciations were in vogue and most of the authority was in the hands of viziers and
date of the Imam’s death are 184/800 (Dala‘il, p. 148), 188/804 (Sibt, p. 350) and 181/797 (al-Majlisi, XLVIII, p. 207).

286 ‘Uyun, i, p. 81; Manaqib, iv, p. 324.

287 see al-Tabari, iii, p. 649; al-Khaṭīb, xiii, p. 32; Ibn al-Jawzi, Sifat, ii, p. 105; Ibn Kathir, x, 183; Ibn Khallikān, v, p. 310; al-Shahristani, p. 145; al-Irbili, Khulasa, p. 136. However, Ibn Hajar al-Ḥaytami (al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa, p. 125) and Ibn al-Sā’i (Muhtasar, p. 30) believe that the Imam was poisoned.

288 W. W. Rajkowski (“Early Shi‘ism in Iraq”, p. 609) F. Omar (“Some Aspects”, p. 179, “Harun al-Rashid”, p. 233) and A. Clot (Harun al-Rashid, p. 65) think that the death of the Imam was from natural causes. J. Philby (Harun Al Rashid, p. 130) and E. H. Palmer (Haroun, p. 131) record that al-Rashid killed the Imam. H. L. Hassan (“Aspects of Shi‘ah History”, p. 279), A. Amin (Duha al-Islam, iii, p. 294), A. S. Nashshar (Nash’a, ii, p. 212) and H. Modarresi (Crisis p. 10) are of the opinion that al-Kaẓim was murdered.


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other officers of high rank rather than of the caliph, a plot or an impulsive decision made by anybody in the court might have resulted in the death of al-Kāẓim.

However, the above-mentioned Shiʿi belief, according to which, all the Imāms died as martyrs who were killed by tyrants in their times, is not completely acceptable especially to early Imāmi scholars. Al-Ṭabarṣi (d.548/1153), for example, although he confirms that al-Kāẓim was murdered by poison, states that the reports which reported that the fourth, fifth, sixth, ninth, tenth and eleventh Imāms had been killed were not reliable and there was no evidence implying sound knowledge of them being murdered. Before al-Ṭabarṣi, al-Mufid, also pointed to the same matter. He says that the reports that all the Imāms were murdered are not other than false rumours (irjāf).


291 Jurji Zaydan illustrates this corrupt situation accurately in the following sentences:

Plots and accusations against leading statesmen were the order of the day; espionage became common in the palace and the bureaux of viziers and public clerks. Each official kept spies to watch the others and report what they were doing. The humbler citizens began to calumniate the better class and address to the Caliph or person in authority libels containing charges against innocent persons by whose ruin the informers hoped to profit. And these were chiefly directed against retired statesman or persons whose accession to authority the informers had reason to fear. Whole boxes filled with such libels accumulated in the offices of Caliphs and viziers; when they became a nuisance, or were of no further use, they would be burned. [J. Zaydan, Umayyads and 'Abbasids being the fourth part of Jurji Zaydan's History of Islamic Civilisation, trans. by D.S. Margoliouth. (London 1907), p.238].


293 al-Mufid, Tashīb, pp.131 2
It is interesting that one of the earliest authors who give an account of al-Kāzim's death, al-Isfahānī (d. 356/966), although he reports the same stories about the Imam's arrest and other events after the murder as those of the Shi'i narrations, gives a completely divergent account of the way the Imam was murdered, that is, al-Kāzim was wrapped in a rug, some Christian servants sat down on it and crushed him to death.294

Another account which maintains that it is al-Fadl b. Yāhya who sent the table on which there was poisoned food to al-Kāzim295 is in sharp contrast to the reports that the former treated the Imam with respect when he was in his custody and refused the order of al-Rashid to kill him, which we have cited.296

Al-Sindi b. Shāhik is the man held by the Imams to be the one most responsible for the murder, because it took place in his house. Al-Sindi received an order from the vizier Yāhya b. Khalid or from Hārūn al-Rashid, who was in Raqqā, to kill al-Kāzim and he carried it out.

In a narration, a Sunni scholar who was described as very respected mentions a meeting arranged by al-Sindi shortly before al-Kāzim's death. Al-Sindi gathered eighty men and brought them to al-Kāzim. Showing the latter's room and bed, al-Sindi said that there was not any harassment against him and he was well-treated in contrast to the rumours that he had been maltreated, and also he added that al-Rashid

294 Maqtil, p.504; al-'Umarī, p.106. Also see Ibn 'Inaba, p.226.
In a very odd story, al-Rashid was not able to find any man whom he could employ to kill al-Kāzim. Eventually he was forced to have fifty Franks brought from Europe, who are described as those men who had neither a faith nor a religion. However, when they came and met with the Imam, they accepted Islam and then returned to their countries as good Muslims, see al-Majlis, XLVIII p.249.

295 'Uyun, i. 87-8.

296 see pp.158-9 above
was waiting for him to come and discuss some scholarly matters with him. Al-Kazim acknowledged that his comfort and living conditions were just as al-Sindi had said but added, "I had been given poison in seven dates\(^{297}\); tomorrow I shall turn green (from the effect of the poison) and on the following day I shall die". The Sunni scholar reports that at that time violent fear seized al-Sindi and he began to tremble like a palm-leaf.\(^{298}\) It is also reported that after the Imam had been poisoned, a physician examined him. He saw a green spot on the hollow of al-Kazim's hand, which was explained as being the poison which had accumulated at that point.\(^{299}\)

The narrations about al-Kazim's arrest and death introduced an important problem into the Imami theology. If the Imam was supposedly omnipotent and omniscient why did he not - or could he not - do anything in order to prevent the end which had been prepared for him, and if he did not, would not that mean that he assisted in bringing about his own demise (mu'in 'alā nafsihi)?

Beforehand, this question had been asked by the Imam's brother 'Ali b. Ja'far when his nephew Muhammad b. Isma'il was about to go to Baghdad to betray al-Kazim to the caliph and al-Kazim tried to stop him. When he failed to stop him, he gave him 300 dinārs and 3,000 dirhams for the expenses for his journey although he knew his real purpose. On this basis, 'Ali b. Ja'far asked him why he had assisted Muhammad in a matter which might have given rise to a dangerous situation for himself. Al-Kazim replied that when Muhammad arrived at Baghdad, the latter's death

\(^{297}\) Unlike al-Kulayni and al-Himyari, al-Kashshi reports in another narration that al-Kazim was poisoned by thirty dates (p.604), whereas Ibn Bahuya's account is nine dates ('Uyun, i, p.79). Ibn Rustam al-Tabari adds to dates sweet basil as the poisoned food (Dala'il, p.148).


\(^{299}\) 'Uyun, i, p.88.
hour would be due. However, in the same narration Muhammad's denunciation brought about al-Kāzīm's arrest. 300

Another report shows that al-Kāzīm was afraid of being murdered. When he thought that he might be murdered in prison, he began to pray to God, entreat ing Him: "O my Lord, rescue me from the prison of Hārūn and bring me to safety from his hand". 301 This and other such prayers, according to narrations, resulted in his release for a while.

'Ali al-Riḍa's explanation of his father's death is also reported. According to it, the Imam knew when he would die and took all the necessary measures in order to protect himself from being murdered, but when the decisive time of death came. God made him forget this information (literally: God threw forgetfulness over his heart) and he ate the poisoned food which caused his death. 302

However, the above report is in sharp contrast to this narration that, again in the prison, poisoned foods were brought to the Imam on three successive days, but he would not eat them. When the food was brought in on the fourth day, the Imam called out: "O my Lord, you know that if I had eaten it before today I would have assisted in my own death". 303

300 al-Kulaynī, i, pp. 485-6; al-Kashshāi, pp. 264-5.
301 Ibn Babuya, Amali, p. 337; 'Uyun, i, p. 76; Manaqīb, iv, pp. 305-6.
302 al-Saffar, pp. 503-4; al-Majlisi, II, IX, p. 236.
303 'Uyun, i, pp. 87-8; Manaqīb, iv, p. 327.
Another different account has it that, in prison, al-Kāzim did not have the freedom to do as he wanted. Therefore, he was obliged to eat the poisoned foods and consequently died without any chance of protecting himself. 304

Some Shi'i accounts state that al-Kāzim sacrificed himself to save his followers from total destruction. God was angry with the iniquitous Shi'is and told al-Kāzim to choose between sacrificing himself to save his followers or having the Shi'is destroyed. He chose to protect his partisans at the expense of his own life.305 Al-Majlisi (d. 1111 / 1699) says that God's anger was the result of their lack of loyalty and obedience to their Imāms, and their abandonment of taqiyya, which led to the secret network and the activities of the Imām being brought into the open and this caused his arrest.306

Harūn al-Rashid was in Raqqa in those days, therefore it was impossible for him personally to carry out the plot of al-Kāzim's murder in Baghdad.307 Consequently, the accounts showing al-Rashid as a cruel plotter seem to be the products of Shi'i abhorrence which made him directly responsible for the murder of the Imam. According to one of these accounts containing exaggerated components, al-Rashid's beloved dog ate from the poisoned dates which had been prepared for al-

304 'Uyun, i, p. 72.
305 al-Kulaynī, i, p. 260.
306 Mir'at al-'Uqul, iii, pp. 126-7.
307 The reports of al-Ya'qūbī and Ibn Babuya that it was al-Rashid who assembled the people in order to make them witnesses of al-Kāzim's natural death are also historically impossible, because it is certain that the former's residence at that time was Raqqa, not Baghdad, see al-Tabarī, iii, pp. 647-9. For these reports also see al-Ya'qūbī, iii, p. 150; Ibn Babuya, 'Uyun, i, p. 85; idem Kamāl, i, pp. 119-20.
Kāzīm and died suddenly. Al-Rashid became very perturbed at its death and also very sorrowful due to his failure in killing al-Kāzīm. 308

It is reported that al-Kāzīm remained three days in a fever from the poisoning and died on the third day. Al-Sindi b. Shāhīk assembled jurists, the representatives of the Hashimis and the Tālibis and other eminent men of Baghdad to look upon the corpse of al-Kāzīm. Before the meeting, al-Sindi called ʿUmar b. Wāqid, a notable of Baghdad, and asked him to invite those people who knew al-Kāzīm and associated with him to the house where the latter had died. About fifty men came, whose names, addresses and occupations were recorded. At first the face of the corpse was exposed. The witnesses testified that it was Mūsā al-Kāzīm. After that, covering only the genitals of it, the whole body was shown. The witnesses testified again that there was no mark from any wound on it, nor any evidence of strangulation, and accordingly he had died a natural death. 309 Al-İsfahānī adds that, after this meeting of testimony, the body was taken out and put on a bridge on the Tigris, then an announcement was made that that man Mūsā b. Jaʿfar had died. 310 According to Ibn ʿInaba, the coffin stayed there for three days. Those who knew him came and looked at him, and then their names were recorded in a minute-book. 311

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308 ʿUyun, i, pp.82-3; Dalāʾīl, p.154; Manāqib, iv, pp.303-4.


310 Maqatīl, pp.504-5. Also see al-İrshād, p.456; al-Ghayba, p.19. In a Shiʿī tradition, when al-Sindi b. Shāhīk was putting the coffin on the bridge, his horse balked and threw him down in the river where he was drowned (Manāqib, iv, p.328). The tradition which punishes the murderer, however, is anachronistic, because al-Sindi's death was probably much later since we saw him as an eager adherent of ʿIbrahim b. al-Mahdi during the civil war taken place between him and al-Maʿmūn between the years 202-204 H. see al-Tahānī, iii, p.1016.

311 Ibn ʿInaba, p.226.
Such kinds of narrations in the Shi'i books, in the meantime, serve to deny the claim of the Waqifis that al-Kāzim did not die and he was the awaited Imam who would return some day and set everything right, just as the narrations used against the Ismā'īlis, which give the account of Ismā'il b. Ja'far's death, who was also believed by some not to have died but to have disappeared to return some day as the Mahdi.

Ibn Bābūya's report mentions some trouble after the Imam's death. On al-Sindi's order, the body of al-Kāzim was taken out, four members of his shura took the charge of the body and called out: "This is the leader of the Rāfiḍis, know him! Whoever wants to see the evil man (al-khabith) who is the son of the evil man, come out (and look upon the body)". Sulaymān b. Abī Ja'far, the son of the caliph al-Manṣūr, hearing clamours, went out from his palace. When he knew the reason for the situation, he gave instruction to his sons and retainers to take the body from the hands of al-Sindi's men, if necessary, they should fight against them for it. They did what Sulayman wanted. They took the body, put it at a cross-roads and called out: "Whoever wants to see the noble man (al-tayyib) who is the son of the noble man come out". The episode was informed to Ḥārūn al-Rashid in Raqqā, so he wrote to his granduncle Sulayman to thank him due to his behaviour and to let him know that al-Sindi had not done it on his instruction.312

Nevertheless, al-Sindi, in the narration which has been mentioned previously, where he tried to deny the claims that al-Kāzim had been killed,313 did not behave in the way reported in the last narration. Hence, it is again probable that the obvious hostility against al-Sindi and the 'Abbasid court prompted the last narration, despite


313 See p. 167 above.
the fact that it is not exactly clear why Sulaymān b. Abi Ja‘far, who belonged to the
same court, was chosen as the benevolent man.

According to yet another narration, Sulaymān b. Abi Ja‘far took over the duty
of washing al-Kāzīm’s corpse. The fact that his son ‘Alī al-Ridā was in Medina and
therefore unable to wash the body of his father created a problem; that is, if al-Ridā
was the real successor of al-Kāzīm who had been appointed by divine testimony, he
should perform the washing duty, because Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq said: “Nobody can wash an
Imām except the (successor) Imām” so al-Ridā was not a legal successor.

Ibn Bābūya tries to solve this problem which was put forward especially by
the Wāqifa. According to him, al-Ṣādiq meant by this statement to prohibit anybody
from washing the corpses of the Imāms except an Imām. In spite of this prohibition, if
somebody attempted to wash the Imām and did it, this would not abolish the imama of
the next Imām. He adds:

"It was also narrated in some reports that al-Ridā washed (the corpse
of) his father Musa b. Ja‘far invisibly. Nobody saw this washing.
However, even the Wāqifis cannot deny that it is (always) possible
that Allāh folds down the earth so the Imām may traverse long
distances in a short time”.

Ibn Bābūya narrates this tradition as well: Al-Ridā came over to Baghdad and
formed his father’s washing, then embalmed the body and shrouded it. After that,

14 'Uyun, i, p.85; al-Ṭabarsī, Iʿlam, p.300.

al-Kulayn, i, p.384. Also see Dala‘īl, p.163. This tradition is probably
by a hadith of the Prophet who is related to have said to ‘Alī b. Abī Talīb,
Sdy washes me except you”. This hadith is related from the Imam al
 Authority of Zurara b. A‘yan. However, according to the traditionist
i (d.161/778), Zurara neither met with al-Baqir nor saw him, see Ibn
father

i, p.86. Al-Rida declared that it was he who had washed his
1, pp.384-5 Musnad al-Rida, i pp 92 3.
he cited to the surprised narrator the following, referring to a verse of the Qur'an (xii: 58): "I am similar to Joseph the righteous and you are similar to his brethren. When they entered his presence, he knew them, but they knew him not." Then al-Rida took the body to the Cemetery of the Quraysh and buried it there. 317

Apart from this miraculous story, it is also reported that it was the *mawla* of al-Kāzim who shrouded him in Mashra'at al-Qaṣb. Al-Sindi asked the Imam to permit him to shroud him, but he refused it saying:

"I am a member of the House (of the Prophet). The giving of dowries for our women, the performing of pilgrimages on behalf of those of us who have not made the pilgrimage, and the shrouding of our dead can only be performed by one of our retainers who is pure. I already have my shroud and I want the washing and preparation (of my body) to be carried out by my retainer so-and-so." 318

‘Uyun gives, instead of the *mawla* of al-Kāzim, the name of Sulayman b. Abī Ja'far as the one who shrouded him. On the shroud, the whole Qur'an was written using a special ink bought for 250 dinārs. 319 According to the same source, al-Sindi, who was the murder suspect, led the people in the funeral prayer of the Imam. 320

Al-Kāzim was buried in the cemetery of the Arab aristocracy called "the Cemetery of the Quraysh or the Cemetery of Shūnizi (or Shuniziyin and Shuniziyya)", which was used especially by the Banū Hashim branch of the tribe of

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317 'Uyun, i., pp.84-5. Ibn Rustam al-Tabari states without adding any narration or comment that al-Rida washed his father's body, see Dala'il, p. 148.


319 'Uyun, i., pp.82, 85-6. Ibn Shahrashub's account that the ink cost 2500 dinārs seems to be exaggerated. (Manaqib, iv, p.328).

320 'Uyun, i, p. 80.
the Quraysh. It is in north-west Baghdad at the Bāb al-Tīb (the straw gate)\textsuperscript{321}, in the area which became known more recently as 'al-Kāzimiyya'.\textsuperscript{322}

Al-Kāzīm made a testament that his grave should not be higher than the grave of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ali in Karbala and nothing (for example, soil) should be taken from his grave to be used to for his blessing (li tatabarrakū bihi), because it was not permissible in religion. However, Ibn Bābiya says that although this testament was fulfilled at first just as al-Kāzim had wanted, afterwards, people made the grave higher and built a tomb above it.\textsuperscript{323} After Muḥammad b. 'Ali al-Riḍā, the ninth Imām, had been buried in the same cemetery, al-Kāzimiyya became one of the most celebrated pilgrimage centres of the Shi'a. There is even one tradition which states that to visit al-Kāzim's tomb is equivalent to visiting al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ali's tomb.\textsuperscript{324} It seems that to be buried in this cemetery became popular later especially among the Shi'i upper class. The famous Shi'i poet Ibn al-Ḥallaj (d.391/1001) was buried in this cemetery and a verse of the Qur'an, "Their dog stretches forth his two-legs on the threshold" (al-Qur'an, xviii:18), was inscribed on his grave-stone at his request.\textsuperscript{325} In this way, Ibn al-Ḥallaj pretended to be the dog of al-Kāzīm, recalling the story of the Ašḥāb al-Kahf, the Companions of the Cave, and their dog in the Qur'an.

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\textsuperscript{321} see Yaqūt, i, p.443.


\textsuperscript{323} 'Uyun, i, pp.84-5.

\textsuperscript{324} al-Kalayn, iv, p.583.

\textsuperscript{325} al-Qalqashandi, Ma'athir, i, p.322.
VII - The Offspring of al-Kāzīm

Mūsā al-Kāzīm’s family was very large. The number of his offspring, as given in the sources, varies between 33 and 60. All these children were from slave-wives (ummuhāt al-awlād). He never had a legal wife.

All the sources agree on the names of ‘Alī al-Riḍā, Ibrāhīm, al-Qāsim, Ismā‘īl, Ja‘far, Hārūn, al-Ḥasan, ʿAbd Allāh, Ishaq, Zayd, Muḥammad as the sons of al-Kāzīm. Only Ibn Abī al-Ṭalj failed to give the name of al-ʿAbbas. However, al-ʿAbbas b. Mūsā comes to notice in a report about his quarrel with ‘Alī al-Riḍā about their father’s testament. He is also well-known as the governor of Kufa on behalf of al-Ma‘mūn. Other names given by several sources as the sons of the Imam are ʿUbayd Allāh, another al-Ḥasan, another ʿAbd Allāh, al-Ḥusayn

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326 18 sons and 15 daughters (al-Nawbakhti, p. 73; al-Qummi, p. 95; Ibn Abī al-Ṭalj, p. 20), 18 sons and 19 daughters (al-Tabarsi, Taj, pp. 47-8; idem, I’lam, p. 301; al-Hilli, al-Mustajad, pp. 200-1), 19 sons and 18 daughters (al-Irshād, pp. 457-9), 19 sons and 19 daughters (Sibṭ, p. 351), 20 sons and 18 daughters (Ibn al-Khashshāb, pp. 190-1; Kashf, iii, pp. 6-7); 18 sons and 21 daughters (Dala‘il, p. 149); 40 children without giving their names (Ibn Kathīr, x, p. 183; al-Irḥilī, Khulasat, p. 135); 18 sons and 23 daughters (al-Ya‘qūbī, iii, p. 151); 22 sons and 37 daughters (al-ʿUmar, pp. 106-7); 23 sons and 37 daughters (Ibn Ḥanāba, pp. 226-7).

327 See pp. 221-2 below.

328 See p. 321 below.

329 Only Dala‘il (p. 149) failed to give his name.


331 Dala‘il, p. 149; Ibn Ḥāzm, Jamhara, p. 61.
The sources also give the names of the daughters. But, because the records are very variant, to make a true table of their names would seem to be impossible.

Al-Ya’qubi, without giving any reason, reports that al-Kāzim prohibited his daughters from marrying; none did so except Umm Salama, who was married in Egypt to al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Ja’far al-Ṣādiq. Al-Ya’qubi also states that some discord took place between al-Kāzim and al-Qāsim’s family. According to Rajkowski, this prohibition by the Imam was for the reason that he considered himself to have no equal in rank and nobility, so that there was no one who could be considered as a proper candidate to be a husband for his daughters. However it

332 al-Ṭabarisi, al-Ḥilli and Sibt failed to give his name.
333 Ibn Abi al-Thalj, Ibn al-Khashshab, Sibt and Kashf failed to give his name.
334 Ibn Abi al-Thalj, Ibn al-Khashshab, Sibt and Kashf failed to give his name.
336 Ibid.
337 Ibid.
338 Ibn al-Khashshab, Sibt and Kashf.
339 Ibn ʿInaba.
340 Ibn al-Khashshab and Sibt.
341 Ibn Hazm, Jamhara, p. 61.
342 al-ʿUmari and Ibn ʿInaba.
343 Kashf.
345 Rajkowski, p. 599.
seems more likely that some statements in the written testament of al-Kāzim brought about a misunderstanding about the marriages of al-Kāzim’s daughters and al-Ya‘qūbī’s report might be a result of this. This testament is reported by al-Kulaynī and Ibn Bābūya. In the testament, al-Kāzim made the marriages of his daughters subject to ‘Ali al-Riḍā’s approval; none of the other brothers was able to make a decision about this matter.\textsuperscript{346} Moreover, the daughters could not marry of their own accord. If they did so, they would lose all their rights of inheritance from al-Kāzim.\textsuperscript{347} However, we do not know if al-Riḍā approved of the marriage of any of his sisters.

It seems that because al-Kāzim’s offspring was plentiful, more than any other of the Imāms, some of later prominent Shi‘is found it easy to claim descent from him. The Shahs of the Safavids, who were probably of Turkoman or Kurdish origin, concealed their ancestry so as to claim descent from al-Kāzim.\textsuperscript{348} Also Mir Muḥammad Amin (d.1145/1732), the founder of the Kingdom of Oudh in India, traced its ancestry through Mūsā al-Kāzim.\textsuperscript{349} Some leaders of the several Mahdi movements also made the same claims. For example, the Shi‘i dervish Faḍl Allāh Astarābādī (executed in 804/1401), who claimed to be a prophet, was known among his followers as a descendant of al-Kāzim.\textsuperscript{350} Another example was Sayyid Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh (d.869/1464), the founder of the Shi‘i Nūrbakhshī order. He

\textsuperscript{346} al-Kulaynī, i, p.317; ‘Uyūn, i, p.28; al-Majlisi, XLIX, p.279.

\textsuperscript{347} ‘Uyūn, i, p.30.

\textsuperscript{348} see Hollister, pp.62, 78; M. Momen, p.101; H. Halm, p.85; H. Algar, p.10.

\textsuperscript{349} see Hollister, p.151, M. Momen, p.129. Even some Ismā‘īlī genealogists traced back the lineage of the Fātimids to al-Kāzim. For this claim and its criticism, see Mamour, Polemics, pp.93-100, 129-30.

\textsuperscript{350} H. Halm, p.77
claimed to belong to a Musawi lineage before being introduced as the awaited Mahdi.\footnote{H. Halm, p. 78, H. Algar, pp. 10-1.}

As well as these Shi'is, we also know some names among famous Sunni or semi-Sunni sufis who were known as the descendants of Müsä al-Kázim. The celebrated early mystic Junayd al-Baghdádi (d.298/910), the founder of the Rifá'i order Ahmad al-Rifá'i (d.578/1183) and, much later, the first shaykh of the Baktáshi order Hajji Bektásh (7th/13th century) can be given as examples of sufis who claimed to be descendants of al-Kázim.\footnote{see H. Algar, pp. 9-10.}

\section*{VII - Al-Kázim as a Traditionist}

Since Müsä al-Kázim was surrounded by a Shi'i circle among whom there were those who did not consider it wrong to foist upon him sayings which he had never uttered, non-Shi'i traditionists seem to have refrained from relating \textit{hadith} from him. There are only two \textit{ahádith} of his which are found in al-Kutub al-Sitta, the six major \textit{hadith} collections of the Sunnis. The first is a tradition which has a Shi'i inclination. The Prophet holds the hands of al-Hasan and al-Husayn and says: "Whoever loves me and these (children) with their father and mother, will become with me in my rank in the hereafter".\footnote{al-Tírмidhi, \textit{Sunan}, v. pp. 641-2, no: 3733.} This tradition was also related with the same \textit{sanad} by Ahmad b. Hanbal in his \textit{al-Musnad}.\footnote{Ahmad b. Hanbal, ii. pp. 576-7, no: 576.} Al-Kázim also appears...
in a sanad in the Sunan of Ibn Maja in which his son 'Ali al-Ridā relates from him a hadith about the characteristics of the faith (al-imān). 355

The Sunni rijał scholars accept Musa al-Kāzim as a trustworthy (thiqā and sadūq) rāwi. 356 'Abd Allāh b. Dinār and 'Abd al-Mālik b. Qudāma al-Jumhī (d. after 160/776-7) are recorded as those rāwis from whom al-Kāzim related hadith. 357 However, since 'Abd Allāh b. Dinār is reported to have died in 127/744-5, a year before al-Kāzim was born, the sanad between him and al-Kāzim must be disconnected (munqaṭi'). 358 The other traditionist, 'Abd al-Mālik b. Qudāma, is usually regarded as a weak rāwi, because of gross errors which he made when he related hadith. 359

In comparison with the numerous traditions which were related from the Imam al-Ṣādiq in the Shi'i books about almost every aspect of the religion, Musa b. Ja'far's contribution to the Shi'i theology and jurisprudence seems to be quite small. The fact that he was only twenty years old when his father al-Ṣādiq died may explain this. Al-Kāzim was not able to spend enough time with his father to utilise his considerable knowledge. Another factor could be that after taking over the imāma, because of the severe 'Abbasid persecution, al-Kāzim was not able to find enough opportunity to communicate with his followers. His communication was usually in secret and related

355 Ibn Maja, Sunan, i, pp. 25-6. For its text, see p. 354 below.

356 see Ibn Abī Ḥātim, viii, p. 139; al-Dhahabi, Mizan, iv, p. 201; idem, Siyar, vi, p. 270; Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib, x, p. 340.

357 see ibid.

358 see Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib, v, pp. 201-3, x, pp. 340.

359 see Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib, vii, p 293.

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much more to the organisation and management of his party. Therefore, scholarly activities gave way to his efforts to keep the party alive.

Al-Kāzīm should be regarded as among the representatives of the Medinan school who tended to lay great emphasis on traditions rather than *ijtihād*. He used to recommend strictly to refer only to the Qur'ān and the *Sunna*. Once he said that whosoever tried to solve religio-legal problems by applying *qiyās*, would not only fall into error in his judgement but also would be punished in the hereafter. This accords with the general policy that is alleged to have been held by the Imāms with regard to *qiyās*.

**IX - The Miracles of al-Kāzīm in the Imāmi Literature**

Like other Imams, Musā al-Kāzīm is believed by the Imāmiyya to have had many supernatural abilities as important signs of his imama. When a Shi'i wanted al-Kāzīm to show a proof of his imama, the Imām told him to tell a tree that al-Kāzīm wanted it to draw near. The tree furrowed through the ground until it stopped in front of him. Then he indicated to it to go back and it went back. One day a lion came to him and asked him to pray for his lioness who had difficulty in giving birth. The lion also asked him whether she bore a male. The Imām prayed for her and replied to his question. In response, the lion prayed that God never imposed on al-Kāzīm nor any of his followers any trouble from wild beasts.

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360 see the relating chapter pp.397-412 below.
361 al-Ṣaffar, pp.321-2
362 *al-Irshād*, p.443.
Once he saw a woman with a group of children who were all crying. The children were hungry, because the cow on which the family depended had died. Al-Kāzim prayed and then hit the dead cow with a stick. It immediately arose and stood up. The woman shouted: "Behold, he is Jesus, the son of Mary!". On another occasion, he met with a man whose donkey had died and thus he was left on the road without transport. Al-Kāzim resuscitated the donkey by hitting it with a twig.

As well as dead animals, he was also able to give life to painted figures. When a magician from the 'Abbāsid court attempted to humiliate the Imām in front of al-Rashid, he brought a lion to life which was painted on a piece of curtain; the animal swallowed the magician before the eyes of the caliph and the courtesans. Al-Kāzim went further to show his deceased father to a follower who was very eager to see him. He told him to enter a house. He entered and saw al-Ṣādiq sitting on the ground; he had come to visit his son.

His supernatural power enabled him to change day into night or the opposite. By virtue of this ability, he took a Medina Shi'i through Mecca, Karbala and Kufa, and then brought him back to Medina in a night. On one occasion, he struck the ground with a stick; the earth was cleft apart and a gate appeared. Through the gate al-Kāzim saw a group of people whose faces were black and whose eyes were light blue. They were described by him as those companions of the Prophet.

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364 al-Saffār, pp.292-3; al-Kulaynī, i, p.484. For the Prophet Jesus who brought the dead to life, see al-Qūrān, v: 110.


366 'Uyūn, i, p.78, Manāqib, iv, p.299. 'Ali al-Ridā also did the same and frightened the caliph al-Ma'mun, see al-Rāwandi, ii, p.259.

367 al-Saffār, p.296.

368 Dalā'īl, pp.173-4.
who had given oath of allegiance to Abū Bakr, those who had fought against 'Alī b. Abī Tālib in the battle of the Camel such as Ṭalḥā and Zubayr, the people of the Banū Umayya and the other enemies of the first Imam.\textsuperscript{369}

Al-Kāzīm's miracles which occurred when he was in prison are exceptional: A snake appearing behind al-Rashid forced him to bow to al-Kāzīm. A rod at the hand of al-Rashid transformed into a snake and wrapped around his neck.\textsuperscript{370} In the Imam's cell, there was a fruit tree which was planted by God and he used to eat from it. Moreover, a table set with viands used to come down from the sky and al-Kāzīm and other prisoners dined miraculously in this way.\textsuperscript{371} Once al-Kāzīm rose to the sky and returned with a spear made from light; al-Rashid was very frightened and he fainted three times because of it. All these miracles which happened when al-Kāzīm was in prison are related by Ibn Rustam al-Ṭabarī in his \textit{Dala'īl}.\textsuperscript{372} It is interesting to note that the \textit{sanads} of these narrations were chosen from those which were constructed by some famous Sunni traditionists. For example, the miracle about the tree of fruit planted in the cell is related with the chain of "Sufyān al-Thawri (d. 161/778) - Wāki' b. al-Jarrāḥ (d. 197/812) - A'īmash (d. 148/765)\), which is a very famous and reliable \textit{sanad} in the Sunni \textit{hadith}. Ibrahim b. Sa'd and Ibrahim b. al-Aswad another two Sunni \textit{rāwīs}\textsuperscript{373} who were placed by Ibn Rustam in the \textit{sanads} attesting to these miracles. In conclusion, it can be said that Ibn Rustam or someone before him

\textsuperscript{369} al-Majlisi, XLVIII, p.84.

\textsuperscript{370} According to the Qur'ān, the Prophet Moses did a similar thing before Pharaoh, see al-Qur'ān, xx: 66-9, xxvi: 44-5.

\textsuperscript{371} This miracle probably referred to a verse of the Qur'ān (v: 114) in which it is said that God sent down a table for Jesus and his disciples upon their request.

\textsuperscript{372} \textit{Dala'īl}, pp.157-8.

\textsuperscript{373} al-Dhahabī describes Ibrahim b. Sa'd (d. 183/799) as a reliable \textit{rāwī} (Mizan, i, pp.33-5), whereas he says that Ibrahim b. al-Aswad's reliability was open to question (\textit{fihi naẓar}) (Ibid., i, p.20).
probably intended by relating these narrations with these *sanads* that they should become a factor which might lead Sunni Muslims to believe in these amazing incidents. However, despite this, it is unlikely that anyone believed in them except for some credulous Shi'i partisans.

Al-Kāzim is reported to have seen events in the future. He informed one of his disciples of the exact time in which the former would return after his release from the detention of al-Mahdi. He would know the times in which his disciples would die as well as the places where their deaths would take place. He sometimes told them these predictions to their faces. On one occasion, he saved the life of a Shi'i by predicting that his house would collapse. The Shi'i removed his family from it and took the necessary things with him. When they went out, the house crashed down.

According to some traditions, al-Kāzim was able to speak Persian, Ethiopian language and Chinese. He was also able to understand the language of birds. He could read the Bible perfectly. A Christian named Abraha is alleged to

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374 al-Kulaynī, i, pp.477-8; al-Rāwandi, i, 315-6.

375 For examples, see al-Saffār, pp.283-6; al-Kulaynī, i, p.484; al-Kashshi, pp.442-3; al-Rawandi, i, pp.310, 317, 324.

376 al-Ḥimyari, p.336.


378 al-Ḥimyari, pp.335-6; Dalā'īl, pp.169-70; al-Rawandi, i, p.312.

379 al-Rawandi, i, p.313.

380 al-Saffār, p.336; Dalā'īl, p.171; al-Tabarsi, ʿIlām, pp.294-5.
have said: "Only the Messiah can read so", and embraced Islam. Many other miracles ascribed to al-Kāzīm are fully narrated in several Imāmī sources.

X - The Asceticism of al-Kāzīm and His Alleged Link to some Early Sufis

Ibn Taymiyya reports: "Mūsā b. Ja'far was celebrated for his style of worship and good manners". Indeed he seems to have drawn more attention from the sufis or those who sought to pursue a spiritual life than most of the Imāms were able to from his predecessors or successors.

It is reported that al-Kāzīm used to prolong his prostrations (sujūd) for the whole night. He never used to give up any supererogatory prayers. The reports of al-Faḍl b. al-Rabī and the sister of al-Sindi b. Shāhik, who were witnesses of the Imam's daily life when he was in detention, about his style of worship are narrated in full in both Sunni and Shi'i sources. When this merit of the Imam was told to al-Rashid, he said that al-Kāzīm was the monk of the Banū Ḥashim.

Al-Kāzīm's prodigious generosity is presented as another aspect of his asceticism. He is reported to have searched for the poor people of Medina and given

381 Manaqib, iv, p.310.

382 For these miracles as a group, see Dala'il, pp.152-74; al-Rawandi, i, pp.307-36; Manaqib, iv, pp.287-305; al-Ṭabarṣi, Ilām, pp.291-5; al-Majlisī, X1.VIII, pp.29-100.

383 Ibn Taymiyya, Minhaj, ii, p.155.

384 al-Khāṭib, XIII, p.27, 'Uyun, i, pp.77, 87.

385 'Uyun, i, pp.86-7, al-Khāṭib, XIII, p.31; al-Kamil, VI, p.112; Abu al-Fida, ii, p.15

386 'Uyun, i, p.78.
them baskets in which were money, flour and dates.\textsuperscript{387} He always had several purses in which there were 300, 400 or 2000 dinārs. He used to give them to needy people according to their needs. When anybody received such assistance from the Imam, his financial difficulties were usually solved.\textsuperscript{388} Therefore, "the purse of Mūsā" became a proverbial phrase for financial assistance coming unexpectedly from somebody.\textsuperscript{389} It is reported that a slave was sent to him for service. He bought the slave from his owner with the estate at which the slave had worked. Then he set him free and gave the estate to him.\textsuperscript{390} A man from the descendants of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb often disturbed the Imam by cursing him and his family. Al-Kāzīm's followers wanted to kill the man. But he would not consent to it. One day he went to him and asked how much money he hoped to make from his farm. The man expected about two hundred dinārs income. Al-Kāzīm gave him three hundred dinārs. This favour immediately affected the man's behaviour towards the Imam. He began to praise him publicly in the mosque.\textsuperscript{391}

His excessive expenditure on the banquets of his sons' weddings became a matter of gossip in Medina. However, al-Kāzīm was satisfied with what he had done. He felt the need to remind people of a verse of the Qur'ān in which God told the Prophet Solomon: "Such are Our bounties: Whether you bestow them (on others) or withhold them; no account will be asked" (al-Qur'ān, xxxviii: 39).\textsuperscript{392}

\textsuperscript{387} al-Irshad, p.448.

\textsuperscript{388} al-Khaṭṭāb, xiii, pp.27-8; Dalā'il, p.150.

\textsuperscript{389} Ibn 'Inaba, p.226; al-Ṭabarṣa, I'lām, p.296.

\textsuperscript{390} Ibn Kathīr, v, p.183; al-İrbili, Khulāṣa, p.135.

\textsuperscript{391} al-Irshad, p.449; Dalā'il, pp.150-1.

\textsuperscript{392} al-Kulaynî, vi, p.281.
Shaqiq al-Balkhi (d. 194/810), the famous Khuràsânian mystic\(^{393}\), is reported to have encountered al-Kâzîm at al-Qâdisîyya while on his way to the pilgrimage in the year 149/766. According to the story, Shaqiq thought that he was a mendicant sufi. However, some remarks and signs from the Imam attracted him, so he began to follow him. During the journey, he witnessed some miracles of al-Kâzîm. It was not until they reached Mecca that Shaqiq finally discovered al-Kâzîm's identity. When he saw him surrounded by a huge crowd, he asked who it was and he was told that it was Mûsâ al-Kâzîm.\(^{394}\)

Ibn al-Šabbâgh says that al-Râmâhumuzi related this story in his Kâramât al-Awliyâ'.\(^{395}\) The author is Abû Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Ābd al-Rahmân al-Râmâhumuzi (d. circa 360/970), the judge of Khuzistan. His above-mentioned work is not extant. According to H. Algar's research, al-Râmâhumuzi appears to be the earliest author to record the story. The story is absent in the early sufi biographical dictionaries and in the early works of the Imâmiyya which give the accounts of lives of the Imâms such as al-Irshâd. Algar determines this fact as an argument against the authenticity of the story even though he sees it quite plausible that Shaqiq and al-Kâzîm could have met on such an occasion.\(^{396}\) Ibn Taymiyya objects to the authenticity of the story and regards it as a "lie". He says that in the year 149 H., a year after Ja'far al-Śadiq's death, al-Kâzîm was in Medina and it was well-known that he was never

\(^{393}\) For him, see al-Sulami, p. 54.

\(^{394}\) Dala'il, pp. 155-6; Ibn al-Jawzi, Sifât, ii, pp. 104-5; Sibt, pp. 348-9; Kashf, iii, pp. 3-4; al-I̲l̲i̲l̲i̲, Minhâj al-Kârâma, pp. 101-2; Ibn al-Šabbâgh, pp. 219-20; al-Haytami, pp. 124-5.

\(^{395}\) Ibn al-Šabbâgh, al-Fusûl al-Muhîmma, p. 220.

\(^{396}\) H. Algar, "Imam Mûsâ al-Kâzîm and Sufi Tradition", pp. 3-6, 9. Algar indicates Ibn al-Jawzi's Sifât al-Šafâa, after al-Râmâhumuzi's non-extant work, as the oldest work narrating the story. However, before Ibn al-Jawzi, a certain Shi' author, Ibn Rustam al-Tabârî (d. circa 400/1009-10), narrates it with its sanad in his Dala'il al-A'imma (pp. 155-6), which apparently makes Sifât al-Šafâa a later work.
present in Iraq until al-Mahdi had him arrested and brought to Baghdad. 397 My own research in this thesis also confirms this conclusion.

The second sufi whose name has been linked to that of al-Kāzīm is Abu Naṣr Bishr b. al-Ḥārith al-Ḥāfī (d.226/840 or 227/841-2). 'Allama al-Ḥilli narrates a story about how Bishr gave up his life of dissipation and became repentant. According to the story, when the Imam was passing in front of Bishr's house, he was distressed to hear the sound of music. A slave girl came out from the house. Al-Kāzīm asked whether the owner of the house was a freeman or a slave. She replied that he was a freeman. Al-Kāzīm observed that this must be true, because if he was a slave (‘abd), he would fear God with regard to what he had done. The girl returned to the house and told Bishr what al-Kāzīm had said. Bishr became so affected that he came out and declared his repentance before the Imam. 398

Ibn Taymiyya again refuses to accept this story, putting forward that when the Imam was in Baghdad, he was under the detention by al-Rashid and had no freedom to walk about Baghdad. 399 However, in fact, some sources report that al-Kāzīm was released by al-Rashid for a brief while and then rearrested. 400 But in any case, the story, again, seems unlikely. Unlike the story of Shaqiq al-Balkhi, the story of Bishr has no widespread circulation. Early Shi‘i and Sunni works which give the accounts of the lives of the Imāms or those of famous sufis report nothing about this link. Furthermore, al-Qushayrī connects Bishr’s repentance with another incident: He found a piece of paper on the road on which the name of God was written; he cleaned it and

397 Ibn Taymiyya, Minhaj, ii, p.155.

398 al-Ḥilli, Minhaj al-Karama, p.102. Also Ibn Taymiyya quotes it in Minhaj al-Sunna, ii, p.143.

399 Ibn Taymiyya, Minhaj, ii, p.155.

400 see pp. 155-6 above.

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perfumed it with an expensive perfume. So it was this act which became the turning point in his life. 401

In conclusion, these alleged links between al-Kāzim and the two famous sufis remain unproved. Numerous narrations about al-Kāzim’s asceticism in both Sunni and Shi‘i sources might encourage some sufis to find such a link. The pro-‘Alid feature of sufi opinion is well-known and therefore the sufis, whether they have Sunni or Shi‘i inclinations, liked their masters to enjoy such a relationship with noble descendants of the Prophet. 402

401 al-Qushayrī, p. 11. Ibn Khallīkan also cites it (v. i, p. 275).

402 For a similar link between ‘Ali b. Musā and Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī, another famous mystic, see pp. 370-1 below. Also for a detailed examination of Musa al-Kāzim’s place in the sufi tradition, see Hamid Algar, “Imam Musa al-Kazim and Sufi Tradition,” Islamic Culture, 64 (1990), pp. 1-14.
CHAPTER THREE

THE IMĀM ‘ALĪ AL-RIḌĀ
This chapter attempts to present a critical account of the life of the Imam 'Ali al-Ridâ. The main focus in the chapter is the caliph al-Ma'mun's remarkable decision to nominate al-Ridâ as his heir apparent. A detailed discussion about this matter throws some light on the factors which drove al-Ma'mun to propose it. The importance of this event in 'Abbasid history is also traced. The Imam's sudden death and speculations concerning it are other matters of investigation presented in the chapter. In order to give a complete account of al-Ridâ, he is also treated as a traditionist and saint. The chapter provides information about al-Ridâ's policy towards ghulât elements and their ideas. It also includes a large section investigating the crisis of succession which was chiefly caused by the Waqifi group following al-Kazim's death.

I - The Birth of al-Ridâ, His Kunyas and Epithets

'Ali al-Ridâ was the eldest son of Mûsâ al-Kazim. His mother was one of al-Kazim’s slave-wifes, who was also the mother of Ibrâhim, al-'Abbas and al-Qasim. There are different accounts in the sources of her origin. Some authors record that she was "Marsiyya", i.e. from an anchorage town, whose location is unknown. According to another account, she was a Nubian, which is the name commonly given to the people living in villages located between Aswan in southern Egypt and northern

1 al-Irshad, p. 457.
2 Manaqib, iv, p. 367; Kashf, iii, p. 49. Ibn al-Khashshab (p. 193) says that she was "Muraysiya" or "Maraysiyya".

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These two accounts might suggest that she was from an anchorage village in West Nubia on the coast of the Red Sea. It can also be propounded that, because 'Ali's complexion was very dark (asmar 'amīq), his mother was of Negro origin. Fernea sees it possible that the name 'Nubian' was broadly applied to Africans who had entered the Muslim world as part of the Nubian slave trade. Ibn Abi al-Thalj's description of her as "Būtīyya" is probably a mistake in transcription through a misreading of "Nūbiyya".

The original name of 'Ali al-Ridā's mother was probably "T.k.t.m". Her other name was "Najma" ("star") which is said to have been given to her by al-Kāzim's mother, al-Ḥamīda, and when 'Ali was born to her, al-Ḥamīda added "al-Tāhira" ("the pure one") to "Najma". In the hadīth of Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh, which is said to have been reported from the Prophet, giving the names of the twelve Imāms with their mothers' names, she was also called "Najma". Her other names given in the sources are "al-Khayzaran" ("reed"), Arwā ("thirst-quenching"), "Sakan al-Nūbiyya" ("the wife of Nubia"), "Sukayna" ("the young wife"), "Suḥā" (the name of a dim star in

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4 Yaqūt, iv, p.820-1; R. Fernea, "Nubians", in Muslim Peoples, ii, 559.
5 Yaqūt reports that Nūba was also the name of a region on the coast of the Red Sea in South-west Arabia, which was given this name because of its Nubian population, see Yaqūt, iv, p.821.
7 R. Fernea, op. cit., p.560. If al-Ridā's mother actually was of Negro origin, this would conflict with an Imāmi tradition attributed to al-Sādiq, according to which, the latter did not approve of buying Sudanese concubines. He says that they are those about whom God has said: "From those who call themselves Christians, we did take a covenant, but they forgot a good part of the message that was sent them" (al-Qur'ān, v: 14). In another tradition, 'Ali b. Abi Ṭalib prohibits marriage with Negro women, because, he said, they are "ugly creatures" ("khalq mushawwah"), see al-Kulaynī, v. p.352.
8 Ibn Abi al-Thalj, p.25.
9 'Uyun, i, pp.13-4.
10 'Uyun, i, p.33.
Ursa Major), "Taḥiyya" ("salute"), "Sumāna" ("quail"), "Ṣaqr" ("falcon"), "Ṣalāma" ("peace"), "Shahda" ("honey"), "Ṣafra" ("yellow"). Her nickname was "Shaqrā" ("brown-haired") whereas her kunya is recorded as "Umm al-Banin" ("the mother of sons").

Some traditions narrate the story of the purchase of Najma. According to the story, al-Kāẓim said that he had bought this concubine at the order of God. When he was sleeping, his father and grandfather came with a piece of silk fabric. They spread it out. In it a picture of a slave-girl was placed, covered by a wrap. They told him to buy her and, when she gave birth, to name the baby 'Ali. Another tradition has it that a slave trader bought Najma for himself from a remote area of al-Maghrib. A woman from Ahl al-Kitāb (the People of the Book, i.e. Jews and Christians) met him on the road and told the trader that it was not appropriate that she should have been with the like of him, because she would soon give birth to a son who had not been born in the east or the west, therefore this slave-girl should be with the best person on earth. The trader came to Medina. He did not sell the girl. Al-Kāẓim was offered other good slave-girls to buy, but he insisted on buying that girl although she was described as being sick. At last al-Kāẓim bought her paying the maximum price which the trader demanded for her. However, another account indicates that it was al-Ḥamida, the mother of al-Kāẓim, who bought Najma: Al-Ḥamida saw the Prophet in her dream; he ordered her to grant Najma to al-Kāẓim, because, the Prophet said, she would give

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12 Dala'il, p. 176.

birth to one who would be the most excellent of the people of the earth. 14 It is also recorded that she was a virgin when she was bought. 15

'Ali b. Musa was born in Medina. About his birth year several dates have been given. The year 148/765 as his date of birth corresponds with year of the death of the Imam al-Ṣādiq. 'Ali is reported to have been born some months after his grandfather's death. 16 As the date of al-Ṣādiq's death was Rajab or Shawwāl of 148/765, 17 'Ali might have been born in one of the last months of the year, probably in Dhū al-Qa'da / December, 765 - January, 766 as Taj al-Mawālid records. 18 Another date given for the birth of the Imam is 153/770. 19 Al-Nawbakhti's account gives the date as 151 H. 20 There are two other accounts of later dates. Ibn Abī al-Thalj's account in his "History of the Imāms" that al-Riḍā died in 202 H. at the age of forty-seven indicates the year 155/772 as his date of birth. 21 From al-Ya‘qūbī's statement that al-Riḍā died


15 'Uyun, i, pp.12, 14. Al-Shaybi highlights the abundance of fabulous stories in the Imāmi books of tradition about the slave-wives who gave birth to the Imāms. He suggests that these traditions tended to cover up bad characteristics which were normally expected to be inherited from slave-girls, from which the descendants of the Prophet were clear, see al-Shaybi, al-Ṣīla, i, p.237.

16 al-Ṭabarsi, Tāj, p.49.

17 al-Kulayni, i, p.472; al-Ṭabarsi, I‘lām, p.266; idem, Tāj, p.44.

18 al-Ṭabarsi, Tāj, p.48. Other sources giving the date as 148 H. are al-Kulayni, i, p.486; al-Īrshād, p.461; al-Kāmil, vi, p.249; Abū al-Fida, ii, p.23; al-Šafadi, xxii, p.248.

19 The months of 153 H. recorded as al-Riḍā's date of birth are Rabi' I, Shawwal and Dhū al-Hijja, see 'Uyun, i, p.15; Murūj, iii, p.441; Iθbat, p.229; Dala‘īl, p.175; Ibn al-Khashshāb, p.192; Manāqib, iv, p.367; Ibn Khalīkan, iii, p.270; Ibn al-Imad, ii, p.6; Kāshf, iii, p.49; Ibn Tulun, p.93; al-Qunduzi, p.383.

20 al-Nawbakhti, p.73. Also see al-Qummi, p.94.

21 Ibn Abī al-Thalj, p.12.
at the beginning of the year 203 H. at the age of forty-four, the latest date of birth appears as 158/774-5 or 159/775-6.  

Imāmi sources give some miraculous reports about al-Riḍā’s birth. According to a narration in ‘Uyun, ‘Ali’s mother, when she was pregnant with him, did not feel the weight of the pregnancy. She used to hear, when she was sleeping, voices glorifying Allāh (tasbīh), utterances of “Lā ilāha illā Allāh” (taḥlīl) and praises to Allāh (taṁjīd), but, when she woke up, these sounds used to disappear. It is also reported that “‘Ali came into the world, like his father, laying his hands on the ground, but raising his head to the sky and his lips were stirring as if he was speaking”. Then his mother took him to al-Kāẓim. He called for water and smeared it on ‘Ali’s palate (ḥannakahu bihi).  

Ali’s well-known kunya was Abū al-Ḥasan. It is reported that al-Kāẓim, by giving ‘Ali his own kunya, wanted to indicate the latter’s succession to the imāma after him.  

In order to prevent confusion among three Imāms called Abū al-Ḥasan (i.e. al-Kāẓim, al-Riḍā and ‘Ali al-Hādi), traditionists, who had a tendency to use the kunyas of the Imāms in place of their names in their isnad, usually preferred to record al-Riḍā instead of his kunya or added it to his kunya. They also added “al- 

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22 al-Ya’qūbi, iii, p.188.

23 ‘Uyun, i, p.17; al-Rāwandī, i, p.337. ‘Ali b. Ḥisā al-Irbīli gives a detail about this Islamic tradition (taḥnīk) practised by al-Kāẓim. He records another version of the above-mentioned narration in which al-Kāẓim smeared the water of the Euphrates (māʿ al-Furāt) on the palate of his son. Al-Irbīli thinks that this water was probably sweet water (māʿun furātun), not the water of Euphrates (māʿ al-Furāt), although he observes that it was possible for the Imāms to have water brought from Euphrates to Medina instantly. see al-Kashf, iii. p.88.

Thani" ("the second") or "al-Khurasani" ("Khurasanian") to Abu al-Hasan.\(^{25}\) His other *kunyas* recorded by the sources are Abu Bakr, Abu al-Qasim and Abu Ali.\(^{26}\)

The history sources and some records in the Imami traditions agree that the nickname "al-Rida" ("the contented one") was given to ‘Ali by the caliph al-Ma'mun when the latter designated him as his heir to the throne.\(^{27}\) However, according to a narration in ‘Uyun, which seems to be tendentious in order to avoid the name al-Rida from being given to him by al-Ma'mun who was regarded by the Imamiyya as an unjust ruler as well as the murderer of the Imam, Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Bazanî, an Imami follower, asked Muhammad b. ‘Ali, the son of al-Rida:

" -- A group which is in opposition to you claims that the nickname "al-Rida" was given to your father by al-Ma'mun since he consented (*radiya*) to become al-Ma'mun's successor! Muhammad said: -- They have lied, by God, and acted immorally. On the contrary, Allah, the Blessed and the Exalted, called him "al-Rida", because he was contented with Allah (*radiya lil-Ulh*) in His heaven, and also contented with His Apostle and with the Imams after Him on His earth.

I (the narrator) asked: -- Has not each of your former fathers been contented with Allah, the Apostle and the Imams?

He said: -- Yes, indeed.

I asked again: -- So, why was only your father called "al-Rida" among them?

He said: -- Because as well as those who were contented with him from his associates, his opponents from his enemies were also contented with him. None of his fathers was in this situation. Therefore, he was called "al-Rida" ("the contented one").\(^{28}\)

\(^{25}\) For example, see al-Kashshi, pp.145, 490, 491, 498; al-Tabarsi, *Taj*, p.48.

\(^{26}\) *Maqatil*, p.561; *Manaqib*, iv, p.366; al-Mamaqani, i, p.189.


\(^{28}\) ‘Uyun, i, p.11.
His other nicknames (laqab) were "al-Šābir ("the patient"), "al-Waṭi" ("the trustworthy"), "al-Waṣī" ("the testator"), "al-Zakī" ("the pure") and al-Wali (the guardian).²⁹

There are almost no accounts of 'Ali b. Mūsā's childhood and youth. It is only reported by some Sunni sources that he started to give fatwās in his twenties.³⁰

II - The Split in the Party

Despite the fact that the split which was caused by the Wāqifa in the Imāmic party after al-Kāẓim's death was one of the important incidents in the history of Shi‘ism because it was long-lasting and of quite serious dimensions, no comprehensive academic work examining it has yet been done in Western languages. I. Friedlaender, in 1908, gave some brief information about the Wāqifa in his commentary on his translation of a section of Ibn Ḥazm's al-Faṣl about Islamic sects.³¹ Rajkowski was perhaps the first author to write some important historical facts about the Wāqifa. He, after outlining different Wāqifi groups, suggests that these groups were probably not separate sub-groups of the sect; they only represented various opinions as to the real meaning of al-Kāẓim's concealment and his future role as the Qā’īm.³² M. Watt is another scholar who paid brief attention to the sect. The information given by Watt was largely derived from two sources; Firaq al-Shi’a of


³⁰ As quoted from al-Waqi‘ī (d.207/823) and al-Ḥākim al-Nisabūrī (d.404/1014), see Sibṭ, pp.351-2; Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Muntazam, x, pp.119-20; al-Iḥbīlī, Khulasâ, p.200; Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhib, vi, p.387.


al-Nawbakhti and the Fihrist of al-Tusi. M. O. Salih, in his Ph.D. thesis, only touched on the Waqifa in a few lines, even though this sect should have been central to the topic of his study. J. Hussain mentioned briefly the roles of some of al-Kazim’s agents in the emergence of the Waqifa.

W. Madelung has spoken about the early Shi’i belief of the Qa’im and, in this regard, briefly examined the Waqifi belief of the Qa’im. He emphasises that some of the Waqifi traditions were later used by the Twelver Shi’a when they declared that the Twelfth Imam was the Qa’im. Madelung also gives the names of some of the Waqifi scholars who wrote on the ghayba. Moezzi has also recorded the authors and titles of some Waqifi and Qa’i works which were probably written for polemical purposes. H. Modarressi, when he investigated the crisis of succession in the Imamí party, has touched on the Waqifi sect. His two large footnotes about the Waqifa contain some valuable information. There is no entry on the Waqifa in the first edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam. In its second edition, an entry on the sect is expected to appear soon.

There is no adequate information about the extremist Waqifa, the Bashiriyya, in modern studies. Moreover, despite the fact that the proclamation of Ahmad b. Musa’s imama firstly took place just after al-Kazim’s death, no works traced this when they investigated this period of crisis. This section of the thesis aims to examine

37 Moezzi, pp. 101-2.
38 Modarressi, pp. 60-2, footnotes 30, 33.
these splits within the Imami party by using all the information available in the sources.

1 - The Emergence of the Waqifa: A Serious Challenge to the Leadership of al-Rida

When Musa al-Kazim died in 183/799, a big division took place within the Imami community. A considerable number of people who followed some prominent disciples of al-Kazim denied the death of the Imam and declared that he had gone into occultation (ghayba) and would come back some day as the Qa'im to restore justice and equity on earth. They also refused to accept the imama of 'Ali al-Rida whom was claimed by some to have succeeded his father through a testament. Because they stopped (waqafa) the line of Imams with al-Kazim and did not continue it, they were called the Waqifa.39

This kind of claim was not new in the history of Shi'i ideology. The Shi'is were quite familiar with the belief of the ghayba and this factor seems to have facilitated the belief of the Waqifa to be adopted easily by large numbers. Al-Nawbakhti asserts that the first Waqifi claim in Islam was that of 'Abd Allah b. Saba', an extremist Shi'i from the circle of 'Ali b. Abi Talib. When 'Ali died, 'Abd Allah contended that he was still alive and that he would not die until he came back to the world and drove the Arabs with his stick.40 The followers of 'Abd Allah believed that 'Ali was in the skies; the thunder was his sound and the lightning was his whip. When


40 al-Nawbakhti, p. 19.
they heard a sound of thunder they used to say: "Peace be upon you, O the Commander of the faithful!". 41

Another similar group denied that al-Husayn b. ‘Ali b. Abi Ṭālib had been killed at Karbala. They maintained that he was raised to the heavens like Jesus had been raised before. They put forward a verse of the Qur’ān as evidence that "God will never grant to the unbelievers a way over the believers" (al-Qur’ān, iv: 144), so the killing of al-Husayn did not actually happen. 42 Al-Mufid calls this group the Mufawwida. 43 After Muhammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya had died in 81/700, several groups declared that he had not died and he was the Qā’im. 44 One group of them believed that he was on the hill of Raḍwā between Mecca and Medina. He was nourished by God with food and drink. A lion on his right and a tiger on his left always protected him and this would continue until his reappearance. 45 His son, Abū Ḥāšim, was also claimed to have been the Qā’im by an extremist group called the Bayāniyya. They stopped their line of Imams with him and started to wait for his reappearance. 46

Al-Kazim’s grandfather al-Ḥāqr and his father al-Ṣadiq became the targets of similar Wāqifi claims as well after their deaths. A minority group which is called by the heresiographers the Bāqiriyya believed in Muhammad al-Ḥāqr’s concealment. 47 The group maintained that he was the Mahdi - Qā’im and this fact had been told by the

41 F. al-Rāzi, Muḥassal, p.242; idem, Iʿtiqādat, p.53.
42 Musnad al-Ridā, ii, pp.503-4.
44 see al-Nawbakhu, pp.25, 26, 28.
46 al-Nawbakhtī, p.30.
Prophet to Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh, a Medinan disciple of the Prophet who is said to have met with al-Baqir. The Prophet told Jābir that he would meet the Qā'im and, when it would happen, he should give the Prophet's greeting to him.48 Another group called the Nāwūsiyya denied al-Ṣādiq's death proclaiming him as the Qā'im.49 Similarly, a body of proto-Ismā'ili disclaimed the death of Ismā'īl b. Ja'far during his father's lifetime and alleged that his death was a ruse of al-Ṣādiq's in order to save Ismā'īl from the 'Abbāsid persecution. Al-Shahristānī designates this group "al-Ismā'iliyya al-Wāqifa".50

The belief that al-Kāẓim would be the Qā'im seems to have already spread to some extent within the Imāmī community when al-Kāẓim was still alive. It seems that this was so especially as the result of the circulation of a hadīth in which al-Ṣādiq was related to have said that the seventh Imām would be the Qā'im.51 This created an expectation that it was al-Kāẓim who would establish justice and equity on earth. For that reason, when the Imām died in custody, the vizier Yahyā b. Khālid ordered it to be announced that Mūsā al-Kāẓim, whom the Shi'īs (al-Rafi'a) claim was the Qā'im who would not die, had died and that they should come and look at his dead body.52 Although the identity and the number of these people are not known, they must have been a considerable number of people since the government delayed the Imām's funeral by displaying his body on a bridge in Baghdad for three days in order to convince the people of al-Kāẓim's death.53

48 al-Baghdādi, pp.64-5.
49 For this group, see pp.82-6 above.
50 al-Shahristānī, p.144. Also see p.60 above.
51 see al-Kashshi, p.475, al-Shahristānī, p.144.
52 Maqātil, p.505, al-Irshād, p 456.
All the Waqifis agreed that Musa al-Kāzīm went into concealment and would return some day and carry out the tasks of the Qā'im. However, there was disagreement among them about the immortality of the Imām and the function of 'Ali al-Ridā who had already been proclaimed as the new Imām by a number of the followers. Some heresiographers reveal this disagreement. It is understood from these reports that many Waqifis thought that al-Kāzīm had not died. He went out from the prison and nobody saw him after that. But al-Rashīd falsified this fact and announced that al-Kāzīm had died. These Shi'is circulated a hadith in which al-Ṣādiq said that if al-Kāzīm's head was rolled down to them from a mountain, they should not believe it, because he was the Qā'im.\(^5^4\) In another hadith al-Ṣādiq was related to have said: "Whosoever comes to you and tells you that he has nursed my son, closed his eyes, washed his body, put him in his grave, and shaken off his hands the dust of his grave, do not believe him".\(^5^5\)

Other Waqifis accepted the death of al-Kāzīm. The opinion of one group of them was that al-Kāzīm, after his death, returned to the world and went into hiding where he continued to command his followers. A small selected group of his disciples was able to visit him and see him. They relied on a hadith attributed to al-Ṣādiq that the Qā'im was called so because he would rise (yaqūmu) after having died. The opinion of another group was that al-Kāzīm died and he would return sometime near the day of resurrection, like Jesus, to fill the earth with justice as it was filled with injustice and despotism. They relied on a statement ascribed to al-Ṣādiq that in al-


\(^{55}\) This is related on the authority of Abu b. Abī Hamzā, one of the leaders of the Waqīla, see al-Tusi, al-Ghayba, p. 37.
Kažim there was a resemblance (shibh) with Jesus and he would be killed at the hands of "the children of al-'Abbās".\(^{56}\)

All these Shi'is were called the Waqīfa. The majority of them did not accept any Imam after al-Kažim and they categorically rejected the imāma of 'Ali al-Riḍā. However, some of them gave some place to him and his descendants in their beliefs. They did not accept them as Imāms; they were only the representatives of al-Kažim until he would return to the earth as the real Imām.\(^{57}\)

There was another group which could be regarded as the sceptical Waqīfa. They considered the contradictory statements about the life of al-Kažim equal in reliability. They also did not regret the traditions of al-Riḍā's designation to the imāma as explicit enough for them to set aside other traditions showing al-Kažim as the last Imām and the awaited Qā'im. Therefore, they decided to wait and did not come to any conclusion about the matter until the truth emerged.\(^{58}\) Al-Nawbakhti reports that many people from this group later accepted al-Riḍā's imāma and joined his party. Al-Kashshi gives some names from these Waqīfīs. According to al-Kashshi, from the followers of al-Kažim, 'Ali b. Khattāb, Ibrāhim b. Shu'ayb, Ibrāhim b. Abī Sammāl and his brother Ismā'īl b. Abī Sammāl died in doubt about whether al-Kažim was the last Imām or not.\(^{59}\) Al-Nawbakhti and al-Qummi consider this group as being within

\(^{56}\) al-Nawbakhti, p. 68; al-Qummi, p. 90; al-Rāzi, p. 290.

\(^{57}\) al-Nawbakhti, p. 68; al-Qummi, p. 90. Al-Mufīd likens these Waqīfīs to those Kaysans who accepted the Imam al-Hasan and al-Husayn as the representatives of the real Imam Muhammad b. al-Hanafīyya. According to al-Mufīd, the corrupt nature of this belief was quite obvious, see al-Fusul al-Mukhtara, p. 254.

\(^{58}\) al-Nawbakhti, pp. 69-70; al-Qummi, p. 91; al-Ash'arī, i, p. 29; al-Baghdādi, pp. 65-6; al-Isfara'i, i, p. 23.

\(^{59}\) see al-Kashshi, pp. 469-74; Al Najashi, p. 16.
the Waqifa. Al-Nāši' and al-Balkhi show them as the third group besides the Waqifis and those who accepted al-Ridā's imāma following the dispute and the schism within the party over al-Kāzīm's death. Al-Baghdādi reports that they were called the Mūsawiyya, because they awaited the return of Mūsā b. Ja'far. Al-Shahristānī and Fakhr al-Rāzī also separate them from other Waqifi factions and call them the Māmūra, which was another name for the Waqifa, the meaning of which will be explained presently. The doubt of this group does not seem to have remained for a long time. According to al-Nāši', most of these sceptics later accepted the death of al-Kāzīm and joined the party of al-Ridā. The rest gave up their doubts and decided to continue with the Waqifa.

The dimension of the schism caused by the Waqifa seems to have been much greater than has generally been thought. Al-Ṭūsī in his Rijal indicates fifty-four Waqifi names among the disciples of al-Kāzim. This number is about one fifth of all the disciples of the Imām whose names are given by al-Ṭūsī. The Waqifis even managed to win Ibrāhīm, the son of al-Kāzīm, over to their sects. Although, according to the majority of the sources, al-Kāzīm had only one son named Ibrāhīm, al-'Umar and Ibn 'Inaba give two names as the elder and the younger Ibrāhīm among

60 al-Nawbakhū, p. 70; al-Qummi, p. 91.
62 al-Baghdādi, p. 66. According to al-Ash'ārī, the Musawiyya were those Shi'īs who followed the imāma of Musa al-Kazim after al-Sadiq's death, not belonging to the Isma'iliyya, the Aftahiyya or the Nawsiiyya (Maqalat, i. p. 29).
64 al-Nāši', pp. 47-8.
65 see al-Ṭusī, Rijal, pp. 342-66.
66 al-Kulaynī, i. p. 380.
the sons of al-Każim.\textsuperscript{67} For this reason, we cannot say with any certainty that this Waqifi Ibrahim b. Musa was the same Ibrahim who was the bloodthirsty governor of Yemen on behalf of the rebel Abû al-Saraya and the caliph al-Ma'mun respectively.\textsuperscript{68}

No work of the Wāqifa has reached us. Only al-Ţūsi relates a large number of Waqifi hadith in his Kitāb al-Ghayba in order to criticise them. These forty-one traditions were quoted from the book of ‘Ali b. Āhmad al-‘Alawi. Al-Ţūsi says that the author wrote it to support the Waqifi belief.\textsuperscript{69} Most of the traditions are attributed to the Imām-al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq. For example, in a hadith al-Ṣādiq said that there was no father between him and the Qā’im (literally: “a father does not knit (nasaja) me and the Qā’im”). ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭalib is related to have said on the pulpit of Kufa that he was like the son of al-Ḥamida who would fill the earth with justice as it was filled with injustice and despotism. A man stood up and asked whether the Qā’im was indeed ‘Ali or not. ‘Ali said that he was from his offspring.\textsuperscript{70} Al-Ḥamida, as has been known, was the name of al-Każim’s mother. In another hadith, al-Ṣādiq said that for al-Każim there were two sorts of concealment (ghaybatayn): The first was “a change of residence (naql)” and the second was “the extended one (taţawwul)”.\textsuperscript{71}

As it is seen, the detention of the Imam in Iraq was regarded by the Wāqifa as a sort of concealment, but his second and real concealment was extended by God until a time which only He knew. A hadith attributed to al-Bāqir was also used to support the Waqifi claim. Al-Bāqir says that “the Master of this authority” (“Ṣāhib ḥādhā al-amr”, i.e. the Qā’im, the Mahdi) will be a model (sunna) of four prophets: like the

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{67} al-‘Umai, p.122; Ibn ‘Inaba, p.231.
\item \textsuperscript{68} For him, see pp.237-8, 373-4 below.
\item \textsuperscript{69} al-Ghayba, pp.29-42.
\item \textsuperscript{70} al-Ghayba, p.35.
\item \textsuperscript{71} al-Ghayba, p.38.
\end{itemize}
model of Moses, he will be watchful in a state of fear (*khā'ifun yataraqqab*);\(^{72}\) like the model of Joseph, he will be imprisoned;\(^{73}\) like the model of Jesus, it will be said that he died although he would actually not die;\(^{74}\) like model of Muhammad, he will fight with the sword.\(^{75}\) In this tradition, the anxiety of al-Kāẓim because of the ‘Abbāsid persecution against him and his detention which took place in the last four years of his life were shown as the signs of the awaited Mabdi. The dispute over his life after his death was another sign. What remained was to wait for his return to fight against the enemies of God in order to provide real justice on earth. Similar traditions emphasise the same point. He, like his name-sake Moses (Mūsā) had done it before, would rescue the Muslim nation from its Pharaoh.\(^{76}\) The name of the Qā'im would be that of "the owner of the Torah and the splitter of the sea (*fāliq al-bahr*)", i.e. Moses or Mūsā.\(^{77}\) The Imām Zayn al-‘Abidin is related to have said that the name of the Qā'im is "the iron of the barber" (*hadidat al-hallaq*), i.e. "the razor" which is "mūsā" in Arabic.\(^{78}\) The name "razor" also indicates the sword as well as the name of its owner.

All these traditions which were circulated among the Shi‘a resulted in the emergence of the Wāqifa sect. However, another important factor must not be overlooked. According to Imāmī sources, a large amount of money belonging to al-

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\(^{72}\) It refers to *al-Qur‘ān*, xxviii: 18, 21.

\(^{73}\) It refers to *al-Qur‘ān*, xii: 32-53.


\(^{75}\) *al-Ghayba*, p.40.

\(^{76}\) *al-Ghayba*, p.30.

\(^{77}\) *al-Ghayba*, p.31.

\(^{78}\) *al-Ghayba*, p.32.
Kāzim was hoarded by several Imāmi agents (wukalā') in different towns.79 When al-Kāzim died in custody, some agents did not accept 'Ali al-Riḍā as his father's legal successor and did not forward the money and other valuables to him. As they had used the money for their own interests, they put forward that al-Kāzim had not died, but he had gone into concealment and thus they had a right to keep the money until he would return as the Qā'im and ask for his possessions from them. These covetous agents are shown by the Imāmiyya as the protagonists of the Wāqifa. Their identities and the sum of money which they held are revealed by the sources.

'Ali b. Abī Ḥamza al-Baṭā'īni was perhaps the most well-known Wāqifi among the followers of al-Kāzim. He was the chief assistant (qā'id) of the blind Imāmi scholar Abū Baṣīr Yahyā b. Abī al-Qāsim al-Asadi.80 'Ali b. Abī Ḥamza was the author of three books about the ritual prayers, the fast and the exegesis of the Qur'ān.81 He worked as the agent of al-Kāzim in Kufa. He expropriated 30,000 dinārs which belonged to al-Kāzim.82 'Ali firstly maintained that al-Kāzim would return in eight months. It seems that when this prediction was not realised, he lost his prestige in the community.83 His death was reported to al-Riḍā when he was in Merv. Thereupon, he is related to have said that 'Ali b. Abī Ḥamza was interrogated in his grave by angels about the Imāms; he enumerated all the Imāms until al-Kāzim, but he

79 For the financial activities of al-Kāzim's party and the system of wakāla, see pp.403-8 below.

80 For Abū Baṣīr al-Asadi, see the index of al-Kashshi, al-Najashi, pp.308-9; al-Mufid, al-Ikhṭiṣās, p.83; al-Māmaqānī, ii, biography no: 12975.


83 al-Kashshi, pp.405-6.
was not able to pass to al-Riḍā, so he was beaten by them with a stick made from fire.  

Another Waqifi agent was Abū al-Faḍl Ziyād b. Marwān al-Qindi, a mawlā of the Banū Ḥāshim. Ziyād is said to have expropriated 70,000 dinārs of al-Kāzim’s after the death of the latter. Mansūr b. Yūnus al-Qurashi is also reported to have taken possession of the money which was entrusted to him by al-Kāzim, the amount of which is not reported by the sources. Besides ‘Ali b. Abi Ḥamza, another Kufan agent, Ḥayyān al-Sarraj, was also a Waqifi. He spent the money which he expropriated by buying very expensive houses and making several contracts for investment. Just before his death, he transferred by will all the possessions to the inheritors of al-Kāzim.

Some agents, although at the beginning they had acted with the Waqifa and kept the trust money, not delivering it to al-Riḍā, later repented and returned it to him. Ahmad b. Abī Bishr al-Sarraj, according to al-Ḥasan b. ‘Ali b. al-Fadlāl, the renowned Fatḥi scholar who was the son-in-law of Ahmad al-Sarraj, took 10,000

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84 Dalā’īl, p.188; Manāqib, iv. p.337. For another version, also see al-Kashshi, pp.403-4.

85 For him, see al-Ṭusi, Fihrist, p.146; al-Najashi, p.122; Ibn Dawud, p.454.

86 al-Kashshi, pp.467, 493; Ibn Babuya, Ḥiyān, pp.25-6, 91; idem, Ḥiyān, pp.235-6; al-Ṭusi, al-Ghayba, pp.42-3.


88 al-Himyari, p.351; al-Kashshi, p.459. Al-Kashshi gives the name of another Ḥayyān al-Sarraj who lived at the time of al-Sadiq. But he was a Kaysani, not a Waqifi, who believed that Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyya was still alive (pp.314-6). Al-Mamaqani observes that these two men are different persons and suggests that the name of the Waqifi could be Ḥannān instead of Ḥayyān, see Tanqihii, biography no. 3480 and 3481.

89 al-Kashshi, pp.459-60.
dinārs, which belonged to al-Kāzim, into his possession, but, just before his death, he enjoined al-Ḥasan to return all the money to al-Ḥiḍā. 90 'Uthman b. Isā al-Rawāsi al-Kūfī was the agent of al-Kāzim in Egypt. He is described as the shaykh of the Wāqifa. He was the author of several books on fiqh 91 and was considered as one of the jurists of al-Kāzim. 92 He had 30,000 dinārs and six (or five) concubines which were the possessions of al-Kāzim. When the latter died, al-Ḥiḍā sent one of his men to 'Uthman to take delivery of al-Kāzim's trusts. 'Uthman refused to deliver them. He wrote a letter in which he said that al-Kāzim had not died and he had not commanded him to deliver the possessions to anybody. He also added that he had emancipated the concubines and married them. 93 But, al-Kashshī reports that he later became penitent and returned the possessions to al-Ḥiḍā. 94

In addition to these agents, several other members of the Wāqifa can be identified in the sources. Al-Ḥusayn b. Qayāma "al-Ṣayrafi" ("money changer") is regarded as one of the leaders of the sect. 95 It was al-Ḥusayn who told al-Ḥiḍā to his face that he was not Imam because al-Ṣadiq had said that an Imam must not be barren. It is reported that a short time later Muḥammad was born to al-Ḥiḍā. This was told al-Ḥusayn. He said that this could be deemed as an important sign corroborating al-Ḥiḍā's imama, but he still would not disregard the traditions related from al-Ṣadiq which indicated al-Kāzim as the Qā'im. 96

90 al-Ghayba, p.44; Manāqib, iv, p.336.
92 al-Kashshī, p.556.
94 al-Kashshī, pp.597-8.
Al-Najashi describes al-Ḥusayn b. Abī Saʿīd al-Mukārī and his father Ḥāshim al-Mukārī as prominent members of the Wāqifa (waḥrayn fi al-Wāqifa). Al-Ḥusayn al-Mukārī and al-Ḥusayn b. Mihrān, another Wāqifi leader, were among those who criticised al-Riḍā because of his neglect of taqiyya. According to them, this behaviour was not the way of the previous Imāms and this fact was a clear indication of the false nature of al-Riḍā’s imāma. A tradition tells that al-Riḍā tried to win al-Ḥusayn b. Mihrān over by sending to him a long admonitory letter. However, al-Riḍā preferred to send it to al-Ḥusayn’s companions instead of sending it directly to him. In this way al-Riḍā made them witnesses to his warnings and admonitions. Otherwise, it was al-Ḥusayn’s custom that whenever an unpleasant thing was asked from him by a letter, he denied that he had received such a letter. It seems that this letter did not work. In another tradition, al-Riḍā is said to have prayed to God to make al-Ḥusayn b. Mihrān and his family paupers due to his conduct with the Wāqifa.

Some Wāqifi traditionists seem to have made a large contribution in support of the sect by their fabricated or misinterpreted traditions. Zur’a b. Muhammad al-Ḥadrami was one of them. He is seen as the first transmitter of the hadith designating al-Kāzīm as the Mahdi who was a model of some of the Prophets. Zur’a was the imam of a mosque in Kufa belonging to the Arab Ḥadrami tribe. This mosque might have been used as a seminary for the Wāqifi group. Another two

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97 Al-Najashi, p.28.
98 ‘Uyun, ii, pp.214-5.
99 For the letter, see al-Kashshi, pp.599-603; Musnad al-Riḍa, ii, pp.429-31.
100 al-Kashshi, p.405.
101 al-Kashshi, pp.476-7. For a similar hadith, see pp.201-2 above.
102 Al-Najashi, p.138. For Zur’a’s profile, see Ibid., p.125.

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traditionists were Yahya b. al-Qasim al-Azdi and Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Shamun. They were the rāwis of the traditions in which al-Ṣādiq was related to have advised his followers not to believe in the death of his son al-Kāzim, because he would be the Qā‘im.\textsuperscript{103} Yahya b. al-Qasim al-Azdi "al-Ḥadhdhā‘" ("shoemaker") must not be confused with Abu Basir Yahya b. Abi al-Qasim al-Asadi because of the similarity between their names. Al-Kasshi and al-Najashi seem to have fallen into this mistake.\textsuperscript{104} Abu Basir al-Asadi, who was a blind scholar from the prominent disciples of al-Ṣādiq, died in 150/767\textsuperscript{105} and thus he must have had no connection with the Waqifa. Al-Maqaqani recognised this mistake and explained it in his book.\textsuperscript{106} On the other hand, Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Shamun is reported to have inclined later from Waqifism to extremism. Since he died in 258/872 being then 114 years old,\textsuperscript{107} his contribution to the sect may be conjectured to be considerable.

A Waqifi scholar, 'Ali b. al-Hasan al-Tatari is worth mentioning as he was the first who wrote a book about the ghayba based on the Waqifi thought. He was a disciple of al-Kāzim. Al-Tusi says that he wrote several books supporting his sect. Another of his books was about the imāma.\textsuperscript{108} Ahmad b. Muhammad b. 'Ali b. 'Umar b. Riyāh al-Qalla was also a learned Waqifi from the disciples of al-Kāzim. Among his several books, his collection of traditions relating what had been said about Abu al-Khattab and his treatise criticising the Zaydi sub-group the 'Ajaliyya are worth

\textsuperscript{103} al-Kasshi, pp.475-6; al-Najashi, p.237.

\textsuperscript{104} see al-Kasshi, pp.474-6; al-Najashi, pp.308-9.

\textsuperscript{105} al-Najashi, p 309.

\textsuperscript{106} see Tanqīḥ, ii. biography no: 12975.

\textsuperscript{107} al-Najashi, pp.237-8.

\textsuperscript{108} al-Tusi, Fihrist, pp. 216-7; al-Najashi, p.179.
noticing.\textsuperscript{109} His younger brother, 'Ali b. Muḥammad al-Qallā, wrote another Wāqifi work about the ghayba.\textsuperscript{110} Al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Sumā‘a al-Kindī (d. 263/877) is described as a zealot Wāqifi. He was the pupil of 'Ali al-Ṭāṭari. He followed his teacher and wrote another Kitab al-Ghayba in the Wāqifi line of thought.\textsuperscript{111} It is also reported that 'Abd Allāh b. Jabala al-Kināni and al-Ḥasan b. 'Ali b. Abī Ḥamzā, who lived at the time of al-Riḍā, wrote books on the ghayba in Wāqifi form.\textsuperscript{112}

It seems that the books of the ghayba, which started to be written in the early days of the Wāqifa, firmly established the foundations of the sect. From all the reports it appears that a severe contest took place from the beginning between the party of 'Ali al-Riḍā and the Wāqifi factions. The Wāqifis attacked al-Riḍā in different ways. They alleged that due to the fact that al-Riḍā had not been able to be present in the funeral procession of his father, he must not have been an Imām, because a Shi'i tradition considered that "the body of the dead Imam could not be washed by anyone except the next Imām".\textsuperscript{113} They also criticised al-Riḍā because of his proclamation of his imama publicly without any fear. According to them, this conduct was not in accord with the principle of taqiyya of the Shi'a and this was not the way which the previous Imāms had followed.\textsuperscript{114} Furthermore, they asserted that al-Riḍā's answers to the questions asked by his followers contradicted the traditions which had been related from his predecessors.\textsuperscript{115} The fact that al-Riḍā was left for a long time without any child

\textsuperscript{109} al-Najāshi, p.67.
\textsuperscript{110} al-Najāshi, p.183.
\textsuperscript{111} al-Najāshi, pp.29-31; al-Kashshi, p.469.
\textsuperscript{112} al-Najāshi, pp.27, 150.
\textsuperscript{113} ‘Uyun, i, p.86. For the statement of this tradition, see al-Kulaynī, i, p.384.
\textsuperscript{114} ‘Uyun, ii, pp.214-5.
\textsuperscript{115} al-Ḥimyūri, pp.348-9.
formed another basis of attack. They maintained that a real Imam could not have been barren.\textsuperscript{116}

'Ali al-Ridā, of course, did not leave these attacks undefended. According to several traditions, the Imam accused the Waqīfīs of being Zindiqs and said that their place in the hereafter would be Hell.\textsuperscript{117} He allowed his followers to make 
\textit{qunūt} (to curse in \textit{ṣalāt}) against the Waqīfīs and prohibited them from giving any zakāt to them.\textsuperscript{118} Al-Ridā also used to send letters to some Waqīfīs in order to convince them of the truth of his leadership. Although this failed in the case of al-Ḥusayn b. Mihrān\textsuperscript{119}, he managed to win Ahmad b. Muḥammad al-Baṣānī over.\textsuperscript{120} Prominent members of al-Ridā's party took part in this dispute as well. Once, Yūnus b. 'Abd al-Rahmān\textsuperscript{121} and 'Ali b. Maytham\textsuperscript{122} had a discussion with some Waqīfīs at a meeting. The discussion became tense, therefore 'Ali b. Maytham told them: "You are more contemptible in my eyes than "\textit{al-maṯūra}" ("the rain-drenched dog").\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{116} al-Kulaynī, i, p.320; 'Uyūn, ii, p.210; al-Kashshī, p.553; \textit{al-Irshād}, p.482.

\textsuperscript{117} al-Kashshī, pp.455-6, 461.

\textsuperscript{118} al-Kashshī, pp.456, 461.

\textsuperscript{119} see al-Kashshī, pp.599-603; al-Māmāqānī, i, biography no: 3087.

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{al-Ghayba}, p.47.

\textsuperscript{121} For him, see pp.427-30 below.

\textsuperscript{122} For him, see pp.424-6 below.

\textsuperscript{123} al-Nawbakhtī, p.69; al-Rāzī, p.290; al-Shahrastānī, p.145. According to al-Ash'ārī (i, p.29), al-Baghdādī (p.66) and Fākhru l-Rāzī (\textit{Muḥāṣṣal}, p.243), this statement was made by Yūnus b. 'Abd al-Rahman. Al-Isfārā'īnī says that it was Zurara b. A'yān who said it (p.23). However, this last information seems to be wrong since Zurara is reported to have died in 150/767, more than thirty years before the Waqīfīs came into existence. There is also another story that, at the time of al-Sadīq, an argument took place between the followers of Isma'īl b. Ja'far and the supporters of Musa al-Kazīm. They agreed to go to a plain and to pray to God to show them which side was right. They went there as they had decided. After they had prayed, a rain cloud appeared and it rained only over al-Kazīm's group. This incident was told to al-Sadīq, so he called al-Kazīm's group al-Mamtūra (\textit{Ithbāt}, p.204). Also see al-Balḥānī.
This name seems to have become popular and it started to be used as an opprobrious name for the Waqifi group. In addition, 'Ali b. Mahziyar al-Ahwazi, another partisan of 'Ali al-Rida, and one of his agents, wrote "The Book of the Qa'im". This book was probably written for the purpose of replying to the Waqifi polemics on the identity of the Qa'im.

The effect of these counter-attacks started to show itself very quickly. It is reported that 'Abd al-Rahman b. al-Hajjaj, Rifaa'a b. Musa al-Asadi, Yunus b. Ya'qub, Jamil b. Darraj, Hammad b. Isa al-Juhani, Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Bazanti, and al-Hasan b. 'Ali al-Washsha left the Waqifs during the time of p.182). However, in the last story the name al-Mamtura is used as a compliment rather than a derogatory title. Therefore this is in sharp contrast to the real meaning of the name. The dog is considered unclean in Islam and, when it is wet, it becomes worse in terms of purity as well as appearance, as is explained by the sources, see al-Nawbakhti, p.69; al-Qummi, p.92; al-Razi, p.290; F. al-Razi, I'tiqadat, p.54.

124 For him, see p.410 below.
125 al-Najashi, p.178.
126 A prominent agent of al-Kazim and al-Rida. For him, see pp.405-7 below.
127 Rifaa'a was a companion of al-Sadiq and al-Kazim. He was regarded as thiqa in hadith. He is the author of a book on inheritance (faraid), see al-Najashi, p.119; al-Mamaqani, i, biography no: 4129.
128 A former Fathi and the agent of al-Kazim, see p.405 below.
129 Jamil was among the most eminent six jurists from the young generation of al-Sadiq's disciples, see al-Kashshi, pp.375, 251-2; al-Najashi, p.92.
130 Hammad was also among the most eminent six jurists from the young generation of al-Sadiq's disciples. He died in 209/824-5 in a flood in Medina, see al-Kashshi, pp.375, 316-7; al-Najashi, p.103.
131 For him, see p.434 below.
132 For him, see pp.411-2 below.
al-Riḍā and joined his party.\textsuperscript{133} ‘Abd Allāh b. Mughira\textsuperscript{134} and Yazid b. Ishāq\textsuperscript{135} alleged that, as a result of their prayers, they themselves relinquished the Wāqifi belief and discovered the right guidance of al-Riḍā.\textsuperscript{136} A group of Shi‘is were also said to have renounced the sect after witnessing some miracles by al-Riḍā.\textsuperscript{137} Abū Khālid al-Sijistānī states that, when he was a Wāqifi, he looked towards the stars and came to the conclusion that al-Kāzim had died, therefore he left his group and accepted al-Riḍā’s imāma.\textsuperscript{138}

One of the methods of the Wāqifa to strengthen its position in the Shi‘i community was to bribe some leading figures of al-Riḍā’s party. It is reported that a large sum of money was offered to Safwān b. Yahyā, the agent of al-Riḍā,\textsuperscript{139} to leave the Imām. He rejected the offer.\textsuperscript{140} They also attempted to bribe Yūnus b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān with 10,000 dinārs not to make known his acceptance of al-Riḍā’s imāma and not to criticise their opinions publicly. He did not accept.\textsuperscript{141} As another tactic, they used to show that the substratum of al-Riḍā’s claim was quite weak. They spread a rumour that Safwān b. Yahyā’s acceptance of al-Riḍā’s claim was only a consequence of his salāt and prayer (istikhāra), not a result of convincing evidences. They also circulated a narration that ‘Ali Baqbaqa, a Wāqifi, had asked

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[133]{al-\textit{Ghayba}, p.47; \textit{Manāqib}, iv, p.336; \textit{Musnad al-Riḍā}, i, pp.206-7.}
\footnotetext[134]{He is one of the famous jurists of al-Kāzim. For him, see p.434 below.}
\footnotetext[135]{For him, see al-Najāshi, p.314.}
\footnotetext[136]{al-Kulaynī, p.355; al-Kashshī, pp.594, 605-6; al-Mufīd, \textit{al-Ikhtīṣās}, p.84; al-Rawandi, i, pp.360-1.}
\footnotetext[137]{see al-Kulaynī, pp.354-5; al-Kashshī, p.469; al-\textit{Ghayba}, pp.47-50.}
\footnotetext[138]{al-\textit{Majlisī}, XI, VIII, p.274.}
\footnotetext[139]{For him, see p.411 below.}
\footnotetext[140]{al-Najāshi, p.139.}
\end{footnotes}
Safwan b. Yahyā and other prominent partisans what had driven them to accept al-Riḍā’s imāma. They could not answer satisfactorily; instead, they turned to Āḥmad al-Bazantū, who must still have been a young and inexperienced man, to answer this question. The Wāqifi rawī said that the followers of al-Riḍā had no strong arguments; they only followed blindly the words of some ignoramuses.142

Similar machiavellian tactics seem to have been implemented by al-Riḍā’s followers and later Imamis as a counter-attack. A number of traditions were attributed to the two previous Imāms, al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq, who were both alleged to have prophesied the emergence of the Wāqifa and cursed them.143 Mūsā al-Kāzīm was also said to have informed al-Riḍā, when he was still a child, of the names of the two prominent Wāqifis, ‘Uthmān b. ‘Īsā al-Rawāsī and Ziyād al-Qindi and cursed them.144 The Imamis, furthermore, maintained that the reason why Mūsā b. Ja’far was nicknamed al-Kāzīm was that he knew all those who would stop the line of the imāma with him and reject al-Riḍā’s imāma among his disciples, but he always kept his wrath (kazama) against them under control and never let them see it.145 They also replied to the Wāqifi allegation about the absence of al-Riḍā in the funeral procession of his father. They probably fabricated a hadith that, when al-Kāzīm had died in prison, al-Musayyab b. Zuhayr, who was the warder of the Imam, had witnessed al-Riḍā coming miraculously from Medina and washing his father’s body, invisible from the people.146

142 al-Ghayba, p.41.
143 see al-Kashshāi, pp.458, 462-3.
144 al-Ghayba, p.45.
145 Ibn Babuya, 'Ilal, p.235; 'Uyun, i, p.91.
146 'Uyun, i, pp.82 5. Also see pp.169-70 above.
A group of hadith in al-Kafi also seem to be later fabrications of the Imamiyya. In one of these three traditions, al-Sadiq is reported to have said: "When we have said anything about a man; if this did not happen to him, it would happen to his son or his grandson. You never reject it. Allah, the Exalted, does what He intends". This hadith apparently indicates that even if al-Sadiq said something about the Mahdiship of al-Kazim, as the Waqifa maintained, it did not mean that this prediction would be definitely realised in him; it was always possible that one person from al-Kazim's offspring might have been the real intention of the hadith. It is obvious that Twelver Shi'i doctors, adding these traditions into their collections, acquired the advantage of being able to corroborate their Qa' im without rejecting other numerous Shi'i traditions in circulation which indicated several numbers in the series of the Imams other than twelve or different historical and physical signs describing who would be the Qa' im or his countenance and the time of his appearance.

It is understood from several reports, which have been mentioned, that the followers of al-Rida managed to convince many members of the Waqifa and strengthened their position in the community against the Waqifi opposition. Especially after al-Rida had been nominated by al-Ma'mun as heir to the throne, the popularity of the Imam peaked in the Shi'i community. It is possible that, if events had continued to develop along the same course, the Waqifa might have disappeared in the community at an earlier time. However, it seems that the unexpected death of al-Rida and the succession of his seven year old son Muhammad to his place became a serious setback for the party of al-Rida. Al-Waqifa probably put this opportunity to good use. Many discussions about this matter seem to have taken place between the two sects at that

\[\text{147 al-Kulayn, i, p. 535.}\]
According to some reports, a group from the party of al-Rida joined the Waqifa on account of this problem.

Muhammad al-Jawad maintained the struggle against the Waqifa. He called them "asses of the Shi'a". He also stated that al-Waqifa had nothing to do with the Imams; they were of the same rank as the Zaydiyya. It seems that continuing internal problems in the Imami party let the Waqifa sect survive in the Shi'i community without clashing with any serious rival until, at least, the beginning of the fourth century H.. Abu Ḥatim al-Razi (d.322/934) states that the Waqifa still existed in his time. However, when the Imamiyya emerged as the Twelver Shi'a after 260/874 and then the latter firmly established their basis, especially on the matter of the concealment of the Twelfth Imam, no place seemed to be left for the Waqifa. The sect must have started to disappear gradually from the first half of the fourth century on. Eventually no vestige of the Waqifa remained.

The Waqifi contribution to Twelver Shi'i thought must not be overlooked. As W. Madelung rightly observes, several Waqifi traditions, having been circulated to support the idea of the seventh Imam's concealment, were later adopted by the Twelver Shi'a in order to advocate the occultation of the Twelfth Imam. On the other hand, it could be suggested that the attitudes of al-Kazim's Waqifi agents became good examples for the agents of the eleventh Imam al-Hasan al-'Askari to follow.

148 For example, 'Ali b. Ja'far al-Sadiq's fight with a Waqifi as a result of a discussion between them about the imama of Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Rida, see al-Kashshfi, p. 429.


150 al-Kashshfi, p 460.

151 al-Razi, p 290.

152 for some examples, see W. Madelung, "al-Mahdi El2, v, p 1236.
Therefore, the history of Islam witnessed for a second time the foundation of another sect largely through the zeal of the powerful financial agents of a Shi'i Imam.

2 - The Extremist Waqifa : The Bashiriyya

As is understood from the heresiographical reports, a group of people, like the Waqifa, denied the death of al-Kāzim and stopped the line of the Imams with him, but this group must have differed completely from the well-known Waqifa because of their extremist ideas. This group seems to have represented another example of Kufan Shi'i extremism. Their ideas were quite similar to those of previous Kufa-based extremist sects such as the Mughiriyya and the Bayāniyya.153

The leader of the group was Muḥammad b. Bashir154, a mawla of the Banū Asad from Kufa. Because of its leader’s name, the group was called the Bashiriyya155 or the Bishriyya.156 According to al-Kashshi, Muḥammad started to spread his extremist ideas about al-Kāzim in the latter’s lifetime, therefore the Imam repudiated him and publicly cursed him.157

153 For these groups, see pp.31-2 above.


155 According to al-Nāshi’, the group of Muḥammad b. Bashir, the Bashiriyya, emerged after the death of al-Ṣadiq. Muḥammad claimed that the imama passed to him from al-Ṣadiq and ascribed to himself prophethood. He maintained that he knew the unseen and he could bring dead people to life (Masa’il al-Imama, p.41). Although the extremist ideas of Muḥammad which are presented by al-Nāshi’ are in accord with the reports of other heresiologists, the point that Muḥammad pretended to be Imam as the successor of al-Ṣadiq is not mentioned in other sources. Hence, it is not exactly known whether Muḥammad b. Bashir started to spread his extremist allegations just after al-Ṣadiq’s death or whether this is simply an error of al-Nāshi’ by confusing the names of al-Ṣadiq and al-Kāzim.

156 al-Nawbakhti, p. 70; F. al-Rāzī, Muḥassal, p.243.

157 al-Kashshi, pp.482-3.

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According to Muhammad b. Bashir, despite the fact that al-Kāzīm was seen as a human being, he was not actually a human being. He was seen as a light by "the people of the light" ("ahl al-nūr"), as the one in impurity (kudra) by "the people of impurity", and as a human being by normal people. He was then screened from the views of the people, even though he was still present in reality among them. He was not imprisoned and he never died. Since he was the Qā'im and the Mahdi in this way, he went into concealment and would return to the earth. Muḥammad b. Bashir claimed that, when al-Kāzīm went into concealment, he appointed him to his post. Before that, the Imam had taught him everything necessary for the affairs of this world and the hereafter, therefore, the only lawful Imam after al-Kāzīm was Muḥammad b. Bashir. The latter also proclaimed his son, Sami' b. Muḥammad, as his successor. The imama of Sami' and his descendants over all the Muslims would continue until the return of Mūsā al-Kāzīm as the Qā'im. The group did not accept the imama of 'Alī al- RIDA. Moreover, they excluded al-RIDĀ from kinship with al-Kāzīm and charged him and his followers with unbelief.

While the Bashiriyya used to practice the salāt five times a day and fast in Ramāḍān, they rejected the obligation of the zakāt and the ḥajj. They used to consider adultery and homosexuality permissible. The group also believed in incarnation (hulūl) and the transmigration of souls (tanāsukh), therefore they claimed that the souls of the all Imams was only one soul and it continued to pass from one Imam to another. Muḥammad b. Bashir ascribed divinity to al-Kāzīm and asserted that he was al-Kāzīm’s prophet.

Muḥammad b. Bashir is described as a very proficient juggler and conjurer. He had a big statue looking like al-Kāzīm in silk clothes. He used to invite his followers to his house and, by using different tricks, make this statue seem as if al-
Kažim was still alive and lived in Muḥammad's house. He used to make the statue speak and, in this way, give commands to his followers.¹⁵⁸

Al-Kashshi reports that Muḥammad was arrested and taken to the court on the charge of being Zindiq. Although, at first, he had managed to gain his freedom for a while by promising that he would make magic for the caliph which was so extraordinary that it would astound all the kings and rulers, after the trickery of his juggling had emerged, he was captured and immediately executed.¹⁵⁹

3 - The Supporters of Aḥmad b. Musa

Presumably it was only a small group of the Shi‘a ¹⁶⁰ which proclaimed Aḥmad b. Musa, a younger brother of 'Ali al-Riḍā, as the new Imam after al-Kažim.¹⁶¹ Al-Kashshi gives the names of two supporters of Aḥmad b. Musa: Ibrāhīm and Isma‘īl who were brothers and sons of Abū Sammāl. When Ahmad joined the revolt of Abū al-Sarāyā in 199/815, they disapproved of this action and left Ahmad. Al-Kashshi maintains that they then adopted the Waqīfī opinion.¹⁶²

There is no further information about these Shi‘is. This small group probably disappeared a short time later. However, al-Balkhi states again that Ahmad was

¹⁵⁸ for all these features of the Bashiriyya, see al-Kashshi, pp.477-82; al-Qummi, pp.62-3, 91-3; al-Nawbakhti, pp.70-1.

¹⁵⁹ al-Kashshi, p.481.

¹⁶⁰ According to al-Balkhi (p.181), the supporters of Ahmad b. Musa were a large number of people. However, this information seems unlikely to be true since, as is understood from the sources, little trace of this group was left and, probably for that reason, they were unknown to most of the heresiologists. Only a few of them mention these Shi‘is in their books.

¹⁶¹ al-Balkhi, p.181; al-As‘hārī, i, pp.29-30; F. al-Razi, Muhassal, p.243

¹⁶² al-Kashshi, p.472.
proclaimed as the Imam after al-Riḍa's death. This last proclamation is also reported by al-Nawbakhti, al-Qummi and al-Mufid and seems to have been the riposte of some partisans to the controversial succession of al-Riḍa's seven year old son, Muḥammad al-Jawād, to the imāma.

It is noteworthy that only the reemergence of the group of Ahmad b. Musa after al-Riḍā has been taken into account by some of the modern works. Except for J. Hussain, none of them seem to have noticed that this group emerged firstly after the death of al-Kazim.

4 - The Qaṭʿiyya : The Followers of al-Riḍa

Besides the Waqifa and the tiny group of Ahmad b. Musa, a large body of the Imamiyya maintained the line of the Imāms with 'Ali b. Musa al-Riḍa. They were called the Qaṭʿiyya, because they affirmed confidently (qata’a ‘alā) that al-Kazim had died and the new Imam after him was 'Ali b. Musa. This group was one of the

163 al-Balkhī, p. 181.
165 see pp. 379-80 below.
166 See Watt, "The Reappraisal", p. 648; idem, Formative Period, p. 160; idem, "Materials", p. 37; idem, "Sidelights", p. 294; Momen, pp. 57-8. Momen calls the group "the Ahmadiyya".
167 J. Hussain mentions this in one sentence. He said: "Al-Riḍa faced many difficulties in proving his right to the Imamate, not only to his father's prominent followers, but also to his brother Ahmad'. The only source Hussain refers to is al-Kashshī's Rijal. See J. Hussain, "New Light", p. 40; idem, The Occultation, p. 39.

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links of the chain of the Imāmi groups, after the Ja'fariyya and the Mūsawiyya, which would form in the future the sect of the Ithnā 'ashariyya (the Twelver Shi'a).

III - 'Ali al-Riḍā's Designation to the Imāma

Musā al-Kāzīm b. Ja'far died in 183/799. It seems that al-Kāzīm took every opportunity to proclaim the succession of al-Riḍā, who was his eldest son, to the leadership of the party in order to prevent a possible quarrel among the brothers after him like: as happened at the beginning of his own imāma. The most important evidence al-Kāzīm left for this purpose was his written testament indicating 'Ali's imāma clearly.

1 - The Written Testament of al-Kāzīm

This undated testament was recounted by al-Kulaynî and Ibn Bābūya. Its authenticity is uncertain. But, four different traditions related with four different sanads narrating the text of the testament or simply mentioning it might corroborate the existence of such a document though we cannot exclude the probability of there being some later Imāmi embellishments in it.

Ten names are recorded by al-Kulaynî as the testifiers of the testament. At the beginning of the testament, al-Kāzīm said that he had transcribed the testaments of

169 al-Kulaynî, i, p.316 no:15; 'Uyun, i, p.27 no:1, p.30 no:2, p.32 no:4. Except the last one ('Uyun, i, p.32 no:4) which only confirms the existence of such a testament and shows the number of al-Kāzīm's heirs as five, the other three narrations are reports which are complementary to each other; they indicate possible details of the testament and the dispute which took place among the family members in the court when the testament was read. From these extended narrations, we have summarised the episode, indicating in the footnotes important differences among the narrations.

170 Al-Kulaynî, i, p.316. However, Ibn Bābūya's account is nine testifiers, see 'Uyun, i, p.27.
the former Imāms word for word and bequeathed it to his son ʿAli. In addition to ʿAli, the names of Ibrāhim, al-ʿAbbās, al-Qāsim, Ismāʿīl and Ahmad, who were the other sons of al-Kāzim, and the mother of Ahmad are accounted in the testament as other heirs. However, the whole disposition of the testament was given to ʿAli alone. Consequently, if he wished to deprive other heirs of their rights, he could have done so. ʿAli also had the right to use one-third of the possessions bequeathed in the testament as he wanted. According to the will, ʿAli’s sisters could not get married without his approval. Besides, he could annul the marriage contract between his father and his wives. In just the same way, he got a divorce for Umm Farwa, one of his father’s wives. If al-Kāzim’s daughters got married, they would have lost all their rights given in the testament. The wives of al-Kāzim, as long as they stayed in the house of ʿAli al-Riḍā, would be treated and looked after in the same way as when al-

171 The name of al-Qāsim is omitted in the text of ʿUyūn (i, p.28). In another tradition in which ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. al-Hajjāj narrates the text of the testament, al-Kāzim made a bequest to only two of his sons, ʿAli and Ibrāhim, subject to that if one of them died, respectively al-Qāsim, Ismāʿīl and al-ʿAbbās would replace him and if all these names died, the two eldest ones from the other sons would replace them. These two sons to whom al-Kāzim made a bequest held the right of disposition of the testament. It seems that in this order al-Kāzim did not respect the seniority of his sons, because, at the end of the tradition, ʿAli al-Riḍā highlights that although al-ʿAbbās was senior to Ismāʿīl, al-Kāzim gave precedence to Ismāʿīl over al-ʿAbbās, see ʿUyūn, i, pp.30-1.

172 al-Saffār, p.487; al-Kulaynī, i, p.381. According to the narration, ʿAli al-Riḍā, although the news of his father’s death did not come yet to Medina, knew the time of the death and, on the following day, divorced Umm Farwa as the trustee of his father. M. Baqīr al-Majlīṣī regards it as a legal divorce because of al-Riḍā’s divine knowledge which enabled him to know everything instantly. According to al-Majlīṣī, this divorce was for the purpose of removing from her the nobility which she had won through her marriage with al-Kāzim like ʿAli b. Abī Talib had declared on the day of the Episode of the Camel that ʿAʾisha, the wife of the Prophet, had been divorced from the Prophet. Al-Majlīṣī also sees it possible that al-Riḍā knew that she wanted to get remarried, therefore, by expelling her from the family (from among ‘the mothers of the faithful’), he rendered it possible and made it easy for her to get remarried. see Biḥar, XI, VIII, p 235.
Kāzim had been alive, but if they remarried, they could not return to the care of the family unless 'Ali approved of it.173

Al-Kāzim had closed the testament with a seal and declared that nobody should break the seal except 'Ali al-Ridā. He had also cursed anyone who might have broken the seal. However, after opening and reading the testament in the court, some brothers of 'Ali, particularly al-'Abbās, objected to its content. Al-'Abbās asked the judge to break a seal below of the testament. He believed that there should have been something under the seal for them to regain their rights, because, he said: "our father has left nothing (for us) but he has given the all to him (Ali), so he left us indigent"174

This tense situation led to some troubles among the members of the family. First, Ibrāhīm b. Muhammad al-Ja'farī, one of the testifiers, stood up and said that if al-'Abbās were a good man, al-Kāzim would have known it and would not have left him in such a situation, so al-'Abbās had no right to speak. After Ibrāhīm al-Ja'farī, Ishaq b. Ja'far, the uncle, rushed to al-'Abbās and held his collar; he blamed him for being foolish, feeble-minded and dumb. However, al-'Abbās still maintained his criticism. Abū 'Imrān al-Ṭalḥī, the judge of Medina, refused to break the seal, because he feared al-Kāzim's curse, but he allowed al-'Abbās to break it himself. Al-'Abbās broke the seal. Under the seal it was written that al-Kāzim deprived all his sons except for 'Ali of their rights and put them under the wardship of 'Ali.

173 According to a narration, 'Ali b. Ja'far, the brother of al-Kāzim, told a Wāqīfī who asked him whether al-Kāzim had died that the latter had died; his possessions had been distributed and his wives had been remarried (al-Kashshi, p.429). The Ismā'īli author Ja'far b. Mansūr also says that al-Kāzim's wives ("the mothers of the faithful") were forced to get remarried to the enemies of the Imam (Asrār, Arab. text p.85, trans.: p.280). Although the last report has an Ismā'īli tendency to show the successor of al-Kāzim as a false Imam who was not able to protect even his family, the first account might indicate that some wives of al-Kāzim did not want to stay in the family home after their husband's death, instead, they remarried at the expense of losing their rights given in the testament of al-Kāzim.

174 'Uyun, i. p.29; al-Kulaynī, i, pp.317-8.
According to the narration, the testifiers also called Umm Ahmad, al-Kazim's wife, to the court and wanted her to open her veil to know whether she was really Umm Ahmad. She objected to that and claimed that her husband al-Kazim had foretold her: "You will be taken forcibly and moved into the meetings". The uncle Ishaq stood up again and said that women could not understand such things because of being weak-minded, so she must be quiet.

After these quarrels, 'Ali defended his father's testament and put forward that he wanted to regard the benefits of all the members of the family. He then turned to al-'Abbas and offered to take over all his debts. Al-‘Abbas was not satisfied. He said that if he remained alive, he would go to the wakil Sa'wan b. Yahiya and kill him in front of 'Ali. He left the meeting saying; "Allah has not made your opinion prevail over us, so this is (simply) due to our father's jealousy of us and his desire for what Allah does not allow to him and to you" 175

2 - Other Signs of the Designation

Apart from the official testament of al-Kazim which has been presented, there are several narrations in the sources indicating the imama of 'Ali after his father. Although majority of them are apparently later products, it seems to be more than probable that some of them were actually heard from al-Kazim himself. He especially emphasised that 'Ali was his eldest son 176 because, according to al-Ṣadiq, the eldest son of the present Imam deserved to be the true successor to his father 177 Other

175 al-Kulayni, i, p.319.
176 'Uyun, i, p.25; al-Kashshi, p.453.
177 al-Kulayni, i, p.284.
statements in the narrations which are said to have been used by al-Kāzim to confirm 'Ali's succession are the followings: 'He is my khalīfa and the proof (hujja) of God to the people after me', "he is the lord (sayyid) of my sons", "he is the most understanding, the most excellent and the best one among my sons", "he is the one who follows most closely my sayings and he is more obedient to my orders than them", "he is the one most preferred and most loved by me", "his writing is my writing and his words are my words".  \(^{178}\)

Like the names of other Imāms of the Twelver Shi'a and their mothers, those of 'Ali and Najma were also entered in the tradition which is related on the authority of Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh from the alleged document of Fāṭima, the daughter of the Prophet, (Ṣaḥīfah Ǧafta Ṭatima). A similar tradition giving an account of the Tablet of Fāṭima (lawḥ Ǧafta Ṭatima) gives 'Ali's name as the eight Imām. In it God says the following about 'Ali al-Ridā to his Prophet mediated by Gabriel:

"Whoever denies the eighth would deny all my awliyā’. 'Ali is my wali and my helper and also he is the one on whom I have laid the burden of prophethood. The devil and imperious man will kill him. He will be buried next to the most evil one from my creatures in a city which the virtuous servant has built."  \(^{179}\)

\(^{178}\) For the traditions as a group indicating the designation of al-Ridā for the imama by his father, see al-Kulayni, i, pp.311-9; ῾Uyun, i, pp.17-27; al-Irshad, pp.461-5; al-Ghayba, pp.24-9; Ithbat, pp.213-8; al-Ṣaffār, p.184; al-Kashshī, pp.451, 467.

\(^{179}\) ῾Uyun, i, pp.34-5; al-Kulayni, i, 527-8. In the same tradition related by Muḥammad b. Ibrahim al-Nuʿmanī (d.360/971) in his Kitāb al-Ghayba, "the virtuous servant" ("al-‘abd al-sāliḥ") is specified as Dhu al-Qarnayn (p.31), the two-horned one, the powerful ruler of east and west as mentioned in the Qur'ān, xviii: 83-98.

The grave which is next to that of al-Ridā belongs to Harūn al-Rashīd. All these traditions are narrated in ῾Uyun (i, pp.32-56) under the title of 'the designation texts (nuṣūs) of al-Ridā's imama amongst those of the other Imāms. Also see al-Kulayni, i, pp.525-35.
Another narration also indicates the divine order of the succession. According to it, al-Kāzim actually desired al-Qāsim, one of his sons, to be his successor, but this authority had not been given to the Imam. He saw the Prophet in his dream; al-Kāzim asked him who was the next Imam. The Prophet replied:

"I have not seen anyone from the Imāms who had been more impatient to quit this authority than you. If the designation of an Imam was determined by love, Ismā‘il (b. Ja‘far) would be (the Imam) because he was more loved by your father than you!" 180

Musa al-Kāzim confirmed ‘Ali’s succession on different occasions. His companions usually would ask about this matter and he would indicate his son ‘Ali though he was still a child. On one occasion, he called his associates and some notables of Medina and declared the nomination of ‘Ali. On another occasion, he sent some possessions to ‘Ali with a companion. In this way, he wanted to indicate the authority to which appeal should be made after him. 181

Before he was taken to Baghdad, al-Kāzim had declared again ‘Ali’s succession in front of the leading figures of the Medinan Shi‘is and gave to ‘Ali his own kunya, Abū al-Hasan. 182 He is also reported to have smuggled out some messages declaring the new Imam after him to his companions when he was in detention in Basra. 183

180 al-Kulayn, i, pp.314-5.
181 ‘Uyun, i, pp.17-27; al-Kulayn, i, pp.311-9; al-Irshād, pp.461-5.
182 Ithbat, p.211. In another tradition, al-Kazim said to Muhammad b. Sinan, a zealot follower of the Imam, that he would be taken to Iraq, so whoever usurped the right of ‘Ali, would be like one who had usurped the right of ‘Ali b. Abī Talib, see al-Kashshī, p.508, al-Ghayba, p.25.
183 al-Kulayn, i, p.313; ‘Uyun, i, p.25.
According to al-Kafi, al-Kazim, before being taken to Iraq, ordered 'Ali to sleep in the porch of his house until he died. Al-Musafir, 'Ali's servant, says that he, himself, used to prepare at nights the bed of 'Ali in the porch for four years. In the mornings 'Ali used to go back to his own home. But when the news of his father's death reached him, he entered his father's house for the first time in four years and asked Umm Ahmad to give him the trust which al-Kazim had left for him. Therefore she handed 2,000 or 4,000 dinars over to him. Al-Rida wanted her not to tell anybody anything about his father's death until the official news reached the governor of al-Madina. Al-Kulayni narrates this tradition under the title of "when does an Imam know that the office has come to him". According to the traditions in this section, the death of an Imam was told to his legal successor instantly by God's inspiration even if there was a long distance between him and the place where the former Imam had died. Al-Kulayni indicates 'Ali al-Rida's awareness of al-Kazim's death in terms of this creed.

Al-Kulayni narrates in Kitab al-Hujja of al-Kafi sixteen nusus on the designation of 'Ali al-Rida, which is the largest section among others dealing with the designations of all the twelve Imams as the leaders of the Muslims. This seems to be because of the emergence of the Waqifa which did not recognise the imama of al-Rida. For that reason, the supporters of the latter had to narrate many more traditions than had been needed before for the confirmation of his succession to his father.

Al-Kulayni's sixteen and al-Mufid's twelve traditions on the designation of al-Rida are related on the authority of twelve different companions of al-Kazim.

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184 al-Kulayni, i, pp.381-2. Also see Ithbat, pp.212, 218; al-Rawandi, i, p.370-1.
185 al-Kulayni, i, pp.311-9.
186 Sachedina, Just Ruler, p.52.
However, five of them are regarded as unreliable (da'if) ṭawi in the rijāl books of the Imāmiyya. Dawūd b. Kathir al-Raqqi is accounted among the extremist Shi'a. It is reported that authentic aḥādīth related from him were very few.187 Muḥammad b. Sinan al-Zahirī was also an unreliable ṭawi due to his connection with the extremists. It is recorded that traditions related on his authority cannot be relied upon, because he confessed just before his death: "Do not narrate anything from what I have related, because they are the books which I bought from the bazaar".188 Two other ṭawīs, Ziyād b. Marwan al-Qindi and al-Ḥusayn b. Mukhtar al-Qalānī, are regarded as having belonged to the Wāqifi sect.189 The fifth ṭawi, Muḥammad b. ʿIṣa b. Ammār al-Ṭaghlabī, is treated by Ibn Dawūd in the chapter in which he gives the accounts of da'if ṭawīs because of his being a Wāqifi. However, al-Najashi regards him as a trustworthy (thiqa) ṭawi.190

3 - The Propaganda of the Imāma and the Attitude of the Government

The imāma of 'Ali al-Riḍā found support within the family. Two uncles of al-Riḍā, Iṣa b. Ja'far and 'Ali b. Ja'far, put their weight as senior members of the family behind al-Riḍā's imāma.191 The support coming from some of the notables of

187 al-Najashi says: "Qāla ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. 'Abd al-Wāḥid: Qalla mā ra'aytu lahu hadithan sadidan" (p.112). Also see Ibn Dawūd, p.452.

188 Ibn Dawūd, pp.504-5. See also al-Najashi, pp.230-1; al-Ṭusi, Fihrist, p.295. However, in another tradition, the Imam al-Jawad praised Muḥammad b. Sinan recalling his truthful obedience to his father and himself, see al-Kashshī, p.504, al-Ghayba, p.211.

189 al Najashi, p.122; al-Ṭusi, Fihrist, p.146; Ibn Dawūd , p.454.


191 'Uyun, v. p.31-2; Iḥbat, p.217; al-Ghayba, pp.28-9. Ishaq b. Ja'far is mentioned as a ṭawi who related from Musa al-Kazim. He had upheld the imāma of his brother relating a nass on this matter on the authority of his father al-Sadiq (al Irshad, p.432). It is interesting to mention that although the text of the report is
the party was also remarkable. Yunus b. 'Abd al-Rahman, a jurist and theologian, not only accepted al-Rida's imama, but also called other Imams to accept it.\textsuperscript{192} Muhammad b. al-Fadl al-Hashimi said the following for the same purpose: "I have seen some of the distinguishing marks of al-Rida - peace be upon him -. If I had lived at the time of the Commander of the Faithful ('Ali b. Abi Talib), I would not see (on him) more than what I have seen (on al-Rida)".\textsuperscript{193}

As well as other questions, the question of who was the new Imam was also answered by al-Rida himself promulgating his succession. Those who were not satisfied cross-examined him.\textsuperscript{194} Ibn Shahrashub gives the number of questions replied by al-Rida in order to show his knowledge as 18,000.\textsuperscript{195}

The first task of 'Ali al-Rida was to convince his followers of the truth of his imama so that he could reunite the party under strong leadership and provide it with its former power and esteem. He faced many questions directed by doubtful Shi'is. One tradition is worth quoting to understand the continuing confusion among the Shi'is, even that of foremost disciples such as Yunus b. 'Abd al-Rahman, because of the extensive propaganda of the Waqifa and other splinter groups. Abu Jarir al-Qummi (Yunus b. 'Abd al-Rahman) relates:

" I said to Abu al-Hasan ('Ali al-Rida): "May God make me your ransom, you have known my devotion to your father and then to you". Then I swore: "By the rightness of the Apostle of Allah and vague, Ibn 'Inaba reports that a group of Shi'is claimed Ishaq's imama (\textit{Umdat al-Talib}, Qum 1409/1988, p. 279), information which has not been recorded in any other sources.

\textsuperscript{192} al-Kashshi, p. 493.

\textsuperscript{193} \textit{Ikhbat}, p. 217.

\textsuperscript{194} \textit{Uyun}, i, p. 21; al-Kulayni, i, p. 354.

\textsuperscript{195} \textit{Manaqib}, iv, pp. 350-1. Al-Tusi gives this number as 15,000 (\textit{al Ghayba}, p. 48).
Although some of the followers were very worried about the open proclamation of al-Riḍa’s succession to the leadership of the Imami party because of Harūn al-Rashid’s persecution of Shi’i elements, the Imam seems to have been content with the present situation.\(^{197}\) It is reported on the authority of Safwān b. Yahyā that al-Riḍa believed that al-Rashid would not harm him. Again Safwān reports from a nameless person in the ‘Abbāsid court, who is called thīqa by the rāwi, that the vizier Yahyā b. Khālid al-Barmāki told al-Rashid that al-Riḍa had declared his imama. But the caliph thought that their attitude towards al-Riḍa’s father, al-Kāẓim, was enough for them as sin, so he asked his vizier: “Do you want us to kill all of them?”\(^{198}\)

According to the traditions, al-Riḍa applied taqiyya in order to avoid the persecution of the government. Muḥammad b. Sinān asked him:

“--You have invested yourself with this authority and sat in your father’s seat even though the sword of Harūn has dripped blood! (The Imam) replied: --What the Apostle of Allah said has encouraged

\(^{196}\) al-Kulaynī, i, p.380. Also see al-Kashshī, p.494.

\(^{197}\) see al-Kashshī, p.465.

me in this act, (the Prophet said:) "if Abū Jahl seized my head, you (should) attest that I was not Prophet". And I also tell you: If Hārūn seized my head, you (should) attest that I was not an Imam". 199

Al-Riḍā is also reported to have bought a dog, a ram and a cock in the market. He thus pretended to be a peasant who had nothing to do with political affairs. Spies informed al-Rashid of it. It was for this reason that al-Rashid did not want to believe in information in the letter of the governor of Medina, Bakkar b. 'Abd Allāh al-Zubayrī, which informed the caliph of al-Riḍā's promulgation of his leadership. 200

IV - Al-Riḍā as the Leader of the Party between 183-200/799-816

Hārūn al-Rashid's harsh policy against Shi'ī elements seems to have continued after the death of al-Kāzīm. We know that Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, after escaping from the 'Abbāsid capital, died in about 187/803 in hiding and then his corpse was displayed and his death was proclaimed in order to stop the pursuit. 201 Especially in Medina, under the governorship of Bakkar al-Zubayrī, an extreme adversary of the 'Alids, the activities of al-Riḍā and his party were probably restricted. This insecure situation seems to have lasted, at least, until the death of al-Rashid in 193/808.

There is no good evidence that al-Riḍā ever left Medina for a long journey during these years. Although some Imāmī reports describe his visits to different places, they do not have any historical substratum. The first of his alleged journeys

199 Manaqib, iv, pp.339-40; al-Majlisi, Xl.IX, p.115 quoted it from Rawdat al-Kafi.

200 Manaqib, iv, p.369; al-Tabarsī, l'Ilam, p.313.

201 Ibn Babuya, Kamal ii, pp.30-1. For more information about this event see pp.417-8 below.
was a miraculous visit to the Shi'i communities in Basra and Kufa. According to an extended story, when al-Riḍā took delivery of the holy possessions inherited from al-Kāẓim, such as the outer garment and the rod of the Prophet, from Muḥammad b. al-Faḍl al-Ḥashimi, the latter mentioned a disagreement among the Basran Imami community on al-Riḍā's imāma and added that they would ask him for proof of the new Imām. Al-Riḍā told him not to worry about it because he would arrive in Basra three days after Muḥammad's arrival. Al-Riḍā came to Basra as he had promised and participated in a meeting in which opponents including Jewish and Christian scholars were gathered. He told them that he had been in the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina for the morning prayer. They asked the Imām many questions, which were answered in a scholarly way by him. Afterwards, he sent Muhammad to Kufa to assemble the Kufan Shi'a. The Imām did the same there as he had done in Basra and went back to Medina. Hence, the doubts of the Shi'i inhabitants of these two important cities about the truth of al-Riḍā's imāma were removed. 202

The second report about another of his journeys has it that 'Ali al-Riḍā went to Qazwin in secret, where he met Dāwūd b. Sulaymān al-Ghāzi. The Imam was hidden in his house during his stay. Dāwūd, using this opportunity, related from the Imam a nuskha (a small collection of hadith). 203 However, there is no report in the early works of the Imamiyya which can corroborate this Persian journey of al-Riḍā. The Sunni rijāl scholar al-Dhahabi notes this nuskha of Dāwūd b. Sulaymān. According to him, it was completely fabricated (mawdū'). 204

202 al-Rawandi, i, pp.341-51; al-Majlisi, XL.IX, pp.73-81.
204 al-Dhahabi, Mizan, ii, p.8.
'Ali al-Ridā's only real departure from Medina which was recorded by the sources was probably for Mecca to make the pilgrimage and the 'umra. There al-Ridā saw the caliph al-Rashid accompanied by the Barmaki family. This pilgrimage must have been in the year 186/802, because it was al-Rashid's first pilgrimage after al-Kāzim's death in 183/799 and also his last pilgrimage accompanied by the Barmakis.205 No conversation among them is reported, except that the Imāmi sources relate that the Imām cursed the Barmakis due to their part in the murder of his father.206

In the pilgrimage of 186/802, al-Rashid redclared the succession of his sons. The first heir apparent was Muhammad. Al-Rashid appointed him as the governor of Iraq and Syria, giving him the honorific title of "al-Amin". As his second heir, he designated 'Abd Allāh naming him "al-Ma'mūn" and giving him the governorship of Khurasan. He also took the oath of allegiance for his other son al-Qāsim, named "al-Mu'taman" by his father, and conferred on him the governorship of al-Jazira.207 After accomplishing the rites of the pilgrimage, the caliph al-Rashid took from al-Amin and al-Ma'mūn two promissory letters which comprised mutual obligations between these two crown princes. He also had another letter written as a document stating the oath of allegiance for his successors, which he had extracted from the notables and common people. Then he placed these documents together in the Ka'ba.208

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205 Ja'far b. Yahya was executed in the following year, 187/803, see al-Ṭabarî, iii, p.667. For this pilgrimage of al-Rashid, also see Ibid., pp.651-2.


207 al-Ṭabarî, iii, pp.651-3. Before this proclamation, al-Amin had been declared as the successor in 175/791-2. In 182/798 al-Ma'mūn was proclaimed as the second successor after al-Amin, see Ibid., pp.610, 647; al-Ya'qubi, iii, pp.152-8.

208 al-Ṭabarî, iii, pp.654-66.
In 192/808 al-Rashid set out for Khurāsān accompanied by al-Ma‘mūn to suppress a rebellion. He was taken seriously ill on the journey. He reached Tūs in a sick state, where he remained until he died in 193/808. At the same time, the oath of allegiance was immediately sworn to Muḥammad al-Amin at the camp of al-Rashid and then in Baghdad. In 194/810 al-Amin removed his brother al-Qasim from everything over which al-Rashid had given him charge, and the following year he ordered that the dinārs and the dirhams which had been stuck with the name of al-Ma‘mūn should be invalidated. He also forbade prayer from pulpits for al-Ma‘mūn and, instead, he commanded that prayer should only be made for himself and after him for his son Mūsā. Al-Ma‘mūn did not submit to al-Amin, who had openly violated the mutual obligations they had signed in the time of their father, so he proclaimed his own caliphate in Khurāsān. He appointed Tāhir b. al-Ḥusayn as chief commander. Tāhir was very successful in his assignment. He and Harthama b. A‘yan, another general of al-Ma‘mūn, supported by overwhelmingly Persian soldiers, overcame the armies of al-Amin in many battles and captured all the cities one by one in the course of three years. Finally Tāhir entered Baghdad and killed al-Amin in 198/813. Accordingly, the reign of ‘Abd Allāh al-Ma‘mūn, which was to survive for twenty years, started.

Apparently, during the rule of al-Amin which continued into the civil war, all Shi‘i groups lived through their most secure and easiest period since the ‘Abbāsid revolution which had occurred sixty years ago. This outcome was not only because of the civil war, but also because of al-Amin’s character, which was described by al-Maṣ‘ūdī as “Muḥammad was extreme in violence, power, valour, brilliancy and

209 For all these developments, see al-Tabari, iii, pp. 730-3, 764, 795-6; al-Ya‘qubi, iii, p. 172; Muruj, iii, pp. 389-91; Ibn Kathir, x, pp. 224-5.

210 For the important stages of the collapse of al-Amin’s reign, see al-Tabari, iii, pp. 829-30, 864-8, 911, 938; al-Ya‘qubi, iii, pp. 173-7; Muruj, iii, pp. 410-5, 438; Ibn Kathir, x, pp. 240-1; Ibn al-Ṭiqqaqa, pp. 212-4.
beauty, but he was (also) feeble-minded, weak in his management and he did not think (properly) about his work”. 211 No report has informed us of any conflict between the government and the Imāmi party during this period. Al-İsfahani (d. 356/966), in his Maqatil al-Ṭalibiyyin which is devoted to the Ṭalibis who were murdered or executed by the caliphate forces or by the caliphs themselves, says only the following without reporting any account of any murder or execution in the chapter which he opened for the reign of al-Amin:

" Al-Amin’s position with regard to the family of Abu Ṭalib was in contrast to the position of those who had preceded him because of his occupation with and addiction to amusements, and because of the war which took place between him and al-Ma’mūn till (al-Ma’mūn) killed (the former). No incident has been mentioned about any of them (the Ṭalibis) in his days either in any sense or for any reason ” 212

It is indisputable that this struggle within the ‘Abbasids delighted all the ‘Alids and their followers. It seems that a spontaneous growth took place for al-Riḍa’s party during this period. The fact that no action against the government was carried out by other Shi‘i revolutionary groups during this period was perhaps because of the lack of a proper leader as al-Laythi and Rajkowski suggest. 213 However, soon after, before al-Ma’mūn had firmly established his rule, a substantial and well-timed Shi‘i revolt broke out in Iraq.

211 Mūṣaf, iii, p. 394.
212 Maqatil, p. 509.
V - The Revolt of Ibn Ṭabāṭabā and the Involvement of the Mūsawid Family

Naṣr b. Shubayb, a Shi'i sympathiser from al-Jazira, came over to Medina for the occasion of the pilgrimage in 198/814. The real aim of his journey was to find a proper man amongst the family of the Prophet who could lead a revolt against the 'Abbasid government. After his investigation, three names were recommended to him. The first man, 'Ali b. 'Ubayd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Ali, the grandson of Zayn al-Ābidin, who had devoted himself to worship, did not seem to have accepted this offer. The second man, 'Abd Allāh b. Mūsā, a Ḥasani, was in hiding, therefore to reach him was not possible. Naṣr, however, after a meeting, persuaded the last one of the recommended men, Muḥammad b. Ṭabatabā, a Ḥasani who had been a participant in the revolt of al-Fakhkh.214

In the following year Ibn Ṭabatabā with his supporters set off for al-Jazira to meet Naṣr b. Shubayb. However, Naṣr could not convince his fellow-tribesmen to take part in a pro-'Alid revolt, because it is said that the people of al-Jazira were well-known for their opposition to the 'Alids. Naṣr sent his regrets and could offer only 5,000 dinārs and some other fiscal assistance. Ibn Ṭabatabā turned back disappointedly towards his home. On his way, he met Sari b. Mansūr al-Shaybānī, known by his kunya as Abu al-Saraya, who was formerly a soldier of Harthama b. A'yān, but, after his allowance had been cut, had left the army and then wandered in Iraq with his three servants. They decided to work together. Although Abu al-Saraya is not recorded as having been involved before in any pro-Shi'i activity, he found that

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214 Maqatil, p. 457. He was Muḥammad b. Ibrahim Ṭabataba b. Isma'il b Ibrahim b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ṭalib. 234
he had a great opportunity to win support, which he had not been able to draw in his own name, for an uprising as a commander on behalf of an ‘Alid leader. On 10 Jumāda II, 199 / 26 January, 815 the revolt was proclaimed for the name "al-Ridā min Al Muḥammad" (‘the One well-pleasing [to God] from the House of Muḥammad”) in the Shi‘i stronghold Kufa. The revolt does not seem to have been well-prepared and planned. However, it managed to gain the mass support of the people, as al-İṣfahānī describes: "The people of Kufa were spread like grasshoppers, but they were not organised and they did not have power; they had no weapons except sticks, ploughshares and baked bricks".215

Ibn Ṭabātabā suddenly died. There is a suspicion that he was poisoned by Abū al-Sarāyā who could have no authority over him. According to Ibn Ṭabātabā’s will, Abū al-Sarāyā set up in the place of the former a young ‘Alid, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Zayd, the grandson of Zayd b. ‘Ali who was the leader of the unsuccessful revolt in Kufa in 122/740.216

Before his death, Ibn Ṭabātabā had appointed his governors over the important cities of the empire. The names of Mūsā al-Kāzim’s three sons are recorded among the governors of the revolt. Ibrāhim b. Mūsā was appointed over Yemen. Zayd b. Mūsā was appointed over Ahwaz. But, he was not content with it; he occupied Basra and expelled from the city al-‘Abbās b. Muḥammad al-Ja‘fari who had also been appointed by the leader of the revolt.217 According to al-Mas‘ūdi, the governor of Basra was ‘Ali b. Muḥammad b. Ja‘far, the nephew of al-Kāzim.218 Another son, Isma‘īl b.

215 Maqatīl, p. 523.
216 al-Tabari, iii, p. 978; Maqatīl, p. 532
218 Muruj, iii, p. 439.
Musa, was appointed over Fars. Ahmad b. Musa is also recorded as having participated in the revolt, but whether he held a significant office in it is unknown.

'Ali al-Rida, unlike his brothers, following the policy of his father and grandfather, did not have any involvement in the rebellion. He was invited by Muhammad b. Sulayman, the governor of Medina on behalf of the revolt, to attend the ceremony of the oath of allegiance. He did not go, but he asked for twenty days delay before making the oath. However, before that time came to an end, the government troops had entered the city and put down the rebels. This narration is related as evidence for al-Rida's ability to prophesy.

Although in its early stage the revolt was quite successful taking advantage of the weak condition of the imperial army which had already been involved in a severe civil war and had thus undergone divisions within itself, thanks to Harthama b. A'yan and other skilled commanders, the revolt was quelled after ten months. Abu al-Saraya was seized and decapitated on 10 Rabi' 1, 200 / 18 October, 815. Abū al-Saraya's protegé, the so-called leader of the revolt, Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Zayd, was

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219 Maqāṭiil, p.533; al-Kamil, vi, p.214; Ibn Khaldūn, al-‘Ibar, iii, p.243. Unlike other above-mentioned brothers, Isma'il b. Musa's involvement in politics is not recorded by the early rijāl books of the Imāmiyya. He resided in Egypt. His great knowledge and the several books which were written by him are particularly mentioned. He is reported to have led the funeral prayer of Safwan b. Yahya, the agent of al-Rida, in Medina in 210 H. at the order of the Imam Muhammad al-Jawad, see al-Najashi, p.19; al-Māmaqānī, i, biography no: 890.

220 al-Kashshi, p.472.


222 ‘Uyun, ii, p.208.

223 For detailed information about the revolt of Abū al-Saraya, see al-Tabari, iii, pp 976-986; Maqāṭiil, pp.518-36; Muruj, iii, pp.438-40; al-Ya'qubi, iii, pp.180-2; Ibn Kathir, x, pp.244-5; al-Kamil, vi, pp.211-8; Kennedy, pp.207 ff.
also captured and taken to Merv, where, after a short time, he died in 201/816-7. There is a suspicion that he was poisoned. 224

During the revolt, Zayd b. Musa al-Kāẓim had gained mastery over Basra. He was called "Zayd al-Nār" ("Zayd of the Fire"), because he burnt down a large number of houses belonging to the ‘Abbāsid family and their mawāli in Basra and threw their supporters alive into the fire. His men also plundered wealth and possessions. ‘Ali b. Abi Sa‘id, the ‘Abbāsid commander, recovered Basra at the end of 199/815 and took Zayd prisoner. 225 ‘Ali b. Abi Sa‘id, after settling the opposition of Zayd, sent the commanders ‘Īsā b. Yazid al-Julūdī to Mecca, Hārūn b. al-Musayyab to Medina and Ḥamdawayh b. ‘Ali b. ‘Īsā b. Māhān to Yemen with orders to make war on any of the Ṭālibīs in these places. 226

The situation of Yemen was very critical for the ‘Abbāsid government. Ibrahim b. Musa al-Kāẓim, Ibn Ṭabarān’s governor of Yemen, was in Mecca when the news of the fate of Abū al-Sarāyā and of the Ṭālibīs involved in the revolt in Iraq reached him. Thereupon, Ibrāhim set out from Mecca with his men and his family for Yemen. Upon hearing about Ibrāhim’s approach, the governor of Yemen, Isḥāq b. Musa b. ‘Īsā al-‘Abbasi, abandoned the country to Ibrāhim and escaped. Ibrahim b. Musa acquired the nickname of "al-Jazzār" ("the butcher") because of the large number of people whom he killed in a bloodthirsty fashion and because of taking people as slaves and confiscating their wealth. In the pilgrimage season of 200/816, Ibrāhim dispatched a man called al-‘Aqili, who was a descendant of ‘Aqil b. Abī Ṭalib, to Mecca to lead

225 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.986; Ibn Kathir, x, p.246; al-Kamil, vi, p.218; Ibn Khaldun, al-‘Ibar, iii, p.244.
226 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.986.
the pilgrimage. When al-'Aqili knew that Mecca had come under the control of the 'Abbasids and they had appointed their own leader of the pilgrimage, he did not attempt to enter Mecca because of lack of his forces; he halted outside the city where he stopped a caravan of pilgrims which was carrying the covering of the Ka'ba and fragrant perfumes for it. He seized them as well as the goods of the merchants who were also in the caravan. The pilgrims and the merchants reached Mecca naked and robbed. Therefore, 'Isa al-Julüdi marched against al-'Aqili and scattered his troops.227

Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-'Alawi, the governor of Medina on behalf of the revolt, had taken the city from Dāwud b. 'Isa al-'Abbāsi without fighting. He held Medina during the year of 199 H.. At the beginning of 200 H. 'Abbāsid troops recaptured the city, which was put under the governorship of Hārūn b. al-Musayyab.228 It is not difficult to reckon that the 'Alids of Medina, who were largely responsible for starting and carrying out the rebellion, were under intense pressure. Al-Riḍā was probably among those who were watched by the spies of the government. According to a narration, a disciple of al-Riḍā, al-Ghifārī, used to inform the Imam about the governor Hārūn b. al-Musayyab. This man was probably close to the governor's entourage, because he told al-Riḍā that he did not want to be seen with the servants of al-Riḍā when the latter had offered to send to al-Ghifārī his four servants to accompany him.229

On the other hand, again in Medina, when the news of Abū al-Saraya's execution and of the expulsion of the Ṭalibi residents in the cities of Iraq arrived, al-Ḥusayn b. al-Hasan al-Aftas b. 'Ali, the grandson of 'Ali Zayn al-Abidin, who was
the governor of Mecca for Abū al-Sarāyā, and other notables of the family went together in a body to Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq in the hope of convincing him to lead the Ṭālibīs in another anti-ʿAbbāsid revolt.\textsuperscript{230}

Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar was well-known for his piety, asceticism and generosity. He is reported to have fasted on alternate days. He is also said to have slaughtered every day a ram for his guests. He was among the traditionists who related hadith on the authority of his father al-Ṣādiq.\textsuperscript{231} Muḥammad was nicknamed "al-Dibāja" or simply "al-Dibaj" ("elegance, handsome [face]") from his handsomeness and brilliance.\textsuperscript{232} With his high status in the eyes of people and being older, he was able to attract people's support which many of the members of the Prophet's family were not able to do because of their activities especially when they were involved in a rebellion.

For example, al-Ḥusayn al-Aftas, one of those who persuaded Muḥammad to rebel, had seized the wealth in the treasury of the Kaʿba at the time of Abū al-Sarāyā's revolt. He had also swept through many houses in the city and confiscated the valuables of the people under the pretext of seizing the wealth which had been previously entrusted to them by the ʿAbbāsids. Al-Ḥusayn's men had also extracted gold-plated windows and other golden ornaments from the pillars of the Ḥaram Mosque and looted them. Ibn Khaldūn reports these incidents to explain why al-Ḥusayn could not shelter in Mecca after the revolt, instead, he went immediately to Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar to persuade him to have another revolt.\textsuperscript{233}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{230} al-Ṭabarī, iii, p. 989.
\item \textsuperscript{231} al-Ṭabarī, iii, pp. 989-90; Maqātīl, p. 538; al-Irshād, p. 432; al-Ṭabarī, Iʿlam, p. 275.
\item \textsuperscript{232} Muruj, iii, p. 439; Ibn Ḥazm, Jamhāra, p. 59; Ibn Ḥnāba, p 275
\item \textsuperscript{233} al-ʿIbār, iii, p. 244. For these incidents, also see al-Ṭabarī, iii, pp. 988-9.
\end{itemize}
Although Muhammad had refused this offer at first, his son 'Ali and al-\Husayn al-Aftas kept on at him until they persuaded him. Therefore, the 'Alids and all the people of Mecca gave their oath of allegiance to him as caliph on 6 Rabi' II, 200/13 November, 815 and addressed him as "Commander of the Faithful", a title which was not adopted by any 'Alid rebel either before or after him.234

After receiving the pledge of allegiance, Muhammad b. Ja'far spent his first month in Mecca without being involved with the government forces. However, in these days, two different shameful acts in which al-Aftas and Muhammad's son were involved damaged the spirit of the revolt. Al-\Husayn al-Aftas assaulted a woman from Quraysh, who was described as outstandingly beautiful. He sent a message to her that she should come to him, but she refused. He also frightened her husband, so the latter had to go into hiding. Then al-\Husayn sent a gang who broke down the house door and carried the woman off to al-\Husayn. But she then managed to escape to her family, who were preparing at that moment to fight at Mecca. On the other hand, 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Ja'far assaulted a youth from Quraysh, a son of a judge, who was said to have been extremely handsome. 'Ali seized him openly in the middle of Mecca and rode off with him. Therefore, native Meccans and foreign visitors gathered and went to Muhammad. They threatened to renounce their allegiance to him unless he restored the youth to them. Muhammad required a guarantee from them to allow him

234 al-Tabari, iii, p.990; Muruj, iii, p.439. Unlike al-Tabari's information, al-Mas'udi, al-Ash'ari and Ibn 'Inaba, without mentioning any attempt of Muhammad's persuasion, report that Muhammad supported the revolt of Ibn Tabatiba publicly and, when it failed, he attempted to lead another revolt in his own name. see Muruj, iii, p.439; al-Ash'ari, i, p.82; Ibn 'Inaba, p.275. According to another report, a letter written probably by an 'Abbasid in which Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, and all the members of the latter's family were insulted was read to Muhammad. He did not say a word; he entered his home and then went out with his sword having put on his armour, and proclaimed his rebellion. It is reported that Muhammad had always segregated himself from political activities until this incident. see Maqatiil, pp.538-9.
to go to his son. They gave it, so he went, took back the youth from ‘Ali and restored him to his family. 235

Meanwhile, the ‘Abbasid troops had surrounded Mecca. Muḥammad, at first, asked the ‘Abbasid commanders for a guarantee of protection so that his forces could evacuate Mecca and go to wherever they liked. This was accepted. Muḥammad went towards the Red Sea coast. After some clashes, in one of which he lost one of his eyes, Muhammad had to seek a guarantee of personal security from the commander ‘Isā al-Julūdī and from Rajā’ b. Abī al-Ḍāḥḥāk, the cousin of the vizier al-Fāḍl b. Sahl. 236 Rajā’ guaranteed on behalf of the caliph that Muḥammad should not be harassed and should be honoured. He agreed to it. Rajā’ took him to Mecca. A pulpit was brought forward near the Ka’ba, at the same point where the oath of allegiance had been given to Muḥammad. The residents of the city were assembled. Muḥammad went up on the pulpit and proclaimed his allegiance to the caliph al-Ma‘mūn. He said that he had received news that al-Ma‘mūn had been killed in the civil war and this had led him to receive for himself the oath of allegiance as Commander of the Faithful, but now he was informed that the caliph was alive, so the pledge which had been given to him had expired and he was from that time an ordinary Muslim. 237

‘Ali al-Riḍā’s attitude to this revolt was as expected. He continued his non-intervention policy. However, his stand seems to be closer to the government rather than to his uncle’s cause. As is understood from the reports, al-Riḍa was present at

235 al-Tahārī, iii, pp.990-1.

236 Ibn al-Athir gives the name as Rajā‘ b. Jamīl, the son of al-Fadl b. Sahl s paternal aunt or uncle (al-Kamil, vi, p.220).

237 al-Tahārī, iii, pp.992-4. Also see Maqatil, pp.537-41; Muruj, iii, pp.439-40; al-Yaqūbī, iii, p.183; al-Ashʿarī, i, pp.82-3; Ibn Kathīr, x, pp.245-6; al-Iṣbāḥī, Khulasā, p.201; Ibn Khaldūn, al-‘Ibar, iii, pp.244-5; Ibn al-ʿImad, ii, p.7; Kennedy, pp.210-1

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Mecca at the time of the revolt, probably to make his farewell pilgrimage before his journey to Merv.\textsuperscript{238} Al-Riḍā was the envoy of Ḥārūn b. al-Musayyab to Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar to persuade him to obey the government. He met his uncle at Thabir.\textsuperscript{239} But Muḥammad neither took note of him nor of the governor's letter which he brought with him.\textsuperscript{240} According to a narration, 'Ali al-Riḍā and his uncle Ishaq b. Jaʿfar went to Muḥammad. Al-Riḍā admonished him not to disown the line of al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāẓim, because the time of insurrection had not yet come.\textsuperscript{241} Another tradition related to this event tends to prove al-Riḍā's prophecy. The Imam sent his mawla Musafir to Muḥammad to warn him that if he went out on the following day, he would be put to flight and his companions would be killed. Musafir gave the warning to him. The latter asked from where had he learned this. Musafir, following the Imam's instruction, said that he saw it in his dream. On this answer Muḥammad retorted: "The slave only dreams when he has not washed his buttocks!" But on the following day the prophecy was realised.\textsuperscript{242}

A tradition shows that in any case the relationship between Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar and 'Ali al-Riḍā was not so good. The Imam told one of his companions that he did not want to be together with his uncle Muḥammad in any place, because, he thought that, when Muḥammad was present with him, people gave credence to what

\textsuperscript{238} Despite its legendary nature, a tradition shows that the Imam al-Riḍā made a pilgrimage before setting off for Khurāsān, see Musnad al-Riḍā, i, p.53.

\textsuperscript{239} Thabir was the name of one of the high hills in Mecca, see Yaqt, i, p.917.

\textsuperscript{240} Maqātil, p.540. The text of this report is vague. In the light of some other information which has been presented, I have preferred to read it that the governor Harun sent al-Rida as his envoy to Muhammad b. Jaʿfar. S.M. Arjomand has understood it in different way that Muhammad sent the Imam to sue for peace with the governor Harun, see S.M. Arjomand, "Crisis of the Imamate and Occultation in Shi'ism", IJM ES, 28 (1996), p.495.

\textsuperscript{241} 'Uyun, ii, pp.207-8; Kāshf, iii, p.90.

\textsuperscript{242} al-Kulayni, i, p.491; al-Irshad, p.476-7; Kāshf, iii, p.70.
Muḥammad said, but, in other situations, his sayings were not taken into consideration. This might indicate that there was a difference of opinion between them on some matters which have not been clearly presented by the sources.

After Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar had withdrawn his claim and restored his oath of allegiance to the caliph publicly, he was taken to Iraq by ʿIsā al-Julūdi and handed over to al-Ḥasan b. Sahl, the governor of Iraq. Then al-Ḥasan sent him under the custody of Rajāʾ b. Abī al-Ḍāhak to al-Maʿmūn at Merv. His being taken to Merv

243 'Uyūn, ii, p.204.

244 Another of al-Riḍā’s uncles ‘Ali b. Jaʿfar, the youngest son of al-Ṣādiq, is recorded by al-İsfaḥānī among the leading figures of Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar’s revolt (Maqāṭīl, p.540). This information is also repeated by two Shiʿi genealogist, al-ʿUmari and Ibn Ṭināba. The genealogists say that although ‘Ali b. Jaʿfar joined this revolt, he did not continue this revolutionary attitude and turned repentantly to the line of the Imāms. (al-ʿUmari, p.136; Ibn Ṭināba, p.271).

We know ‘Ali b. Jaʿfar as a Shiʿi scholar and a ṭāwī transmitting from al-Kāẓim and Sūfyan al-Thawrī. He was also a propagandist for the imama of al-Riḍā and al-Jawwād. Except for this event, there is no information of his involvement in any political activity. According to Ibn al-ʿImād, he died in 210/825-6 whereas Ibn Ṭināba reports that he died in the time of the Imām ‘Ali al-Hādi (after 220 H.). His death place was al-ʿUrayd, a village which was six mīls away from Medina. (al-ʿIrshād, pp.434, 440; Ibn Ṭināba, pp.270-1; Ibn al-ʿImād, ii, p.24).

If ‘Ali b. Jaʿfar was a sincere disciple of his brother al-Kāẓim and then that of al-Riḍā as is shown in the sources, he should have followed their policy and not joined in such a rebellion which was repudiated presently by al-Riḍā. Therefore, there is a possibility that al-İsfaḥānī or later copyists dropped the name “Muḥammad” between “‘Ali” and “Jaʿfar” like a copyist had done in another part of the book and this mistake has been corrected by the editor (see p.534). Because, al-İsfaḥānī, according to the text of the book, failed to record the name of ‘Ali b. Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar, who is expected to have been mentioned due to him being one of the two men who invited Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar to lead the rebellion (see al-Tabārī, iii, p.990). If this conjecture is true, it might be suggested that the accounts of al-ʿUmari and Ibn Ṭināba were based on the text of Maqāṭīl.

A similar mistake exists in Jamḥāra of Ibn Ḥazm, who notes ‘Ali b. Jaʿfar as a rebel in Basra (Jamḥāra, p.59). However, the rebel in Basra was, in fact, ‘Ali b. Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar who is recorded as the governor of Basra appointed by Ibn Ṭahātaba. He rose in Basra together with Zayd b. Musa against the Ṭabābids (see Murūj, iii, p.439; Ivanow, ‘Early Shiʿi Movements’, p.12, quoting from al-Qadī al-Nuʿmān).

Ṣibt b. al-Jawzī’s record that ‘Ali b. Jaʿfar was the leader of the rebellion of 200 H. in Mecca (Tadḫiḥārat, pp.346-7) is definitely an error. We know that its leader was Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar.

245 al-Tabārī, iii, pp.994-5.
was probably a part of al-Ma'mūn's plan in which 'Ali al-Riḍā would also be proclaimed as heir to the 'Abbāsid throne, and it seems that he was with al-Riḍā during his journey to Merv as will be mentioned later.\textsuperscript{246} With Muhammad, a group of the Ṭalibis who had participated in the revolt were also taken to Merv. At first al-Ma'mūn had not wanted them to be with Muhammad on the journey; he ordered them to be taken under the custody of another Ṭalibi, who was called 'Ubayd Allāh b. al-Husayn. But the Ṭalibis refused to do this and kept themselves close in their homes. So al-Ma'mūn later accepted that they could ride with whomever they preferred on the journey. They favoured to be with Muhammad.\textsuperscript{247} This incident might indicate that he had not yet lost his esteem within the family after the defeat of his rebellion.

Muhammad b. Ja'far spent his last two years in Khurāsān. He was present in the ceremony of the oath of allegiance for al-Riḍā as the heir of al-Ma'mūn.\textsuperscript{248} He was often with al-Riḍā in the symposia arranged in the court of al-Ma'mūn.\textsuperscript{249} He died in 203/820 in Jurjān on his journey to Baghdad with al-Ma'mūn.\textsuperscript{250} The death probably took place in one of the last two months of the year 203 H. on the basis that al-Ma'mūn stayed in Jurjān for a month and then he left for Rayy in Dhū al-Hijja of 203 H.,\textsuperscript{251} the time which corresponds to nine or ten months later than the date of al-Riḍā's death given by al-Tabari. The cause of his death is reported to have been that he

\textsuperscript{246} see p.270 below.

\textsuperscript{247} Maqātil, p.537; al-Irshād p.433; al-Ṭabarisi, I’lām, p.275.

\textsuperscript{248} Maqātil, pp.563-4; Kashf, iii. p.67.

\textsuperscript{249} see ‘Uyun, i. p.128; al-Ṭabarisi, al-Iḥtiyāj, p.425.

\textsuperscript{250} al-Kāmil, vi. p.252; Ibn al-‘Imād, ii. p.7.

\textsuperscript{251} al-Ṭabarisi, iii. p 1036; al-Kāmil, vi, p.253.
underwent blood-letting followed by sexual intercourse, and then he went to the bath where he died.252

Al-Ma'mun participated in his funeral. He led his funeral prayer. He was among the people who carried Muḥammad's coffin to the graveyard. He went down in the grave and buried him. It is reported that when al-Ma'mun was asked to ride his horse so that he would not get so tired, he answered that this gesture was the demonstration of kinship between the two families which had been broken for two hundred years. The caliph also took over Muḥammad's debts amounting to about 30,000 dinārs.253

VI - The Nomination of al-Riḍā as Heir to the 'Abbāsid Throne

The civil war between the two 'Abbāsid princes ended at the beginning of the year 198 H. The caliph al-Amin had been killed by his brother. This resulted in discontent among the 'Abbāsid family and in the Baghdad court. Instead of coming to Baghdad and taking over the government, the new caliph al-Ma'mun preferred to stay in Merv, the capital of Khurāsān, and sent al-Ḥasan b. Sahl, the brother of his Persian vizier, to Iraq as a governor of a large domain including Baghdad. This became an important factor which incited further discontent. At this time in which uncertain and insecure conditions dominated, a series of rebellions, which were very dangerous in terms of the state's security broke out, seizing the opportunity of these circumstances.

252 Ibn al-'Imād, ii, p. 7; al-Irbi, Khulaṣa, p. 201.

253 Maqātil, p. 541; al-Irbi, Khulaṣa, p. 201; Sibt, p. 347; Ibn al-Jawzī, Muntazam, x, p. 121. In the report of al-Mufīd, the debt is 15,000 dinārs; see al-Irshād, p. 434.
Al-Ḥasan al-Hirsh rebelled with a large number of his tribesmen in Dhū al-Ḥijja, 198 / July-August, 814. Although the rebellion had not a Shi‘i nature, it was proclaimed with the slogan "for the cause of al-Ridā min ʿAl Muḥammad". Al-Ḥasan terrorised a large part of Iraq, seizing the possessions of merchants, plundering villages and exacting taxes. The revolt was suppressed in a short time and its leader was killed.254 However, a few months later, a more serious and dangerous revolt started. This uprising which was conducted by Abū al-Sarāyā and supported largely by the Shi‘is lasted for about ten months and was only quelled with difficulty. According to al-Ṭabarānī, on the side of the ’Abbasid army two thousand soldiers lost their lives in this episode as recorded in the account books of the government (diwān).255 This rebellion was followed by other local outbreaks directed by some prominent ’Alid figures. The most momentous were led by Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar and Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā, the uncle and the brother of ʿAlī al-Riḍā. These took place in the first half of the year 200 H. If the report that Rājāʾ b. Abī al-Dāhibāk, the official who had been sent by al-Maʿmūn with the responsibility for bringing ʿAlī al-Riḍā to Merv, arrived in Hijaz in the last month of 200 H.256 is taken into consideration, it can be said that the decision to summon al-Riḍā as heir to the throne was possibly made in the first half of the year 200 H., the time in which the government was exerting itself to defeat the ’Alid rebellions in the several places in Iraq and Arabia.

We can now examine the factors which led the caliphate to make such an extraordinary decision, to which nothing similar had ever been recorded in the history of the ’Abbasids. Before observing the general views about which factor or factors came first to make such a decision, it is appropriate to examine first whether the caliph

254 al-Ṭabarānī, iii, pp. 975-6.
255 Maqātil, p. 550.
256 al-Ṭabarānī, iii, p. 993.
was the only one who decided it or whether his vizier al-Fadl b. Sahl induced him to do it, a matter on which much discussion has taken place amongst the historians.

1 - The Role of the Vizier al-Fadl b. Sahl

The vizier al-Fadl b. Sahl, formerly a Manichaean, was introduced to Islam by al-Ma'mūn. It is also said that his father Sahl accepted Islam thanks to the caliph al-Mahdi when the former was the prisoner of the caliph. Yahyā al-Barmaki is accounted, too, to have been influential in the conversion of the two sons of Sahl, al-Fadl and al-Ḥasan; then they lived as protégés of the Barmakīs and then were commissioned in the service of al-Ma'mūn.257 After al-Ma'mūn had become caliph, he assigned al-Fadl to the vizirate of the state giving him both civil and military commands. For that reason he was called "Dhū al-Riyāsatayn" ("the man with two powers").258 Al-Ma'mūn also granted to al-Fadl's brother, al-Ḥasan, the governorship of the districts of al-Jibw, Fars, Iraq, Hijaz and Yemen.259

The only report indicating that al-Ma'mūn had decided himself previously to nominate 'Ali al-Ridā as his heir and, after having him brought to Merv, opened his mind about the Imam to al-Fadl b. Sahl was related by al-Isfahānī on the authority of an 'Alid, Yahyā b. al-Ḥasan. According to this report, al-Ma'mūn summoned al-Fadl and his brother al-Ḥasan into his presence and explained to them his desire to appoint al-Ridā as his successor. Al-Ḥasan did not enjoy this news, because he thought that


259 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p. 975.

247
this might lead to taking this privileged position out of their own family. But they
had to go to al-Ridā at al-Maʿmūn’s order to persuade him to accept the caliph’s
offer.

This report, however, includes a significant inaccuracy. In contrast to this
narration, al-Ḥasan b. Sahl, the governor, did not appear at that time in Khurasan
according to the historical annals. Instead, we see him in Iraq busy with the
suppression of the opposition movement which accepted Mansūr b. al-Mahdi as the
new governor and expelled al-Ḥasan’s officials from Baghdad.

W. Madelung has translated the letter Kitāb al-Shart wa al-Hibā, which
was written for the ceremony of al-Ridā’s succession to the throne, to al-Faḍl b. Sahl
to guarantee him all his rights and to explain the caliph’s desire to retain his services.
As part of his introduction to the translation, Madelung observes that al-Faḍl’s asking
the caliph for his retirement and his desire of withdrawal from the world as were
mentioned in the letter, could indicate that al-Faḍl initially opposed this step of al-
Maʿmūn and was fully aware of the hazardous nature of this policy for al-Maʿmūn and
himself who would likely be held responsible for it. So Madelung concludes that the

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260 However, according to E. Kohlberg, a story, which was presented by
Radi al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Musa ibn Ṭawus in his Faraj al-Mahmum fi Tarikh al-
ʿUlama’ al-Nujum, depicts al-Ḥasan b. Sahl as a follower of al-Riḍā. Ibn Ṭawus
cited this story from al-Jāmiʿ of Muhammad b. al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walid al-Qummi

261 Maqatil, pp. 562-3. Al-Mufid and al-Irbili also quote it without giving al-
Isfahani’s name, see al-Irshad, pp. 470-1; Kashf, iii, p. 66. The rāwi is Yahya b.
Ṭalib. He related from al-Riḍā. He is regarded by the Imamī al Najashi as a
truthworthy rāwi and an expert in hadith, see al-Najashi, p. 309.

262 see al-Ṭabarī, iii, pp. 1001-1011; al-Kamil, vi, pp. 225-7. Muḥsin al-
Amin sees that it is plausible that al-Maʿmūn summoned al-Ḥasan for this matter and
then sent him back to Iraq, see Aʿyan al-Shiʿa, IV.3, p. 134.
initiative probably belonged to the caliph rather than the vizier, a conclusion which also confirms the assumption of F. Gabrieli and D. Sourdel. 263

However, if some other reports and a new document which the authors do not seem to have consulted are taken into consideration, it appears that the factor of al-Fadl b. Sahl in the process of making the decision should not be omitted. First of all, it must be stressed that the original of the above-mentioned letter, which was preserved with another explanatory letter, was dated 7 Ramazan, 201. If my assumption that the decision of al-Ri’ad’s nomination was made in the first half of the year 200 H. is true, 264 this would mean that the letter was made public, at least, fourteen months after the decision had been made. Therefore, there is no reason not to think that al-Fadl induced the caliph to this step or, at least, agreed with him from the outset, but, upon an abrupt and dangerous change of the situation, he then wanted to withdraw himself from the government in order to escape from the responsibility for the dangerous situation. Even before al-Ri’ad was proclaimed as heir, the ‘Abbasids in Baghdad had already held al-Fadl b. Sahl responsible for several decisions of al-Mamun such as the appointment of al-Hasan b. Sahl as governor with great authority over the mainland of the empire. Furthermore, the Harbiyya troops, who were mainly Persian mawali, blamed him for the murder of their commander Harthama b. A’yan at the end of 200 H. So the first half of the year 201 H. witnessed a civil war between the side of al-Hasan b. Sahl who represented the Khurāsān-based government and the side of the ‘Abbāsids in Baghdad and Abnā’ al-Dawla (Persian mawali) who were very uneasy due to al-Mamun’s policy. Besides, this state caused Mansur b. al-


264 See p. 246 above.
Mahdi to be accepted by the opposition in Baghdad as their new governor from 25 Jumādā 11, 201 onwards, so they expelled the officials of al-Ma'mūn from the city.⁵⁶

We think that these circumstances compelled al-Fādil b. Sahl to leave his office. Nevertheless, al-Ma'mūn reassured his vizier through this letter to retain his services which he deemed essential for the well-being of the state.

Another letter seems to corroborate our assumption about the responsibility for the decision. This document is a letter of summons which was written by al-Fādil b. Sahl and sent to al-Riḍā in Medina.⁶⁶ In it al-Fādil says that "he had sacrificed his lifeblood to return (al-Riḍā's) rights to him and had worked night and day in order to fulfil it" and he adds his expectation of God's blessing in return for his effort to realize it.⁶⁷ These sentences seem to be clear statements explaining al-Fādil's part in the affair.

According to the sources, al-Fādil b. Sahl so dominated al-Ma'mūn that he meddled in everything, even as far as a slave-girl the caliph wanted to buy.⁶⁸ Perhaps for that reason, when the 'Abbasids in Baghdad received the news of 'Alī al-Riḍā's succession to the throne, the first man they held responsible for it was al-Fādil, they said: "All this is nothing but machinations on the part of al-Fādil b. Sahl."⁶⁹

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⁵⁶ For all these developments, see al-Tabari, iii, pp.1001-6.

⁶⁶ The letter is presented by the Shāfi‘ī scholar Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karim b. Muhammad al-Rafi‘i al-Qazwīnī (d.623/1226) in his al-Taddīn fi Akhbar Qazwīn. For the full translation of the letter, see pp.268-9 below.

⁶⁷ See al-Rafi‘i, iii, p.425.


⁶⁹ al-Tabari, iii, p.1013. Also see 'Uyun, ii, p.150.
The sources which see al-Faḍl as author of the scheme give two different factors which drive the vizier to put such a dangerous decision into effect. According to Ibn al-Athir, al-Faḍl was a sympathiser with Shi’ism; this was the reason why he proposed this offer of appointment to al-Ma’mūn. Another report from al-Jahshiyārī indicates that al-Faḍl b. Sahl, as a former Manichaean or still holding this faith, desired an ‘Alid heir in order to restore the Sāsānid monarchy. Nu’aym b. Ḥāzim asserted before the caliph and the vizier that after the caliphate passed from the ‘Abbāsids to the ‘Alids, it would be easy for al-Faḍl to achieve this intention, and he added that it was the fact that the vizier chose green instead of white as the official colour of the caliphate that strengthened his suspicion since white was the traditional ‘Alid colour whereas green was the cloth of the Kisra. Nu’aym then turned to Ma’mūn and asked him not to nominate a man from a family whose blood still dripped from the swords of the Khurāsānians. Ibn al-Ṭiqāqa also emphasises this matter stating that al-Faḍl employed all means to further his interest and in his efforts to win the caliphate

270 al-Kāmil, vi, pp.134-5. Ja’far M. al-‘Āmili denies this claim giving several evidences from Imāmi narrations, see al-Ḥayāt al-Siyāsyya, pp.262-8. According to al-Māmāqānī, the Shi’ism of this sort of Zindiq is a degenerate and blameworthy man should be only in a deformed and confused form, see Tanqīḥ, ii, biography no: 9471.

271 Nu’aym was a Khurāsānian supporter of al-Ma’mūn. He carried the flag of al-Ma’mūn in the civil war, see al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.841.

272 al-Jahshiyārī, pp.312-3. This assumption seems to have led to an uneasiness among the caliph’s entourage, hence, Yahyā b. ‘Āmir al-Hārith al-Ḳafirin and asked him not to nominate a man from a family whose blood still dripped from the swords of the Khurāsānians. Ibn al-Ṭiqāqa also emphasises this matter stating that al-Faḍl employed all means to further his interest and in his efforts to win the caliphate

Nabia Abbott (Two Queens, p.223), H. Ibrāhīm Hassan (‘Aspects of Shi’a History”, p.281) and Ahmad Amin (Duḥā al-Īslām, iii, p.295) connect a bond between al-Faḍl’s Shi’ism and his being a native Persian and explain his role in the nomination proposal from this conjecture. According to them, the Persians had been, from early days, associated with the Shi’a or, in Ahmad Amin’s word, yajrib fi ‘urūqibim al-tasbāyya’ (‘Shi’ism flows in their veins”). Jurji Zaydān sees it possible that al-Faḍl imposed the nomination of al-Riḍā on al-Ma’mūn as a condition for his assistance to him in fighting his brother al-Āmin (Tārikh al-Tamaddun al-Īslāmī, iv, p.169).
for himself. In another report quoted by Ibn Bābūya from Tārikh Khurāsans of Abū 'Ali al-Sallami (writing in the first half of the 4th/10th century), al-Faḍl is shown as one who pretended to become another Abū Muslim: Al-Faḍl had transferred the caliphate from one brother to another (from al-Amin to al-Ma'mūn), but the next step now was to transfer it from one family to another family (from 'Abbasids to the 'Alids) just like Abū Muslim had done in the 'Abbāsid revolution.

Apart from these two principal explanations, another report seems to be more revealing of the real factor which made the vizier make such a decision or, at least, to consent to this plan from the outset. Ibn Bābūya relates on the authority of the Tāhirīd 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Abd Allah b. Tahir that al-Faḍl pointed al-Ma'mūn to the nomination of al-Riḍa by suggesting that this was an opportunity to gain God's favour by reconciling the kinship between the two families, so in this way Hārūn al-Rashīd's negative attitude towards the 'Alids would be obliterated. As Hugh Kennedy rightly observes, such a policy of reconciliation with the 'Alids was a continuation of the policy of the Barmakīs, so al-Faḍl b. Sahl, who was the author of the scheme, as a pupil of the Barmakīs was developing their ideas.

273 al-Fakhrī, p.217.

274 'Uyun, ii, p.163. An interesting narration in 'Uyun Akhābār al-Riḍa, which denotes the great ambition of al-Faḍl b. Sahl to transfer the caliphate to 'Ali al-Riḍa, is definitely not in agreement with the known character and attitude of the vizier. According to it, the vizier al-Faḍl, with Hīshām b. Ibrāhīm, went to al-Riḍa and offered him co-operation to kill al-Ma'mūn and then to restore his right to the caliphate. The Imam refused it and scolded them because of the offer. Afterwards, the vizier who noticed the hazardous results of this conversation went to al-Ma'mūn and told him that he had put al-Riḍa to the test in order to reveal what he had concealed in his mind, see 'Uyun, ii, pp.164-5.


276 H. Kennedy, The Early 'Abbāsid Caliphate, p.158.
2 - What Led the Caliph al-Ma'mun to Make this Decision

2.1 - The Imami - Shi'i explanation

The Imami sources usually hold al-Ma'mun responsible for the nomination of the Imam al-Ridā. The most popular of the factors put forward to explain the reason behind the decision is al-Ma'mun's fulfilment of an earlier vow. According to the narration of al-Rayyān b. al-Ṣalt who was an Imami Khurāsānian official of the caliph, al-Ma'mun mentioned to al-Rayyān rumours which showed al-Fāḍl b. Sahl as the plotter of the nomination, and said that it was totally imaginary that somebody came to the caliph and asked him to appoint another person from a different family. Then he began to narrate that when al-ʿAmin summoned him to Baghdad, he refused to obey him. So al-ʿAmin sent his troops to force him to obey. At the beginning, his situation in Khurāsān was very miserable. He had no power and money in order to resist al-ʿAmin's military strength, therefore he decided to seek refuge from the king of Kabul, but then he gave that up, being concerned that the king might have handed him over to al-ʿAmin if the latter granted something to him. Except for prayer he could do nothing. He put on white clothes, the colour of the Prophet's family, and turned to God in repentance. In his prayers he vowed that if he could stay alive and manage to come to power, he would leave the caliphate to a man who was entitled by God to this post. Al-Ma'mun finished his talk with al-Rayyān saying that this was the reason why he nominated 'Ali al-Ridā as his heir to the caliphate.277

277 'Uyun, ii, 149-51; al-Tabarsi, ʿIlam, p. 320; Musnad al-Rida, i, pp. 75-6. Al-Isfahān also mentions this vow, see Maqātil, p. 563, and al-Irbīlī quotes it in Kashf, iii, p. 66. Ibn Babuya adopts this narration, therefore he rejects al-Sallān's report that the real person behind the decision was the vizier al-Fāḍl see 'Uyun, ii, p. 164.
Another Shi'i explanation which was introduced by Abū al-Salt al-Harawi has it that al-Ma'mūn aimed to ensnare the Imām in worldly affairs and, in this way, to turn the devotion of his followers away from him, but he could not see the effect of this plan and eventually killed the Imām.²⁷⁸ Although he is a non-Shi'i author, 'Alī b. Yūsuf al-Qifṭī (d.646/1248)’s statement also puts forward the same point. When he relates a narration from ‘Abd Allāh b. Sahl b. Nāwbakht, who is introduced as the astrologer of al-Ma’mūn, he recounts, in the course of the narration, what drove the caliph to nominate al-Riḍā as his heir:

"Al-Ma’mūn saw that the family of the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib, were in fear and hiding because of al-Mansūr and those who had come after him from the Banū ‘Abbās. He also observed that the common people, to whom the affairs of these ‘Alids were completely unknown, believed that the ‘Alids had a similar position to the Prophets, and they made claims about their capacities which were far outside the shari‘a. At first, he (al-Ma’mūn) intended to punish these people because of this. Then he considered that if he punished these common people in this way, they would become more agitated. He thought about this meticulously. He felt that if the ‘Alids were able to reveal themselves to the people and the people could see the sinfulness and unfairness of the ‘Alids, they would fall into disfavour in the eyes of the people; (otherwise), it was not possible to undermine the people’s great respect for them.

Then he said: If we ordered them (the ‘Alids) to appear, they would fear and hide; they would think ill about us. Hence, the (proper) decision is to place one of them at the head and to proclaim him as an imām for them. So, when they see this, the ‘Alids would forget (themselves), appear (as they are) and display all the actions peculiar to (ordinary) human beings. Consequently, their (real) status and what they have concealed very carefully (so far) would become confirmed to the people. When it happens, I can remove the sweepings and bring the matter to an early resolution".²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ ‘Uyūn, ii, p.241. M.H. Tabātabā‘ī also mentions this factor, see A Shi‘ite Anthology, ed. and trans. by W.C. Chittick, p.139.

²⁷⁹ al-Qifṭī, Kitāb Akhbār al-'Ulāmā' bi Akhbār al-Hukamā’, pp.149-50. Ahmad Amin’s suggestion is in accord with al-Qifṭī’s information. He thinks that al-Ma’mūn might have contrived to reduce the worthiness of the ‘Alids in the eyes of people by drawing the Imām into governmental affairs, because it was the fact that the lack of the ‘Alids’ involvement in state affairs increased in common eyes their holiness and sanctity which sometimes encouraged some of the family members to get involved in dangerous business in terms of the security of the state. So, in this way, the Imām who would make a lot of mistakes and commit many sins in worldly affairs could obliterate this image of the ‘Alids, see Duḥā al-Islām, iii, p.295.
To remove a potential peril permanently is another Shi'i explanation for the decision of al-Ma'mūn: In a tradition related by the eleventh Imam al-Hasan al-'Askari from his father 'Ali and grandfather al-Jawad, al-Ma'mūn explains his conspiratorial intention in the following sentences:

"This man (al-Ridā) was hidden from us calling the people to himself, therefore we wanted to designate him as our heir in order to make him pray for our favour, and as a result of the nomination, he would acknowledge our authority and caliphate, and (consequently) evil-doers ("muftinūn", i.e. supporters of the Imam) would believe that the Imam's previous claim was an unconvincing one, so the authority would (totally) belong to us rather than to him. We have feared to leave him in that situation as it would allow him to act in such a way as to cause splits which might not be able to be stopped, and to achieve things we could not tolerate. Now, since we have done to him what we have done, we have sinned in the matter what we have sinned and we have exhausted all our effort at it, the contempt of his authority is not permitted. However, it is necessary to reduce his influence by and by in order to illustrate him to be, in the opinion of the people, a person who is not entitled to such a position, and then we would have prepared for him something by which the trouble which he was for us would be permanently removed from us".280

2.2 - Al-Ma'mūn's Mu'tazilism and Shi'ism

Some historians think that the Mu'tazili effect was dominant as a factor behind the decision of al-Ma'mūn. Ibn Kathir states that al-Ma'mūn was a Mu'tazili.281 According to Ahmad Amin, because al-Ma'mūn adopted the ideas of the Mu'tazili school of Baghdad, which generally accepted that 'Ali b. Abi Talib was more entitled to the caliphate than Abu Bakr and 'Umar, he nominated al-Ridā as his successor in order to carry the idea of the precedence of the 'Alids into effect.282

281 al Bidaya, x, p.275.
This hypothesis is open to doubt. Although it can be admitted that some Mu'tazili scholars in the court might have considered this step to be appropriate, there is no clear evidence that the caliph himself was a thoroughgoing Mu'tazili. His declaration of the doctrine that the Qur'an was created and his opinion on the unity of God (tawhid) may indicate a tendency towards Mu'tazilism. However, the fact that some of his comments and actions on several occasions were contrary to some of the principles of the sect might suggest that the caliph's theological views were rather eclectic. This eclecticism also shows itself in his choice of al-Riḍā as his heir as will be explained.

Al-Suyūṭī puts forward that al-Ma'mūn's extravagant attachment to Shi'ism induced him to the nomination of al-Riḍā. Ibn Babuya relates two narrations about the cause of al-Ma'mūn's Shi'ism. However, these narrations seem to have been designed to show the Imam al-Kāẓim's superiority and esteem rather than the first step of al-Ma'mūn's inclination to the sect. According to the narrations, when the caliph was still a child, Harūn al-Rashid's reception of al-Kāẓim and his veneration of him made a deep impression on al-Ma'mūn. Al-Rashid told the latter: "I am the imām of the community in appearance in terms of victory and force (al-ghalaba wa al-

283 for these scholars, see pp. 265-6 below.

284 see al-Ma'mūn's letters on the mīhna, al-Ṭabarī, iii, pp. 1112-1127.

285 John A. Nawas, who examines in his article the current explanations for al-Ma'mūn's introduction of the mīhna, has collected evidence of al-Ma'mūn's anti-Mu'tazili actions and comments, see "A Reexamination of Three Current Explanations for al-Ma'mun's Introduction of the Mihna", IJMES, 26 (1994), pp. 616-7. Nawas gives an evidence from the History of Ibn Tayfur that al-Ma'mūn is said to have abandoned the position of human free will, which was a crucial principle of the Mu'tazili ideology. Another report from Ibn Tayfur also shows that on two different occasions al-Ma'mūn declared himself to be a Mu'riji', a comment which would, of course, show him not to be a Mu'tazī. Upon these evidences and other determinations on the mīhna letters, Nawas concludes that the Mu'tazilism hypothesis must be rejected as the principal explanation for the caliph's action in the mīhna episode (Ibid., p. 617).

286 Suyūṭī, p. 320.
qahr), but Mùsà b. Ja'far is the true I màm. O my son, by God, he is truly more entitled to the place of the Apostle of Allàh than me and than the whole of creation". After narrating the story, al-Mà'mùn expressed his feelings in his own words: "At that time the affection for them (the Imam's family) was planted in my heart". 287

Indeed al-Mà'mùn's sympathy to Shi'ism was a historical fact. This factor laid behind several of his actions. In 211/826-7 he banned the favourable mention of the name of Mu'awiya b. Abi Sufyan and giving him superiority over other companions of the Prophet. 288 The following year he proclaimed the pre-eminence of 'Ali b. Abi Talib, emphasising that he was the best of mankind after the Prophet. 289 It has been reported that he also attempted to permit officially the mut'a marriage, but as a result of the persuasion of the Sunni judge Yahyà b. Aktham, he turned away from this

287 see 'Uyûn, i, 72-6. S.B. Samadi links al-Mà'mùn's Shi'i inclination with the influence of Ja'far b. Yahyà al-Barmaki who was the tutor of the caliph, see "Some Aspects of the Theory of the State and Administration under the Abbasids", Islamic Culture, 29 (1955), p.112.

288 al-Tabàri, iii, p.1098; Murùj, iii, p.454; al-Kàmil, vi, p.286.

289 al-Tabàri, iii, p.1099; al-Azàdi, p.373; al-Kàmil, vi, p.288; Ibn Katîr, x, p.266-7. Al-Mà'mùn, by way of this proclamation, abolished the caliph al-Màhdi's claim that the hereditary rights of the 'Abbasids to the caliphate did not come through 'Ali b. Abi Talib's descendants but came from al-'Abbas b. 'Abd al-Mûttalib himself (see p.114 above). This fact is stressed in al-Mà'mùn's answer to the 'Abbasids who did not yet approve the caliph's decision to nominate al-Rùfà even though the latter had already died. He said:

"As for your placing al-'Abbas before him ('Ali b. Abi Talib) in rank, God, the Exalted, says: "Do you make the giving of water to pilgrims and the maintenance of the Holy Mosque equal to someone who believes in God and the Last Day and fights in the path of God?" (Qur'an, 9:19). By God, if only a single trait of the merits and virtues of the Commander of the Faithful were in any man of you or anyone else, he would have deserved, and have been suited for the caliphate in preference to the Companions of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, by this trait. (trans.: W. Madelung, "New Documents", p.341. Arab. text al Majisti, XLIX, p.210)."
plan.\textsuperscript{290} The 'Alids asked him to return to them the land of Fadak, so he did it.\textsuperscript{291} Moreover, his last recommendation to the next caliph al-Mu'tasim was to treat the descendants of 'Ali with kindness and forbearance.\textsuperscript{292}

However, it seems that these actions were motivated by his attempt to remove the ongoing hostility between the two branches of the Banū Hāshim for the sake of the well-being of the state, as will be mentioned, rather than his Shi'ism or his inclination to Shi'ism. The same al-Ma'mūn, although he always expressed his regard and love of 'Ali b. Abī Talib and his descendants, interrogated 'Abd Allāh b. Tāhir, the governor of Egypt, Syria and al-Jazīra, after hearing that he had an inclination towards the family of Ali b. Abī Talib.\textsuperscript{293} Because 'Abd Allāh was an important man as the governor, al-Ma'mūn could not tolerate him to have such a sympathy for the security of his state. The Imāmi sources also give accounts of two scholars from the circle of 'Ali al-Riḍā; Muḥammad b. Abī 'Umayr and Ja'far b. Bashir al-Bajalti who were tortured by order of al-Ma'mūn after the Imam's death. Yaḥyā died as a result of the torture.\textsuperscript{294}

It remains to say that al-Ma'mūn's sect was the attainment of his policy, for the sake of which there was no objection for him to adopt freely one or some of the principles of different sects, or to champion one of them, even though it was to the disadvantage of others.

\textsuperscript{290} Ibn Khallikan, vi, pp. 149-50.
\textsuperscript{291} al-Ya'qūbi, iii, pp. 203-4; Dalā'il, p. 177.
\textsuperscript{292} al-Tahāri, iii, p. 1139; Ibn Kathīr, x, p. 280; al-Kāmil, vi, p. 304.
\textsuperscript{293} al-Tahāri, iii, p. 1094.
\textsuperscript{294} al-Kashshī, pp. 590, 605; Ibn Dawūd, pp. 287-8.
2.3. - Consolidation and Reinforcement of the Caliphate

The consolidation and reinforcement of the 'Abbasid caliphate seems to be the only factor which explains this remarkable decision of the caliphal court. This section focuses on furnishing evidence in order to reveal the decision-makers' real objectives when they introduced al-Rida's succession to the 'Abbasid throne.

2.3.1 - The Provision of Peace and Security by Virtue of the Reconciliation of the Two Families

The outburst of the Shi'i-originated revolts one after another against the 'Abbasids, who were accused of infringing the rights of the descendants of 'Ali and Fatima, probably urged al-Ma'mun to put into effect a reconciliation plan between the two branches of the Prophet's family, the Banu Hashim. He started it by sparing many 'Alids who had rebelled against the government including Muhammad b. Ja'far, Zayd and Ibrahim b. Musa al-Kazim. Afterwards he chose 'Ali b. Musa as his heir. 'Ali b. Musa, as the leader of a popular Shi'i party with a non-revolutionary policy, was the most fitting person among the 'Alids for the succession. In this way, al-Ma'mun would have diminished the 'Alid threat by nominating a man from them as his heir and created an easy atmosphere to strive against the opposition in Baghdad, who had supported al-Amin against him in the civil war. Maybe he had a hope that he might have used these 'Alid-Shi'i elements against them.

295 It must not be forgotten that when Nasr b. Shubah came to Medina at the beginning of 199 H. to investigate the 'Alids to find among them one who could lead an anti-government revolt, nobody indicated that he should go to 'Ali b. Musa. see p. 234 above. The latter was known as a person who maintained the traditional non-intervention policy of the Imamite party. He anyhow proved this through his attitude in the revolts in which his uncle and some of his brothers were involved.
This step carried a hope of unity of the two families which had materialised in
the spectacular revolution against the Umayyads. Therefore, this attempt was
expressed by al-Ma'mūn as "the second summons" ("al-da'wa al-thāniya").

In spite of this successful co-operation about seventy years previously, the following
developments resulted in an extended hostility between them. Al-Ma'mūn confessed
the unfaithfulness of his own family to the previous unity in the following sentences in
his letter to the 'Abbāsids:

"Thus we and they were a single party, as you claimed, until God
decreed the power for us. Then we frightened them, harassed them,
and killed them more (ruthlessly) than the Banū Umayya had killed
them. Woe to you, for the Banū Umayya killed of them only him
who drew a sword; but we, the kindred of Banū l-'Abbās, killed
them altogether. So may the bones of al-Ḥāshimiyya be asked: "For
what sin was she (were they) killed" (Qur'ān, 81:9), and may the
souls who were thrown into the Tigris and the Euphrates be asked,
and the souls who were buried alive in Baghdad and in Kufa. But
alas, "Whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall see it, and
whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it" (Qur'ān, 99:
7-8)."

But, now it was the time for the removal of the hostility and the time for the
repair of damage between them, and this was realised at his hand. He said about his
feat:

"Al-Ma'mūn has further shown reverence to the Apostle of God,
may God bless him and grant him salvation, in his offspring and has
fastened the bonds of kinship of the People of his House. Thus he
has restored their concord and re-joined their disarray, repaired their
rift and mended their split. Through him God has removed the
rancours and feuds among them and has lodged mutual support and
affection, friendship, and love in their hearts. Thus their hands have
become one through his success, his protection, his blessing, piety,
and generosity; their word has become united, and their desires con­
current. He took care of the rights of those entitled to them, put the
legacies in their proper place, requited the beneficence of the

296 In Kitāb al-Shart wa al-Hibā presented in 'Uyūn. ii. p.155

297 From al Ma'mūn's letter to the 'Abbāsids: trans.: Madelung. New
Documents", p 342. Arab. text: al Majlisi, XLIX. pp 210-1
beneficent, remembered the tribulation of the afflicted, and brought near and removed (his associates) in accordance with the religion".

298

The example of this fidelity was not left without response from the Imam. He said:

"I am 'Ali b. Mūsā al-Riḍā b. Ja‘far. The Commander of the Faithful -may God support him with good fortune and give him integrity of conduct- has distinguished our right of which others have been ignorant, has united kinship which had been broken off, has reassured souls which had been frightened, rather he has lent life to them who perhaps had been annihilated; he has protected them when they had become divided, desiring (only) the satisfaction of the Lord of the Worlds. He (al-Ma‘mūn) does not want a reward other than it. "God will reward those who (serve him) with gratitude" (al-Qur‘ān, 3:144). "He does not omit the remuneration of the beneficent persons" (al-Qur‘ān, 3:171)."

299

Al-Ma‘mūn made known that this nomination was a delayed response to what ‘Ali b. Abi Ṭalib had done for the favour of the ‘Abbāsids. He said to Zaynab, the daughter of the ‘Abbāsid prince Sulaymān b. ‘Ali b. ‘Abd Allāh, who asked him what had driven him to this act, that neither Abu Bakr nor ‘Umar and ‘Uthman had appointed anybody from the Banū Hashim, but ‘Ali, when he had succeeded to the government, had appointed, from the sons of al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, ‘Abd Allah to Basra, ‘Ubayd Allāh to Yemen, Ma‘bad to Mecca and Qutham to Bahrain.


299 For al-Riḍā’s answer of acceptance to al-Ma‘mūn’s letter of the designation, see Kashf, iii, p.127. These lines are also presented by Ibn Bahuya (‘Uyun, ii, p.144-5) in a narration related from Abu Bakr al-Sulī. But, in contrast to al-Īrbilī’s report, this narration is presented here as an oration (khutba) of the Imam, not his letter, which he made after the oath of allegiance had been taken for him. It is possible that al-Riḍā addressed the people on the occasion of the ceremony of bay‘a by reading from the document which he had written as his answer of acceptance to al-Ma‘mūn’s letter. However, it is noteworthy that the narration in ‘Uyun is shorter than that in Kashf; some sentences at the end of the letter are missing in ‘Uyun.
Nevertheless, nobody from the 'Abbásid family, when power had come to them, had repaid it, so this nomination was a repayment of it. 300

The caliph strongly believed that the reconciliation could avert the turmoil and consolidate the caliphate. He emphasised the importance of the succession in this regard:

"God, great and mighty is He, has made the covenanting of the caliphate part of the completion, perfection and might of the government (amr) of Islam and the well-being of its people. In His making sovereign of him whom His caliphs choose for Him [to succeed them], God has inspired them with something in which there is great blessing and all-encompassing security, and He has thereby untwisted the rope (marr) of the people of schism and enmity, [those given to] striving for disunity and looking out for sedition." 301

In this way, al-Ma'mún thought, the two families in particular and the whole umma in general were largely and considerably benefited:

"[Do so] thanking God for His counsel, with which He has inspired the Commander of the Faithful in [the matter of] taking care of you, and for His solicitude for your guidance (rushd) and well-being (salāh), and hoping for the benefit of that, by way of the uniting of your fellowship, the sparing of your blood, the bringing of you together after dispersal, the defence of your frontier-ways of access, the strength of your religion, the subduing of your enemy, and the good state of your affairs." 302

Hence, after this, the 'Alids should have had no reason to revolt against the authority or at least to side with any such leader who rose in revolt. The following was

300 Ibn A'tham, viii, p.324; al-Irbilī, Khulasā, pp.218-9; Ibn al-Tiqtaqa, pp.218-9; al-Suyūṭī, pp.320-1; Ibn al-'Imad, ii, p.3.

301 From al-Ma'mun's letter of the designation; trans.: Crone and Hinds, God's Caliph, pp.136-7, Arab. text. Kashf, iii, pp.124-5.

302 From al-Ma'mun's letter of the designation; trans.: Crone and Hinds. Ibid., p.139, Arab. text. Kashf, p.126.
addressed to them: "This (designation) is the affair which you have desired, the justice which you have expected and the blessing which you have looked forward to". 303

The 'Abbāsids who refused this designation should have reflected on it wisely, because it was wholly beneficial to avoid the danger which threatened the family. Al-Ma'mūn told them:

"... it (the designation) was only that I might become the sparer of your blood and your protector by perpetuating the love between us and them. This is the way I pursue in honouring the kindred of Abū Tālīb in giving them a share of the fay' in the small amount that accrues to them, even though you claim that I desire that its income and its benefits should pass to them. Thus I am occupied with managing your affairs and with taking care of you and your offspring and sons after you, while you occupy yourselves with carefree amusement." 304

In conclusion, this unusual course of action seems to have attained its object as al-Ma'mūn had expected. Ibn al-'Imād records that in 203 H. his sovereignty was firmly consolidated (istawthaqa al-mamālik). 305 Sa'd al-Qummi and al-Nawbakhti mention a group of Zaydiyya who recognised the imāma of al-Riḍa, after al-Ma'mūn had chosen him as his heir. 306 Indeed it could be taken into account, together with the continuation of this reconciliation policy during the reign, that the revolts which were undertaken by Shi'i -especially Zaydi- fomentation almost disappeared during the rest of the reign of Al-Ma'mūn. Only two supposedly Shi'i seditions are recorded: The rebellion of 'Abd al-Rahman b. Ahmad al-'Alawi in

303 From the khutba which was delivered by the lieutenant 'Abd al-Jabbar b. Sa'd al-Masahiqi in Medina on the occasion of the designation of al-Riḍa, see Ibn 'Abd al-Rabbih, al-'Iqd al-Fārid, v. p.381.

304 From al-Ma'mūn's letter to the 'Abbāsids; trans.: Madelung, "New Documents", p.343, Arab. text: Majlisī, XLIX, p.213.

305 Shadharat al-Dhahab, ii. p.5.

306 al-Qummi, p.94; al-Nawbakhti, p.73.
Yemen in 207/822-3 and the disobedience of the people of Qum in 210/825-6, but both of these were motivated by financial reasons such as the heaviness of taxes rather than political reasons.\(^{307}\)

2.3.2 - The Provision of Legitimacy for al-Ma'mūn's Rule

It was a fact that the caliphal institution had lost much of its religious essence since the Umayyads had come to power. While the typical separation between religious and political authority brought about the semi-secularisation of the state, the religious authority started to be represented by independent scholars from different theological and legal schools. Thereby, the designation of ‘Ali b. Musa could be regarded as an attempt to reunite worldly-political and religious authority within the caliphate. Thus the title of "khalīfat Allāh" returned to the coinage accompanied with the name of the heir, the Imam al-Riḍā on this occasion.\(^{308}\) Also the title of "Amīr al-Mu'mīnīn" was substituted by the word "Imām" which was inscribed on all of al-Ma'mūn's coins.\(^{309}\) The title "Imām" carried greater weight, because it was accepted not only by the Shi'is but also by the Sunnis. Hence, the caliph means now God's deputy on earth, instead of the simple meaning of successor.\(^{310}\)

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\(^{307}\) See al-Tabari, iii, pp.1062-3 and 1092-3.

\(^{308}\) See S. Lane-Poole, Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum, IX, p.55; G.C. Miles, The Numismatic History of Rayy, pp.103-6; idem, "Numismatics", p.370.

\(^{309}\) P. Hitti, History of Arabs, p.185.

\(^{310}\) For more elaborate discussions of this issue see, S.B. Samadi, Some Aspects of the Theory of the State and Administration under the Abbasids, pp.122-3; M.A. Shaban, Islamic History, ii, p.47; Crone and Hinds, God's Caliph, pp.94-6. The authors of the latter book, regarding there to be a close similarity between al-Ma'mūn's letter for al-Riḍā's succession and that of the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd II, examine the zeal of these two caliphs in order to unite worldly and religious authority for the caliphate. For the translation of the letters see God's Caliph, pp.116-126, 133-139.
It is reported in the sources that "al-Ma'mūn considered the members of the 'Alid and the 'Abbasid families and found 'Ali b. Musa among them the most excellent and the most suitable person for the caliphate and nominated him as heir".  

Al-Ma'mūn made it known clearly in the following:

"As for your mention of al-Ma'mūn's having reached discernment (istibsār) with regard to the pledge of allegiance for Abū l-Hasan al-Riḍā, peace be on him, al-Ma'mūn took the pledge of allegiance for him only with full discernment in his regard, knowing that no one of clearer excellence remained on the face of the earth, no one of more manifest integrity, no one more pious, more abstemious toward worldly gain, freer in spirit (atlaq nafsan), more agreeable (ardā) to the elite and the common people, more severe in respect to the essence (?) of God than he, and that the pledge of allegiance for him is in agreement with the pleasure of the Lord, Powerful and Lofty is He. I have endeavoured and do not find (just) censure of anyone with respect to God. By my life, if the pledge of allegiance to him were one of personal partiality, al-'Abbas, the son of the Commander of the Faithful, and the other sons of the Commander of the Faithful would be dearer to his heart and more pleasant in his eyes. But the Commander of the Faithful wanted a matter, and God wanted another matter, and his matter would not forestall the matter of God."

Sourdel and Watt approach the issue from a subtler side: They suggest that the designation of 'Ali al-Riḍā as the heir on the ground that he was afdal was a preparation for the defence of the 'Abbasid rule as that of the most excellent of the clan of the Banu Hashim. The idea also implied that in future the caliph should be the most excellent among the 'Alids and the 'Abbasids, which might have been oriented by the Mu'tazili and the Zaydi principle that the most excellent of the community was best able to rule. They allude that the two important Mu'tazili names, Bishr b. al-Mu'tamīr


and Thumama b. Ashras, were probably behind this crucial decision. Because of the fluidity in the relations between Zaydisim and Mu'tazilism at this period, the above-named Mu'tazilis may well have been Zaydis too. Watt also suggests that this was an attempt of al-Ma'mun which was made against the "constitutionalist bloc", which possibly reflected the tradition and was congenial to the 'ulamā', in favour of the "autocratic or absolutist bloc", which was mainly represented by the caliph himself. the secretaries of the state and proto-Shi'i and Mu'tazili elements of the community who, when they needed security in the time of stress, looked to the guidance of an inspired or charismatic leader. The latter bloc considered that the caliph should have been able to overrule the interpretations of the 'ulamā', advocating an absolutist and autocratic form of government. This was an important step which could strengthen al-Ma'mūn's authority.

The question of whether al-Ma'mūn was determined to carry on this decision until the end if al-Riḍā had stayed alive, has still remained without response. In order to answer the question, the Imami claim that al-Riḍā was murdered by the caliph must be excluded from the argument.

313 They were two witnesses of the document declaring 'Ali al-Riḍā heir, see Kashf, iii, p. 128.


M. Zahniser who examines the religious policy of al-Ma'mūn on the basis of the main theme of al-Jahiz's 'Uthmaniyya comes close to Sourdel and Watt's points of view. He, setting off from the fact that 'Uthmaniyya was written for the information of al-Ma'mūn himself and the latter found that it had excellent diction and smoothness of style, concludes that al-Ma'mūn's policy was not to champion Shi'ism against Sunnism or non-Arabs against Arabs, but rather to champion a point of view which might best be identified politically as absolutist and theologically as Mu'tazili, which found confirmation in the work of al-Jahiz (d. 255/869), see "Insights from the 'Uthmaniyya of al-Jahiz into the Religious Policy of al-Ma'mūn Muslim World, 69 (1979), pp. 8, 16-7.
We have known that this step of al-Ma'mūn provided many advantages in the short term although it brought about the insubordination of the 'Abbāsids in Iraq, but this problem was also solved in the short term. The first thing which comes to one's mind is the obvious disparity in age between al-Ma'mūn and al-Riḍā. The heir al-Riḍā was twenty-seven or, at least, twenty-two years older than the present caliph al-Ma'mūn. This is an unusual disparity between a ruler and his successor. Secondly, in spite of this fact, during al-Riḍa's time -also after his death- al-Ma'mūn did not mention any rule governing the succession for the future by virtue of personal merit according to which he had chosen al-Riḍā. He could have appointed an electoral council which would choose the successor from the distinguished members of the Hashimis or have given this responsibility to al-Riḍā. But he failed to do that. His only attempt in this regard was his offer of 'Ali al-Riḍa's place, after the latter's death, to a rebel 'Alīd in hiding, 'Abd Allah b. Musa b. 'Abd Allah b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Ali b. Abi Ṭālib.315 This offer was not accepted by 'Abd Allāh. However, this offer of al-Ma'mūn which was made to a rebel, for whom no distinguished merit was mentioned, instead of an esteemed member of the family leads us to think that these attempts of al-Ma'mūn were no more than a political ploy, which was able to provide him with some short or long-term benefits in the political area. This absolutist caliph seems to have always given preference to the survival and the interest of his state over all matters, including the benefits of some religious groups or sects he championed and even the interest of his own family. He showed it by nominating as his heir Abu Iṣḥaq al-Muṭṣim, who is reported to have been a good soldier and a brave man but was destitute of education and there was no other reports about his merits and religious knowledge.316 He did not nominate his oldest son al-'Abbas using the hereditary rights of his offspring, because al-'Abbas was too young to govern a state.

315 Maqatil, p.628.
He did not nominate, too, Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Ridā, his son-in-law and the son of his most excellent successor, because no one would have accepted him as caliph in the absence of himself.

VII - The Summons and the Journey to Merv

It is probable that the command of al-Ma'mūn reached 'Ali al-Riḍā before the pilgrimage season of the year 200 H. We have the text of a letter of summons, which seems to be the first letter which Rajā' b. Abī al-Dāhāk brought to Medina. It is presented by 'Abd al-Karīm b. Muhammad al-Rāfī'ī al-Qazvīnī (d. 623/1226) in his al-Tādwin fī Akhbār Qazwīn. The translation of it is as follows:

"In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.
To 'Ali b. Musa al-Riḍā, the son of the Apostle of Allah, the chosen one, who is the guide with his right guidance, the exemplar in his deeds, the protector of Allah's religion and the safekeeper of Allah's revelation; from his companion al-Fadl b. Sahl, who has sacrificed his lifeblood to return his (the Imam's) right to him and has worked night and day in order to fulfil it.
The peace be upon you and also Allah's mercy and benediction. I praise Allah, there is no god but He, and ask Him to bless Muḥammad, His servant and His apostle. To continue:
I verily hope that Allah has led and permitted to return your right to you from those who have deemed you weak, and He has enhanced

This letter is translated from the printed text of al-Rafī'ī in his al-Tadwin. I have also utilised another printed text given by Ja'far M. al-'Āmili in his book, al-Hayāt al-Siyasiyya li al-Imām al-Riḍā (pp. 445-7), for some variant readings. Al-'Āmili's text was taken from a manuscript of al-Tadwin located in the Daftar Tablighat Islāmī Library in Qum.
The authenticity of the letter cannot be proved. However, the fact that al-Rafī'ī, following this letter, records another letter, which is al-Riḍa's answer of acceptance to al-Ma'mūn's letter of the designation, and this last letter is found partially in Ibn Babuya's 'Uyun (ii, pp. 144-5) and wholly in al-Irbīlī's Kashf (iii, pp. 127-8) might indicate that the letter of summons was also taken from an earlier source. Because al-Rafī'ī does not say anything about this source, its name remains unknown. The letter does not reflect Shi'i ideology, therefore it seems to be unlikely that it was forged for the purpose of Shi'i propaganda. It also does not contain any statement which contradicts the historical facts. There is no aspect in the letter which refutes the strong conjecture that it was written by a royal pen. This letter can be considered as one of the important evidences showing the vizier al-Fādil b. Sahl's part in the plan of designation of 'Ali al-Riḍā as heir apparent.

268
His favour over you, and made you the heir Imam, so your enemies and those who have disliked you perceive in you what they should beware of.

This letter of mine is a determination of the Commander of the Faithful, 'Abd Allah, the Imam al-Ma'mun, and of me to reject iniquity which has been done to you, to put your rights in your hands and to establish them for you, on (a basis), through which I ask Allah, Who has knowledge about it, to make me become the happiest one in the worlds, and become one from those who are successful in the opinion of Allah, join the Apostle of Allah -peace be upon him and his family- (in the hereafter) being from those who accomplish (their duties), and become one of your assistants to help you to achieve it, so that I reach, in your administrative position and government, both of two glorious things (i.e. victory and martyrdom, referring to the verse of the Qur'an, ix, 52).

When my letter comes to you, oh, could I but sacrifice myself for you- it is necessary for you not to leave it from your hand until you arrive at the gate of the Commander of the Faithful, who considers you a partner in his work, a full brother in his kinsfolk, and the worthiest one of the people under his power. I have done what I have done, surrounded by Allah's blessings, and guarded by His angels, and protected by His watch. Allah is the guarantor for you of the whole good benefit which is collected for you and of the goodness of the Muslim nation.

Allah is enough for us, who is the Best as a Disposer of affairs. The peace be upon you and also Allah's mercy and benediction."

At first the Imam did not accept this proposal. But when al-Ma'mun insisted, by sending letters, one after another, according to the sources, al-Ridā had no alternative but to accept it. Before leaving Medina, al-Ridā gathered his family and wanted them to lament for him, because he believed that he would never see them again. He left for them 12,000 dinārs and set off for Khurāsān. The fact that al-Ridā did not take his family and, more importantly, his five-year-old son Muhammad with him may indicate his concern with regard to the suspicious nature of the proposal of succession and its uncertain aftermath. At first, he was taken to Mecca in the hope

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318 I read "maḍlumatika", instead of "maḍlumatika", as in the manuscript of Qum.

319 I read "'ā'idā", instead of "'ā'idha", as in the manuscript of Qum.

320 al-Kulaynî, i, pp.488-9; 'Uyūn, ii, p.148.

321 'Uyūn, ii, p.219; Musnad al-Ridā, i, p.52.
of employing him as a mediator who could persuade his uncle Muhammad b. Ja'far, who had revolted in Mecca, into ending his turbulence. Al-Ri'ādī failed to do that. He probably remained there until Muhammad b. Ja'far surrendered. Afterwards, Ali al-Ri'ādī, Muhammad b. Ja'far and a group of the Ṭalibis set off towards Iraq. The man in charge of their journey was Isā al-Julūdī, the general and the governor of Mecca. Al-Julūdī handed them over to al-Ḥasan b. Sahl, the governor, in Iraq and the latter sent them in the custody of Raja b. Abū Dahḥāk and the eunuch Firnās. 325

322 see p. 242 above.

323 Idrīs, the Ismā'īlī dā'ī and author, gives the names of some of the Ṭalibis who were taken to Merv with 'Ali al-Ri'ādī (Uyun al-Akhhār, p. 359). They are Muhammad b. Ja'far, Isma'il b. Musil and 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn b. Zayd, the grandson of Zayd b. 'Ali Zayn al-Abidin. He also gives the name of Ibn al-‘Arqā (the son of the leopard). "Al-‘Arqā" was the nickname of Muhammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, the leader of the famous rebellion in 145 H., and that of Abū Allāh b. 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ali b. Abī Tatib, the son of 'Ali Zayn al-Abidin (see Ibn Hazm, Jamhara, pp. 45, 53). The name of Abū Allāh b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbas b. 'Ali b. Abī Talib appears, too, in another report of Idrīs, which narrates the ceremony of al-Ri'ādī's succession (Uyun al-Akhhār, p. 361). He might be among these Ṭalibis. But, his name needs to be corrected because Ibn Hazm records that there was no issue from the sons of al-‘Abbas b. ‘Ali b. Abī Talib except from ‘Ubayd Allāh b. al-‘Abbas b. ‘Ali b. Abī Talib and the name of ‘Ubayd Allāh’s grandson was ‘Ubayd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan b. ‘Ubayd Allāh b. al-‘Abbas b. ‘Ali b. Abī Talib (Jamhara, p. 67). Accordingly, it seems likely that Idrīs read ‘Ubayd Allāh as ‘Abd Allāhs. This ‘Ubayd Allāh led on behalf of al-Ma’āmun the pilgrimages of the years 204/820, 205/821 and 206/822 (al-Tabari, iii, pp. 1039, 1044, 1062).

B. S. al-Qurashi also quotes from Thufāt al-Azhār of Ibn Shaqdam ‘Ali b. al-Ḥasan al-Madani (d. 1033/1623-4) that Ḥamza b. Musā, the brother of al-Ri’ādī, was with the Imam and served him on the journey, but, on the way, he was attacked by the men of al-Ma’āmun and killed (Ḥayāt al-Imām Musā, ii, p. 419). However, there is no substantiation of this report in the early sources. Therefore, it seems to be a later innovation reflecting antagonism towards al-Ma’āmun. It would be very unusual for the caliph to have the brother of his heir killed without any obvious reason.

Al-Kashshā gives another name, al-Jawm (?), reporting that he was from the Imam’s associates and he accompanied him on the journey (p. 506).


325 al-Ṭabarṣī, iii, pp. 994-5 and 1001. This report of al-Ṭabarṣī solves the contradiction between two different accounts about who was the responsible official on the journey. Some sources give the name of ‘Isa al-Julūdī (see the previous footnote), whereas the others name him Raja (Uyun, ii, p. 178; al-Nawbakhtī, pp. 73-4; al-Qummi, p. 95, al-Ya’qūbī, iii, p. 183; Sibt, p. 352; Ibn al-Jawzi, al
According to some of the narrations, al-Qādisiyya, a town lying the south-west of Kufa, was one of the stops on the journey. There the Imam met with one of his vottaries, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Baʿṣantī. He instructed him to carry out some of his affairs. Beforehand, al-Riḍā wanted him to hire a room which had two doors opening both to the outside and to the caravanserai in which the caravan stayed, because he did not want to reveal the identity of his followers who would frequent him. 326

Al-Baʿṣantī reports that the caravan did not enter Kufa; instead it took the route towards Basra. 327 This route had been decided by al-Maʿmūn. 328 The reason probably was that Baghdad and Kufa at that time were in the hands of the opposition camp in Baghdad. From the report of al-Ṭabarī, we know that when al-Julūdī arrived in Wāṣīt accompanied by Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar, the war between the troops of al-Ḥasan b. Sahl and the Abnū' troops was still continuing. 329 Another suggestion from al-Rawandi is that al-Maʿmūn ordered this route to be followed because he thought that al-Riḍā's arrival in Kufa might tempt the people of the city, the majority of whom were Shiʿis, so that it would become an occasion for some disturbances. 330 It is quite possible that the leaders of Shiʿī community in the city, which was not under

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328 al-Kulaymi, i, p.489; 'Uyun, ii, p.178.
329 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.1003.
330 "...wa lam yamurra bihi 'alā tariq al-Kūfa fa yustutina bihi ahlūha", see al-Rawandi al Kharaʾīj, ii, p.661.
the control of the Khurasan-based government, might not have let the Imam continue his journey because of concern for his fate in Merv.331

There were two main roads to Khurasan from Iraq. The first was the road of Jibal, via Baghdad, Hulwan, Kirmanshah, Hamadan, Ray and Damghan, the route which al-Ma'mun followed when he returned to Baghdad. The second was a road starting from Basra continuing via Ahwaz, Fārs (Shiraz) and the Great Desert of Iran.332 It is reported that the Imam used the second road.333 He, after al-Qādisiyah, did not enter Kufa; he headed towards Basra. Hence, the report of the Shi'i rāwī Abu al-Salt al-Harawi showing al-Riḍā at Kufa334 and that of al-Yaʿqūbī which gives an account of al-Riḍā's arrival in Baghdad335 are thus erroneous.336

331 For the Shi'i identity of Kufa, see al-Ash'ari, i, p.64; Fayyad, pp.174-80; Frye, The Golden Age, p.156. ‘A. al-ʿUtāridi, the editor of Musnad al-Riḍā, maintains that the purpose of the caliph in choosing the Basra - Ahwaz route for al-Riḍā's journey was that Basra, Ahwaz and Fārs were in the hands of al-Riḍā's brothers, Ismā'il and Zayd, who were the governors of the rebel Abu al-Saraya, so the Imam's presence in the region might play a sedative role and stop the revolt (i, p.52). However, this view seems to be mistake, because the date of the journey was 201 H., but these cities must have been freed from the rebels at least at the beginning of 200 H., see p.237 above.


334 ‘Uyun, ii, p.140.

335 al-Yaʿqūbī, iii, p.183.

336 Donaldson and Rajkowski give, as al-Riḍā's route, the names of some cities which it would have been only possible for the Imam to pass through if he followed the road of Jibal. Therefore, they probably rely on al-Yaʿqūbī's statement, see D.M. Donaldson, The Shi'iite Religion, p.166; W. Rajkowski, "Early Shi'ism in Iraq", p.630.

Al-Shaybi shows as evidence for al-Riḍā not being present in Baghdad that al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdadī did not mention anything about al-Riḍā in his voluminous Tarikh Baghdad. According to al-Shaybi, if al-Riḍā had entered the city, al-Khaṭīb should have opened a part about his life like he did for the Imam's father, son and grandson. see al-Sīla bayn al-Tasawwuf wa al-Tashayyu', i, p.243.

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The sources present traditions about some events which happened during this journey. Although many of them have a legendary nature which were probably fabricated by local Shi‘is to honour their venerable guest, they still give some indications about the Imam’s stopping places and his relationship with the locals.

Ibn ‘Ulwăn, a Basran Shi‘i, narrates that he saw in his dream that the Prophet came to Basra and went down to a garden. In the morning he heard that ‘Ali al-Ri‘da came to the city and went down to the same garden.

Al-Ri‘da’s next stop was Ahwaz. He asked for sugar cane from the locals. They told him that in the summer season it could not be found. The Imam said that they would find it. Finally the hired man of a Shi‘i resident brought some sugar cane, which had been stored as seed. Yaqút also records that in the city there was a mosque which had been built by al-Ri‘da when he had been present there and it was named after him

Al-Ri‘da then appears to be present in Qantarât Arbaq (the bridge of Arbaq) in a tradition. There he told Ja‘far b. Muḥammad al-Nawfali that the Imam after him was his son Muḥammad. The caravan passed through Mafâzat al-Khurasân, Dasht-i Kawir as its name is today, the northern section of the central desert of Iran. The

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337 Musnad al-Ri‘da, i, pp. 54-5.
339 Yaqút, i, pp. 411-2. He also mentions that Ahwaz was famous for its high quality sugar.
340 Qantarât Arbaq was a place near Ramahurmuz in the province of Khuzistan, see Yaqút, i, p. 185, iv, p. 187.
water was all gone, so al-Rida indicated a place where the travellers found water which was sufficient for them and their riding animals.\textsuperscript{342}

After the desert, the caravan eventually reached Nishapur.\textsuperscript{343} The Imam entered the city in a silver-made howdah on a grey mule. The scholars of the city went to meet him. According to the reports of Abu al-Salt al-Harawi and the historian al-Waqidi,\textsuperscript{344} these prominent scholars were Ishaq b. Rabiya\textsuperscript{345}, Yahya b. Yahya\textsuperscript{346}, Ahmad b. Harb\textsuperscript{347} and Muhammad b. Rafi.\textsuperscript{348}

Another report is that of al-Hakim al-Nisaburi which narrates the Imam's entrance into the city in a detailed form.\textsuperscript{349} Al-Hakim records two names who met al-Rida as the representatives of the city's intelligentsia. They then requested him to narrate hadith. The first name is Muhammad b. Aslam al-Tusi (d.242/856), a

\textsuperscript{342} 'Uyun, ii, p.218.

\textsuperscript{343} Al-Hakim's account that the year in which al-Rida arrived in Nishapur was 200 H. (quoted by al-Dhahabi, Siyar, ix, p.390) is unlikely to be true. According to reliable historical reports, the Imam's arrival in the city took place in 201 H..

\textsuperscript{344} Ibn Babuya relates this report on the authority of Abu al-Salt ('Uyun, ii, p.132). Sbit b. al-Jawzi (p.352) and Ibn al-Jawzi (al-Muntazam, x, p.120) quote it from al-Waqidi's report.

\textsuperscript{345} The well-known Sunni traditionist. He died in 238/852-3.


\textsuperscript{347} He was an ascetic from Nishapur. He is said to have been a propagandist for the Murjia. He lived between 176/792-3 and 234/848-9 (al-Dhahabi, Mizan, i, p.89). In the text of 'Uyun (ii, p.132), "Ahmad b. al-Harth" should be "Ahmad b. Harb".

\textsuperscript{348} Muhammad b. Rafi b. Abu Zayd al-Qushayri. He died in 245/859-60 (Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib, ix, pp.160-1).

Khurasanian traditionist, exegesist of the Qurʾan and theologian. Although his birth date is not known, his presence in this welcoming parade is historically and geographically possible. However, the second name given by al-Ḥakim raises doubts about the report. He is the celebrated Sunni traditionist Abū Zurʿa ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Karim al-Rāzī who was born in 200/815 and died in 264/878. From his birth date, it can be clearly seen that Abū Zurʿa was a one-year-old infant when the Imam came to Nishapur. How this error was made by al-Ḥakim (d.404/1014), who was also a renowned traditionist, is almost not understandable. But this narration might be accounted as one of the examples of the attitude of some Shiʿi traditionists who were very eager to attribute falsely traditions about the merits of their Imams or sectarian beliefs about them to famous Sunni scholars. Abū Zurʿa might have been chosen as such a person, and the narrations then managed to enter the work of al-Ḥakim, whose sympathy with Shiʿism is recorded in spite of the fact that he has been regarded as a prominent scholar by the Sunnis.

All the above-mentioned reports agree that these prominent scholars requested the Imam to narrate a hadith related through his father and grandfathers. The rest of the story is as follows according to al-Ḥakim’s narration:

"The mule stopped and the sunshade was lifted; the Muslims delighted in his blessed and fortunate appearance. His hair had two tresses like the tresses of the Apostle of Allāh. All the people were standing in accordance with their rank: Their (emotional) states were between yelling and weeping, tearing their clothes, rolling in the dust, kissing the halter of his mule and stretching their necks towards the sunshade of the howdah. (This situation) continued until midday.

350 For him, see al-Ṣafādī, ii, p.204.
351 For him, see Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhib, vii, pp.30-3.
352 It is said about al-Ḥakim that although he was a thiqa ṭāwi in hadith he was "an evil (khabiṭh) Rāfīḍi. He is also said to have had severe fanaticism for the Shiʿa, but he professed Sunnism, especially on the matter of the caliphate, see al-Dhahabi, Mizan, iii, p.608; al-Safādī, iii, pp.320-1. For the accounts of some Imam authors about him, see Kohlberg, A Medieval Muslim Scholar, p.366.
Tears ran like rivers. (Eventually), sounds ceased and the imams and the judges shouted: 'Oh ye people, listen and pay attention! Do not molest the Apostle of Allah by molesting his descendant; give your ears and record this hadith!'”

The Imam, accounting the names of his father and grandfathers as the sanad of the hadith, narrated from God mediated by the Prophet and Gabriel: "The words of Lā ilāha illā Allāh (there is no god but Allāh) is My fort: Whoever declares it, enters My fort and whoever enters My fort, becomes safe from My punishment".353

Al-Riḍā stayed in Nishapur for a while. Ibn Bābūya mentions a bath in the city called "Ḥammam al-Riḍā". He says that when the Imam was in Nishapur, he went to this bath, but there was too little water. The Imam put somebody in charge of excavating for water. Consequently, the water became abundant, so the Imam took a bath there and then prayed behind it. Ibn Bābūya reports that people still respected this bath. They took baths there, drank its water and prayed for blessings and to request the help of God for their necessities. The spring of the bath was called "'Ayn al-Kahlān" which was a well-known place at the time of Ibn Bābūya.354

The Imam left Nishapur for Merv. On his way another miracle occurred. When he entered the village of "al-Ḥumrā", he wanted to pray the midday prayer, but there was no water for the ablution; he scraped the ground slightly, so enough water sprang for the ritual. Ibn Shahrahshub (d.588/1162) states that this spring still existed in his time. It was called "Chasma-i Riḍā".355 D.M. Donaldson also mentions a shrine near Nishapur. In it there was a stone on which there was a huge impress of foot. It was

353 quoted from al-Ḥakim’s Tarikh al-Nisabur by al-Irbīlī, Kashf, iii, p.98.
355 Manaqib, iv, p.343. For the original narration related on the authority of Abū al-Salt, see ‘Uyun, ii, p.135.
believed to be the footprint of 'Ali al-Riḍā. Donaldson adds that pilgrims who travel to Mashhad by motor-lorry always insisted that the driver should stop in "Qadamgah" (the place of the footprint) to enable them to visit the shrine.\footnote{356 Donaldson, \textit{The Shi'ite Religion}, pp 266-7.}

Al-Riḍā arrived in Sanābath, a village of al-Ṭūs. According to one narration, in Sanābath the Imam prayed for a hill whose clay was used to make pots, and then he ordered that a pot should be made for him from it and all meals should be cooked in it. Accordingly, the foods which were cooked in it for the Imam's guests during his stay there became enough and sufficient. In the same narration al-Riḍā also indicated to his followers his grave next to that of Hārūn al-Rashīd.\footnote{357 'Uyun, ii, p.135.}

\begin{quote}
Al-Riḍā was put up in the palace (\textit{Qasr}) of Ḥumayd b. al-Qaḥṭaba in Sanābath.\footnote{358 'Uyun, ii, p.135} This mansion was probably used by high officials of the state or for guests of a high rank. Its real owner had been Ḥumayd b. al-Qaḥṭaba, the powerful general and the former governor of Khurasan, who died in 159/775-6.\footnote{359 For Ḥumayd, see al-Tabari, iii, pp.458-9.} Nevertheless, the \textit{rāwī} of a tradition related by Ibn Bābūya seems to have supposed that Ḥumayd had been a contemporary of al-Riḍā, so he made them meet in this palace on this occasion. According to the story, a concubine of Ḥumayd found a slip of paper in the pocket of al-Riḍā's garment which had been given to her for washing, and took it to her master. Ḥumayd asked the Imam what it was. The Imam replied that it was an amulet which protected him from "Satan and the \textit{Sulṭān}" and told Ḥumayd the contents of it at his request.\footnote{360 'Uyun, ii, pp 136-7.}
\end{quote}
Eventually the caravan arrived in Merv. Idris gives the date of arrival as 10th of Jumādā (? I or II), 201.\textsuperscript{361} Al-Ma’mūn received the ‘Alids in his presence. He separated al-Riḍā from them and settled them in different houses.\textsuperscript{362}

**VIII - The Pledge of Allegiance to al-Riḍā as the Heir**

Sometime after ‘Ali al-Riḍā’s arrival, al-Ma’mūn proclaimed that he had chosen al-Riḍā as his heir to the caliphate. This section outlines the situation in which al-Riḍā accepted the proposal of al-Ma’mūn. It also gives information about the excuses which are reported to have been made by al-Riḍā for his acceptance. Historical reports about the solemnity of the bay‘a and the following observances are also presented to understand the real character of the event.

1 - Al-Riḍā’s Acceptance and the Excuses for it

It is clear in the letter of summons which was sent by al-Fadl b. Sahl to al-Riḍā that the purpose of taking the Imam to Merv was to designate him as al-Ma’mūn’s successor to the throne. However, some Shi‘i accounts report that al-Ma’mūn, after al-Riḍā had come to Merv, proposed to resign from the caliphate in favour of the Imam.\textsuperscript{363} Al-Riḍā explicitly rejected it. It is reported on the authority of Abū al-Ṣalt al-Harawi that al-Riḍā said to the caliph:

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\textsuperscript{361} Idris, ‘Uyun al-Akhibar, p.359.

\textsuperscript{362} Maqatil, p.562.

\textsuperscript{363} ‘Uyun, ii, pp.147-8, no 21 and pp.138-9, no.3. Both narrations are related on the authority of ‘Ali b. Ibrahim b. Hashim al Qummi, who is regarded by al-Najashi as thiqa ṛawi and sahih al-madhhab (p.148). For the same account
"If this caliphate belongs to you, God designed it for you, so it is not permissible for you to take off a robe which God has dressed you in and to give it to somebody other than you, or if the caliphate does not belong to you, it is (also) not permissible for you to give me what does not belong to you." 364

Al-Riḍa resisted this proposal for about two months. At the insistent refusal of the Imām, al-Ma’mūn had to change his proposal and forced him this time to accept becoming his heir.365 In the historical sources there is no confirmation of this surprising attempt which would not normally be expected from a ruler who had already been involved in a civil war in which he took part in order to capture the caliphate for himself and as a result killed his own brother to achieve it. If these narrations can be relied upon, it could only be suggested that in this way al-Ma’mūn wanted to make his manoeuvre more effective. An institution of the caliphate, whose authority were shared by two men, al-Riḍa, the most excellent and meritorious caliph but alone, helpless and inexperienced, and al-Ma’mūn, a victorious ruler who sacrificed his throne in favour of the just ruler, could function for the same purpose quite adequately. Or al-Ma’mūn made this proposal firstly to the Imām in order that the latter could find no excuse to refuse his following proposal.

Finally ‘Alī al-Riḍa consented to an appointment as heir to the caliphate but on the following conditions:

a - Al-Riḍa did not command nor forbid anything.

b - He did not give legal decisions (fatāwā) nor judge (qadā).

c - He did not appoint nor dismiss anybody.

also see al-Irshad, pp.469-70; Manaqib, iv. p.363; al-Tabarsa, I’lam p.320; al-Salādi, xxii, p.249; al-Qunduzi, p.384; Musnad al-Riḍa, i, p.73.


d - He did not change anything from how it was at present.  

The early books of the Imāmiyya, also Maqātīl of al-İsfahānī, agree that al-Ridā had the choice between compliance and death. Al-Mufid reports that al-Maʿmūn threatened the Imam reminding him the condition in ʿUmar b. al-Khattāb’s electoral committee in which ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib had taken part. The caliph ʿUmar stipulated that any of the members of the committee who opposed the decision on which the majority agreed should be executed. Al-Maʿmūn meant that therefore there was no escape for al-Ridā from accepting his proposal.

The Imāmi books have also included traditions in which the Imam al-Ridā expressed his excuse for accepting this proposal. According to one of them, al-Maʿmūn’s threat of death obliged al-Ridā to accept it, because if he did not, he would make his own hands contribute to his destruction, but that was prohibited by God. It was also a similar situation of constraint which had led the Prophets Joseph and Daniel to accept an office in an illegitimate government. A tradition related by the Imami exegesist Muḥammad b. Masʿūd al-ʿAyyāshi (d.320/932) designates an analogy between the succession of al-Ridā to the caliphate and Joseph’s rule in Pharaonic Egypt: A man asked al-Ridā why he consented to the nomination. The Imam replied:

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367 Ibn Babuya, ʿİlal, p.239; ʿUyun, i, p.16, ii, p.138; Maqātīl, p.563; al-İrshad, p.470; al-Kashshī, p.501; Kashf, iii, p.65; Manaqib, iv, p.363; al-Tabarsi, lʿİlam, p.320.

368 al-İrşad, p.470. Also see Maqātīl, 563, ldris, ʿUyun al-İkhbar, p.360.

369 See al Qurʾān, ii: 195: “wa lā tuldū bi ayydikum ilā al-tahlūka”.

370 ʿUyun, i, p.16. Also see ibid., ii, p.138, 169; Ibn Babuya, ʿİlal, p.239; idem, Amali, p.589.

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"O man, which one is more excellent, the *nabi* (the prophet) or the *wasi* (the regent, i.e. the Imam)? (The man) replied: It is a *nabi*. (The Imam) asked (again): Which is more excellent, a Muslim or a *mushrik* (polytheist)? (The man) replied: It is a Muslim. (The Imam) said: The Ruler, the ruler of Egypt, was a *mushrik* and Joseph was a *nabi*, (but) al-Ma’mun is a Muslim and I am a *wasi*. Moreover, Joseph himself asked the Ruler to assign him as he said, "Set me over the storehouses of the land: I will indeed guard them as one that knows" *(al-Qur’an, xii : 55)*, but I have been obliged to do it." 371

The Imam also likens his position to that of ‘Ali b. Abi Talib who was said to have been obliged to take part in the electoral committee of ‘Umar b. al-Khattab. He says that the reasons in both incidents are exactly the same. 372

Although it cannot be known whether these excuses were really put forward by al-Rida himself, it is a fact that the nomination of the Imam has stayed in Imami theology as a problematic matter, so the Imami scholars always need to explain it and these excuses have often been narrated in their books to exonerate the Imam and his action. According to some narrations, there were also reactions to al-Rida within his own circle. The prominent scholar Yünus b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān, when he heard of al-Rida’s journey to Khurāsān and learned the reason for it, said that if the Imam accepted it either willingly or unwillingly, he, from now on, was a tāghūt (an idol or a tyrant). 373 In another tradition, Yünus said, too, that by this act the institution of prophetship which had started with Adam was destroyed. 374 It was quite reasonable


372 *Uyun*, ii, pp.139-40. This committee was arranged by ‘Umar (ruled 15 23 / 634-644) to elect the new caliph after him. Among the six members of the committee was ‘Ali b. Abi Talib who has been regarded by Shi’is as the only legal successor (Imam) of the Prophet.


374 al-Kashshi. p.496.
for Yūnus to think this because he was a pupil of Hishām b. al-Hakam,\textsuperscript{375} and Hishām should perhaps be regarded as the one who created a doctrine from the wasıyya idea of the Shi'a, which considered a line of the Prophets and the Imāms who had been determined by divine order and people had no right to interfere with this order either by choosing or appointing a nabi (prophet) or a wası (Imam),\textsuperscript{376} a doctrine which became later a fundamental principle of the Imāmiyya. Yūnus, as a famous theologian and the author of "the Book of Imāma",\textsuperscript{377} which probably reflected the idea of divinely ordered imāma, was right to condemn al-Riḍā's attitude on the basis of his ideology.

Another proof of the Shi'is' disapproval of the agreement by al-Riḍā was the attitude of Kufan Shi'is when al-ʿAbbas b. Mūsā, the brother of the Imam who was the governor of Kufa on behalf of al-Ma'mūn, asked them for support against the troops of Ibrahim b. al-Mahdi who had been proclaimed in Baghdad as the new caliph. Al-Tabari reports that almost all the extremist Shi'i factions and most of the moderate Shi'is refused to assist al-ʿAbbas. They said that if al-Ma'mūn's name was placed in the sermon, and only after him 'Ali al-Riḍā's name was placed as the heir, that would be unacceptable to them, but if al-ʿAbbas invoked al-Riḍā's name first, or the name of himself or any name from the 'Alids, they would join him. Al-ʿAbbas did not do what they wanted. The Shi'is also did not change their attitudes, so, al-Tabari reports that, not a single one of them joined al-ʿAbbas b. Mūsā, who, for this reason, was defeated by the troops of Baghdadi opposition.\textsuperscript{378}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{375} al-Kashshī, p. 278.

\textsuperscript{376} see p. 420 below.

\textsuperscript{377} al Najashi, p. 312.

\textsuperscript{378} al Tabari, iii, pp. 1020 1.
\end{flushleft}
It seems that these sorts of objections continued to be brought to the agenda by some individuals both within the Imāmis and non-Imāmis, therefore some Imāmi doctors might have attributed some sayings to mouth of their Imām in order to remove doubts from their doctrines. Apart from these traditions, it is worthwhile quoting one of the convincing explanations which belongs to the Imāmi theologian al-Sharif al-Murtaḍā. In his book "Tanzih al-Anbiya'" ("the Blamelessness of the Prophets") he exonerates the act of al-Riḍā:

"If it is asked how 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā undertook the succession to the throne after al-Ma'mūn in spite of the fact that the imāma is not designated in this way, and also if it is asked whether this (the succession) was a matter of criticism (ibām) with regard to the religion, we say as an answer that we have already discussed the reason for the Commander of the Faithful's participation in the electoral council (of 'Umar, the second caliph), which is the basis of this subject and its sum total. The one who has a right is entitled to get this (right) using all means and all occasions. Particularly, if he could reach this right (the imāma) by an authorisation (of somebody), it would become requisite for him to get it (tawassul), to take it up (tahammul) and to administer this duty (tasarruf) just like in the case of al-Riḍā -peace be upon him and his family- who has been entitled to this right by the designation of his fathers. When it (the imāma) was taken away from him, (but) on another occasion it was consigned to him to administer it, it was his duty to take this occasion to reach his right. There is no criticism in this case, because the evidence for his entitlement to the imāma prevent this doubt from entering the matter. Even if there could be some criticism (ibām) of it because of adequate protection (lihasanat iljā'īn), he was compelled to do it by necessity just as he and his fathers had been forced to appear to follow the wrongdoers and acknowledge their imāma. Perhaps he accepted the succession out of caution (taqiyya) and fear. He did not choose to refuse the authorisation of the one who forced him to accept it and burdened him with it. (If he refused), the matter would have lead to conflict and fighting, (but) the situation did not require it. This is clear." 380

379 'Alī b. Abī Ta'lib's participation in the council might have indicated the manifestation of his oath of allegiance to the first two caliphs and also to the new elected caliph. Al Sharif al-Murtaḍā tried to refute this signification using similar arguments to those used in the case of al-Riḍā. see Tanzih al-Anbiya', pp 141-3.

The pledge of allegiance to al-Riḍā was most probably made on 7 Ramadān, 201 / 29 March, 817.\(^{381}\) This date coincides with the day on which the letter of the designation of ‘Alī al-Riḍā was signed and despatched to Medina.\(^{382}\) It is also the same day on which another letter, "the Letter of Gift and Stipulation" (Kitāb al-Shart wa al-Ḥibā’), was written for the vizier al-Faḍl b. Sahl.\(^{383}\) Al-Ṭabarī’s date as 2nd of Ramadān\(^{384}\) is probably the day on which a letter containing the news of the designation and some orders of al-Ma’mūn in this regard was despatched to al-Ḥasan b. Sahl in Iraq. Maṭnaqib gives the date as 5th of Ramadān,\(^{385}\) whereas al-Mufid and Idris give it as 6th of Ramadān.\(^{386}\)

Probably before the ceremony of the pledge, letters in which the designation was proclaimed were sent to the different parts of the state. The most important one of these letters was certainly the letter which was sent to Iraq. It was despatched to al-Ḥasan b. Sahl and then al-Ḥasan forwarded it to his commander ‘Īsā b. Muḥammad b. Abi Khalīd\(^{387}\) with the order that the latter should inform all his appointees and the

\(^{381}\) This date is given by al-Ya’qūbi, iii, p. 183.

\(^{382}\) Kashf, iii, p. 127.

\(^{383}\) ‘Uyun, ii, p. 155. In the letter it is said: “The seventh of the month of Ramadan of the year 201, which is the day on which God made the reign of the Commander of the Faithful complete, and he appointed his successor to the throne and made the people wear green dress.” (from trans. of the letter: Madelung, “New Documents”, p. 336).

\(^{384}\) Al-Ṭabarī, iii, p. 1013.

\(^{385}\) Manāqib, iv, p. 367.


\(^{387}\) ‘Īsā was the son of the Abnā’ leader Muḥammad b. Abi Khalīd. He later became the governor of Armenia and Azerbaijan in 205 / 820-1, see al-Ṭabarī, iii, p. 1044.
Hashims in Baghdad. Upon the order of al-Ma'mun, al-Hasan also commanded that they should take an oath of allegiance to 'Ali al-Ri'da and throw off their black robes; instead, they should put on green ones. When 'Isa received these instructions, he declared to the Baghdad troops that they should put them into practice.\textsuperscript{388} However, although some of the people agreed to it, most of them refused to give their oath of allegiance to al-Ri'da; they threw off their allegiance to al-Ma'mun and gave it to Ibrāhim b. al-Mahdi, the son of the third 'Abbasid caliph, al-Mahdi. This occurred, according to al-Ṭabarani, on 28 Dhu al-Hijja, 201 / 17 July, 817 and it was declared on the pulpit on 1 Muharram, 202 / 20 July, 817.\textsuperscript{389} Another two letters were sent to Egypt and Medina. One of them arrived in Egypt in Muharram of 202 H., therefore, the governor, al-Sari b. al-Ḥakam, took the pledge of allegiance from the people on behalf of the caliph.\textsuperscript{390} Another letter was sent to 'Abd al-Jabbar b. Sa'id\textsuperscript{391} in Medina and he proclaimed it on the pulpit. His question was "Do you know who has been designated as the heir to your caliph?" and the answer of the Medinans was "No, we do not know", could indicate that the people of Medina probably did not already know the reason for al-Ri'da's journey to Merv. 'Abd al-Jabbar ended his speech with a verse of a poem:

"Seven of his fathers! Who are they?"

\textsuperscript{388} al-Ṭabarani, iii, pp.1012-3.

\textsuperscript{389} al-Ṭabarani, iii, pp.1014-6. The different dates given by other sources are 5 Dhu al-Hijja, 201 (al-Kāmil, vi, 230) and 5 Muharram, 202 (al-Ya'qubi, iii, p.185; Muruj, iii, p.441). According to Ibn Khallikan, the first oath of allegiance was taken on 5 Dhu al-Hijja, 201 by the 'Abbasids. The second proclamation was made on 1 Muharram, 202 in order that the people of Baghdad might give their oaths. Finally, on 5 Muharram, 202, it was announced again by Ibrahim b. al-Mahdi himself on the pulpit on Friday, see Ibn Khallikan, i, pp.39-40, iii, pp.269-70. Also see Levy, A Baghdad Chronicle, pp.80-1.

\textsuperscript{390} al-Kindi, Wulat Misr, p.192.

\textsuperscript{391} In al-'Iqd al-Farīd of Ibn 'Abd al-Rabbih, he is 'Abd al-Jabbar b. Sa'd v, p.381. Al-Mufid's account (al-Īrshād, p.472) gives 'Abd al-Hamid which should be "'Abd al-Jabbar".

285
They are the most excellent of those who drink the rain of the clouds\textsuperscript{392}

Another letter is also presented by several books. It is the document of the designation of al-Riḍā written by al-Maʿmūn\textsuperscript{393} It was probably written and signed by the witnesses before the ceremony and another letter, the acceptance of al-Riḍā, which was written by the Imam himself, was attached to it. A statement in the letter that al-Maʿmūn called his generals and troops who were in "\textit{al-Madinat al-Mahrūsa}" (the protected city) to give allegiance to al-Riḍā\textsuperscript{394} drives Crone and Hinds to suggest that this document was intended to be proclaimed in Medina.\textsuperscript{395}

At the bottom of the letter there are some names as witnesses who signed the document.\textsuperscript{396} They are the vizier al-Fāḍl b. Sahl, the judge Yahyā b. Aktham, 'Abd

\textsuperscript{392} 'Uyun, ii, p. 144; Musnad al-Riḍā, i, p. 69. Also see Maqātil, p. 565; al-Irshād, p. 472; Ibn 'Abd al-Rabbih, v, p. 381. The words of "seven of his fathers" refer to the seven Imams before al-Riḍā.


How this document appeared is reported in al-Muntazam of Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200). Hibat Allah b. Fāḍl b. Saʿīd al-Kātib, who was probably a clerk in the court, said that his maternal uncle Yahyā b. Saʿīd bought the document for 200 dinārs and presented it to the Mazyadid ruler Sayf al-Dawla Sadaqa b. Mansūr (ruled 479-501/1086-1108) (al-Muntazam, x, p. 99). Also 'Ali b. 'Isā al-Irbīlī (d. 692/1293) reports that, in 670/1271, one of the attendants of the shrine of 'Ali al-Riḍā brought the document to him and then he presented it in his book (Kashf, iii, p. 123).

\textsuperscript{394} Kashf, iii, p. 126.

\textsuperscript{395} (Crone and Hinds, God's Caliph, pp. 133, 138.

\textsuperscript{396} Kashf, iii, p. 128; Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Muntazam, x, pp. 98-9 (he omitted the name of Sahl b. al-Fāḍl); al-Qalqashandi, Maʾathir, ii, pp. 334-6 (he omitted the name of Thumama b. Ashrath).
Allah b. Tahir, the son of the commander Tahir b. al-Ḥusayn, who became later the governor of Egypt and Syria, the Muʿtazili scholars Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir and Thumāma b. Ashrāt. 397. Sahil b. al-Fadl, another witness, was probably Abū Sahil al-Fadl b. al-Nawbakht al-Fārisi (d.202/817-8), the famous astrologer of al-Maʾmūn, whose name has usually been confused with the vizier al-Fadl b. Sahil. 398 Another name, Ḥammād b. Nuʿmān, creates a little confusion. Sibt b. al-Jawzī records the name as Ḥammād b. Abī Ḥanifa, the son of the imām Abū Ḥanifa Nuʿmān b. Thābit. 399 However, this Ḥammād died in 176/792-3 or, at the latest, 180/796-7, 400 so the witness Ḥammād b. Nuʿman must be another person in the court other than Ḥammād b. Nuʿmān Abū Ḥanifa. He might be Ismaʿil, the son of Ḥammād b. Abī Ḥanifa, who was appointed by al-Maʾmūn in 208/823-4 to the office of judge in Baghdad. 401 The name of Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī is given only by Sibt b. al-Jawzī as another witness. 402 This is another error of his, because Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī was Muḥammad b. Yahya, the historian, who died in 335/946. His presence at the time of the designation is historically impossible. This al-Ṣūlī might be Abū ʿIshaq Ibrahim b. al-ʿAbbas al-Ṣūlī (d.243/857), the kātib (clerk) and the poet in al-Maʾmūn’s court. 403

397 For Bishr, see Ibn al-Murtadā, p.52; al-Malāṭī, p.30; Watt, Formative Period, p.222. For Thumāma, see al-Dhahabi, Mizān, i, pp.371-2; al-Ṣafadī, xi, pp.20-1; Watt, ibid. p.222.

398 For Abū Sahil, see Ibn al-Nadīm, p.274; al-Qiftī, pp.168, 266.

399 Tadhkira, p.354.

400 Ibn Khallīkan, ii, p.205; al-Ṣafadī, xiii, p.147.

401 For this appointment, see al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.1066.

402 Tadhkira, p.354.

403 For Abū ʿIshaq al-Sūlī, see Ibn al-Nadīm, p.122; Ibn Khallīkan, i, pp 44 v, p.340.
Ibn Babuya cites the historian Abu Bakr al-Suli as saying that the time of al-Riḍa’s designation became a matter of astrological discussion. Al-Suli relates on the authority of al-Fadl Abū Sahl b. Nawbakht that the latter considered that the time of the designation was not appropriate according to the movements of the stars. He wrote this to al-Ma’mun. However, the caliph did not want any postponement in the plan of the designation. He wrote back to Abū Sahl and demanded that he should not inform anything about it to the vizier al-Fadl, who was carrying out the project. But al-Fadl, who was an astrologer himself, had come to the same conclusion. Thereupon Abu Sahl feared that al-Ma’mun would suppose that he had informed the vizier of it and would make him responsible for any delay by the vizier in the process of the designation, therefore he went immediately to al-Fadl and, after a long discussion on astrological matters, managed to persuade him that the time was just appropriate for the designation.

The sources give detailed information about the ceremony of al-Riḍa’s designation. A narration has it that, in the ceremony, the pledge of allegiance was taken not only for al-Riḍa as the heir but also for al-Ma’mun as the caliph and al-Fadl

404 The name al-Fadl b. Sahl al-Nawbakhti in the text should be al-Fadl Abū Sahl b. Nawbakht. The father, Nawbakht, was also an astrologer. He was employed in the palace by the caliph al-Mansur. Then he converted to Islam and participated with the caliph in the construction of Baghdad. Afterwards, he was replaced by his son Abu Sahl, who served the caliphs al-Mansur, al-Mahdi, al-Hadi, al-Rashid, al-Amin and al-Ma’mun. He died in 202/817-8. He is an ancestor of al-Hasan b. Musa al-Nawbakht (d.310/922), the Imami scholar who is the writer of Firaq al-Shi’a. For further information, see Ibn al-Nadim, p.274; H. Ritter’s introduction for Firaq al-Shi’a.

According to a later source, Kitab al-Akhbar al-‘Ulama’ of ‘Ali b. Yusuf al-Qifti (d.646/1248), this person was ‘Abd Allāh b. Sahl b. Nawbakht, who was probably the son of Abu Sahl b. Nawbakht, see al-Qifti, p.150.

405 Ibn al-‘Imad, ii, p.4; al-Rifa‘i, i, p.297. Ibn Khallikan (iv, p.41) says that al-Fadl was an expert in astrology; many of his decisions made by using astrological knowledge were right.

b. Sahl as the vizier. This could be corroborated by the fact that Kitāb al-Sharṭ wa al-Hibā', a letter which was written for al-Fadl b. Sahl to guarantee him all his rights and to explain al-Ma'mūn's desire to retain his service, was dated on 7 Ramadān, 201. The day on which the solemnity took place.

On that day, all the officials - the military commanders, the judges, the chamberlains and others - were present at the field of the ceremony on their horses, all wearing green. Two great cushions were prepared for al-Riḍā. He came. He was dressed in green and wearing a turban and sword. Al-Ma'mūn seated him next to himself. Then al-Ma'mūn ordered his son, al-‘Abbās, to make the pledge of allegiance to al-Riḍā. Al-Riḍā lifted his right hand and held it with his palm towards the people. Al-‘Abbās slapped the Imām's hand; then he kissed his father's hand and sat down. The protocolist Abū 'Abbād called Muhammad b. Ja'far al-Ṣadiq as the second man. He did the same, but he did not kiss al-Ma'mūn's hand. Then all the officials and the members of both the 'Alid and the 'Abbāsid families made their pledge of allegiance in this way.

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407 Ibn Bābūya, 'Ilal, p.239; 'Uyun, ii, p.240.
408 'Uyun, ii, p.155.
409 Maqā'il, pp.563-4. Also see al-Irshād, p.471; Kashf, iii, pp.66-7. In Idris's version, there are the names of some men who were present at the solemnity. They made their pledge of allegiance and took their gifts from the caliph ('Uyun al-Akhbār, p.361). However, these accounts need to be corrected. First of all, one of them, 'Abd al-Ṣamad b. 'Ali, could not have been present in this congregation. He was the uncle of al-Manṣūr and died in 185/801 (al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.650). The second name is Ishaq b. Musa b. 'Isa b. Muhammad b. 'Ali b. 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muttalib. The name must be corrected as Ishaq b. Musa b. 'Isa b. Musa b. Muhammad b. 'Ali b. 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbās. He was the great-grandson of al-Saffah's brother Musa, who was the former governor of Yemen (al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.987) and among the commanders who suppressed Muhammad b. Ja'far's revolt in Mecca (al-Ṭabarī, iii, pp.991-2). He also led the pilgrimage of the year 201 H. (al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.1015). The third name is 'Isa b. Ya'qūb b. Isma'il b. 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muttalib. Since, according to Ibn Hazm, 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbās's progeny continued only with his son 'Ali (Jamhara, p.19), the true name must be 'Isa b. Ya'qūb b. Isma'il b. 'Ali b. 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbās. 'Isa's grandfather Isma'il b. 'Ali, who was the paternal uncle of al-Mansūr, was the governor of Kufa (Ibn Hazm, Jamhara, p.20).
Ibn Bābūya relates on the authority of al-Rayyān b. Shubayb, the maternal uncle of the caliph al-Muʿtāsim, that al-Riḍā, after the oath of allegiance had been completed, told al-Maʾmūn that the rite should have been repeated, because when they slapped his hand for the bayʿa, they began with his thumb and drew their hands across his hand to the little finger; this meant the abolition of allegiance according to the tradition, so, instead, they should have slapped his hand and began with his little finger, drawing their hands across his hand to his thumb. Thereupon, al-Maʾmūn made them repeat the rite in this manner, but, the rāwī Shubayb adds that, this led the people to grumble that the one who knew how the pledge was made should have been more entitled to become caliph than the one who did not know it.410

According to al-Mufid, 10,000 dirhams were granted to the participants in the ceremony.411 On this report it could be said that Idris's account about the sum of money which was conferred on this occasion is very exaggerated. He reports that Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar received 60,000 dinārs as a grant and the same amount was given to each of five men. The rest of the participants also received 30,000 dinārs each.412 Therefore, al-Mufid's account seems to be more plausible because the amount is much less, even though still rather large.

After the people had given their oath of allegiance, al-Maʾmūn asked al-Riḍā to address the people. The Imam praised and glorified God and then he said: "We have a right due to us from you through the Apostle of God and you also have a right due to you from us through him. If you carry out your duty to us, then it is necessary for us

410 Ibn Bābūya, 'Ilal, pp 239-40; 'Uyūn, ii, pp.240-1.

411 al-Irshād, p 472.

412 Idris, 'Uyūn al-Akhbār, p 361.
to carry out our duty to you." 413 During the ceremony, orators mentioned al-Ridā's merit and the part played by al-Ma'mūn in the affair. Poets also did the same with their poems. 414 Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī cited a verse which was quoted by an 'Abbāsid orator in the ceremony: He said:

"It is inevitable that the people need the sun and the moon
You are the sun and he is the moon" 415

On this occasion, al-Ma'mūn ordered a year's wages to be paid to the soldiers. 416 While al-Ma'mūn endowed money so extravagantly, the governor of Iraq, al-Ḥasan b. Sahl, was not even able to pay the monthly stipends of the soldiers. 417 This seems to indicate that the caliph was not being informed about the real situation in Iraq, which was being concealed from him, as will be discussed later.

All the officials in Merv made their pledge of allegiance to 'Āli al-Ridā as the heir. A narration in 'Uyun reports that only three commanders refused to do it. They were 'Īsā al-Julūdī, 'Ali b. Abī Imrān and Abū Yūnus (or Abū Mu'nis). Al-Ma'mūn had them jailed. 418 Another narration has it that before al-Ma'mūn set off for Iraq, these commanders had been brought to the caliph's presence and then he demanded once more that they make the pledge of allegiance, but they refused again. So al-

413 trans. by I.K.A. Howard, al-Irshād, p.472. Also see Maqātil, p.564; Kashf, iii, p.67.

414 Maqātil, p.564; al-Irshād, p.471.

415 Sibt, p.355.

416 al-Azdt, p.342; 'Uyun, ii, p.146. Idris's account is that it was paid to all the officials of the state (Uyun al-Akhbar, p.360). Al-Isfahani and al-Mufid do not mention the soldiers; from their reports it can be understood that all the participants in the solemnity received their yearly wages, see Maqātil, p.564; al-Irshād, p.471.

417 see al-'Tabarî, iii, pp.998-1000.

418 'Uyun, ii, p.148.
Ma'mun had them executed although al-Rida had requested the caliph to spare al-Juludi.419

It seems difficult to give these reports any credibility. Although nothing has been mentioned about Abu Yunus and 'Ali b. Abi 'Imran, 'Isa al-Juludi is a well-known and a frequently mentioned personality in the sources. His date of death is not given, but he appears in al-Tabari's History participating in the ceremonies of the pilgrimage of 202 H.420, which was about six months after he had been executed in the narration of 'Uyun. Moreover, al-Ya'qubi states that the governor of Basra, Isma'il b. Ja'far b. Sulayman al-Hashimi, refused to dress in green, so al-Ma'mun ordered al-Juludi to arrest him. He carried out this task.421 This report is clear evidence for the loyalty of al-Juludi in the matter relating to al-Rida's designation.

The change in the official colour from black to green on the occasion of al-Rida's designation must now be taken into consideration. It does not seem that the green colour was at this date specifically associated with the 'Alids. However, it is no doubt that the black was the official colour of the 'Abbasids, which, according to Ibn Khaldun, was especially used at the time of revolution as a sign of mourning for their martyrs and also a sign of reproach directed against the Umayyads who had killed them. Therefore, they were called "al-Musawwida" ("the black ones"). In contrast, the 'Alids used to be called "al-Mubayyida" ("the white ones") as they used white flags. Ibn Khaldun also reports that this was maintained by many 'Alid-originated states and groups, for instance, the Fatimids, the Zaydi missionaries of Tabaristan and the

419 'Uyun, ii, pp. 158-9. It is also quoted by Ibn al-Shahrashub, Manaqib, iv, p 346.

420 al-Tabari, iii, p. 1029.

421 al-Ya'qubi, iii, pp 183-4.
We also know that the 'Alid rebels always adopted the white colour. Al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ali in al-Fakhkh in 169/786 and Abū al-Sarāya in Kufa in 199/815 proclaimed their rebellions on the pulpit in white clothes. Hence, Nuʿaym b. Khazim was right to protest to al-Fadl b. Sahl before al-Maʿmūn that white was traditional 'Alid colour whereas green was the cloth of the Kiswa. Although Ibn al-Ṭiqtāqa reports that the green was chosen because it was the colour of the clothes worn by the people of Paradise, the change seems to mean nothing except an attempt to please the Persian elements of the imperial court who were the pillars of al-Maʿmūn's reign. Possibly because of the fact that green had nothing with the 'Alids, the Imam al-Riḍā does not seem to have adopted this change completely although it had been made on the occasion of his designation. It is reported that he went out in Merv on the festival day to lead the prayer putting on a white cotton turban, not a green one.

Al-Maʿmūn, on this occasion, is said to have given 'Ali b. Mūsa the nickname "al-Riḍā" ["the one well pleasing (to God)"]. Ibn Bābūya reports a tradition in 422 Ibn Khaldūn, al-Muqaddima, ii, pp.50-1.

423 See al-Ṭabarī, iii, pp.554, 1017.

424 al-Jahshiyārī, pp.312-3. Also see p.251 above.

425 Ibn al-Ṭiqtāqa, p.216.

426 al-Kulaynī, i, p.489; ʿUyūn, ii, p.149; al-Irshad, p.474.

Al-Maʿmūn, the members of his family and the officials of the state continued to stay in green clothes until he reverted to wearing black clothes. It is said that it was on account of the requests of some members of the 'Abbasid family and especially that of his commander Tahir b. al-Ḥusayn. This officially took place on 22 Safar, 204 / 18 August, 819, the time twenty-seven days after al-Maʿmūn's entry into Baghdad, see al-Ṭabarī, iii, pp.1037-8; Ibn Tayfūr, pp.9-10; al-Azdi, p.353, al-Yaʿqūbi, iii, p.188; Muruj, iii, p.442; Ibn al-Ṭiqtāqa, pp.218-9; Ibn al-Imad, ii, p.3. Three years afterwards, in 207/823, following the rebellion of the 'Alid 'Ahd al-Rahman b. Ahmad in Yemen, al-Maʿmūn ordered the Tālibis in Baghdad to start wearing black garments, see al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.1063.

427 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.1013; ʿUyūn, ii, p.146; Maqātil, p.563; al-Irshad p.471.
which al-Ma'mun was claimed to have chosen the nickname al-Rida, which also means "the contented one", because the Imam consented to become his successor. In fact, this name was not an innovation of al-Ma'mun. It had been adopted largely by the Shi'is - especially by the revolutionary Shi'is - for a long time. Firstly, the 'Alids shared this slogan with the 'Abbasids during the revolution which resulted in the collapse of the Umayyad dynasty. It was repeated in the revolt of Abu al Saraya. The same name was also used by non-Shi'i rebels; for example, al-Hasan al-Hirsh found this slogan more popular despite its Shi'i nature and did not see any objection to adopt it in his revolt in 198/814. Sa'd al-Qummi says, when he explains the principles of the Zaydiyya, that for the Zaydis if someone rebelled against an illegitimate government and his call and sermon was for the cause of "al-Ridā", he would be a proper Imam to whom it is necessary to obey and to fight against the enemy under his flag is obligatory. In the light of these facts al-Ma'mun's choice of this particular name becomes more understandable. As given this name to the heir apparent, the most desired zeal of the 'Alids and the Shi'is was fulfilled and thus no reason remained for them any more to revolt against the authority.

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428 'Uyun, i, p. 11. For this tradition related from the Imam al-Jawād, which reflects the Imamiyya's criticism of this claim and its allegation that the Imam 'Ali b. Musa had already been named al-Rida by God see p. 192 above.


430 al-Tabari, iii, p. 554; Maqātil, p. 450.

431 Maqātil, p. 532; al-Kamil, vi, p. 212.

432 al-Tabari, iii, p. 975. For a more elaborate examination of the meaning of the name and its use in more previous times especially in the time of the 'Abbasid revolution, see P. Crone, "On the Meaning of the 'Abbasid Call to al-Rida", in The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times: essays in honor of Bernard Lewis, ed. C. E. Bosworth pp. 95-111.

433 al-Qummi, p. 71.
Another official decision which was made for the honour of al-Rida was to mint silver coins (dirham) with his name. Some of these coins have been found in archaeological excavations. They were minted in Samarqand and al-Muhammadiyya (Rayy), and the dates of their minting were 202, 203 and 204 H.

IX - Al-Rida at the Royal Court

1 - With al-Ma'mun

If we consider that al-Rida came to Merv just before Rajab, 201/January and February, 817, it means that the Imam spent a whole year at the court until he left the city with al-Ma'mun on 10 Rajab, 202 / 22 January, 818 for the journey to Baghdad.

434 Ibn Habib, p.201; 'Uyun, ii, p.146; Maqatil, p.564; al-Irshad, p.472; al-Kashshi, pp.546-7. According to some reports ('Uyun, ii, p.148, Muruj, iii, p.441; Ibn Khallikan, iii, p.269), also golden coin (dirham) was minted. However, it seems that al-Rida's name was struck only on silver coin as the first-referred sources say. The fact that only silver coins have been found in archaeological excavations could prove it. An account from al-Najashi (pp.197-8) marks that these coins were called "Darahim Rida'iyya".

435 At the obverse area of the coins is the word "al-Mashriq" (the East) following the sentence of "There is No God but Allah, the Single, there is no partner with Him". At the outer margin of the same side is a verse of the Qur'an, which is "Allah's is the command, before and after; on that day the believers shall rejoice in the help of Allah" (al-Qur'an, xxx: 4,5). On the reverse it is read in seven lines that "To God (illah), Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah, al-Ma'mun, the caliph of Allah, among those things ordered by al-Amir (the commander) al-Rida, heir apparent of the Muslims, 'Ali b. Musa b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib, Dhū al-Riyāsatayn (the man with two powers: al-Fadl b. Sahl)". The verse ix: 33 of the Qur'an is at the margin of this side. (G.C. Miles, The Numismatic History of Rayy, pp.103-6; idem, "Numismatics", p.370; Lane-Poole Stanley, Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum, i, p.103 and Additions to the Oriental Collection 1876-1888, ix p.550).

436 see Idris's account p.278 above.

437 For the departure date, see Rakaya, "al-Ma'mun", E12, vi, p.335.
According to Shi’i reports, al-Riḍā is reported to have stayed in a house adjoining al-Ma’mūn’s residence, so they used to frequent each other. Al-Ma’mūn would address the Imam in a very close and respectful manner: “O my master” (“yā sayyidī”) and “O my cousin” (“yā ibn ‘ammi”) were the ways of address the caliph frequently used.

Some meetings between al-Ma’mūn and al-Riḍā are narrated in several sources. In one of them, the caliph asked the Imam to recite poetry; he recited some poems about clemency (ḥilm), secrecy (sīr) and how to win over an enemy, so the delighted caliph ordered him to be given 300,000 dirhams.

At another time, the subject of talk was more serious. We quote it from the translation of M. Sharon:

" (Al-Ma’mūn said:) "On what grounds do you claim the caliphate for yourself?" ‘Ali b. Mūsa replied: "Through the nearness in kin of ‘Ali to the Prophet, may Allah save him and give him peace, and by the descent from Fatimah, may Allah be pleased with her”. "If it is all nothing but a question of kinship" said the Caliph, "then surely there are amongst the Prophet’s relatives -people who are nearer in kin to the Prophet or on the same level as he. Whereas, if it is only the descent from Fatimah which counts in this matter, then truly the rights of Fatimah belong after her to Hasan and Husayn and not to ‘Ali. It follows that ‘Ali robbed them both in their lifetime while they

438 ‘Uyūn, ii, p.152.
439 al-Kulaynī, i, p.491.
440 ‘Uyun, i, p 144.
441 ‘Uyun, ii, pp. 172-3. The narrator Ibn Rahuya needs to make a comment that al-Riḍā’s acceptance of this grant was similar to the case of the Prophet, who had accepted gifts from several kings and rulers, and to the case of al-Ḥasan b. Abī Talib who had also accepted gifts from Mu’awiyah b. Abī Sufyan, because, he said. “whoever had the worldly things, (but) they were snatched (by someone) and then some of them were returned to him (i.e. to the true owner of them), it would be lawful for him to receive them” (Ibid., p 173).
were in good health, and seized something to which he had absolutely no right”. 'Ali b. Mūsā had no reply.” 442

Although we do not know whether this conversation really occurred or whether it was the product of the unsolved controversy on this subject between the 'Abbasids and the 'Alids, it seems that, especially on the side of the Imāmis, this historical association between al-Riḍā and al-Ma‘mūn has been seen as an opportunity to explain or to justify some of their beliefs by producing false conversations between them. There is no strong evidence to prove their authenticity. For example, al-Mufid narrates a conversation, without giving any sanad, that as an answer to al-Ma‘mūn who had expressed his view that he did not see any difference in excellence between the two families and accused the 'Alids of zealous partisanship, al-Riḍā repeated his father al-Kāzim's argument which he had put forward against al-Rashīd 443 that the daughters of Fatimah's descendants supposedly could not get married with the Prophet because he was their grandfather, but this marriage was permissible for the daughters of the 'Abbasids, which was a fact corroborating their nearness to the Prophet and thus their excellence.444 It is well known that al-Ma‘mūn later proclaimed the pre-eminence of 'Ali b. Abī Ṭālib, emphasising that he was the best of mankind after the Prophet.445 Therefore, this fact seems appropriate to be a criterion to examine such reports.


443 see p.154 above.


Perhaps the most prevalent occasions when al-Riḍā cut a dash at the court were the symposia which were arranged by al-Ma'mūn himself. Due to a fact that the narrations about such symposia are unusually extended and seem to have a tendency to show al-Riḍā's ability in discussion and his wide knowledge, we must stress again that they must be treated as highly suspect. Nevertheless, the popularity of such symposia in the time of al-Ma'mūn is well known and the participation of al-Riḍā in them as the heir apparent and a respected scholar is very natural. What is doubtful is the authenticity of the narrations related especially by the Imāmī Ibn Bābuḍ in his 'Uyun. However, at least, in order to know the participants with whom al-Riḍā is shown to have debated it is useful to mention a little about these symposiums.

Ibn Bābuḍ narrates three different sessions of discussion in which al-Riḍā debated. He narrates two of them, the session with several scholars from different religions and the other session with Sulaymān al-Marwāzī, on the authority of al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Sahlah al-Nawfālī. Al-Najashi records this ṭāwī and his book on al-Riḍā's discussions, Dhikr Majālis al-Riḍā 'alayhim al-Salam ma' a Ahl al-Adīn, which is likely the same book that these narrations were derived

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446 see Murūj, iii. p.432.

447 D. M. Donaldson thinks that these reports were not written until nearly two hundred years after the event. He asserts that it was easier for Ibn Bābuḍ, the compiler of 'Uyun al-Aikhbar al-Riḍā in which the narrations are fully related, to supply appropriate sayings for the Imam than to invent intelligent replies for his Jewish, Christian or Zoroastrian opponents, see The Shi‘ite Religion, p.168.

448 He might be Abu Dawūd Sulaymān b. Ma‘bad al-Marwāzī, a traditionist and grammarian who died in 258/872 (see Ibn Abī Khatīm, ii 71, p. 147 [no 632]: al Saffādī, xv, pp. 428-9). If this man was the same al-Marwāzī in the narration he must have been a very young man when he debated with al-Riḍā, and therefore he was an inappropriate rival for the Imam.

449 see 'Uyun, i, p.126 (bāb: 12), p.144 (bāb: 13).
from. However, he regards al-Nawfali as a weak ṭāwi although he says that this book has a lot of beneficial things.⁴⁵⁰

Ibn Bābūya states that al-Ma'mūn summoned to the symposia those scholars who were very zealous to defeat the Imām in discussion, but, through the promised assistance of God for His apostles, the Imām managed to overcome all of them.⁴⁵¹ This finds its corroboration in a tradition narrating a debate between the Imām and Sulaymān al-Marwāzī. Before the debate, al-Marwāzī told al-Ma'mūn that he did not want to compete with al-Riḍā, because this might lead the latter to be disparaged before the Banū Hāshim and other notables, so this was not a permissible thing to do against an heir apparent. Al-Ma'mūn replied that this was what he desired and this was also why he chose al-Marwāzī as a very learned scholar to debate with al-Riḍā.⁴⁵² However, at the end of the debate which was made on the subjects of badā' (change in God's knowledge) and irāda (the will of God), Sulaymān al-Marwāzī was defeated. Al-Ma'mūn then said that al-Riḍā was the most learned man of the Banū Hāshim.⁴⁵³

Another debate of the Imām happened with 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Jahm.⁴⁵⁴ The subject, that time, was the sinlessness of the Prophets (ʿismat al-Anbiyyā'). Ibn Jahm gave several examples from the Qur'ān which might indicate some sins or errors of the Prophets. Al-Riḍā explained one by one all the verses which Ibn Jahm

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⁴⁵⁰ al-Najāši, p.27.
⁴⁵¹ 'Uyun, i, p.152.
⁴⁵² 'Uyun, i, p.144.
⁴⁵³ See 'Uyun, i, pp.144-52.
⁴⁵⁴ He is described by Ibn Bābūya as an "al-Nāṣibī ṭantis Ahlī) ('Uyun, i, p.162).
had asked and proved the infallibility of the Prophets. At the end, Ibn Jahm confessed his mistake and then repented in tears. 455

The third narrated debate of al-Riḍā took place with several scholars from different beliefs under the organisation of al-Faḍl b. Sahl. The participants were al-Jāthiliq (the Catholicos or the Patriarch) 456, Ra’s al-Jālūt 457, Nustās al-Rūmī (Nustās the Greek), al-Harbadh al-Akbar (the Great Harbadh) 458 and the heads of the Sabian and the Zoroastrian communities. 459 According to the narration, al-Riḍā debated with them one by one and defeated all; they had to give up the discussion. Moreover, ʿImrān, 460 the representative of the Sabians, became a Muslim and afterwards attended later symposia on behalf of the Muslims. Al-Maʾmūn granted him

455 ʿUyun, i, pp. 153-5. The narration is related on the authority of Abu al-Salt al-Harawi. For another conversation on the same subject between al-Riḍā and al-Maʾmūn, see ibid., i, pp. 155-62.

456 He is not identified by name, but he might be Abū Qurra, Sāhib al-Jāthiliq (the companion of the Catholicos), who appears debating with al-Riḍā in another tradition (ʿUyun, ii, p. 232; Manaqib, iv, pp. 351-2). For Abū Qurra, see footnote: 459 below.

457 M. J. Mashḵūr says that he was the head of the Jewish community in Iraq in the time of the Sasanid empire. The name came from "RESH gālātā", and then was transformed to "RAʾS al-JALŪT" (see Taʿliqāt in al-Qummi, al-Maqālat, ed. M. J. Mashḵūr, p. 172). "RESS gālātā" is probably Resh galuta who was the Exilarch, the head of the Exilarchate in Iraq (Babylon).

458 I have not been able to identify Nustās and al-Harbadh.

459 ʿUyun, i, pp. 126-144; al-Ṭabarānī, al-Iḥtiyāj, pp. 415-25. We have also another account of a similar symposium before al-Maʾmūn recorded in the book of a Christian author who is anonymous, but the manuscript of the book is ascribed by the author of the Paris Library Catalogue to the fifteenth century, as A. Guillaume says Guillaume has narrated it and commented on it in his article "A Debate between Christian and Muslim Doctors", JRAS, 1924, pp. 233-44. The Imam al-Riḍā is not mentioned in it. Nevertheless, Abū Qurra, the Christian scholar, who is recorded to have debated with al-Riḍā (ʿUyun, ii, p. 232, Manaqib, iv, pp. 351-2), is among the contestants in this symposium. He is described by Guillaume as Theodore Abū Qurra, the Bishop of Harran (p. 233). Other contestants recorded in the article are ʿṢaʿṣaʾah Khalid al-Iṣrāʾīl and Ḥusayn b. Ḥawwāʾ (or Liwa) al-Farāisi (pp. 240, 242).

460 I have not been able to identify him
10,000 dirhams. Al-Riḍa also put him in charge of the *sadaqāt* (charitable lands) in Balkh. ⁴⁶¹

At the end of the narration, a talk between Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar, the uncle of the Imam and one of the audience of the symposium, and the *rāwi* al-Ḥasan al-Nawfali is recorded. Muḥammad was very surprised, because he did not expect such success from his nephew. He said that al-Riḍa had never met the theologians before; he only used to reply in Medina to the questions of pilgrims about the pilgrimage. He added that he was worried about al-Maʿmūn's jealousy of him, which might lead him to be poisoned or to meet with other troubles and thus asked al-Nawfali to request al-Riḍa no longer to take part in such symposia. ⁴⁶²

Another narration related by Ibn Babuya is a very long discussion between al-Maʿmūn and the Ahl al-Ḥadith arranged by Yahya b. Aktham, the chief judge of al-Maʿmūn, on the subject of the pre-eminence of ʿAli b. Abi Ṭalib over the first two caliphs. The narration seems to reflect the familiar arguments of the Imamiyya about the subject. Ibn Babuya relates it in a special chapter under the title of "the report of debates on the imama and the precedence (tafdil) with the opponents through which

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⁴⁶¹ *ʿUyun*, i, pp.143-4; al-Tabarsi, *al-Iḥtiyāj*, p.425. David Thomas has translated a large part of this tradition, in which al-Riḍa debates with the Catholicos, from *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* of Ibn Babuya, see "Two Muslim-Christian Debates", *J. of Semitic S.*., 33 (1988), pp.65-75. Then he has argued against the authenticity of the tradition. He has suggested that the tradition seems to be Ibn Babuya's own production and intended to demonstrate al-Riḍa's superhuman knowledge. According to Thomas, certain features of the discussion in the narration appear to derive from an earlier tradition of anti-Christian polemic. He has regarded it as one of the subtly constructed and entertaining examples of the Shiʿi endeavour to secure the group's position within the Muslim intellectual community. See ibid., pp.75-80. However, as we have suggested, the source of the tradition goes back to an earlier work, the book of al-Ḥasan al-Nawfali, and Ibn Babuya appears to have derived the tradition from this book. If Thomas's suggestions are correct, they are correct for al-Nawfali not Ibn Babuya.

⁴⁶² *ʿUyun*, i, p.143.
al-Ma'mun sought to gain al-Riḍā's favour. Nevertheless, in another tradition in the same chapter, al-Riḍā, by warning his disciples not to believe in these gestures of al-Ma'mun and foretelling that he would kill him, thwarted the caliph's intention.

3 - The Marriages

Al-Ma'mun reinforced al-Riḍā's nomination by marriage alliances. On one day three marriages were proclaimed: The marriage of Umm Ḥabīb, the daughter of al-Ma'mun, with al-Riḍā, that of Umm al-Faḍl, another daughter of the caliph, with Muḥammad, the son of al-Riḍā, and that of al-Ma'mun himself with Būrān, the daughter of al-Ḥasan b. Sahl. According to the sources this happened in 202/817-8. However, these were only the engagement proclamations. The wedding of the caliph with Būrān took place in 210/825-6 and that of Muḥammad with Umm al-Faḍl in 215/830. There is no report about al-Riḍā's wedding. But some reports show

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463 'Uyun, ii, pp. 183-200.

464 'Uyun, ii, p. 183. For other traditions narrating such symposia in which al-Riḍā took part, see Ibn Shu'ba, pp.312-25; al-Tabarsi, al-Iḥtiyāj, pp.396-441. In addition, for al-Riḍā's long speech about the unity of God (tawḥīd) at the request of the 'Abbasids who had doubted whether al-Riḍā was a knowledgeable man, see 'Uyun, i, pp.123-6; al-Tabarsi, al-Iḥtiyāj, p.398.

465 al-Masʿūdī gives her name as Umm Ḥabība (Murūj, iii, p.144). Al-Irbīlī and al-Raḍī report that her real name was Zaynab (Khulaṣa, p.194; al-Tadhīn, iii, p.427). In Iḥbat (p.226), this woman is recorded as the sister of al-Ma'mun. The fact that among the daughters of Harūn al-Rashīd there was an Umm Ḥabīb (al-Tabari, iii, p.758) and the necessary disparity between the ages of the caliph's daughter and al-Riḍā give this exceptional account much more weight.

466 al-Tabari, iii, p.1029; al-Azdi, p.343; al-Kamil, vi, p.248; Ibn Khallikan, iii, p.269. Ibn Khaldūn (al-'Ibar, iii, p.250) records that it took place during the journey of the caliph and al-Riḍā to Baghdad, which is after Rajab of 201 H. If we consider that, after the assassination of al-Fadl b. Sahl on 2 Sha'ban, 202/13 February, 818, al-Ma'mun might have wanted to please and cheer up al-Fadl's brother, al-Ḥasan, by arranging for him to marry his daughter, the proclamation possibly occurred in Sha'ban of 202 H. or after that. Ibn Shahrashūb gives the date as early 202 H. (Manaqib, iv, p.367), the date N. Abbott also suggests (Two Queens, p.224).

467 al-Tabari, iii, pp.1081-2, 1102.
that the marriage contract was made. One account indicates that the judge Yahyā b. Aktham was asked to perform al-Riḍā’s marriage ceremony, but he did not accept it because he said that al-Ma’mūn, as a grand judge, should have performed it. Therefore the caliph performed the ceremony. He allocated 400 *dirhams* as his daughter’s dower.⁴⁶⁸ In Shi‘ī accounts, it was al-Riḍā who performed the marriage ceremony. The amount of the dower the Imām conferred was 500 *dirhams*.⁴⁶⁹

Al-Ṯahānī records another marriage. According to it, al-Ma’mūn married ʿIṣāq b. Musā b. Ja’far, the brother of al-Riḍā, to the daughter of his paternal uncle, ʿIṣāq b. Ja’far b. Muḥammad. Al-Ṯahānī also adds that the caliph assigned ʿIṣāq b. Musā b. Ja’far to lead the pilgrimage of the year and told him to proclaim al-Riḍā’s new position as heir apparent in every town he passed through.⁴⁷⁰ He gives this account among the functions of al-Riḍā’s designation which took place in Ramāḍān of 201 H. ʿIṣāq b. Musa b. Ja’far was probably not able to reach Mecca on time because of the long distance and the lack of time. We know that the leader of the pilgrimage of 201 H. was ʿIṣāq b. Musā b. ‘Īsā al-‘Abbāsi.⁴⁷¹

Ibn Babuya relates that al-Ma’mūn granted al-Riḍā a slave-girl. But she did not enjoy him because of his old age. Therefore the Imām who recognised her unhappiness sent her back to the caliph, writing also a short poem which explained the reason for his refusal of this gift.⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁹ *Dala’il*, p. 177; *Ithbat*, p. 226.
⁴⁷¹ *Tabari*, iii, p. 1015.
⁴⁷² *Uyun*, ii, pp. 175-6.
The Imāmi author J.M. al-'Āmili takes this event into consideration and suggests that this slave-girl was sent by the caliph as a spy on al-Riḍā, so this was why al-Riḍā refused her politely. Al-'Āmili also thinks that the marriage of al-Riḍā with Umm Ḥabīb was arranged for the same purpose. He further puts forward the view that al-Ma'mūn might have wanted to assassinate the Imām by using his daughter.

This idea reflects a typical Imami speculation. Similar speculations have been made for the Imām al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī who is claimed to have been poisoned by his wife, Juʿda, on the orders of Muʿāwiyah. and for the Imām al-Junayd who is also said to have been killed by his wife, Umm al-Fadl, the daughter of al-Ma'mūn, on the orders of her uncle, the caliph al-Mu'tasim. It seems to be more reasonable to think that political purposes were behind this marriage than that there was such a nefarious design. However, it must be remembered that the employment of women in such deeds was a historical fact, especially in al-Ma'mūn's time. Perhaps for that reason al-Fadl b. Sahl insistently rejected marrying one of al-Ma'mūn's daughters. He said: “Even if you hanged me, I would not do it (I would never get married to one of them)”. Samadi says that more than two-hundred women alone were employed to obtain secret news from different households and the total number of people both male and female working under al-Ma'mūn for this purpose was several thousand. He maintains that even the viziers had spies to watch the caliph, and such activities were ordinarily engaged in by slaves, male or female, and particularly

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473 al-'Āmili, al-Ḥayāt al-Siyāsyya, p. 213.
474 Ibid., pp. 209-10.
475 See al-ʿIrshad, pp. 286-7.
476 See Ibn Babuya, Risala, pp. 101-2; M. Amin. IV/3 pp. 248-9
by the singing-girls. Hence, al-Āmili might be right in his assumption about why al-Riḍā sent the slave-girl back. In such an environment it seems al-Riḍā took the wisest measure.

4 - The Life at the Court

The historian Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī reports that the annual salary of al-Riḍā was 1,000,000 dirhams. This excludes the extra grants and other gifts. For example, the caliph who delighted in listening to al-Riḍā’s poems is said to have granted him as much as 300,000 dirhams on one occasion. This large amount of income seems to have drawn the Imam towards some luxury. Al-Kulaynī narrates that al-Riḍā used to have a special kind of perfume prepared for 700 dirhams. Al-Faḍl b. Sahl had to inform him of rumours about such lavish spending. However, al-Riḍā defended himself by giving an example from the Prophet Joseph who had used to wear silk brocade adorned with gold and sit on a golden throne, behaviour which had not damaged his prophethood.

Al-Riḍā was given his own chamberlain (ḥājib) for the service of his private needs. Four different men were recorded as his chamberlains. The first one is Yasir, the mawla of Ḥamza b. al-Yasa’. He used to be very close to the Imam. He related from him a book called "Masā’il" (the Questions). Another chamberlain whose

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480 'Uyun, ii, p. 173.
482 'Uyun, i, p. 127; al-Najashi, p. 315; Ibn Dawud, p. 370. Al Mamsqani reports that Yasir also related from the Imam al-Ḥasan al-ʾAskari. He then proved that this was historically possible by taking Yasir’s age into consideration, see vol. i, biography no: 12954.
name is given is Muhammad b. Zayd al-Ṭabarî (or according to al-Najāshi, "al-Razāmī"). There is no further information about him. Ibn Ḥabīb gives the name of Yahyā b. Mu‘adh b. Muslim as hājiḥ. Hishām b. Ibrāhīm al-‘Abbāsī is also said to have been appointed by al-Ma‘mūn as the Imām’s chamberlain. Al-Riḍā was also given his own police force (ṣubūṭa) and guard (ḥarās). The leader of his private ṣubūṭa, al-‘Abbās b. Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. al-Ash‘ath, is known for his strong sympathy towards the Imāms. The name of the chief of al-Riḍā’s guard is recorded as Sa‘īd b. Sulaym.

In spite of the conditions upon which al-Riḍā had accepted becoming heir apparent, it seems that al-Ma‘mūn desired al-Riḍā to take part in the business of the state. The Imām used to attend the trials in the Diwān al-Mazālim (the Board for the Scrutiny and Redress of Grievances). During these trials, which took places on Mondays and Thursdays, al-Riḍā would sit at the right of the caliph. He sometimes would interfere in it and correct the judgement of al-Ma‘mūn. At one time, the caliph asked the Imām to recommend him trustworthy persons to appoint them to the places where unrest prevailed. The Imām rejected it reminding him of the conditions which he had made. However, on the other hand, he did not seem to have held these conditions strictly. For example, we know that he appointed ʿImrān, the Sabian, 


484 Ibn Ḥabīb, p.201.

485 ‘Uyūn, ii, p.152. For detailed information about him see p.316 below.

486 Ibn Ḥabīb, p.201.

487 For him, see p.391 below.

488 Ibn Ḥabīb, p.201.

489 see Manāqīb, iv, p.368. Ibn Babuya, ‘Ilal, p 240.

490 ‘Uyūn, ii, p.164

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who converted to Islam thanks to the former, to be in charge of the sadaqāt (charitable lands) in Balkh.\textsuperscript{491} Perhaps, the appointments which al-Riḍa refused to make were risky ones for which later he might have been held responsible by the caliph.

From a narration related by Yāsir, the chamberlain, it is understood that al-Riḍa interposed in some private business in the court. Al-Maʿmūn and his cousin loved each other. There was a gate opening to al-Maʿmūn’s meeting room from the women’s apartments. The vizier al-Fāḍl found it inappropriate and had it closed up. However, al-Riḍa, who knew about the affair between the caliph and his cousin, told the caliph that this was not a matter for the vizier, so al-Maʿmūn should not have allowed him to meddle in such business and he should have the gate reopened immediately. Consequently the wall was demolished and the gate was reopened as the Imam had suggested.\textsuperscript{492}

The chamberlain Yāsir also narrates an incident which took place probably on the first of Shawwal in 201 H., (ʿid al-fitr). Al-Riḍa had been designated as heir at the beginning of Ramaḍān in 201 H.. At the end of the month, al-Maʿmūn asked him to lead the festival prayer (salāt al-ʿid) and give a speech on the pulpit. It would be al-Riḍa’s first meeting with the masses as the heir apparent. However, he declined it, giving as his excuse the conditions on which he had agreed to accept al-Maʿmūn’s proposal. But, as a result of the caliph’s persistence, at last, he consented to it on condition that he would conduct the service in the way that the Prophet and Ṭāḥaf, Abī Ṭalib had done. In the morning of the day, the people who had heard the news lined up on the road between al-Riḍa’s house and the great mosque. The commanders and

\textsuperscript{491} Uyun, i. p. 144; al-Tabarsi, al-īḥtiyāj, p. 425

\textsuperscript{492} Uyun, ii. p. 152

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other high-ranking officials gathered in front of the house in festival clothes in order to accompany him in the ceremony. Al-Riḍā came out, putting a white turban on his head, gathering up his trousers to the middle of his legs. He started to walk, stopping and shouting a *takbir* every ten steps. Yāsir described the situation as being, "(as if) the whole Merv was crying out: The people were not able to refrain from weeping and yelling". The caliph was informed of this immediately. Al-Fadl b. Sahl counselled the caliph that if al-Riḍā reached the mosque in this state, the people would become ready to be provoked, so the best thing to be done was to ask him to return. Accordingly al-Maʿmūn sent his men to the Imam. The latter acceded to the request and returned. ⁴⁹³ This incident may be regarded as a first sign of the hidden quarrel between the Imam and the vizier, which would result eventually in the assassination of the latter.

Al-Ṭabarî reports that in the year 201/816-7 there was a severe famine in the region of Khurāsān; food prices rose and deaths resulted. ⁴⁹⁴ A narration in *Uyun* records that some of al-Maʿmūn's entourage and those who had envy for al-Riḍā interpreted the famine as bad fortune which might have been caused by al-Riḍā's nomination. Therefore, al-Maʿmūn requested the Imam to pray for rain (*istisqāʾ*). This was another opportunity for al-Riḍā to meet the public. According to the narration, on a Monday, the Imam and people went early in the morning to flat land out of the city. A pulpit was set up and the Imam gave a speech. After the prayer, the people returned to their homes. In the meantime it started to rain. ⁴⁹⁵


⁴⁹⁴ al-Ṭabarî, iii, p.1015. Also see Ibn al-Jawzi, al-Muntazam, x, p.100.

5 - The Imam and the Poets

5.1 - With Di'bil b. 'Ali

Di'bil b. 'Ali al-Khuza'i is a famous pro-Shi'i poet who was born in 148/765 and died in 245/859 or 246/860. He is said to have seen Mūsā al-Kāzim, but there is no report about this meeting. He met with 'Ali al-Riḍā at Merv. It is understood from one narration that Di'bil and his close friend, Ibrāhīm b. al-'Abbās al-Sūlī, another famous poet, travelled to Merv particularly to meet al-Riḍā and to make poetry for him. Several stories are narrated about the relationship between the Imām and Di'bil. It is related that al-Riḍā listened to a poem of Di'bil about himself and Aḥl al-Bayt, and said: "O Khuzā'i, the Holy Spirit has uttered these two verses on your tongue".

It seems that Di'bil himself or some Imams after him exaggerated some incidents which had taken place between him and the Imām. Therefore, almost all of such stories seem unreliable. There are several contradictory stories about one incident. The incident is that al-Riḍā granted some valuable things to Di'bil after listening to his panegyrics about himself and his grandfathers. The variations of the story and contradictory elements are as follows:

a - Di'bil b. 'Ali relates that he recited an ode before al-Riḍā; the latter was affected and began to cry, so he asked him to stop reciting. After a while he wanted it to be repeated. But Di'bil had to stop it again due to the Imam's crying. After the ode had been repeated a third time, al-Riḍā ordered Di'bil to be given 10,000 dirhams

496 see al-Najashi, p.198.
497 'Uyun, ii, pp.140-1.
498 'Uyun, ii, p.270; Manaqib, iv, p.331.
from those which had been minted with his name on. Di’bil went to Iraq. Iraqi Shi’is bought from him every dirham for 10 dirhams so he collected 100,000 dirhams.499

b - Al-Mufid and al-Kashshi relates that al-Riđā granted Di’bil 600 dinārs. However, what Di’bil really wanted was one of the Imam’s robes, not the money. The Imam also gave him it in addition to the money. Di’bil then went to Qum. Some Qummis offered to buy the robe for 1,000 dinārs. He refused. But after he had left the city, they followed him and stole the robe. Di’bil had to return to Qum. He did not manage to get it back, but the zealot Shi’is gave him 1,000 dinārs as the price of the robe.500

c - Al-Ísfahani relates the above-recorded story with some differences. The amount which was granted by al-Riđā to Di’bil is 10,000 dirhams. The money which was offered by the local Shi’is is 30,000 dirhams. Also in addition to the previous story, Di’bil asked the Qummis, who had stolen the shirt of al-Riđā, to give him at least a piece of it. They gave it to him. Di’bil made this piece part of his shroud which he had been keeping for his death.501

d - Al-Irbili’s version has it that after listening to his poem, al-Ma’mun granted Di’bil 50,000 dirhams. Al-Riđā also gave him a handkerchief and one of his shirts. While Di’bil was going towards Iraq, Kurdish robbers waylaid him. Their leader was a Shi’i sympathiser; he used to recite one of Di’bil’s poems and cry. Di’bil told him

499 al-Ísfahani, al-Ághanî, xx, pp.162-3. For a similar story, also see ‘Uyun, ii, p.141.
501 al-Ísfahani, al-Ághanî, xv, p.132.
that he had written this poem. Thereupon, the surprised leader and his men became repentant and returned all things which they had robbed from the travellers to them.  

502

e - In al-Najashi's story, al-Riḍā gave Di‘bil a green silken shirt and a silver agate ring. He particularly reminded the poet to take care of the shirt, because, the Imam said, he had prayed thousand *rak‘a* in thousand days in it and also in it he finished reading the whole Qur‘ān a thousand times.  

503

f - In last story related by Ibn Bābūya, a miracle which appeared thanks to al-Riḍā's robe is narrated: Di‘bil's beloved concubine had become blind. The physicians were not able to cure her. Di‘bil remembered the virtue of the Imam's robe. He rubbed it over her eyes, so, on the following day, they opened and she began to see better than before. 

504

All of these are nothing but the products of a zealot Shi‘i poet who seems to have found plenty of interest in such stories among the Shi‘i masses in Qum and Iraq and considered it an opportunity to increase his fame by fabricating and narrating them. Later Shi‘i-originated contributions to these stories also should not be disregarded.

5.2 - With Ibrahim b. al-‘Abbās al-Ṣūlī

Ibrahim al-Ṣūlī was one of the distinguished poets in the early ‘Abbasid period. He was a clerk in the court. He died in 243/857.  

505 Al-Ṣūlī was among the

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502 *Kashf*, iii, pp.51-3.

503 al-Najashi, pp. 197-8.


505 see Ibn al-Nadīm, p.122; Ibn Khallikan, i, pp.44-6.
poets who recited panegyrics on the occasion of al-Ridā’s designation. It is narrated that the Imam granted him 10,000 dirhams of those which had been minted with his name on. He delivered most of the money to his relatives and close friends, and some was spent later for the equipment and the preparation for his funeral.

507

5.3 - With Abū Nuwās

Abū Nuwās al-Hasan b. Hāni’, the celebrated poet, is also said to have met al-Ridā and recited poems for him. According to al-İsfahānī’s version, Abū Nuwās was told that he had recited many sorts of poems on different subjects, but he had said nothing about ‘Ali al-Ridā even though they were contemporaries. Abū Nuwās replied that such an attitude from him was only out of veneration for the Imam, because he was not worthy to recite poems for an important man like al-Ridā. Nevertheless he recited a poem about the Imam and his family. It was the admiration of all. Therefore, ‘Ali al-Ridā related a tradition from the Prophet: “If a lover of us extolled us and gave utterance to the love for us, God would support him with the Holy Spirit”.

508


507 ‘Uyūn, ii, p.141. Also see al-İsfahānī, al-Ağhānī, x, p.63.

It is narrated that Ibrāhīm al-Sūlī later got into trouble due to one of his poems which he had recited in the honour of the Imam. He had written this poem in his own handwriting and given it to his friend, Ishaq b. Ibrāhīm. Later al-Sūlī was appointed to Diwan al-Diyā (the department of estates and properties) by the caliph al-Mutawakkil (ruled 232-247/847-861). After this appointment, al-Sūlī and Ishaq b. Ibrāhīm were on strained terms. Al-Sūlī dismissed Ishaq, who was responsible for the estates of Hulwān (or Sirawān), from his office and demanded money in return for it. However, Ishaq had excellent blackmail material to use against al-Sūlī. He told al-Sūlī he would show the panegyric written for al-Ridā to al-Mutawakkil, who was a severe persecutor of the Shi‘i elements, unless al-Sūlī stopped his demand. The poet had to submit to this blackmail. He accepted what Ishaq had wanted. In return, he took the poem from him and destroyed it in the fire, see ‘Uyūn, ii, p.147. al-İsfahānī, al-Ağhānī, x, p 64; Ibn Khallikān, v, pp.340-1.

508 al-İsfahānī, al-Ağhānī, xxv, pp.293-4.
Some other books also give similar narrations but with an additional detail that this incident took place after al-Rıdı had been nominated as heir. It is almost certain that all these stories have not any historical substratum. The dates given for Abu Nuwas’s death are 195, 196 and 198 H. and he is reported to have died in Baghdad. Therefore, his presence in Merv in 201 H. is historically impossible. If al-İsfahānī’s above-recorded narration is taken into consideration and it is supposed that al-Rıdı and Abū Nuwas met so much earlier than the celebration of the Imam’s succession, it would not be true again. This narration describes a meeting which probably took place at the ‘Abbāsid court in Baghdad because there is an indication that the caliphal astrologer Abū Sahl al-Nawbakhtī was also present at the same meeting. Al-Rıdı had never been present at the court in Baghdad. Ibn Shahrāshūb probably noticed these errors and thus changed the name to Harūn al-Rashīd as the caliph, in whose presence Abū Nuwas and al-Rıdı met. However, he could not escape from falling into another error: ‘Ali al-Rıdı, according to the historical accounts, had never been in the presence of al-Rashīd.

One of the authors who records this narration in one of his book is Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥilli. He narrates the story as a proof for the excellence of al-Rıdı. However, Ibn Taymiyya, in his Minhaj al-Sunna which he wrote against al-Ḥilli’s Minhaj al-Karama, says in response that even if the narration was authentic, it would not be proper to prove one’s excellence with an attestation of such a poet who was well-known for his dissolute life.

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510 Ibn Khallikan, ii, p.103.
511 Manaqib, iv, pp.342-3.
512 al-Ḥilli, Minhaj al-Karama, p.103.
6 - Zayd b. Musä, the Mischievous Brother

We have recorded that Zayd b. Musä, the brother of al-Ridä, who was the governor of Basra and Ahwaz on behalf of the rebel Abü al-Saräyä, burnt down large number of houses belonging to the 'Abbasids in Basra and threw their supporters alive into the fire. Due to these actions he was called "Zayd al-När" ("Zayd of the Fire"). Eventually, 'Ali b. Abi Sa'id, the 'Abbasid commander, recovered Basra at the end of 199/815 and took Zayd prisoner.514 However, he managed to escape from prison and then rebelled again with the brother of Abü al-Saräyä in Anbar, a town on the Euphrates to the west of Baghdad, in Dhù al-Qa'da, 200 / June, 816. The rebellion was suppressed and Zayd was recaptured.515 There is no further report about him in al-Tabari's History. However, a narration in 'Uyun related on the authority of 'Ali b. Aḩmad al-Nassāba reports the following incidents: When Zayd was about to be executed at the order of the governor al-Ḥasan b. Sahl, a man who was called al-Ḥajjaj b. Khuthayma, advised the governor not to execute Zayd. He told al-Ḥasan that without al-Ma'mün's permission this action might have got al-Ḥasan into trouble just like the case of the 'Alid 'Abd Allah b. 'Aftas whom Ja'far b. Yahya al-Barmakī had executed without al-Rashid's permission, so the caliph had been so angry that he had ordered Ja'far to be killed. Therefore the execution of Zayd b. Musa, who could be regarded as a cousin of al-Ma'mün, might have caused al-Ḥasan to be harmed. Upon this advice, al-Ḥasan withdrew the order of execution and had Zayd put in prison. Zayd stayed there until he was taken to al-Ma'mün in Merv.516

514 see p.237 above.
515 al-Tabari, iii, pp. 999-1000.
516 'Uyun, ii, pp.235-6.
Al-Ma'āmun compared Zayd b. Mūsā with Zayd b. 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābidin. He told al-Ridā that what Zayd had achieved against the 'Abbāsids in Basra was not less than what Zayd b. 'Alī had done before. If he had not been the brother of al-Ridā, he would have executed him as Zayd b. 'Alī had been. Al-Ridā told the caliph not to compare his brother with Zayd b. 'Alī, because, he said, the latter was a scholar: "He became angry for (the cause of) God and fought against His enemies until he was killed for the sake of Him", but his brother was not in the same situation.517

Al-Ma'āmun sent Zayd to 'Ali al-Ridā. The Imam scolded his brother because of his action against the 'Abbāsids in Basra. He told him that he had probably been misled by a tradition related by the low people of Kufa that God had forbidden the progeny of Fātimah, the daughter of the Prophet, from being thrown into Hell. He reminded him that their father Mūsā al-Kāzīm had obeyed God sincerely, he used to fast day and night and wake up for prayer at nights, and then he asked Zayd how he could suppose that he would enter Paradise only by relying on such traditions. Al-Ridā also reminded him of the case of Noah's son who could not be prevented from perishing even though he had been the son of a prophet.518 He related a tradition from Zayn al-'Ābidin that the benevolent ones from the Prophet's family would be rewarded double, but also the sinful ones from the same family would be punished double that of other ordinary people.519 The Imam also swore that he would never talk to Zayd as long as he lived.520


518 see al-Qur'an, xi: 46.


520 'Uyun, ii. p. 235 (no: 2).
About Zayd b. Musa's fate, there are some contradictory accounts. The genealogist Ibn 'Inaba reports that al-Ma'mun assassinated him by poison.\textsuperscript{521} Another account records that he had been the boon companion of the caliph al-Muntasir (ruled 247-248 / 861-862),\textsuperscript{522} probably before the latter ascended to the throne, and died around the end of the reign of the caliph al-Mutawakkil (ruled 232-247 / 847-861).\textsuperscript{523} According to Ibn Hazm's account, Zayd died in the time of the caliph al-Musta'in (ruled 248-252 / 862-866).\textsuperscript{524}

7 - Hisham b. Ibrahim, a Treacherous Shi'i at the Court

Hisham b. Ibrahim al-Hamdani is said to have been a genuine Imamite partisan before 'Ali al-Rida's nomination as heir to the throne. He appears in a tradition with the Imam al-Kazim that when the Imam was taken into custody, the latter fulfilled a request for him.\textsuperscript{525} It seems that his allegiance to the party still continued for sometime under al-Rida's imama. He worked as an agent for al-Rida. It is reported that all taxes, funds and gifts which had been brought from different regions had been previously delivered to him before they reached al-Rida.\textsuperscript{526}

\textsuperscript{521} Ibn 'Inaba, p.251.

\textsuperscript{522} 'Uyun. ii, p.235. In the narration, "al-Mustansir" should be "al-Muntasir" as al-Mamaqani corrects, see vol.: 1, biography no: 4455.

\textsuperscript{523} 'Uyun. ii, pp.235-6.

\textsuperscript{524} Ibn Hazm, Jamhara, p.61.

\textsuperscript{525} al-Kashshi, p.500.

\textsuperscript{526} 'Uyun. ii, p.151.
Hisham is described as a learned, intelligent and well-mannered man. He was an associate of the celebrated Imami scholar Yunus b. Abd al-Rahman. Probably due to his strong involvement in Imami theology and the propaganda on behalf of it, he was persecuted by al-Rashid like many of his contemporary sectarians. In that time, when he was in hiding, he wrote a book defending the legitimacy of al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s imāma. As the book is described as a Zaydi treatise, it can be suggested that it defended al-'Abbās’s imama on the basis of the Zaydi doctrine that the imama of the inferior (al-mafdūl) was lawful. When this book reached al-Rashid, he stopped the persecution and reassured Hishām of his life.

Presumably from this time, Hishām’s closeness to the 'Abbāsid court started. He began to be called by the nicknames "al-Rašidi" and "al-'Abbāsi". It is reported in al-Aghāni that he was among the teachers employed for al-Ma’mūn’s education. In al-Ma’mūn’s time, his position near the ruling family increased. According to ‘Uyun, he gained the confidence of the vizier al-Faḍl b. Sahl, so he managed to hold an office in the court. Al-Ma’mūn put his son, al-‘Abbās, in the care of Hishām. The caliph also appointed him as the chamberlain of al-Riḍā.

527 ‘Uyun, ii, p.151.
528 al-Kashshi, p.278, 501. It is worth mentioning that another man who was also named Hisham b. Ibrahim must not be confused with the above-named Hisham. This Hisham b. Ibrahim, who was known as al-Mashriq al-Jibali and al-Baghdadi, was also associated with Yunus b. ‘Abd al-Rahman. As is understood, he was a theologian. He was described as a very strong Imami ("thiqā thiqā"), see al-Kashshi. pp.490, 498-500.
531 al-Isfahani, al-Aghanī. x, p.76.
It seems that no trace of Hishâm's Shi'ism survived. He became, from now on, a loyal servant of the caliphate. He met again with his former Imam in Merv. His attitude against al-Riḍâ amazed the latter. Al-Kashshi relates that he asked the Imam to accept al-Ma'mun’s nomination proposal; if he did not, he told al-Riḍâ to his face that he would kill him himself. Al-Riḍâ was astounded and was not able to find anything to say except: "O al-‘Abbāsi, you, too, are against me!" 533

It is narrated in 'Uyûn that Hishâm al-‘Abbāsi, as the chamberlain, allowed only a group of selected people to enter into al-Riḍâ’s presence. Most of the Imam’s disciples who wanted to visit him were usually not able to do so. 534 This account finds confirmation in another narration that Ahmad b. Muḥammad al-Bāzanṭī wrote to the Imam that he desired to visit him. Al-Riḍâ replied that admission was very difficult and restricted, so al-Bāzanṭī should have to wait for sometime. 535 It seems more plausible that these sorts of restrictions were carried out by the order of al-Fadl b. Sahl rather than that of al-Ma‘mun, because the caliph had no reason to do it. But, in contrast, for the vizier, a heir apparent who had been well-informed by his visitors who were coming to Merv from all the corners of the empire might have become very dangerous by revealing to the caliph the facts which he had been concealing for long time, a matter we are going to mention soon. Another account related to Hishâm al-‘Abbāsi’s actions is that he informed the vizier of all the things which had been said in al-Riḍâ’s salon.

Besides, Hisham had also been accused of spreading from al-Riḍâ’s mouth some statements which actually did not belong to him. He said that al-Riḍâ had

533 al-Kashshi, p. 501.
534 'Uyûn, ii. p. 152.
535 'Uyûn, ii. p. 213.
permitted singing, which was later denied by the Imam.\textsuperscript{536} All this explains why the Imam called him and his father Zindiqs.\textsuperscript{537} Such malicious actions by Hishâm and the Imam's clear judgement of him being a Zindiq seem to have motivated some impetuous disciples of al-Riḍā to take serious action against him. Al-Rayyān b. al-Salt\textsuperscript{538} a Khurāsānian Imāmi votary, who was a government official, proposed to the Imam that killing Hishâm was easy for him, because he frequented him in order to know the news about the Imam and he sometimes spent the night in his home, so he would be able to kill him and then make it look as if he had died naturally. Al-Riḍā did not consent to this. Al-Rayyān maintained that he would be sent by al-Fadl b. Sahl to Iraq on some business, and some days afterwards Hishâm would set off in the same direction, therefore he could halt in Qum and ask some local Imāmis to waylay Hishâm like robbers and kill him if, of course, the Imam consented. Al-Riḍā said nothing. Al-Rayyān was not sure what he should do. He went to Qum. There he discussed the matter with Zakariyyā b. Ādam, a Qummi Imāmi scholar and one of al-Riḍā's agents.\textsuperscript{539} Zakariyyā was not able to come to a decision either. He asked for time from al-Rayyān to consult Muʿammar.\textsuperscript{540} The latter thought that the Imam's silence should have indicated that it should not be done. However, in the meantime,

\textsuperscript{536} al-Kashshi, p. 501; al-Ḥimyarī, p. 342.

\textsuperscript{537} al-Kashshi, p. 501.

\textsuperscript{538} He is Abū ʿAli al-Rayyān b. al-Salt al-Ashʿari al-Qummi. He is said to have been al-Rashīd's saddler (al-Hillī, \textit{al-Mustajad}, p. 30). According to some accounts, he was also an official working under al-Fadl b. Sahl (al-Kashshi, p. 547; al-Ḥimyarī, p. 344) or under al-Hasan b. Sahl (\textit{Uyun}, II, p. 148). Al-Rayyān was probably a hidden adherent of al-Riḍā. He collected the words of the Imam about the difference between the Prophet's family and the rest of the \textit{umma}, see al-Najashi, p. 119; al-Ṭusi, \textit{Fihrist}, p. 140; Ibn Dawūd, p. 154; al-Mamaqani, \textit{i.} biography no. 4183.

\textsuperscript{539} For Zakariyyā b. Ādam, see p. 435 below.

\textsuperscript{540} He is probably Muʿammar b. Khalīl, a disciple of al-Riḍā. He is reported to have been in Khurasan in those years, see al-Kashshi, p. 547.
Hishām al-'Abbasī arrived in Qum. There was nothing they could do after that even if they had wanted to. 541

It is clear that al-Riḍā did not want any trouble around him, which might have endangered his situation. Another similar offer had been made before to him and he had refused it too. In his journey to Merv, one of his adherents asked him for approval to kill Rājā' b. Abi al-Ḍāḥḥāk, the officer who was responsible for the journey. The Imam refused that. 542 The Imāmi scholar al-Ḥurr al-'Āmili (d. 1104/1692) interprets al-Riḍā's above-mentioned silence as his permission for the act. 543 Perhaps the Imam, having kept silent, put the responsibility for the action on local Imāmi Qummus who might think better about an act in their region whose consequences directly affected themselves and their activities.

X - A Crisis for al-Ma'mūn and al-Riḍā's Interference

Although al-Ma'mūn's plan of reconciliation between the 'Alids and the Abbasids in order to secure the power of his government seems to have shown its good effect on what the caliph had intended for the 'Alids, it very dangerously divided the ruling family into two hostile camps. We have stated that, on the first day of the year 202 Ḥ., the 'Abbasids in Iraq declared al-Ma'mūn's deposition from the caliphate and gave their oath of allegiance to Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdi as new caliph. 544 They nicknamed him "al-Mubarak" ("the blessed one") and arranged a ceremony of bay'a for him. Ibrāhīm appointed his governors over the towns of Iraq and established his

541 al-Majlīṣī, XLI.X, pp. 263-4; al-Ḥimyārī, pp. 343-5.
542 'Uyūn, ii, p. 206.
543 al-Ḥurr, Wasa'il, ii, p. 63.
544 see p. 285 above
encampment at Madain. It is reported that the whole of Iraq was now under his control.545

Al-‘Abbās b. Musā, the brother of al-Riḍā, was the governor of Kufa on behalf of the Merv-based government. Al-‘Abbās asked for the assistance of local Shi'is to defend the city against Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī's troops. They refused to help him.546 On the side of al-‘Abbās b. Musā, two well-known names stood out. 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ja'far, the cousin of al-Riḍā, who was the son of the rebel in Mecca, and Abū 'Abd Allāh, the brother of Abū al-Sarāyā, were the commanders for al-‘Abbās when he engaged in a battle outside Kufa with Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī's troops. They were defeated and had to flee back into Kufa. After this success, Ibrāhīm's troops surrounded the city. Several battles took place between the troops of Ibrāhīm's commander Sa‘īd b. Sājūr, who were in black, and the troops of al-‘Abbās b. Musā who were all in green. Eventually, the notables of Kufa perceived their own hopeless situation. They asked Sa‘īd for a guarantee of safety for their governor, al-‘Abbās. This was accepted. Therefore, the city was handed over to the commanders of the anti-Ma’mūn movement in Baghdad. All these events took place in the month of Jumada II, 202 / November-December, 817.547

In the meantime, al-Ma’mūn in Merv was not aware of the situation in Iraq. He did not even know that the oath of allegiance had been taken for Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī as the new caliph. The vizier al-Faḍl b. Sahl kept all such news hidden from the caliph, because the governor of Iraq, al-Ḥasan b. Sahl, was his own brother and the opposition in Baghdad held al-Faḍl and his brother responsible for all the things which

545 al-‘Tabari, iii, pp. 1015-6; al-Kamil, vi, pp. 242-4.

546 For the reason for this refusal see p. 282 above.

547 al-‘Tabari, iii, pp. 1020-2.

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were happening. He only told the caliph that Ibrāhīm had been set up by the 'Abbāsids in Iraq as a governor to look after their interests; there was no mention of the seriousness of the situation.\textsuperscript{548}

It was 'Ali al-Riddā who revealed all the hidden facts to the caliph. He, in this respect, did what Harthama b. A'yan had not been able to manage. Harthama, the powerful general, had come to Khurāsān two years earlier to inform the caliph of the serious unease in Iraq. However, al-Fadl had influenced al-Ma'mūn not to hear al-Harthama and persuaded the caliph to imprison him. Then the unfortunate Harthama had been murdered in prison probably at the order of the vizier al-Fadl.\textsuperscript{549} But this time 'Ali al-Riddā unexpectedly disclosed all the facts, despite the fact that he had agreed to become heir apparent on the condition that he did not interfere in governmental business.

It is reported that 'Ali al-Riddā informed al-Ma'mūn of the conditions of civil disturbance in Iraq since al-Amin had been killed and that there was a state of war between al-Ḥasan b. Sahl and Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdi for whom the pledge of allegiance had been given as caliph. Al-Riddā also said how al-Fadl b. Sahl had been keeping news from him, so the 'Abbāsids and other people thought that al-Ma'mūn was bewitched or possessed because he had not acted in order to repair the situation, instead, he had been doing everything to make it deteriorate. Al-Riddā did not omit mentioning the general concern among the 'Abbāsids which had been brought about by his own position as heir apparent.\textsuperscript{550} Thereupon, al-Ma'mūn asked al-Riddā to

\textsuperscript{548} al-Ṭabarī, iii, p. 1025.

\textsuperscript{549} al-Ṭabarī, iii, pp. 996-8; Ibn Khaldūn, al-‘Ibar, iii, p. 249.

\textsuperscript{550} According to one report in 'Uyun related from Abu Bakr al-Suh, al-Riddā told the caliph the following: "O commander of the faithful, counselling you is necessary. Perfidy is not proper for a faithful man. The masses dislike what you have done to me and the people of distinction dislike what you have done to al-Fadl b.
indicate to him generals who knew all about what the Imam had informed him of so that he might interrogate them. Al-Riḍā brought a number of commanders into the caliph’s presence. They refused to say anything until al-Ma’mūn gave them assurance of protection from possible retaliation upon them by al-Fadl b. Sahl. They told the caliph about the civil conflict going on in Iraq. The Iraqis had given their oath of allegiance to Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī and called him “the Sunni caliph”. On the other hand, they accused al-Ma’mūn of being a Rāfīḍī on the grounds of his designation of al-Riḍā as his successor. The commanders also pointed out how al-Fadl had deceived the caliph in the affair of Harthama b. A’yan. They mentioned the latter’s sincerity in offering wise counsel about the affairs of the state and his doubtless loyalty to al-Ma’mūn. They further mentioned ʿṬāhir b. al-Ḥusayn’s present situation: Despite his great service to the caliphate, and especially to al-Ma’mūn, he had been appointed to Raqqā, a distant corner of the empire, and left there deliberately. The commanders also suggested that if ʿṬāhir had been the governor of Iraq, he would have firmly ensured that they would have been peace. Finally they asked al-Ma’mūn to go to Baghdad. They indicated that if the Hashimis and other commanders saw their caliph, they would give him full obedience. Consequently, al-Ma’mūn realised the truth of the allegations put forward by al-Riḍā and ordered the departure to Baghdad. ⁵⁵¹

When the vizier al-Fadl knew what had happened, he punished the commanders very harshly. He had some of them flogged and jailed others. He also tortured them, having the hairs of their beards pulled out. Hence, ʿAlī al-Riḍā came to

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⁵⁵¹ al-Ṭahārī, iii, pp. 1025-7; al-Kāmil, vi, pp. 245-6; Ibn Kathīr, li, pp. 248-9; Ibn al-Tiqtaqa, p. 218. Ibn Khaldūn (al-ʾIbar, iii, p. 249) reports that the commanders were not able to dare to say all these to al-Ma’mūn so they went to al-Riḍā and asked him to inform the caliph of this information which had been concealed by al-Fadl b. Sahl. Al-Riḍā accepted to do this.
the vizier and reminded him of the assurance of protection given to them by the caliph. But al-Faḍl told him that he would achieve what he wanted anyway in secret.\(^{552}\)

Ibn Ḥabib (lived 165-245 / 781-859) relates a narration which shows the bitter regret of the vizier for what he had achieved in favour of ‘Ali al-Riḍā’s succession. He felt that he was betrayed. He asked some people with him: "What do you say about a cow for which I created two horns of gold, but I became the first one whom it butted with them!".\(^{553}\)

W. Madelung, who translated 
*Kitāb al-Sharṭ wa al-Llibā'*, (the letter of stipulation and gift),\(^{554}\) assumes that the second part of the letter dated Safar, 202/August-September, 817 has a connection with al-Ma’mūn’s decision to return to Baghdad. Al-Faḍl needed again to reassure himself of his situation and asked for a similar letter to the previous one, which had been issued on 7 Ramadan, 201, to be written.\(^{555}\) As Madelung correctly indicates, a Shi’i report in ‘Uyun related on the authority of Yasir, the chamberlain, might suggest such a connection. After al-Ma’mūn’s decision to return to Baghdad, al-Faḍl asked the caliph to allow him to stay in Merv, because he feared that all the ‘Abbasids held him responsible for the killing of al-Amin and the nomination of al-Riḍā, so his presence in Baghdad would be very hazardous. Al-Ma’mūn did not accept that and demanded that he compose a letter for himself stipulating anything he wished. The letter was written and signed by the caliph. Al-Faḍl also asked al-Ma’mūn that al-Riḍā should sign it as well. The caliph reminded him of the conditions of al-Riḍā that he did not interfere any such businesses

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\(^{552}\) al-Tabari, iii, p. 1027; al-Kamil, vi, p. 246.  
\(^{554}\) see p. 284 above.  
\(^{555}\) see W. Madelung, *New Documents* p. 339.
and told him to go to al-Rida himself and request it. Al-Fadl went to him. Al-Rida approved the letter.556

This Shi'i report in 'Uyun is coloured by legendary motifs and full of inaccuracies, so its reliability is doubtful. But the fact that al-Ya'qubi mentioned the same letter just after recording al-Ma'mun's decision to return to Baghdad 557 also indicates the same point, i.e. the publication of the letter dated Safar, 202 probably took place after the caliph had decided to set off for Iraq. Accordingly, it seems clear that al-Rida's information to the caliph of the real situation occurred just after the news of the proclamation of Ibrahim b. al-Mahdi as new caliph had reached Merv, and al-Rida and some commanders made a historical decision to put an end to al-Fadl's intrigues and devices which had become so unendurable that they might result in the division of the caliphate.

Eventually al-Ma'mun set off from Merv with his heir al-Rida, his vizier al-Fadl and his entourage for Baghdad. When they reached Sarakhs, a group of men including the vizier's own cousin attacked al-Fadl in a bath and killed him. This took place on 2 Sha'ban, 202 / 13 February, 818. The assassins managed to flee, but al-Ma'mun sent his men to capture them and offered 10,000 dinârs as reward for whoever brought them back. They were apprehended in a short time and brought into the presence of the caliph. They said that the caliph himself ordered them to kill the vizier. However, this did not save them from being executed.558

556 'Uyun, ii, pp. 160-1.
557 al-Ya'qubi, iii, p. 186.
It seems that the assassins had carried out Al-Ma'mun's orders as they had confessed. Otherwise, the caliph's entrance to Baghdad accompanied by al-Fadl would have achieved none of Al-Ma'mun's aims. For that reason, even if the caliph was not himself responsible for this assassination, the death of his vizier became very timely for him.

Al-Kulaynī and al-Mufid relate a miraculous event regarding the aftermath of al-Fadl's assassination. Al-Fadl's men, some military commanders and soldiers gathered at the gate of al-Ma'mun. They held al-Ma'mun responsible for the murder and demanded vengeance for al-Fadl. They also brought fire to set the gate alight. Al-Ma'mun came to al-Riḍā and begged him to quieten these people down so that they went away. Al-Riḍā went out. He indicated that they should depart. The chamberlain Yasir reports that the people began to fall over each other. Whoever the Imam pointed to, ran away without looking back. From this report, one can only consider that the element of truth in the story may simply be that Al-Ma'mun requested al-Riḍā to speak to the crowd and calm them down and this is what al-Riḍā did and the people dispersed.

XI - The Death of Al-Riḍā

1 - The Place and Date of His Death

Al-Ma'mun and the royal court left Sarakhs on 1 Shawwal, 202 / 12 April, 818. When the caliph stopped in Tus to visit the tomb of his father al-Rashīd, 'Alī...
al-Riḍā fell ill and died after a few days. The exact place of his death was Sanābādh, a village near Nawqān in the area of Tūs.\(^{561}\)

His death, according to the majority of the historical sources and the most reliable accounts, took place on one of the last days of Ṣafar, 203 / early September, 818.\(^{562}\) Another two different days given as the date of his death in Ṣafar, 203 are 3th\(^{563}\) and 17th\(^{564}\) of the month. Ibn Athir gives the date as the first day of the year 203 H.\(^{565}\) Al-Ya‘qūbi also indicates the early days of the same year.\(^{566}\) The month of Ramāḍān, 203 H. given as the date of al-Riḍā’s death by some sources\(^{567}\) seems to be the latest date to which credence could be given in the light of some other historical accounts. Al-Ṭabarī records twice that al-Ma‘mūn, after Tūs, moved west and reached Jurjān where he stayed a month and then left in Dhū al-Hijja of 203 H. moving towards Rayy and Hamadan.\(^{568}\) Hence, the dates indicating the days of the last two

\(^{561}\) Yaqūt says that the distance between the city of Tūs and Sanābādh was around one \textit{mil}, see \textit{Mu’jam al-Buldān}, iii, p. 153.


\(^{564}\) al-Majlīsī, XLIX, p. 293; al-Māmaqānī, i, p. 188.

\(^{565}\) Ibn Athir, \textit{Lubāb}, i, p. 470.

\(^{566}\) al-Ya‘qūbī, iii, p. 188.


\(^{568}\) al-Ṭabarī, iii, pp. 1036-7
months of 203 H. as the date of the Imam's death are unlikely to be true. G. C. Miles's suggestion thus is also unlikely. He, on the basis of the coins found in archaeological excavations, which were minted with the name of al-Riḍā and dated 204 H., suggests that the date of al-Riḍā's death should be in the last days of the year 203 H., probably on 5th of Dhū al-Ḥijja as Ibn Khallikān records, because only that could explain the mint date of these coins as 204 H.; if șafar of 203 H. was accepted as the real date, it would be too early. This matter was also noted by Muḥsin al-Amin. He proposes that these coins might have been issued in commemoration of al-Riḍā, a suggestion which seems to be quite plausible.

Dhū al-Ḥijja of 202 H. might be another date to which credence could be given as the date of al-Riḍā's death. However, other dates in the same year, șafar of 202 H., Jumādā I of 202 H. and Ramaḍān of 202 H. seem to be erroneous due to the fact that al-Faḍl b. Sahl was murdered on 2 Sha'ābān, 202 H. in Sarakhs and

569 These dates are 13th of Dhū al-Qa'ida (Ibn Khallikān, iii, p.270), 23th of Dhū al-Qa'ida (al-Mufid, Masarr, p.16), 5th of Dhū al-Ḥijja (Ibn Khallikān, iii, p.270) and the last day of the year (al-Sam'ānī, vi, p.139; Ibn Ḥibbān, ii, p.107).

570 see p.295 above.


572 see M. al-Amin, IV/3, p.147.

573 Iṭḥbat, p.228.

574 Ibn Khallikān, iii, p.270; Ibn Ṭūlūn, p.98.

575 al-Najashi (p.73) quotes the record of 'Abd Allah b. Aḥmad b. 'Āmir al-Ṭā'ī, who was a disciple of 'Ali b. Muḥammad, the tenth Imam.

576 Dala'il, p. 177. Al-Kulaynī, in another account (i, p.492), and Ibn Abī al-Thalj (p.12) record the date simply as 202 H..
al-Ma’mūn left the town on 1 Shawwal, 202 H. The date of 201 H. was also too early and certainly out of the question.

2 - Speculations on the Cause of His Death

Two of the early historians, al-Ṭabari (d. 310/922) and Ibn A’tham (d. 314/926) report the cause of al-Riḍā’s death as being that he ate a surfeit of grapes and suddenly died. According to Ibn al-‘Imād, he died from a fever.

Apart from these reports which show the Imam’s death to be sudden but natural, some sources, especially Shi‘i, maintain that al-Riḍā was killed by al-Ma’mūn by poison. Al-Īṣfahānī and al-Mufid narrate that al-Ma’mūn started the process of his evil plan to kill the Imam in a meal they took together. After the meal had been finished, al-Riḍā fell ill and al-Ma’mūn pretended to be sick in order to show that the sickness was from the food that they had eaten. The next step is related by ‘Abd Allah b. Bashir, a servant in the palace. He reported that al-Ma’mūn ordered him to grow his finger-nails longer than was usual. Then the caliph summoned him; he gave him a poisonous fruit which looked like a tamarind and asked him to knead it with his hand. Afterwards, they went together to al-Riḍā. The latter looked well. Al-Ma’mūn demanded that ‘Abd Allāh prepare some pomegranate juice for them. ‘Abd Allāh squeezed the fruits with his hands. So the remains of the poisoned substance in his

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577 al-Ṭabari, iii, pp. 1027-8.
579 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p. 1030; Ibn A’tham, viii, p. 323.
580 Shadharat, ii, p. 6.
nails mixed with the juice. Al-Ma'mūn offered it to the Imām. He drank it and after two days he died. 582

A narration in 'Uyun also gives a similar story. Al-Riḍā, after having a bath, wanted to undergo blood-letting. In the meantime al-Ma'mūn visited him. The caliph demanded that his servant, whose finger-nails had some poisonous substances, pick some pomegranates in the garden and then grind them up for eating. Al-Riḍā ate it. Al-Ma'mūn did not join the Imām to eat, using the sickness of his stomach as an excuse. After a short time al-Riḍā became ill. Al-Ma'mūn explained the illness of the Imām and some smells actually caused by the effect of the poison as the result of the blood-letting which the Imām had undergone. 583 These last two stories are the most popular reports narrating the assassination of the Imām. For that reason, even some well-known Sunni authors such as Ibn Ḥibbān (d.354/965) and al-Sam`ānī (d.562/1166) record, unlike the reports of al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Aṭham, that the cause of al-Riḍa's death was poisoned pomegranate juice. 584

In the continuation of al-Isfahānī's report, al-Riḍā recognised that he had been poisoned and told his disciple, Abū al-Ṣalt al-Harawi. However, the Imām did not die yet. With the third stage, the process was completed. Al-Riḍā used to like grapes. Al-Ma'mūn got some for him and introduced poison in them with needles. Muḥammad b. Jahm, who is also the rāwī of the narration, took them to al-Riḍa. The Imām ate from them and suddenly died. 585 Al-Ma'mūn kept the news of his death secret for a day


583 'Uyun, ii. pp.242-3. The narration is related on the authority of 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ka'bū.


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and a night. He then asked a group of the Talibis, including the Imam's uncle Muhammad b. Ja'far, to examine the Imam's corpse in order to have their testimony that he had died a natural death. They did that. Then he was buried. According to al-Ya'qubi, it was 'Ali b. Hishām who gave the poisoned pomegranate to al-Rida to eat. 'Ali b. Hishām, a prominent Khurasānian, was the governor of Baghdad on behalf of al-Hasan b. Sahl. We encounter his name frequently between the years 200 and 204 H. in Iraq in al-Tabari's History; he was busy struggling against Ibrahim b. al-Mahdi's movement. Therefore, his presence in Khurasān at the time when al-Rida died seems unlikely.

The Shi'i sources which charge al-Ma'mun with having killed al-Rida indicate some reasons which incited the caliph to do it. Some sources give the names of the brothers al-Hasan and al-Fadl b. Sahl as those who were influential in persuading al-Ma'mun to take this action. Al-Rida used to disparage them before al-Ma'mun and admonish the latter not to listen to their advice. They became aware of that, so they began to try to isolate al-Rida from al-Ma'mun. They continued in this way until they managed to change the caliph's opinion about al-Rida and made him act to kill him.

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587 al-Ya'qubi, iii, p.188.
588 see al-Ṭabarānī, iii, pp.998-1000, 1028-9, 1035-7.
589 'Ali b. Hishām then became the governor of al-Jihāl, Azerbaijan and Armenia. Al-Ma'mun sent him against the rebels of Qum who had denounced the authority of the government due to the high sum of land-tax imposed on them. 'Ali defeated them. Then he imposed on them a tax assessment of 7,000,000 dirhams though they had previously found 2,000,000 dirhams too high. This event happened in 210/825-6 (al-Tabari, iii, pp.1092-3). On the grounds of this incident it might be thought that the origin of al-Ya'qubi's statement was the Qummi Shi'i who had produced such a report reflecting their hostility against 'Ali b. Hishām. and al-Ya'qubi who wrote his History in Khurasan recorded it in his book.

The same sources also mention al-Riḍā's attitude towards al-Ma'mūn in warning him. Whenever al-Riḍā was alone with the caliph, he used to indicate to him the crimes which he had committed and recommended him to fear God. The sources also give an example of it. One day al-Riḍā saw al-Ma'mūn performing the ritual ablutions for prayer. A servant helped him to perform it by pouring water on his hand. 'Ali al-Riḍā told the caliph not to let anybody participate in his act of worship to God. So al-Ma'mūn sent the servant away and finished his ablutions by himself. According to the sources, al-Ma'mūn would pretend to accept such warnings, but inside him he hated him because of such attitude towards himself.591

Ibn Babuya also relates two narrations about the same matter in 'Uyun in the chapter of "the motives on account of which al-Ma'mūn killed 'Ali b. Musa al-Riḍā by poison". The first narration has it that a sufi who committed theft was brought to the court before al-Ma'mūn. The sufi defended himself by claiming that he had committed it with justification, not of his own accord, because the right due to him from some of the state incomes had not been distributed to him. Then he proved his argument with some verses of the Qur'ān. He also went further by saying that al-Ma'mūn could not have cut his hands off according to the shari'a, because the caliph was his servant on the grounds of the fact that al-Ma'mūn's mother, who was a concubine, had been bought by the money of Muslims, so he was his servant unless he freed him. Al-Ma'mūn who was very angry consulted al-Riḍā sitting next to him about the verdict. Al-Riḍā said that the evidences which had been put forward by the sufi seemed to be quite strong. Accordingly, the sufi was acquitted. The ṭawī of this narration, Muḥammad b. Sinan, suggests that from that time al-Ma'mūn engaged himself in looking for ways to kill al-Riḍā. After relating the narration, Ibn Babuya, maybe because of the identity of its ṭawī, Muḥammad b. Sinan, who is accused of being...

connected with extremist Shi'a.⁵⁹² needs to express his exemption from the responsibility for the authenticity of the narration.⁵⁹³

The second narration shows how al-Riḍā recognised an important mistake when the pledge of allegiance was taken for him and thus had it repeated. This incident let the people grumble that al-Riḍā who knew how the pledge was taken properly should have been more entitled to become caliph than al-Ma‘mūn who did not know. The ṭāwi, al-Rayyān b. Shubayb, suggests that this incident drove the caliph, who lost face before the public, to poison the Imam.⁵⁹⁴

According to Abū al-Ṣalt al-Harawi, al-Ma‘mūn killed al-Riḍā because of the fact, although the caliph proposed by the nomination of al-Riḍā as his heir to ensnare him in worldly affairs and thus to turn the devotion of his followers away from him. it appeared, in contrast, that his excellence was demonstrated further, especially thanks to the symposia in which he took part and defeated all the contenders from several religions and sects one by one.⁵⁹⁵

Another narration in Ṣyūn shows that al-Riḍā prepared his own end by his advice to al-Ma‘mūn. He told the caliph that al-Fāḍl b. Sahl and himself caused

⁵⁹² see Ibn Dāwūd, pp.504-5; al-Najāshi, pp.230-1; al-Ṭusi, Fihrist, p.295.

⁵⁹³ Ṣyūn, ii, pp.239-40.

⁵⁹⁴ Ṣyūn, ii, pp.240-1. For the story see p.290 above. The ṭāwi al-Rayyān b. Shubayb was the maternal uncle of the caliph al-Mu‘tasim. He was a resident of Qum. The Qummis related hadith from him. He is regarded as a reliable ṭāwi, see al-Najāshi, p.118. However, Muhammad b. Khālid al-Barqi, a Qummi Imami, who relates this narration from al-Rayyān, is not regarded as as strong as the latter. Al-Najāshi says that Muhammad was weak in hadith, see al-Najāshi, p.236.

⁵⁹⁵ Ṣyūn, ii, p.241. Muhammad H. al-Ṭabātabā’ī also touches on this point saying that when al-Ma‘mūn saw that Shi‘ism began to spread even more rapidly; he realised his mistake and killed the Imam, see A Shi‘ite Anthology, trans. by W.C. Chittick, p.139.
discomfort and dissatisfaction among the common people in general and the upper class in particular, so the only way for al-Ma'mūn to settle the peace was to remove them from his presence. The rāwī Ibrahim b. al-'Abbās says: "This word, by God, was the long and the short of the (real) reason". 596

In spite of these several Shi'i-originated narrations, some scholars from the Imāmiyya did not believe that al-Riḍā had been killed by al-Ma'mūn. The prominent Imāmi scholar Raḍī al-Din 'Ali b. al-Ṭawus (d. 664/1266) was one of them. We know his view about the matter from another Imāmi scholar 'Ali b. 'Iṣā al-Irbīlī (d. 692/1293), who also shares Ibn al-Ṭawus's sentiment. Ibn al-Ṭawus, taking into consideration al-Ma'mūn's affection and attachment to al-Riḍā and also his choice of him as his heir before members of his own family, does not accept the claim that the caliph killed the Imam. As well as Ibn al-Ṭawus, al-Irbīlī also touches on this matter. In addition, he criticises the narration related by al-Mufīd suggesting that al-Riḍā's advice to the caliph about Ibn Sahl brothers and his disparagement of them in public did not befit al-Riḍā because he should have been concerned in religious affairs rather than such worldly things. Al-Irbīlī also questions why al-Riḍā would have tried to adjust the caliphate according to his recommendation and advice if the caliphate of al-Ma'mūn was an illegitimate one, root and branch, as al-Mufīd believed. 597 He adds, too, that he could not understand how grapes are poisoned when needles are thrust into them, which seems to him to be medically nonsensical. 598

596 'Uyun, ii, p. 144; Kāshf, iii, p. 99.

597 Al-Irbīlī, here, probably criticises the narrations related by al-Mufīd in his al-Irshad. However, al-Mufīd, in his later work, Tāshīh 'I'tiqadat al-Imāmiyya, presents his suspicion about the reports that al-Riḍā was poisoned, see Tāshīh, p. 132.

598 Kāshf, iii, pp. 72-3.
A response to this criticism comes from al-Majlisi (d.1111/1699) almost four centuries later. He maintains that al-Riḍā’s advice to al-Maʿmūn about some worldly affairs did not turn him away from his religious duties. In contrast, this manner of al-Riḍā should be perceived as ordering what is good and forbidding what is reprehensible as well as lifting injustice from the Muslims. The fact that the caliphate was corrupt could not have been regarded as an excuse for al-Riḍā giving up the duty of guidance, because this duty should have been carried out in the interests of the Muslims, not in that of the caliphate. He says in conclusion that what is true is the opinions of al-Ṣadūq (Ibn Bābūya) and al-Mufid that al-Riḍā died as a martyr through the poison of al-Maʿmūn.599

From the early historians Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī (d.335/946) also does not give credence to this accusation attributed to al-Maʿmūn. According to al-Ṣūlī, the grief displayed by the caliph after al-Riḍā’s death was so extreme that it is not feasible that he could be so hypocritical.600 On the other hand, as far as is understood from their statements, the historians Abū ʿAli al-Sallāmī (writing in the first half of the 4th/10th c.)601, al-Masʿūdī (d.346/957)602 and the traditionist al-Ḥākim al-Nisabūrī (d.404/1014)603 still continued to maintain that al-Riḍā was murdered by the caliph. Also Ibn Ḥabīb (d.245/859) records al-Riḍā’s name and some accounts about him in

599 al-Majlisi, Biḥar, XLIX, pp.312-3.
602 Muruj, iii, p.417; al-Tanbih, p.303.
603 quoted from his Tarīkh al-Nisabūr by al-Dhahabī, Siyar, ix, p.393 and Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhib, vii, p.387.
his book he wrote about famous people who had been killed by the forces of the state.604

Indeed, if we examine the narrations which relate the event of the assassination of al-Riḍā, it becomes obvious that these cannot be regarded as strong and proper evidence. Firstly, it is worthwhile to mention another two types of narrations. The first type of narrations are those *ahādīth* in which al-Riḍā's martyrdom is prophetically reported. In the alleged document called *Lawḥ Fāṭima* (the Tablet of Fāṭima), God says to His prophet, Muḥammad, that al-Riḍā will be killed by a devil who is an imperious man.605 Also ‘Ali b. Abi Ṭālib, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and Mūsā al-Kāżim foretell that ‘Ali al-Riḍā will be killed by poison in Khurāsān.606 The second type of traditions are those in which ‘Ali al-Riḍā himself foretells that he will be assassinated and then buried next to Hārūn al-Rashid.607

Consequently, only one type of narration is worthy to be examined. These narrations are concerned directly with the assassination event. They are five different narrations, according to the result of our determination from the two earliest major sources, ‘Uyūn and Maqātil. The rest of the sources always cite these in their relevant chapters. The *sanads* of these narrations are traced back to five different persons.


605 al-Nu‘mānī, pp.30-1; ‘Uyūn, i, pp.34-5.


607 For the examples, see ‘Uyūn, ii, pp.139, 183, 202, 229, 258, 260, 265.
The ṛāwi of the first narration in ‘Uyun 608 is Abū al-Ṣalt ‘Abd al-Salām b. Ṣāliḥ al-Harawi. He had probably recorded this narration in his book devoted to the death of al-Riḍā ("Kitāb Wafā‘ al-Riḍā"). 609 Al-Dhahabi quotes from Tāriḵ al-Marw of ʿAbd al-Ṣalam b. Sayyār (live; 198-268 / 814-881) that Abū al-Ṣalt came to Merv after participating in a military expedition. When al-Maʿmūn met with him and listened to his argument, he included him in his entourage. He is reported to have stayed on good terms with al-Maʿmūn until the latter manifested some ideas of the Jahmiyya sect, because Abū al-Ṣalt used to refuse the ideas of the Jahmiyya, the Murjiʿa and the Qadariyya. He debated before al-Maʿmūn several times with the famous Jahmiyya theologian Bishr al-Muraysi (d. circa 218/833). It is reported that on every occasion Abū al-Ṣalt overcame him. 610 On the grounds of this account, it appears that what destroyed the good terms between him and the caliph was the latter’s introduction of the doctrine that the Qur’an was the created word of God. Bishr al-Muraysi was the leading promoter of this doctrine. 611 Therefore, it is difficult to think that, when the policy of the mihna was carried out, Abū al-Ṣalt, with his ideas which were wholly opposed to the official view of the caliphate, still stayed in the court. He probably left the court or was expelled from it. So, in this light it makes sense that Abū al-Ṣalt’s animosity towards al-Maʿmūn which was caused by these facts might have drawn him later to fabricate such incredible stories which show the caliph as a cruel murderer. Otherwise, it is not understandable that Abū al-Ṣalt, as a close associate of al-Maʿmūn, related such stories and furthermore wrote a book in which he put them forward.

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609 see al-Najashi, p. 172.

610 al-Dhahabi, Mizan, ii, p. 616.

611 see Watt, Formative Period, pp. 175-6, 196-7, 286.
Abū al-Ŝalt is accused by the rijāl scholars of having fabricated hadith.\footnote{Ibn Abī Hatím, vi, p. 48; Ibn al-Ŝibbān, al-Majrūḥin, ii, p. 151; al-Dhahābī, Mizan, ii, p. 616.} The narration in question seems unreliable. It is full of incredible legendary elements. He related another narration, possibly in order to support his next story about the assassination of the Imām, that when he visited al-Ridā in Sarakhs, he saw the Imām shackled in prison,\footnote{'Uyūn, ii, p. 182.} a claim which has no historical basis.

The rāwi of the second narration in 'Uyūn is Harthama b. A' yan, the 'Abbasid commander.\footnote{The Chapter 64: What Abū Habīb Harthama b. A' yan related about the death of al-Ridā who was poisoned by both grapes and pomegranate. ii, pp. 248-53.} However, Harthama's being a witness of this incident is historically impossible by virtue of the fact that he died at the end of the year 200/816.\footnote{see al-Ṭabarî, iii, p. 998.} Besides, numerous fabulous elements in the narration make it completely out of the question. There is another story narrated again on the authority of Harthama. According to it, al-Ma'mūn charged thirty of his servants with the killing of al-Ridā. They killed him cruelly with their swords. However, whilst al-Ma'mūn began the preparation for his funeral, the Imām reappeared miraculously. God had prevented him from dying, because "the appointed hour of his death had not come yet".\footnote{'Uyūn, ii, pp. 215-7.} The name of Muhammad b. Khalaf al-Ṭātār emerges in the sanads of both stories as a rāwi who related from Harthama. Other rāwis are different individuals. Therefore, al-Ṭātār, perhaps, might be held responsible for the fabrication of these narrations.
The rāwi of the third and the last narration in 'Uyun is 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn al-Kātib, the clerk of the Turkish slave commander Bughā al-Kabir.617 He is also one of the rāwis of al-Ṭabarî in his History.618 At the beginning of the sanad there is the name of al-Ḥusayn b. Ahmad al-Bayhaqī, one of the Shaykhs of Ibn Bābyûa.619 He related the narration from the historian Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Yahya al-Ṣūlī. Although he appears in the sanad of such a narration, we know that Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī did not believe that al-Riḍā had been killed by al-Ma’mūn.620 The other four names in the sanad between al-Ṣūlī and 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn are unknown (majhūl) rāwis about whom no information has been found.621

The last two narrations are related in Maqātil of al-ʾIsfahānī.622 The first narration is related on the authority of 'Abd Allāh b. Bashīr through his brother Mansūr b. Bashīr. 'Abd Allāh is the man who is said to have carried out the task of poisoning al-Riḍā at the order of al-Ma’mūn. The second narration is related on the authority of Muḥammad b. Jahm. He is also another man who was employed by al-Ma’mūn to poison al-Riḍā on another occasion. The rāwi relating these two narrations from these two men is Muḥammad b. 'Ali b. Ḥamza (d. 286/899), a descendant of al-ʾAbbas b. 'Ali b. Abī Ṭālib. It is reported that the slave-girl who was claimed to have been the mother of the twelfth Imām, al-Mahdī, was put in his home

618 al-Ṭabarî, iii, pp. 1085-6.
619 see M. Amin, xxv, p. 41.
620 see Sibt, p. 355.
622 Maqātil, pp. 566-7. Al-Mufid also relates them, see al Irshād, p. 478.
by government order in order to find out whether she was really pregnant.\footnote{al-Najāshi, p.245.} He is regarded by both the Shi'is and the Sunnis as "sound in \textit{hadith}".\footnote{al-Najāshi, p.245; Ibn Ḥajar, \textit{Tahdhib}, ix, pp.352-3.} He wrote a book called \textit{Maqātil al-Ṭalibiyin} \footnote{al-Najāshi, p.245.} and it seems likely that al-İsfahānī quoted these two narrations from this book. What is unusual about these two narrations is how Muḥammad b. 'Ali b. Ḥamza was able to reach both of these men, who personally carried out the poisoning al-Riḍā on separate occasions. This matter arouses strong suspicion about the authenticity of these reports.

It is also worth mentioning that the Shi'i poet Diʿbil b. 'Ali, who was a contemporary of al-Riḍā, seems to have contributed largely spreading the idea that al-Riḍā had been killed by al-Ma'mūn in some of his poems. In these poems, Diʿbil, recalling that al-Riḍā's father, al-Kāẓim, had also been poisoned in prison, says that this thus was the 'Abbāsids' second murder.\footnote{\textit{Maqātil}, pp.570-1; \textit{Shīr Diʿbil}, p.272.} He deems that the Umayyads' attitude against the 'Alids might be excusable, but that of the 'Abbāsids' can never be seen as justifiable.\footnote{'Uyūn, ii, p.254.} He calls those who were responsible for the death of al-Riḍā boorish people (\textit{ajlāf}).\footnote{\textit{Shīr Diʿbil}, p.192.} He also maintains that the death of al-Riḍā was an act of anger by God against His creatures.\footnote{\textit{Shīr Diʿbil}, p.263.}
Di‘bil b. ‘Ali, although he had stayed for a while in Merv with al-Riḍa, was in Qum when he received the news of al-Riḍa’s death. Therefore he was not a direct witness of the incident. There is no doubt that Di‘bil recited some verses about the Imam’s death. But it is doubtful that all the verses attributed to him which have come to us were really recited by him. ‘A. al-Ashtar observes that due to Di‘bil’s pro-Shi‘i identity, subsequent unprofessional authors have always attributed to him many verses which carried elements of Shi‘i propaganda. But, being rather meagre and barren, they are deprived of the original spirit of Di‘bil’s own poems.

Indeed, those who have the opinion that al-Riḍa was probably murdered by al-Ma‘mūn do not usually get their evidence from the above-mentioned and recorded narrations. Their main argument is the difficult and hazardous situation which al-Ma‘mūn faced from the ‘Abbāsid opposition in Baghdad. The extraordinary decision taken by him in nominating an ‘Alid to the succession had aroused strong opposition among the ‘Abbāsids and as result they and the people of Baghdad had thrown off their allegiance to him and given it to Ibrāhim b. al-Mahdi. Consequently, a civil war had broken out between the rival government in Baghdad and the Merv-based government of al-Ma‘mūn. The latter had known the real situation quite late and then set off for Baghdad to put the situation under his control. In his way, the vizier al-Fadl b. Sahl, who was the most responsible man for the deterioration of the state, had been assassinated probably at the order of the caliph. Just six months afterwards, before the royal convoy had reached its destination, ‘Ali al-Riḍa suddenly died. All these developments made some historians think that al-Ma‘mūn had sacrificed al-Riḍa in

\[630\] see ‘Uyun, ii, p.254.

\[631\] see Shi‘r Di‘bil, Introduction, pp 9-11. The editor of the book, ‘Abd al-Karim al-Ashtar, says that Diwan of Di‘bil b. ‘Ali quoted by Ibrāhim al-Suli is exempt from such fabricated poems. The production on behalf of Di‘bil began two centuries later and such verses can largely be found in some Shi‘i books such as Maqta‘ al-Ilusayn of Akhtar Khawarizm and Manaqib Āl Abī Talib of Ibn Shahrashub, see Ibid., p.10.
order to repair the authority of the government. For instance, al-Šafādi records that al-Ridā was killed "in order to persuade the 'Abbāsid" ("mudāratan li Bani 'Abbās"), 632 which is an opinion that has been shared by many scholars and researchers in modern times. 633

There is no doubt that al-Ridā's death was very opportune and timely for al-Ma'mūn in order to solve the serious problem in Baghdad. However, when some other narrations, historical reports and documents are carefully taken into consideration, it seems that al-Ma'mūn is innocent of the accusation of killing al-Ridā.

It is a fact that towards the end of the year 202 H. al-Mu'talib b. 'Abd Allāh al-Khuza'i, the prominent supporter of Ibrahim b. al-Mahdī, started secretly spreading word that he had thrown off allegiance to Ibrahim and acknowledged al-Ma'mūn as caliph. He also spread that he recognised Mansūr b. al-Mahdī, the brother of Ibrahim

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632 al-Šafādi, xxii, p. 251.

633 Jurji Zaydan (Tarīkh al-Tamaddun al-Islāmi, iv, p. 169). Hassan I. Hassan, ("Al-Ma'mūn wa 'Alī al-Ridā", pp. 91, 93-4), N. Abbott (Two Queens of Baghdad, p. 226), W. W. Rajkowski ("Early Shi'ism in Iraq", p. 634), J. J. Saunders (A History of Medieval Islam, p. 112) are among these authors. Also P. Crone (Slaves on Horses, p. 258) and W. Madelung ("Ali al-Reza", E. Iranica, i, p. 879) see it probable that al-Ma'mūn had had a hand in al-Ridā's death on the grounds of the above-mentioned reason. D. Sourdel ("The 'Abbāsid Caliphate", p. 122), H. Kennedy (The Early 'Abbāsid Caliphate, p. 161) and J. M. Hussain (Occultation, p. 44) believe that the Imam was poisoned, but they do not put responsibility for it on al-Ma'mūn. On the other hand, M. G. S. Hodgson (The Venture, i, p. 479), M. Rekaya ("al-Ma'mūn", p. 335) and R. Mottahedeh (The 'Abbāsid Caliphate", p. 74) do not imply any murder. They directly say that "al-Ridā conveniently died," M. A. Shaban (Islamic History, ii, p. 47), A. Sachedina (Islamic Messianism, p. 25) and M. A. A. Moezzi (The Divine Guide, p. 64) suggest that al-Ridā died in suspicious circumstances, without mentioning the poison. Cl. Huart quotes only al-Tabari's account ("Ali al-Ridā", p. 296). E. V. Grunebaum gives the account of the assassination of al-Ridā as exceptional (Classical Islam, p. 91). D. M. Donaldson (The Shi'ite Religion, p. 169). Bl Lewis ("Ali al-Ridā", p. 400) and Y. Richard (Shi'ite Islam, p. 39) show the murder account as a Shi'ite opinion. M. Momen is of the opinion that the suddenness of al-Ridā's death has caused most writers to state that he was poisoned (An Introduction, p. 42). According to H. Halm, the claim that al Ma'mun may have killed him is not provable (Shiism, pp. 33-4).
b. al-Mahdi and the leading figure of the anti-Ma'mūn movement in Baghdad, as Ma'mūn's representative in Iraq. Hence, Manṣūr b. al-Mahdi and Khuzayma b. Khazim, who was another supporter of Ibrāhīm, followed al-Mu’tālib’s lead.634 This was a big and important split within the ranks of Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdi. We know al-Mu’tālib b. ‘Abd Allāh as one who organised the ceremony of bay ’a for Ibrāhīm in Muḥarram, 202/ July, 817.635 Another problem for Ibrāhīm was financial difficulties. He had difficulty in paying the allotments of the army though he had promised it when the oath of allegiance had been taken for him.636 It seems difficult to think that Ma’mūn was not informed of these positive developments in Iraq in terms of his objective. He probably hoped that, through his entrance to Baghdad, most of the problems would be solved easily. The factor of al-Faḍl b. Sahl, who was the main reason for which the ‘Abbāsids had raised their opposition, had disappeared. It does not seem likely that Ma’mūn had planned his manoeuvre with al-Riḍā only for a short period like two years and, when he had faced some difficulties, he decided to remove him. There was no objection for him to continue it in Baghdad.

Al-Ṭabarī reports that Ma’mūn, in Rabi’ I, 203 / September-October, 818, wrote to the ‘Abbāsids and the people of Baghdad informing them of al-Riḍā’s death. He reminded them that with the death of al-Riḍā they had nothing to complain about, so what was expected from them was that they should resume their obedience to him. But they responded to him "in the toughest manner in which anyone could be addressed".637 Accordingly, it can be suggested with some confidence that the ‘Abbāsids did not believe the sincerity of Ma’mūn in his appointment of al-Riḍā as

634 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.1028.
635 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.1016; al-Azdi, p.342.
636 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.1016.
637 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.1030.
his successor to the caliphate. They knew that al-Ma’mün’s decision was in response to their support for al-Amin in the civil war and that he was pursuing some other political goals for his government. What the ‘Abbāsid opposition really wanted was to overthrow al-Ma’mün, to rescue the state from overwhelming Persian influence and to return it to its origin. This can only explain why the deaths of al-Fadl b. Sahl and ‘Ali al-Riḍā, one after another, did not have any important positive effect on them in terms of al-Ma’mün. If we also look at al-Ma’mün’s answer to this letter of the ‘Abbāsids, we observe that he continues to justify his decision very strongly; he accuses them of acting unjustly and sometimes insults them. 638 Therefore, this does not seem a letter which is written by one who sacrificed his heir apparent in order to be reconciled with the opposition.

It is reported in some historical sources that al-Ma’mün, after his entry to Baghdad on 15 Šafar, 204 / 11 August, 819, stayed in green clothes for twenty seven639 or twenty nine 640 days. This date corresponds to a time which was almost one year after al-Riḍā had died. During this crucial time, the caliph did not consider it necessary to abolish green as the official colour, which was one of the important factors disturbing the ‘Abbāsid elite and the loyalist high officials in Baghdad. When the historian Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī records the conversation between al-Ma’mün and Zaynab, the daughter of Sulaymān b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-‘Abbas, who was among the most esteemed figures of the ‘Abbāsid family, he mentions that al-Ma’mün determined to nominate Muhammad, the son of al-Riḍā, in the place of his father and Zaynab tried to make him abandon this plan. Zaynab succeeded. She also persuaded the caliph to change green as the official colour of the state and return to black. During

638 see al-Majlisi, XLIX, pp.208-13; Eng. trans.: Madelung, New Documents”, pp.339-44.

639 al-‘I’abari, iii, p.1038.

640 Ibn Tayfur, p.10.
the conversation, we see al-Ma'mūn always trying to justify his decision and there was no trace of regret in his words.641

Probably the only historical record which may arouse one's suspicion is a report narrated by Muḥammad b. Yusuf al-Kindi (d.350/961). According to it, al-Ma'mūn ordered his governor in Egypt, Sari b. al-Ḥakam, that the pulpits on which al-Riḍā's succession had been proclaimed should be washed.642 However, this instruction seems to be a show which aimed at resolving the serious opposition movement led by al-Ḥārith b. Zur'a who had rebelled in Egypt against the governor al-Sari at the provocation of Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdi.643 Since al-Riḍā had died, al-Ma'mūn must have used this opportunity in order to solve the problems standing in front of him.

As we turn again to the narrations related in the Shi'i books, despite the fact that their authenticity is always open to question, we are able to find some evidence which could clear al-Ma'mūn from these accusations. According to a narration in Maqāṭīl, al-Ma'mūn visited al-Riḍā when the latter was ill. After expressing his condolences, he said that the rumours among some people that he had poisoned al-Riḍā saddened him very much, and added that he was completely innocent. Al-Riḍā responded: "You are, by God, innocent".644 Al-Ṭūsī also relates a narration on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir b. al-Husayn b. al-Ṭāhir b. Ṭalib. He was a high officer in Basra. According to Maqāṭīl after an

641 Sibt b. al-Jawzi quotes it from al-Sūlī in Tadhkīrat, pp.355-6. Also for another version of the same conversation, see Ibn al-Tiqāqa, pp.218-9.

642 al-Kindi, Wulāt Miṣr, pp.194-5.

643 see al-Kindi, pp.192-4.

644 Maqāṭīl, pp.571-2.

645 He is Muhammad b. Ṭāhir b. al-Husayn b. Ṭāhir b. Ṭalib. He was a high officer in Basra. According to Maqāṭīl after an
remembered al-Ridā when a singing girl recited a verse about him; he began to cry and cursed 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan and his brother Ḥamza as the murderers of al-Ridā. ⁶⁴⁶
There is no hint in the narration about who these men were. ⁶⁴⁷

On the other hand, there are also few Shi‘i narrations which indicate that al-Ridā’s death was natural. Al-Ŷāsir, the chamberlain of al-Ridā, mentions al-Ridā’s illness. In this condition, the Imam prayed to God to expedite his death if the death was caused by this illness. ⁶⁴⁸ Ŷāsir also relates another narration about al-Ridā’s death in which he does not mention anything about poison or any other kind of method of assassination. ⁶⁴⁹ He reports that al-Ridā fell ill in a place seven days (manāzil) away from Ṭūs. When the convoy entered the town, his illness became intense. Al-Ma‘mūn used to visit him twice every day. After taking a meal, al-Ridā fainted. The palace was shaken by this news. Al-Ma‘mūn came immediately. A short time afterwards he regained consciousness. He recommended al-Ma‘mūn to look after insignificant quarrel between him and al-Mu‘tasim, the latter became irritated and thus poisoned him, which occurred in the time of al-Ma‘mūn, see Maqatil, p. 573.

⁶⁴⁶ al-Ṭūsī, al-Ghayba, p. 49.

⁶⁴⁷ Amir Ali believes that al-Ridā was poisoned by the ‘infuriated ’Abbāsids” (The Spirit of Islam, p. 312). S.M. al-Ŷaythi also agrees with him saying that in this way they prevented the caliphate from passing into the hands of the ’Alid family (Jihād al-Ši‘a fi Ṭsr al-’Abbāsi, p. 360). According to Muhammad al-Khudari, some persons from al-Ma‘mūn’s retinue might have committed this murder without al-Ma‘mūn’s instruction or knowledge in order to relieve him of the ‘Abbāsids’ accusations and threats (Al-Dawl al-’Abbasiyya, p. 183). Ahmad Amin holds that al-Ridā died a natural death, but he thinks, if he was killed, the responsible ones would certainly be the ’Abbāsid propagandists in Khurasan (Duḥa al-İslam, iii, pp. 295-6).

Although I personally see it unlikely that al-Ridā was poisoned, if it actually took place, I suggest that the murderer or murderers must be from a third side, the supporters of the vizier al-Fadīl b. Šahl, because, al-Ridā caused the vizier’s death by revealing to al-Ma‘mūn the news which he had been concealing for long time. The Persian elements in the court thus failed in their attempts to dominate the government. Therefore, they might take revenge on the person most responsible for their failure.


⁶⁴⁹ Ibn Rabuya relates it in ‘Uyun under The Chapter 62: The account of another report about the death of al-Ridā from a special tariq (i.e. the chain of the narration), ii, pp. 243-4.
Muḥammad, his son. He died on the night of this day. Yasir reports that in the morning, a group of people gathered in front of the palace and murmured that the caliph had killed al-Riḍā. Al-Ma‘mūn sent Muḥammad b. Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq to the crowd. He told them that al-Riḍā was not able to go out that day. The crowd dispersed. On the same night al-Riḍā was buried.

There is no doubt that al-Ma‘mūn was genuinely grieved. Yasir reports that al-Ma‘mūn was crying when he visited the Imam in his last hours. It is also reported that when the members of the ‘Alid family examined al-Riḍā’s body, the caliph expressed his grief by saying that it was hard on him to see al-Riḍā in that state and he had hoped that he would have died before him. Al-Ya‘qūbi reports that al-Ma‘mūn, in white clothes, walked in the funeral procession to the grave, which was in the tomb of Hārūn al-Rashīd, and stayed there for three days, eating only bread with salt.

Because we have no single record about any elaborate ceremony for al-Riḍā’s funeral, it seems that he was probably buried with a simple funeral ceremony with the participation of a certain number of people from the court. Maybe, as Yasir relates, he was buried at night in order to avoid sedition which might be incited by some people who believed that al-Ma‘mūn had killed al-Riḍā. Al-Ma‘mūn himself led the funeral prayer over him.

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650 'Uyun, ii, p.243.
651 Maqātil, p.567; al-Īrshād, p.479; al-Ḥillī, al-Mustajad, p.209.
652 al-Ya‘qūbi, iii, p.188.
653 see 'Uyun, ii, p.244.
On the grounds of the Shi‘i belief that "the body of the dead Imam cannot be washed by anyone except the next Imam", some narrations show that Muḥammad al-Jawād, the son of al-Riḍā, came from Medina miraculously and performed all the necessary religious duties at his father’s funeral. Abū al-Šalt al-Harawi narrates that after al-Riḍā had been killed by poison, a young man, who is described as "the one who has a handsome face, short and curly hair and is the person most like al-Riḍā", appeared in the room. He washed his father, shrouded him and performed a funeral prayer over him. Then he put him in a coffin. The roof was cleft open and the coffin rose, went out and disappeared. Al-Jawād explained this situation that, "for every prophet who dies in the east, but his regent is present in the west, God brings their spirits and bodies together". Afterwards, the roof was cleft open again and the coffin was returned. Al-Riḍā came out and laid down in his bed. He told Abū al-Šalt to open the door for al-Ma’mūn. The caliph came in and ordered that the preparation of al-Riḍā's funeral should be begun. At the end of the story, Abū al-Šalt claims that al-Ma’mūn forced him to tell him what he and al-Riḍā had spoken about before the latter died. However, he said that he had forgotten everything. Therefore, the caliph put him in jail. He stayed there for a year. He prayed to God to rescue him. His prayer was accepted. Muḥammad al-Jawād came; he broke open the handcuffs and took him out whilst the guardians were looking on but were unable to do anything at all.

655 al-Kulaynī, i, p.384.

656 According to another narration related from Harthama b. A’yan, Muhammad came down in a large white tent (‘Uyun, ii, p.249). In al-Irbilī’s version, he came on a camel in the costume of an Arab, veiling his face (Kashf, iii, p.56).


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The Shīʿī books especially emphasise that al-Riḍā's grave is in front of al-Rashid's grave in its direction towards Mecca (bayna yadayhi fi qiblatihi).\(^{658}\) It is reported that al-Maʿmūn wanted to bury al-Riḍā at the back of his father's grave, beside his feet, but this was prevented from happening by God.\(^{659}\) According to one narration, an account of the hardness of the ground, al-Maʿmūn's men were not able to dig a space where al-Maʿmūn wanted to bury al-Riḍā. Harthama b. Aʿyan, the rāwī, told the caliph to try the western side. When they dug, the grave was filled with water, in which there was a fish. Then it instantly disappeared and the water subsided. Al-Riḍā was buried there. There was no need to fill the grave with soil; the grave filled itself up miraculously.\(^{660}\)

The village in which al-Riḍā had been buried, Sanābadh, grew in the course of time and became a big town, which is now called "al-Mashhad" ("sepulchral shrine").\(^{661}\) It is now one of the main centres of the Imāmī-Shīʿī pilgrimage.

According to Amoretti's article, 'Alī al-Riḍā is the second Imam who has been entitled to have been named "mazlūm" ("tyrannised") after the martyr al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī. Al-Ḥusayn was mazlūm due to the particular manner of his martyrdom. Since his enemies denied him water, he died in thirst. However, in the case of al-Riḍā, mazlūm becomes synonymous with gharib (stranger), the victim who chooses to

\(^{658}\) al-Irshād, p.479; Kashf, iii, p.72; al-Ṭabarṣi, Tāj, p.51; al-Iḥṣīlī, al-Mustajād, p.209.

\(^{659}\) al-Haytāmi, p. 125.

\(^{660}\) 'Uyūn, ii, pp.249-53; Dala'il, pp.177-82; in summary Kashf, iii, pp.55-60. Al-Rawndi relates that the diggers found in the grave a picture of a fish drawn on a copper plate on which was written in Hebrew: "Here is the garden of Ḍu b. Musa and there is the pit of Harun, the tyrant" (al-Rawndi, i, pp.367-8, al-Majhīṣi, XLIX, p.307).

\(^{661}\) For detailed information about the town and the shrine see Donaldson, The Shiʿite Religion, pp.170-87; M. Streck, Mashhad, EI2, vi, pp.713-6.

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die far off in the East in order to make his exile a testimony of his mission. Perhaps because of this factor, in Imāmi tradition, pilgrimage to his shrine acquired a special reward. Muḥammad al-Jawād is reported to have said that the visitors to the shrines of the Imām al-Husayn and al-Ṣādiq were many, but, in contrast, only a special number of Shi‘is were able to visit his father’s shrine, a situation which requires much more reward in return for the pilgrimage to Mashhad. It is also related that to visit Mashhad is equal to one thousand hajj and for every visitor God would build a pulpit which would face the pulpits of the Prophet and ‘Ali b. Abi Talib until the day of resurrection.

Although, according to one hadith, al-Jawād once advised his followers not to visit the shrine during those days in order to hide their Shi‘i identity from the government, to visit the shrine has usually been encouraged in the course of history. The famous traveller Ibn Baṭṭūta paid a visit to the shrine in the fourteenth century. After picturing the elegant construction of its dome, he describes how the Shi‘i visitors paid their tributes in the shrine. When they entered the dome, they firstly kicked the tomb of al-Rashid with their feet and then pronounced a blessing on al-

663 al-Kulayni, iv, p.584; 'Uyun, ii, pp.259-60.
664 Ibn Baḥyāya, Aمαλι, p.105.
665 al-Kulayni, iv, p.585. For other ahādith relating the same subject matter, see 'Uyun, ii, pp.258-70; Musnad al-Rīḍa, i, pp.143-55. Also see the relating chapters of Jawād b. Šāh al-Karbala‘i, Qurrat al-Mahajj fi Ziyarat al Thamin al-Hujaj. (Qum 1993). Ibn Baḥyāya relates some ahādith describing the rituals of the visit and gives the texts of prayers which were recommended to say during the rituals, see 'Uyun, ii, pp.271-5. In addition, the miracles which appeared in the shrine and the examples of the acceptance of prayers which were said in it are also narrated, see 'Uyun, ii, pp.283-292; Musnad al-Rīḍa, i pp.136-67.
666 al-Kulayni, iv, p.584.
The same tradition continued for centuries. Major Sykes also describes a visit in 1908:

"In the passage, all the enemies of the Imám are cursed, and Sayyid Mirza Ali (the friend of M. Sykes) called out, "A curse be on Harun and on Ma'mun!" to which we responded, "Let it be more". At the head of the tomb the grating was again kissed, and, after prostrations, the two prayers were read".668

The poet Di'bil b. 'Ali indicates in the following verses the irony at al-Rashid and al-Riḍā sharing the same dome:

"Two tombs in Tūs: (one of them) belongs to the most excellent one from all people, 
(The other) tomb belonging to the most evil one from them is an (example of) admonition, 

The dirty does not benefit from being close to the pure and, 
There is no harm due the pure through being close to the dirty".669

XII - Al-Riḍā in Sunni Ḥadīth

The only account we meet in the Sunni sources about al-Riḍā's scholarly activity is al-Wāqidi's report that he started to give fatwās in his twenties in the Mosque of Medina.670 Al-Ḥakim al-Nisābūrī gives the names of the traditionists from the Ahl al-Ḥadīth who related from al-Riḍā. They are ʿĀdām b. Abī Iyās (d. 220/835 or

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667 Ibn Battūta, p. 177.


669 'Uyun, ii, p. 255.

670 Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Muntazam, x, pp. 119-20; Sibt, pp. 351 2. Al Dhahabi especially indicates that that time was the time of Malik b. Anas (d. 179/795), who was the great jurist of Medina, see Siyar, ix, p. 388.
221/836), Nasr b. 'Ali al-Jahdami, and Muhammad b. Rafi al-Qushayri (d.245/859). He also records those from whom al-Rida related. His father Musa al-Kazim, his uncles Isma'il, 'Abd Allâh, Ishaq and 'Ali, and 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abî al-Mawâlî are the persons from whom al-Rida transmitted hadith. But the names of Isma'il and 'Abd Allâh must be excluded from this list because they had died before al-Rida was born. Al-Dhahabi also quotes a sanad presented by al-Mufid in which the imâm Ahmad b. Hanbal relates directly from al-Rida. But he says that the text of the hadith related with this sanad is "rejected" (munkar).

In the ‘Ilm al-Rijal, the Imâm al-Rida does not seem to be a popular râwi. Ibn Hibbân (d.354/965) says: "He related extraordinary things (al-‘ajâ’ib) from his father". Al-Sam‘âni (d.562/1166) indicates that the flaw in his narrations is that these narrations were related from those râwis whom the scholars have generally discredited and from whom they refrained from relating. Al-Dhahabi (d.748/1347) touches on the same point and marks the activity of hadith fabrication, especially attributing them to the Imâm al-Sâdiq and putting al-Rida somewhere in the sanad of these ahâdîth.

671 Ibn Hibbân says that Nasr died in the time of Abû Ja'far (Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib. x, pp.429-30). Abû Ja'far is probably the caliph al-Mansur.

672 'Abd al-Rahman was a mawla of the 'Alids. He is regarded as thiqa. He died in 173/789-90 (Ibid., vi, p.282-3).


674 al-Dhahabi, Siyar. ix. p.388.


676 al-Sam‘âni, al-Ansab, vi pp.139-40.

677 Mizan, iii. p.158.
All these three scholars point out Abu al-Salt 'Abd al-Salam b. Salih al-Harawi as the man most responsible for the inventions attributed to al-Rida. We have already recorded that Abu al-Salt was present in Merv for sometime.\textsuperscript{678} There he probably met with al-Rida and related hadith from him. According to Yahya b. Ma'in (d.233/848), Abu al-Salt was a strong and reliable rāwi despite his Shi'ism. Ahmad b. Sayyār (lived 198-268 / 814-881), who says that he met with Abu al-Salt and discussed some matters with him in order to discover his ideas, reports that his Shi'ism was not extremist; he used to speak well of the companions of the Prophet and give Abu Bakr and 'Umar priority in the order of the caliphate over 'Ali b. Abi Talib. However, Ahmad b. Sayyār also warns that one should still be careful about some of his narrations.\textsuperscript{679}

However, the majority of scholars discredit Abu al-Salt completely. Abu Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d.277/890) regards him as a "weak" rāwi.\textsuperscript{680} Ibn Hibbān (d.354/965) says that when Abu al-Salt stands alone in the sanad of a hadith, i.e. when the same hadith is not related from another rāwi with a different sanad, it is not permissible to give this narration as evidence.\textsuperscript{681} According to 'Abd Allah ibn 'Adl (d.365/976), he was a "suspicious" (muttaham) rāwi, especially concerning the traditions relating the excellence of Ahl al-Bayt. Al-Daraqutnī (d.385/995) and Muḥammad b. 'Amr al-Uqayli (d.322/934) describe him as "Rāṣīdi khabīth".

\textsuperscript{678} see p.334 above.

\textsuperscript{679} al-Dhahabi, Mizan, ii, p.616; Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib, vi, pp.319-21.

\textsuperscript{680} Ibn Ḥātim, vi, p.48.

\textsuperscript{681} Ibn Hibbān, Kitab al-Majruhīn, ii, p.52.
("evil Rāfiḍī"). Abū Zur'a (d.264/878) is reported to have ordered those who relate hadith from him to be beaten as a punishment.

Because of Abū al-Ṣalt and other rāwis like him, 'Ali al-Riḍā was evidently shunned by Sunni traditionists. There is no hadith of al-Riḍā in the works of al-Bukhārī and al-Muslim, the two major Sunni hadith collections. Only Ibn Maja (d.275/889), who is the composer of al-Sunan, the last one of the six hadith collections ("al-Kutub al-Sitta") to which the Sunnis give priority over other collections, relates a tradition from him. This hadith is narrated on the authority of Abū al-Ṣalt. The Imam relates from the Prophet through his father and grandfathers that "īmān (faith) is to accept with the heart, to utter with the tongue and to act in pursuance of it". After the hadith, Abū al-Ṣalt says that if the sanad of this hadith was read to an insane person, he would recover. However, this statement is attributed by some Shi'i authors to Ahmad b. Hanbal, the celebrated Sunni traditionist. In one narration related by Ibn Bābūya, this statement was made by al-Ma'mūn with some slight difference. The caliph said: "By God, if these names (the names of the Imams) were read to deaf and dumb persons, they would recover with God's will. But these narrations seem again a deliberate attribution of Shi'i originated words to Sunni scholars or to some famous persons for the purpose of propaganda. We have already recorded some examples of it.

682 Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhib, vi, pp.320-2.
683 Ibn Abī Hātim, vi, p.48.
685 Ibn Maja, i, p.25-6.
688 Ibn Bābūya, Amali, p.590.
Ibn Hibban and Ibn Ḥajar give some examples from quaint traditions related by Abū al-Ṣalt from al-Riḍā. One of them is that the Prophet said: "Saturday is for us. Sunday is for our adherents (li ẓāfatinā); Monday is for the Umayyads. Tuesday is for their adherents; Wednesday is for the ‘Abbāsids. Thursday is for their adherents. Friday is for all the people. There is no ingratitude (kufr) on this (day)". 689 There are another three ahādith concerned with some plants. The Prophet said: "When I travelled by night to the heavens (the event of Mi‘rāj), my sweat dropped to the earth and then the rose germinated from it. Whoever likes to smell my odour, smell the rose". He said again: "Oil yourselves with violet, because it is cold in the summer and hot in the winter". The last hadith is about the pomegranate: "Whoever eats a whole pomegranate with its (inside) integument, God lights his heart for forty days". 690

It is obvious that it is not only Abū al-Ṣalt who fabricated hadith from the mouth of the Imām. It seems that, during the long years after him, several strange ideas and some incredible mythical figures were located by anonymous individuals in the form of tradition among the hadith collection related from al-Riḍā. Two ahādith should be enough to show this.

"Ahmad b. 'Umar al-Ḥallāl (al-Washsha) said: I told al-Riḍā: I fear Hārūn (al-Rashīd) 691 for you'. The Imām said: 'I will be none the worse for him. God has some countries where there are gold plants and He protects them with the weakest of His creatures like a particle. Even if an elephant wanted (to enter), it could not reach there'. Al-Washsha said: 'I asked him about this country, so he reported: It is a place between the rivers of Balkh and Tibet, where there are gold plants. In this place there is an ant which is as big as a dog. In addition, even a bird cannot pass through. It hides at night in cells and comes out at day. Sometimes, people raid this country on horses

689 Ibn Hibban, al-Majrūhin, ii, p. 106; Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhib vii, p. 389

690 Ibn Hibban, Ibid.; Ibn Ḥajar, Ibid.

691 "Ṣāhib al-Raqqā" (the Master of Raqqā), instead of "Ḥarūn" in the narration in al-Rawandi's al-Khara'īj wa al-Jara'īh, p. 369
which cover thirty farsakh in a night. Therefore, (eventually) the endurance of the horses is lessened. Then the people overload them (with gold) and return immediately. When the morning comes, the ant comes out to search for food. If it catches up with one of them, it chops him up. Its speed is like the wind. Therefore, when they catch up with it, they throw a piece of meat to it, so it becomes busy with that. If they do not do this, the ant seizes them and chops up their horses. 692

Another hadith related from al-Riḍā carries Cabalistic components. According to al-Riḍā, the first thing God created was the letters of the alphabet. He then relates a hadith from ‘Ali b. Abi Ṭalib:

"Al-Alif is the blessings of God (‘Alā’ Allāh), bā’ is the magnificence (bahja) of God, tā’ is the accomplishment of (God’s) instruction by the Qā’im of the Prophet’s family - peace be upon them (tamām al-amr li Qā’im), thā’ is the reward (thawāb) of the faithful for their good deeds, jīm is the beauty (jamāt) of God,... ... ... ... yā’ is the hand of God (yad Allāh) over the hands of His creatures, which extends (to provide) the means of subsistence,..." 693

The Imam’s circle was formed by traditionists who belonged not only to the moderate but also the extremist bodies of Shi’ism. This circle seems to have still continued to circulate inauthentic hadith and al-Riḍā was, despite himself, involved in it. Probably because of this reason, non-Shī’i traditionists stayed clear of transmitting hadith from al-Riḍā. Ibn Muṭahhar al-Hilli’s statement that famous jurists in that time studied under al-Riḍā is thus responded to ironically by Ibn Taymiyya:

"This statement is a most distinct deceit. As is known, these famous jurists of the community (jumhūr) never received knowledge from him. At times (only) the students of the jurists study under middle

692 Ithbat, p. 219; al-Rawandi, i, pp. 369-70; al-Majlis, XI, IX, pp. 54-5
693 Ibn Bahuya, Ma’āni, pp. 43-4; ‘Uyun, i, pp. 106-7.

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class (*mutawassitūn*) scholars or under those below middle class”. 694

Ibn Taymiyya also answers al-Hilli’s claim that al-Rida was the most abstemious and learned of the people in his time:

“...This (claim) is nothing more than an allegation based on no evidence. Everyone who goes too far about a person alleges such a claim. How is this true despite the fact that the people know that in al-Rida’s time there were those scholars who were more learned and more abstemious than him such as al-Shāfi’i 695, Ishaq b. Rāhuya 696, Ahmad b. Ḥanbal 697, Ashhab b. Ḥ Abd al-‘Aziz 698, Abu Sulaymān al-Darānī 699, Ma’mūf al-Karkhi 700 and those who were equal to them? No scholar related *hadīth* from him nor reported a *hadīth* from him in the books of the tradition. Abu al-Salt al-Hasawi and similar ones to him related *nuskhas* (the pamphlets of *hadīth*) through him from his fathers. In them, there are lies from which may God keep the truthful ones away” 701

**XIII - Al-Rida and the Ghulāt**

From the beginnings of the second century of the *Hijra*, several heretical persons and groups emerged who proclaimed one or another prominent figure of Ahl al-Bayt as God. Some of these heretical persons then went further by declaring that

694 *Minhaj al-Sunna*, ii, p.156.

695 He is the founder of the Shāfi’i law school, who died in 204/820.

696 He is a famous Sunni traditionist, who died in 238/852-3.

697 He is the founder of the Ḥanbalī law school, who died in 241/855.

698 Abu ‘Amr Ashhab b. Ḥ Abd al-‘Aziz al-Qaysi al- Amin, a Maliki jurist who died in 204/820, see al-Ṣafadī, ix, p.278.

699 Abu Sulayman Ḥ Abd al-Rahman b. Ḥ Atiyya al- Darani, the celebrated mystic who died in 215/830-1, see al-Sulami, pp.63-73.

700 Abu Maḥfuz b. Firuz al-Karkhi, the famous ascetic who lived in Baghdad where he died in 200/815-6, see pp.370-2 below.

701 *Minhaj al-Sunna*, ii, p.156.
they were themselves the messenger of that God. All these persons and groups developed in time their own esoteric interpretations. We have seen that almost all the Imāms condemned and publicly disassociated themselves from these groups which had been called ghulāt. Especially in the time of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, a new category of extremism emerged within the Imāmi community. This group adopted many ideas of ghulāt Shi'ism. Although they did not proclaim the Imāms as God and did not attribute prophethood to somebody, they ascribed to the Imāms' supernatural role and capacities. They believed in the divine light inherited from Adam through the line of the Prophets and the Imāms. This enables an Imām to have knowledge of everything, seen or unseen. With this knowledge, the Imāms were also able to determine licit and illicit and, if they wished, they were able to abrogate the shari'a. This idea was called in the Shi'i tradition by the term of tafwid (literally authorisation or empowerment, i.e. to authorise the Imāms with the functions of God), and the group was named al-Mufawwiḍa. 702

Activities of these groups still existed at the time of 'Ali al-Riḍā and seemed to have been quite influential. Yunus b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān reports that the tradition books of the extremist group the Khaṭṭābiyya were already circulated among the Imāmis in Iraq, which is fifty years after the death of Abū al-Khaṭṭāb, the leader of the group. Al-Riḍā complained about this situation remarking that these traditions still contaminated the collections related authentically from al-Ṣādiq. 703

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702 For detailed information about the Mufawwiḍa and their ideas, see H. Modarressi, Crisis and Consolidation, pp. 19-37. This group is certainly distinct from another Mufawwiḍa which was another name of the Qadariyya, who were the believers in human free will delegating (fawwada) the power of act to men, instead of to God, see Watt, Formative Period, pp. 94-7.

703 al-Kashshī, p. 224.
Ibrahim b. Abu Mahmūd indicated to al-Riḍā the traditions about the superiority and the merits of Ḥali b. Abī Ṭalīb and the House of the Prophet. He said that these sorts of *ahādīth* did not seem to have been related from the Imams, and asked him whether they could apply to them. Al-Riḍā, after emphasising the importance of the source of traditions, said that the opponents of his group fabricated three types of traditions about the Imams and Ahl al-Bayt. The first type was the traditions containing exaggerated elements (*ghuluww*); people heard such a *hadith* and deified the Imams, so they went out from the frame of the religion. The second type of traditions fell short of recognising the true nature of the Imams (*al-taqṣīr fi amrīnā*), accordingly, the people believed so. The third type of traditions criticised the foes of Shi'a and displayed their shortcomings; these resulted in a contrary impression on people who, in response, began to slander the Imams. Hence, all the three types apparently damaged their cause. 704

Exaggerated traditions about al-Riḍā still exist in the *hadith* books of the Imamiyya. They seem to be the products of the Mufawwida fabricated either when the Imam al-Riḍā was alive or after him. In a *hadith*, al-Kaẓim is reported to have said that al-Riḍā had read the contents of the *jifr* (leather case). 705 The alleged book which is claimed to have contained all the knowledge of the Prophets, the previous Imams and the scholars of the Children of Israel. 706 Al-Riḍā is said to have known all the languages including those of animals. He said: "It is not fitting for God to provide for nations a Proof (*al-Ḥujja*) who does not know their languages". 707 It is related that

704 'Uyun, i, p.237.
705 al-Kulayni, i, p.312; al-Irshad, p.463.
706 see al-Kulayni, i, pp.239-40.
he was able to understand and speak Persian, Sindi, Greek and Slavonic. He also knew the language of the jinn. One of the disciples of al-Rida listened to a conversation between the Imam and the jinn, and reported that their language was like whistling. At one time a sparrow came and told al-Rida that a snake had come into its nest and was about to eat its young. Therefore, he ordered his disciple to kill the snake. He did it.

Al-Rida is alleged to have known the events of the future. There are several traditions about this matter. He prophesied the fall of the Barma kids, the civil war between al-Amin and al-Ma'mun, the death of Ibn Tababā forty days after he had rebelled, the execution of Harthama b. A'yān and finally that he would be buried in Tus next to al-Rashid. Ibn Babuya states that al-Rida was able to know this information by virtue of a knowledge coming from God through Gabriel, the Prophet and the previous Imams which report all the events in the history of the caliphate, including the history of the Umayyads and the 'Abbāsids.

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708 see 'Uyun, ii, 230; al-Rawandi, i, pp.340, 347; Kashf, iii, p.94; Manaqib, iv, pp.333-43; al-Majlisi, XLIX, pp.86-9.

709 al-Kulayni, i, pp.395-6.

710 al-Saffār, p.365; al-Rawandi, i, p.359; Manaqib, iv, p.334. This story is related on the authority of Sulaymān b. Ja'far al-Ja'farī. Ibn Rustam al-Tabari records this story, relating it on the authority of Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Mu'ārif, among the miracles of Musa al-Kazim, not al-Rida, see Dalā'il, p.173.


712 'Uyun, ii, p.209; Dalā'il, p.189; Manaqib, iv, p.335; al-Tabarsi, l'lam, p.311; Ibn al-Sabbagh, p.233.

713 al-Rawandi, i, p.363; Musnad al-Rida, i, p.249.

714 Manaqib, iv, p.335; al-Tabarsi, l'lam, p.311.


716 'Uyun, ii, p.226.
The Mufawwidi allegations go further by attributing to al-Rida the ability to bring the dead alive. On one occasion, he brought the dead parents of a Shi'i to life: they stayed alive for ten days and then died.\footnote{al-Majlisi, XLIX, p. 60; Musnad al-Riḍa, i, p. 205.} On another occasion, he called upon the wife of his disciple to return to life. The man went home and found her alive. Later, she gave birth to a child.\footnote{Dala'il, p. 187.}

Al-Riḍa made his position clear against such allegations attributed to him. He answered the question of his chamberlain, Yāsir, who had asked him about ṭafwīd, by saying that God has delegated (fawwāda) His messenger with only religious authority, therefore creation (khalq) and provision of subsistence of His creatures (rizq) were not under his authorisation.\footnote{Uyun, ii, p. 203 (no: 3).} In another hadith, he described the ghulāt as infidels and the Mufawwīda as polytheist. He banned any sort of contact or friendship with the Mufawwīda:

"Whosoever sits with them or associates with them, or eats or drinks in their company, or has sexual intercourse with them, or gives them in marriage or gets married to them, or believes in or trusts them, or authenticates their hadith, or helps them even with half a word, goes out from the sovereignty of God, the Mighty and the Great, from that of God's Apostle and that of ours, Ahl al-Bayt."

On one occasion, he expressed a statement which had been attributed to himself and the previous Imāms. He said that the statement that people were the servants of the Imāms was not true if it was used in the meaning of worship (ʿibāda). However, if it was used in the meaning of obedience (al-ṭāʿa), it was

\footnote{Uyun, ii, p. 203.}
what they meant. They rejected the idea of *tanāsukh* (the transmigration of souls) and judged that anyone who believed in this idea was an infidel. Al-Riḍā also laid down the means by which his followers could determine the authenticity of traditions attributed to him. He said that if they were contrary to the teaching of the Qur’ān they must be rejected. The second means was that these words also should be in agreement with those of the previous Imāms, because, he said: "The word of the last one of us is similar to the word of the first one of us. The word of the first one of us is the confirmation of the word of the last one of us." Perhaps the most active extremist in al-Riḍā’s time was Muḥammad b. Furat al-Ju‘fi al-Kūfi, a resident of Baghdad, who was one of the clerks of the court (*kuttāb*). According to al-Riḍā, every Imām before him was disturbed by an extremist follower: The case of ‘Ali b. al-Ḥusayn with Bayan b. Sam‘an, of al-Baqir with Mughira b. Sā‘īd, of al-Ṣādiq with Abū al-Khaṭṭāb and of al-Kāẓim with Muḥammad b. Bashir are of this kind. Muḥammad b. Furat was also disturbing him in the same way. It is recorded that Muḥammad proclaimed that he was a prophet and a *bāb* (the gate leading to the Imām). From a report, he seems to have abrogated the ritual prayer (*ṣalāt*) and seen the drinking of wine permissible. Al-Riḍā sent to

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721 al-Kulayni, i, p.187.

722 ‘Uyūn, ii, p.203.

723 al-Kulayni, i, pp.224-5.

724 For him, see Ibn Dāwūd, p.509, al-Najāshi, p.257. He is regarded as a "very weak ṭālīf ṭālīf" (*da‘if da‘if*). He is probably one of the earliest members of the Shi‘ī Ibn al-Furat family who held the offices of the secretary or vizier under the ‘Abbasid caliphs or the Ikshīdīd *amīrs*, see D. Sourdel, "Ibn al-Furat", EI2, iii, pp.767-8.

725 see al-Kashshi, pp.303, 554.

726 al-Kashshi, pp.303-4.

727 al-Kashshi, p.555.
him a mat and some dates. Muḥammad explained that the Imam, by sending these gifts, wanted to encourage him to pray *salāt* and forbid him to drink wine.\(^{728}\) It seems that the Imam was able to achieve nothing by this behaviour. Therefore, al-Riḍā had to charge Yūnus b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān to keep Muḥammad and his followers away from genuine Imāmis in Iraq and to warn them of these extremists. He also ordered Yūnus to curse Muḥammad publicly and to proclaim their innocence of his ideas.\(^{729}\) According to a report, Muḥammad b. Furāt was killed by Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī.\(^{730}\)

It is worth mentioning that the first literal activity against the *ghulāt* occurred in the period of ‘Ali al-Riḍā. Three different polemical books entitled "*al-Radd ‘alā al-Ghulāt* (or *al-Ghāliyya*)" (the refutation against the extremists) and written by three disciples of al-Riḍā; Yūnus b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān, al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. al-Faddāl and al-Ḥusayn b. Sa’īd,\(^{731}\) could be regarded as the first examples of their kind.

Although they could not be considered as within the *ghulāt* groups, some Imāmi theologians such as Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, Hishām b. Salīm and Yūnus b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān differed from the mainstream Imāmi orthodoxy in some of their ideas.\(^{732}\) ‘Ali al-Riḍā’s stand with the ideas of these scholars, who were the loyalists of the Imāmi party, seems to be easier: Al-Riḍā did not hesitate to condemn them when it was necessary.\(^{733}\) Sometimes he indicated which idea was true in accordance with

\(^{728}\) al-Kashshi, p.554.

\(^{729}\) al-Kashshi, p.554.

\(^{730}\) al-Kashshi, pp.303, 555.

\(^{731}\) see al-Najashi, p.312; al-Tusi, *Fihrīst*, pp.94, 105.

\(^{732}\) The Sunni heresiologist al-Shahrastānī examines the Hishamiyya and the Yūnusiyya in the chapter which he opens for the *ghulāt* groups. See pp 158-61. For information about them, see pp.415-30 below.

\(^{733}\) For instance, after having read one of Yūnus’s books, al-Riḍā struck it on the ground saying that it was the book of a bastard, see al-Kashshi, p 493.
true religion. When 'Abd al-Malik b. Hishām asked him which idea, Hishām b. Sālim's or Yūnus's, about what God resembled was acceptable, he declared that Hishām b. Sālim's view on this matter was wrong. However, his general attitude had a greater tendency to reconcile opposing factions within his party rather than to show himself on one side unless the other went further beyond the main principles of the Islamic faith.

A narration from al-Kashshi can show inside fray and disagreement in the Imāmi party and al-Riḍā's effort to reconcile the sides and cover up the problem. The time was 199 H., the days of Abū al-Sarāyi's revolt. Ja'far b. 'Isā b. Yaqtin complained to al-Riḍā of people who were accusing his followers of infidelity and being Zindiqs. Al-Riḍā pointed out that the disciples of the previous Imāms such as al-Bāqir, al-Sādiq and al-Kāzim had also been accused of infidelity. Besides, even within the Imāmi community, some people, for example, the followers of Zurārā b. A'yan and their opponents, had accused each other of infidelity. Therefore, this was not a case which occurred for the first time. However, Ja'far b. 'Isā still insisted that the question must be brought out. He also maintained that Yūnus b. 'Abd al-Rahmān and Hishām b. Ibrāhim al-Mashriqi were the causes of the problem, because they taught theology (katām) to them, so if they were wrong, then only these two men were responsible for this. He then asked al-Riḍā to command him and his friends to abandon their ideas and be repentant. Al-Riḍā said nothing. Ja'far b. 'Isā continued his complaint: Two disciples, Abū al-Asad and Sālih, had narrated from al-Riḍā that the latter had also called them Zindiqs and asked whether this was true. Al-Riḍā replied swearing to God that he had never said anything like this. The Imam tried to make a logical explanation. He said that if they were really Zindiqs, the judgement of people for them as Muslims would not benefit them. Also if they were really Muslims.

734 al-Kashshi, pp. 284-5.
whatever the judgement of the people was, would not harm them. However, the
dispute did not finish. Ibrāhīm al-Mashriqi put forward that whatever they said was
from a book with them called Kitāb al-Jāmi‘ which contained the all what people
narrated from the previous Imāms. Ja‘far b. ‘Īsā also said similar things like this. Al-
Riḍā objected to it saying that they did not quote the words of his fathers, instead, they
cited those of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.735

As is seen, al-Riḍā was very careful to preserve the balance between the
opposite sides and very eager to calm the dispute down. On the other hand, if he saw
something wrong, he did not hesitate to point it out. In this way, he managed to keep
his followers in unity despite the differences of opinion among them. He also
prevented them from exceeding the limit by his indications of warning.

XIV - Al-Riḍā the Saint

1 - Miracles Ascribed to Him

Numerous miracles are attributed to al-Riḍā by the Imami tradition.736 They
have been used as the proofs of the verity of his imama. We have already recorded
some of his miracles, especially in the section related to al-Riḍā’s long journey to
Merv. We have also remarked upon the fabrication of hadith carried out by the
ghulāt groups and the Mufawwida and given examples about incredible feats
ascribed to the Imam by these groups. Apart from these, it is also worth noticing other
miracles by him as showing the way the Shi‘is exalted their Imam.

736 For al-Riḍā’s miracles see ‘Uyun ii, pp.204-26; Dala’īl pp.184, 200;
al-Rawandi, i, pp.337-71; Manaqib, iv, pp.333-50; al-Majlisi XLIX pp.29, 89;
Musnad al-Riḍā, i, pp.155-208.
Al-Rida was able to read the minds of his disciples or visitors, so he served their needs or replied to their questions before they asked. 737 He had the power to heal sick people. He healed the headache of one of his disciples and cured the "Irq al-
Madani" (Guinea-worm) 738 of another by pronouncing some incantations. 739 A tongue-tied man dreamed of al-Rida; in the dream the Imam told him to grind cumin, wild thyme and salt together and inhale it through his nose. He did it and his tongue recovered. 740 Another man whose concubine continuously miscarried applied to the Imam. He prayed for her. Accordingly, a very beautiful and healthy baby was born to her. 741

On one occasion, al-Rida scratched the earth with his whip. Then he struck it with his hand and took out a bar of gold. He gave it to a needy follower of his and admonished him that he should not tell anyone what he had seen. 742 On another occasion, he asked for water and a bowl; one of his followers poured the water on his hands. When the water touched his hands, it changed into pieces of gold and dropped into the bowl. 743 Ishaq al-Jallab narrates that when he was sleeping in Medina, he was

737 For instance, see 'Uyun, ii, pp.205, 212, 219-22; al-Irshad, pp.467-8; al-Rawandi, i, pp.365-6, ii, 663.

738 Guinea-worm is a painful disease occasioned by the presence of the parasitic Guinea worm (Flaria Medinensis) on the skin. See R. Dozy, Supplement aux Dictionnaires Arabes, Paris 1927, ii, p.119.

739 'Uyun, ii, pp.222-3; al-Kulayn, i, p.354.

740 'Uyun, ii, pp.211-2; Manaqib, iv, p.344; al-Tabarsi, I'lam, p.312

741 al-Ghayba, p.49; al-Rawandi, ii, p.660.

742 al-Irshad, p.469; al-Rawandi, i, pp.337-8.

743 al-Kulayn, i, p.491.
sent by al-Riḍā to Baghdad miraculously. He woke up. All of a sudden, he was in front of his own home.744

All creatures were obedient to al-Riḍā. All natural powers were under his control. It is reported that a piece of wood and fishes confirmed al-Riḍā’s imāma before a man who did not believe in it.745 Some ‘Abbāsids report that a lion on his right shoulder and a viper on the left shoulder always used to guard al-Riḍā wherever he went.746 When al-Riḍā came to the palace of al-Ma’mūn, servants in front of the gate used to raise a curtain and al-Riḍā used to enter the palace under it. At one time the servants deliberately did not do it. However, a severe wind suddenly broke out and raised the curtain. The Imam came into the palace under it. When he went out, the same thing happened.747 Abū al-Ṣalt al-Harawi narrates that after al-Ma’mūn had expelled the people who had come to listen to al-Riḍā, the latter prayed to God. Before he finished his prayer, an earthquake had started in the city. In the meantime, some men appeared on the roofs of some houses and began to throw bricks at al-Ma’mūn, who had gone out and was preparing to flee the city. So al-Riḍā punished al-Ma’mūn and his supporters by frightening them in this way.748

In Khurasan, a woman claimed that she was a descendant of Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet. This news reached al-Riḍā. He said that he did not know her, so her claim was false. Then she was brought to the Imam. She said that she denied that al-Riḍā was from the family of the Prophet. Al-Riḍā asked for an “arena of lions”

744 al-Ṣaffār, p. 426; al-Mufid, al-Ikhtisāṣ, p. 325.
745 Dala’īl, p. 186.
746 Dala’īl, p. 186.
to be prepared in order to put him and her to a test in it. He declared that God forbade predatory animals from eating the flesh of the descendants of 'Ali and Fatima. People gathered around the arena. First al-Ridâ came down. The lions sat down. The Imam began to stroke their heads. They were very happy and were wagging their tails. Then, it was the women's turn. But she dared not come down. She was ordered to be put in the arena where the animals ate her.749

It is alleged that even after al-Ridâ's death, his extraordinary power continued to affect people. The people of Nishapur used to use the fruits of an almond tree, which had been planted by al-Ridâ, to heal several illnesses. Pregnant women also used to eat from it in order that their deliveries would be easy. In time the tree died. One man cut some of its branches, so he was blinded. Another man cut the whole tree down, so he lost all his possessions. Ibn Bâbûya gives the names of these men and those of others who also were damaged in different ways because of their ill treatment of this tree.750

2 - Claims concerning His Religious Merits

According to Imami books, al-Ridâ's model religious life and asceticism were very remarkable. Al-Kâzim is reported to have said that his son, 'Ali, had the characteristics of the two previous Imams named 'Ali: 'Ali b. Abi 'Libb's insight (fahm), clemency (hilm), love (wadd), faith (din) and tribulation (miha). 'Ali b.

749 Kashf, iii, pp.50-1. Ahmad b. Hajar al-'Ilaytami says that this event happened in the presence of the caliph al-Mutawakkil. therefore the one who challenged the woman should be 'Ali b. Muhammad, the tenth Imam, not 'Ali al-Ridâ, see al-Ṣawa'iq al-Muḥriqa, p.126.

750 'Uyun, ii, pp.131-2; Manâqib, iv, p.344; Musnad al-Ridâ, i, p.207.
al-Ḥusayn's tribulation as well and his patience (ṣabr) in the face of the situation which he was compelled to endure. 751

Al-Riḍā used to finish reading the whole Qurʾān every three days. 752 He is said to have never relinquished the fast of "three days" (the first, the middle and the last days of a month). 753 He was very eager to perform supererogatory prayers. He never gave them up even on his journey to Merv. Rājāʾ b. Abī al-Dahḥāk, who was in charge of the journey, relates the Imam’s prayers and the way he worshipped in detail in an extended narration. 754

According to the reports, when al-Riḍā sat down to eat a meal, he would want all the people in his house to eat with him, including his cupper (ḥajjām), stablemen and doorkeepers. 755 In one narration, Ibrāhīm b. al-ʿAbbās, one of the Imam’s companions, states that he had never seen that al-Riḍā treat anybody in a rough way, interfere in anybody’s speaking, turn down anybody who had come to him for a need, lean against anybody in a meeting circle. Besides, he never used to spit nor burst out laughing but he used to simply smile. The narrator adds that al-Riḍā used to have very little sleep; sometimes he used to stay awake during the night and spend his time in prayer. He also would prefer to give his alms in darkness to avoid being recognised. At the end Ibrāhīm says: "Whoever claims that he has seen a man similar to the Imam in excellence, do not believe him". 756

751 al-Kulaynī, i, p.315.
752 Manaqib, iv, p.360.
753 Ḥājī Ḥasan ibn ʿUmar, pp.183-4.
754 see Ḥājī Ḥasan ibn ʿUmar, pp.178-82.
756 Ḥājī Ḥasan ibn ʿUmar, pp.182-3.
It is reported that one day 'Ali al-Riḍā went to a bath. In the meantime a soldier came in. The soldier, because of the Imam's dark skin, supposed that he was an attendant in the bath, so he asked him to pour water on him. Al-Riḍā did what he asked without saying anything. Then a man who knew the Imam came in. When he saw the situation, he shouted at the soldier that he was al-Riḍā. The soldier suddenly turned back and began to kiss the feet of the Imam. Al-Riḍā calmed him and said that there was no sin for him because of it. 757

Al-Riḍā is reported to have sat down on a wicker mat in summers and on a sackcloth in winters. He would wear tough clothes woven from thick fabric. But he would prefer to dress well when he had access to the public. 758 On one occasion, he put on a silk garment, but under it there was a hair shirt (mish). He said that the silk was for people and the mish was for God. 759 Some sufis visited him and mentioned that the Imāms should eat jashab (eating bread without anything with it), wear khashan (tough cloth) and ride a donkey. Al-Riḍā replied to this by reciting a verse of the Qur'ān: "Say: Who has forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allāh, which He has produced for His servants, and the things, clean and pure for sustenance?" (al-Qur'ān, vii: 32). 760

3 - His Place in Sufism

Before mentioning the place of 'Ali al-Riḍā in Sufi tradition, it is noteworthy to look at the alleged relationship between al-Riḍā and Ma'rūf al-Karkhi. Abū Mahfūz b.

757 al-Ṣafādi, xxii, pp.251-2.
758 'Uyūn, ii., p.176.
759 Mansūrib, iv, p.360.
760 Kashf, iii, p.100.
Firuz (or Firuzan) Ma'ruf al-Karkhi was one of the most celebrated of the early ascetics and mystics of the Baghdad Sufi school.\textsuperscript{761} He was a Christian\textsuperscript{762} by birth. When he was young, he is said to have been in disagreement with his Christian teacher about the Trinity. After his teacher's attempt to beat him, Ma'ruf fled. He then met with al-Rida and, thanks to him, converted to Islam.\textsuperscript{763} When Ma'ruf mentioned his inclination towards Sufism, he said that after he had listened to preaching in Kufa, he decided to abandon all the worldly works he was doing except his service for the Imam al-Rida.\textsuperscript{764} Al-Sulami reports that Ma'ruf was the doorman of al-Rida. One day, in Baghdad, the visitors of the Imam were crowded in front of the door, so they pushed Ma'ruf over and trampled him to death.\textsuperscript{765} In a later source a miracle is reported that Ma'ruf wrote a prayer, which had been taught to him by al-Rida, on a slip of paper and gave it to a tradesman. The latter boarded a ship. A storm broke out at the sea, which might have caused the ship to sink. The tradesman took out the slip of paper. Therefore, the waves became tranquil and the ship and the passengers were saved.\textsuperscript{766}

In the light of the historical facts, all this information is unlikely to be true. First of all, if the record that Ma'ruf met Dawud al-Ta'i (d.165/781-2), another

\textsuperscript{761} For detailed information about him, see al-Sulami, p.75; al-Qushayri, pp.9-10; al-Khatib, xiii, pp.199-209; Ibn Khallikán, v, p.231; Ibn al-'Imad, i, p.360; al-Sha'rani, i, p.57.

\textsuperscript{762} According to al-Khatib, his father was a Sabian, see Tarikh Baghdad, xiii, p.200.

\textsuperscript{763} al-Sulami, p.75; al-Qushayri, p.9; Ibn Khallikán, v, pp.231-2; Manaqib, iv, 361; Ibn al-'Imad, i, p.360.

\textsuperscript{764} al-Qushayri, pp.9-10; Ibn Khallikán, v, p.232; Manaqib, iv, pp.361-2; Ibn al-'Imad, i, p.360.

\textsuperscript{765} al-Sulami, p.75.

\textsuperscript{766} Nur Allah al-Tustari (d.1019/1610) recorded it in his Kitab Majalis al-Mu'minun. Al-Shaybi quotes it in al-Šila bayn al-Tašawwuf wa al-Tashayyu', i, p.241.
famous mystic, 767 is taken into consideration, it could be said that Ma'rūf was probably born in the first half of the second century H.. Therefore, it seems unlikely that Ma'rūf who was in Iraq when he was young met with 'Ali al-Riḍā who was about the same age and, at the same time, was in Medina. Secondly, Ma'rūf al-Karkhi, according to the most reliable account, died in 200/815-6 in Baghdad. 768 Since al-Riḍā was never present in Baghdad, 769 the account that Ma'rūf died at the gate of al-Riḍā's house is historically wrong. We know that, al-Riḍā, until the end of 200 H., was still in Hijaz; he had not yet set off for his journey to Khurāsān. Ibn Taymiyya also states that there was a consensus among those who knew the state of affairs in those days that these episodes between Ma'rūf and al-Riḍā had never happened. 770

Perhaps because of these narrations about the relationship between the Imam and Ma'rūf al-Karkhi, the name of al-Riḍā is deeply involved in Sufi tradition. He was regarded by some sufis as the renewer of the religion (mujaddid) in the second century H. 771 It has also been believed that al-Riḍā had received a Sufi way (al-Ṭariqa al-Riḍāwīyya) through which the ascetic and mystic meanings of the religion and the teachings of the Prophet about these subjects reached the present generation and the next person after al-Riḍā to whom this tariqa passed was Ma'rūf

767 see al-Sulami, pp. 74-5.

768 see al-Khatīb, xiii, pp. 208-9; Ibn Khallikān, v, p. 203; Ibn al-'Imād, i, p. 360.

769 see pp. 271-2 above.

770 Minhāj al-Sunnah, ii, p. 156.

E. G. Browne states that the famous mystic theologian al-Husayn b. Mansur al-Hallāj was one of the missionaries or propagandists of 'Āli al-Riḍā (E. G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, i, p. 429). This record is an error on the grounds of the fact that al-Hallāj (executed in 309/922) is reported to have been born in 244/857, about 40 years after al-Riḍā's death.

771 al-Shaybānī, i, p. 242.
al-Karkhi 772, who has been accepted as a *qutb* (a most leading personality) in Sufism by many Sufi orders. It was also put forward by some mystics that although both the inner and the outer aspects of the religion had continued to be represented in the personalities of the former Imāms until the time of al-Riḍā, the latter handed over the inner aspect (*tasawwuf*) to Maʿrūf al-Karkhi so that from Muhammad al-Jawad onwards, the Imāms represented only the outer aspect (*shariʿa*) of the religion. 773

**XV - The Family of al-Riḍā**

1 - Some Speculations about the Fate of some of His Brothers

After al-Maʿmūn's declaration of al-Riḍā as his heir, some of al-Riḍā's brothers are reported to have come to Khūrāsān. Zayd b. Mūsā was taken to Merv at the order of al-Maʿmūn. 774 The reports about his fate and the date of his death are contradictory. 775 Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā led the pilgrimage of the year 202/818 on behalf of al-Maʿmūn and invoked his brother in the prayers as heir apparent. 776 He was then appointed as the governor of Yemen. He proceeded there to fight against Ḥamdawayh b. Šaʿbān b. ʿIsa b. Mahān who had thrown off his allegiance to the caliph. Firstly he met the son of Ḥamdawayh on his way and defeated him. He reached Sanʿa. There a severe battle took place between him and Ḥamdawayh. Ibrāhīm was defeated. Many

772 al-Shaybānī, i, p.241.


774 al-Yaʿqūbī, iii, p.184; ʿUyun, ii, p.236.

775 see p.316 above.

of his soldiers were killed. He had to flee towards Mecca. After al-Riḍa’s death, he is reported to have gone to Baghdad. There is no account of why he went there. Despite one account from Qaḍī Nu’mān (d.363/974) indicating that Ibrāhīm was also taken to Merv like Zayd b. Mūsā, it seems to be more likely that he stayed in Baghdad until he died. It is reported in Mukhtaṣar Akhbār al-Khulāfā’ attributed to Ibn al-Sā‘i (d.674/1276), the Iraqi historian, that Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā died in 210/825-6 in Baghdad from poison. The author records that Ibrāhīm came to Baghdad with an assurance of security provided by al-Ma’mūn, but he was not saved from being killed. There is no clear account about who poisoned him. But Ibn Sā‘i’s report is quite late and no confirmation of this information has been found in earlier historical works.

Ahmad b. Mūsā’s grave is largely believed to have been in Shiraz. M. Amin quotes from Lubb al-Ansāb of Muḥammad b. Ḥarūn al-Nisābūrī (d.?) that when Ahmad received in Baghdad the news of the murder of al-Riḍā, he became very sad and angry, therefore he set off for Khurāsān with 3,000 ‘Alīids in order to take revenge for his brother. After several battles in Qum, Rayy, and Isfara‘īn, respectively, with the troops of some of the commanders of al-Ma’mūn, he lost all his men and was himself killed in Isfara‘īn where he was buried. Amin does not give this report any credence and regards it as a fabricated tale. He says that although he was not able to find any satisfying explanation in the sources about why Ahmad came to Shiraz, it is almost certain that he died there and was buried there.

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777 al-Ya‘qūbī, iii, p.184.

778 quoted by Ivanow, “Early Sh’ite Movements”, p.12.

779 Ibn al-Sā‘i, p.55.

780 M. Amin, x, pp.286-7. J.M. al-‘Amili cites from Kitāb Qiyam Sadat ‘Alawī of ‘Ali Akbar Nashīd (for this book, see al-Tihrān, xvii, p.244) that Ahmad b. Mūsā fought against Qutlugh Khan, al-Ma’mūn’s commander, but he was defeated
Hārūn and Hamza, another two brothers of al-Riḍā, are also claimed to have been killed by al-Ma’mūn’s forces in Iran.\(^{781}\) This claim has also no basis either in historical books or in the early books of the Imāmiyya. Fāṭima, the sister of al-Riḍā, travelled to Iran in the year 201/816-7, probably to go to Merv, near her brother. But she fell ill in Sāwa, near Qum. She asked to be taken to Qum, where she died after a short time among her devoted followers. The Qummis called her “al-Maʿṣūma” (“the sinless one”) and built a shrine over her grave covered with a golden dome, which is the most popular place of pilgrimage in Qum at the present time.\(^{782}\) There are some who say that she was poisoned like some of her brothers.\(^{783}\) According to a hadith attributed to al-Riḍā, whoever visits her tomb, will go to Paradise.\(^{784}\)

Accordingly, it can be said that everyone from the brothers of al-Riḍā whose tomb is believed to be in Iran is said by some authors to have been killed by the forces of al-Ma’mūn. This includes Fāṭima, the daughter of al-Kāzin. It seems likely that they set off for Merv from Hijaz and Iraq after their elder brother had been nominated as heir. However, their journeys were interrupted by the news of al-Riḍā’s move towards Baghdad and, afterwards, that of his death. So they settled in different places and killed in Shiraz. Among those who were massacred was Muḥammad b. Musa al-Kāzin, see al-Ḥayāt al-Siyāsīyya, p.427.

\(^{781}\) B.S. al-Qurashi quotes these reports from Tuhfat al-Aẓhar of Ibn Shadqam ’Ali b. al-Hasan al-Madani (d.1033/1623-4) and from Jamī’ al-Ansāb of al-Sayyid Ibrāhīm (d.?) (see Ḥayāt al-Imām Musa, ii, pp.419, 435), and J.M. al-‘Āmilī quotes them from Kitāb Qiyām Sādāt al-ʿAlawi of ’Ali Akbar Nashid (see al-Ḥayāt al-Siyāsīyya, p.428). Al-Qurashi says that Harun’s tomb is in one of the villages of Tāliqān and it has already been visited by people (al-Qurashi, Ibid. , ii, p.435). Hamza’s tomb is believed to be in Bistān, Rayy or Qum (al-Qurashi, Ibid. , ii, pp.419-20).

\(^{782}\) see al-Majlisi, XI.VIII, p.290, al-Qurashi, Ibid., ii, pp.438-9, Haim, p.43.

\(^{783}\) see Donaldson, The Shi‘ite Religion, p. 258; J.M. al-‘Āmilī, p.43.

in Iran where they found plenty of sympathy towards them as the descendants of the Prophet and 'Ali b. Abi Ṭālib. The tombs of these imānzadagan (the sons or grandsons of the Imāms), especially those of the descendants of Mūsā al-Kāzim, can still be found through the length and breadth of Iran.\(^7\) In later times, the hostility against al-Ma'mūn who was accused of killing al-Riḍā gave birth to several stories that these sons of al-Kāzim had also become the objects of the caliph's rage and they all had been massacred in different ways in different places.

2 - His Alleged Children and Muḥammad al-Jawād b. al-Riḍā

According to al-Mufid and al-Ṭabarṣi, the Imām al-Riḍā left only one son, Muḥammad al-Jawād.\(^7\) Ibn Abī al-Thalj and Ibn Ḥazm reports that the Imām had two sons. They agree on the name of Muḥammad, but Ibn Abī al-Thalj gives the second son's name as Mūsā,\(^7\) whereas Ibn Ḥazm gives it as 'Ali and says that he had left no issue.\(^7\) Another genealogist al-'Umārī adds to Muḥammad and Mūsā the name of a daughter, Fāṭima.\(^7\) This Fāṭima appears in a sanad, relating from her father a ḥadīth of the Prophet Muḥammad.\(^7\) The records that al-Riḍā had two sons are indicated by a tradition that Abīmūammad b. Muḥammad al-Baṣanṭi, when he met the Imām in al-Qādisiyah in the latter's journey to Khurāsān, asked him which one of his two sons would be the next imām. Al-Riḍā indicated Muḥammad.\(^7\) However,

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\(^7\) see A. K. S. Lampton, "Imānzadā", EI2, iii, p.1169.

\(^7\) al-Irshād, p.480; al-Ṭabarṣi, Taj, p.51.

\(^7\) Ibn Abī al-Thalj, Tāriḵ al-Aʾimma, p.21.

\(^7\) Ibn Ḥazm, Jamhara, p.61.

\(^7\) al-ʿUmārī, al-Majdi fi al-Anṣāb, p.128.

\(^7\) Musnad al-Riḍā, i, p.298.

\(^7\) al-Ilimyari, pp.376-7.
according to some later authors, al-Riḍā left six children: Muḥammad, al-Ḥusayn, Jaʿfar, Ibrāhim,792 al-Ḥasan and ‘Ā’ishah.793 ‘Abd al-Karim b. Muḥammad al-Rāfīʾi al-Qazwīnī (d.623/1226) records that al-Riḍā, in his stay in Qazwin, lost his two-year-old son. Al-Rāfīʾi then cites from al-Khālil 794 that this boy was buried in the cemetery of the city.795 However, the Imām’s journey to Qazwin has no historical basis.796 Therefore, this imāmzāda buried in Qazwin seems to have been created in the collective opinion of local Shiʿis as a blessed present sent by God to their city.

Despite the doubts over these records, it is almost certain that al-Riḍā’s progeny continued only from Muḥammad b. ‘Ali. From some narrations, it seems that, before Muḥammad, no child was born to al-Riḍā for a long time. The notables of the Waqīfa came to al-Riḍā. Al-Ḥusayn b. Qayyama, swearing to God, told al-Riḍā that he was not a real Imām, because, he maintained, according to a tradition related from al-Ṣādiq, the real Imām could not be sterile, but al-Riḍā, although he was no longer young, had no child. Al-Riḍā turned away from them. He started to scratch up the...
ground for a while in silent; then he returned and said that a child would be born soon to him. 797

When al-Ridā was about forty-seven or forty-two years old, in Ramadān, 195/ May-June, 811, Muḥammad was born to him from a Nubian concubine called Sabīka or al-Khayzarān who is claimed to have been from the descendants of the family of Mariya, the concubine of the Prophet Muḥammad. 798

However, Muḥammad's birth could not have relieved al-Ridā completely. Some rumours were circulated to the effect that Muḥammad was his secretly adopted, not his natural, son, because he was extremely dark skinned. 799 These rumours affected even the close relatives of the Imam. They suspected that Muḥammad might have been a son of Sayf or Lu‘lu‘, the two black slaves of al-Ridā. 800 They went further by deciding to assemble the family in order to discuss the matter. ‘Ali b. Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq relates this event to al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭālib that some uncles, including himself, and brothers of al-Ridā told the latter that there had never been an Imam among them very dark skinned (ḥā‘il al-lawn) like Muḥammad, who must have been a very young child at the time, probably under five years old age. They maintained that al-Ridā should have put the matter to the test by

797 'Uyūn, ii, p.210; Also see al-Kulaynī, i, p.320; al-Kashshī, p.553; al-Irshād, p.482.


J.N. Hollister quotes from Madhāhib al-Islām of Najm al-Ghānī Khān, Lucknow 1924, p.429 that she was from Constantinople (Istanbul) (see The Shi'a of India, p.84), an account which has no basis in the early works.


calling qāfa (the physiognomists) to establish truly whether al-Riḍā was the real father of him, in sameway as the Prophet had applied such a test in a case. Al-Riḍā consented to it. The uncles, brothers and sisters of al-Riḍā gathered in a garden where the testing took place. They made him put on farmer’s clothing. They also thrust into his hand a spade. The physiognomists arrived and identified those present as Muḥammad’s aunts, uncles or great uncles, but they said that his father, if anyone of those present, was the owner of the garden. The relatives seem to have been satisfied; ‘Ali b. Ja’far stood up and kissed Muḥammad.801

It seems that, in addition to Muḥammad’s dark complexion, the intensive pressure from the Waqifa about the matter and then Muḥammad’s birth to the Imam unexpectedly, after his long years without a child, resulted in the emergence of such a serious suspicion. Otherwise, Muḥammad’s complexion alone was not a matter which would have aroused it, because we know that Muḥammad’s grandfather al-Kāzim and his father al-Riḍā were also very dark skinned 802 and both al-Riḍā and Muḥammad were reportedly born of Nubian mothers. It is also worth mentioning that this event seems to be a reflection of the jealousy and hostility between al-Riḍā and some of his relatives, which had also appeared in another incident when al-Kāzim’s testimony was opened and read.803

According to Shi‘i traditions, al-Riḍā, both before going to Khurasan and after that, indicated the imāma of Muḥammad after him even though the latter was still a child. When it was pointed out to him that Muḥammad was a child of only three years old, he gave evidence from Jesus that the latter started his mission when he was less

801 al-Kulaynī, i, p.322-3.


803 see pp.221-2 above.
than three years old.\textsuperscript{804} However, this explanation did not satisfy many partisans. When the Imam died and left his seven-year-old son behind him, some recognised Aḥmad b. Mūsā, the brother of al-Riḍā, and claimed that al-Riḍā left the imāma to him, instead of his son, with testimony of his designation.\textsuperscript{805} It has been indicated that Aḥmad had been formerly proclaimed as an Imam by some Imāmis after al-Kāẓim’s death, but it seems that al-Riḍā’s propaganda had been superior and consequently this group had disappeared in a short time.\textsuperscript{806} However, at this time, the state of crisis led some partisans to bring Aḥmad to the fore again in order to maintain the line of the Imāms. The legacy of this claim was built on the early Fāthi theory allowing the possibility of the imāma being held by two brothers one after another. On the other hand, as is understood from heresiographical accounts, some followers of al-Riḍā preferred to join the Waqifa.\textsuperscript{807} Another group probably felt that the line of the Imāms had, then, lost its sense, therefore they stopped the line on al-Riḍā and did not recognise any Imam after him.\textsuperscript{808}


\textsuperscript{805} al-Nawbakhti, p.72; al-Qummi, p.93; al-Balkhi, p.181; al-Mufid, al Fusul al-Mukhtāra, p.256.

\textsuperscript{806} see pp.217-8 above.

\textsuperscript{807} al-Balkhi, p.181.

\textsuperscript{808} F. al-Rażī, l’tiqadāt, p.55.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINANCIAL AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES OF THE IMĀMĪ PARTY IN THE TIME OF AL-KĀZĪM AND AL-RIḌĀ
FINANCIAL AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES OF THE IMĀMI PARTY IN THE TIME OF AL-KĀZIM AND AL-RIDA

In order to understand perfectly the real status of the Imāmi party and community within Muslim society under the leadership of al-Kāzim and al-Rida, it is essential to look at the activities of the Imāmis at that time in several areas. Without such an investigation, this monographic study would not be complete. This investigation shows not only the strength of the group among other sects and religious schools relatively, but also the dimensions of its impact and influence on the Muslim state and society. In this chapter, three different aspects of these activities are laid under investigation: The dimensions of the Imāmi infiltration into ‘Abbāsid government, the underground activities of the appointed agents (wakīls) of the Imāms and finally the scholarly activities of the foremost rijāl from the circle of al-Kāzim and al-Rida and their brief profiles.

First, it is worthwhile to mention some modern works which have dealt partially with these topics. W. Madelung has spoken about the activities of ‘Alī b. Yaqtin, who was a secret Imāmi official, in the introduction to his translation of al-Sharif al-Muṭṭada’ī’s treatise on the legality of working for the government.1 Arjomand has also given some brief information about some members of the Banū Yaqtīn and Banū Bazi’ families who occupied important government positions in the ‘Abbāsid state.2 J. Hussain has touched briefly on the Imāmi system of agents under al-Kazim and al-Rida.3 Sachedina is another scholar who has mentioned the system of agent.

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3 J. Hussain, “New Light”, p.38; idem, The Occultation, p.36.
He has particularly emphasised the collection of *khums*. He has said nothing about the continuation of the system into the period of al-Ridā.⁴ S.F. Wardrob, when she has examined in her thesis the development of the Imāmī organisation, spoke about the *wakāla* system under al-Kāzim and al-Ridā, and presented valuable information about the activities of some Imāmī agents.⁵

Among the scholar *rijāl* who are presented in this chapter, only Hishām b. al-Ḥakam has an entry in the EI₂.⁶ Watt has also introduced Hishām as one of the early exponents of *Kalam* and given some brief information about ‘Ali b. Maytham’s theological ideas.⁷ One of the aims of L.N. Takim in his thesis is to identify the importance of the *rijāl* of the Imāms in early Shi‘ism. He has given the detailed biographies of the renowned *rijāl* of al-Kāzim and al-Ridā. Among them there are ‘Ali b. Yaqtīn, Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, Hishām b. Sālim, Yūnus b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān and Muhammad b. Abī ‘Umayr,⁸ who are also the subjects of this chapter. However, this chapter gives some additional historical materials which Takim seems to have omitted. Furthermore, we also provide information about the Imāmī jurists of the time on whom later Twelver scholars agreed that their authentication in jurisprudence must be admitted as true and official source of the Imāmī *fiqh*.

⁵ S.F. Wardrob, pp.180-93.
⁸ Takim, pp.51-88, 140-56.
I - Imāmi-Shīʿī Infiltration into Governmental Ranks

It is interesting to see that while harsh persecution by the ‘Abbasid government was carrying on against Shi‘i movements, some organised Shi‘is managed to infiltrate the imperial court and the high administration of the state. In the time of the vizier Ya‘qūb b. Dāwūd (163-166/780-783) Shi‘is began to occupy vital positions in the government. But there is no confirmation in Imāmi sources that Ya‘qūb’s team or some of them were supporters of Mūsā al-Kāzim. The Imāmi officials who are at the centre of this chapter seem to have reached those positions through chance rather than Ya‘qūb or other Shi‘i individuals’ influence and held their offices on the grounds of taqiyya which provided them with the opportunities to conceal their real beliefs.

The problem of the lawfulness of accepting and holding office under an illegitimate ruler remained an important question for the Imāmi Shi‘a from the earliest times. It is known that as well as Zayn al-ʿAbidin and al-Bāqir who had not interfered in political activities, al-Ṣādiq also adopted the same policy and thus refused offers of help to restore him to the leadership of the state. However, the Imāms, especially Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq and those after him, were often on friendly terms with the caliphs and the viziers. They permitted their followers to hold offices in the government as well as to pay taxes demanded by the rulers, to transact business with them and to accept their gifts etc.


Al-Sharif al-Murtada (d.436/1044), an Imāmī scholar from the descendants of al-Kāzīm, in his treatise on the legality of working for the government,\textsuperscript{11} explains the reasons and the necessity of the acceptance of governmental offices:

"It is obligatory if the one accepting office knows, or considers it likely on the basis of clear indications, that he will through the tenure of the office be enabled to support a right and to reject a false claim or to order what is proper and to forbid what is reprehensible, and if it were not for this tenure, nothing of this would be accomplish. In this case, the acceptance of the office is obligatory for him because of the obligatoriness of that for which it is a means and an expedient for its accomplishment."\textsuperscript{12}

Al-Sharif al-Murtada derived his conclusion from traditions coming from the Imāms and the examples of their times. He probably found most of his samples in the times of the imāma of al-Kāzīm and al-Riḍā.

\textbf{'Ali b. Yaqtin}

Most prominent in this period was the case of 'Ali b. Yaqtin. 'Ali was originally from Kufa, being a mawla of the Banū Asad. His father Yaqtin b. Mūsā was a propagandist (dā'i) of the 'A ābāsids before the revolution. Yaqtin fled from Kufa because of the persecution against him which had been started by the Umayyad Caliph Marwān II (d.133/750). In the meantime, 'Ali b. Yaqtin was born in Kufa in 1241/742. His mother took him with his brother to Medina. After the 'A ābāsids had taken power, Yaqtin appeared from hiding and the family return to Kufa.\textsuperscript{13} Afterwards, Yaqtin faithfully served the 'A ābāsid caliphs. He was employed in several important works. Al-Mansūr sent him to Khurāsān to divide up the booty.

\textsuperscript{11} It has been edited and translated by W. Madelung in his article "A Treatise of the Sharif al-Murtada on the legality of working for the government (Maṣ'ala fil 'Amal ma'a l-Sultān)". BSOAS, 43 (1980), pp.18-31.

\textsuperscript{12} W. Madelung, ibid., p.25, Arab. text: p.22

which Abū Muslim had gained from the caliph’s uncle ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Ali.\textsuperscript{14} Al-Mahdi charged him with supervising construction work on the road to Hijaz and the expansion of the Haram Mosque in Mecca.\textsuperscript{15} It was also Yaqūṭīn who fought against the ‘Alid al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Ali in the battle of al-Fakhkh and, after the battle, brought his head before the caliph al-Ḥādī. His elder son ‘Ubayd was also among the fighters in the government forces in this battle.\textsuperscript{16} The vizier Yaḥyā al-Barmakī sent Yaqūṭīn to Ifriqiyya against the rebel ‘Abdawayh.\textsuperscript{17}

Ibn al-Nadim says that Yaqūṭīn was a Shi‘ī.\textsuperscript{18} But, according to one report, the Imām al-Ṣādiq cursed him and his offspring.\textsuperscript{19} It is probable that al-Ṣādiq was perturbed because of Yaqūṭīn’s excessive loyalty to the ‘Abbāsids. After al-Ṣādiq, Yaqūṭīn’s close involvement with his son in suppressing an ‘Alid revolt and killing its leader might show that Yaqūṭīn’s Shi‘ism was no more than being a sympathiser for ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭālib, which was quite natural for an ‘Abbāsid propagandist. The fact that there is no account about his relationship with al-Kāẓim, even though his son ‘Ali’s full involvement in the Imām’s affairs was narrated in traditions, might also indicate that Yaqūṭīn did not support the line of al-Kāẓim inherited from al-Ṣādiq. Yaqūṭīn died after his son ‘Ali in 185/801 in Baghdad.\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} al-Ṭabari, iii, p. 133.
\item \textsuperscript{15} al-Ṭabari, iii, pp.486, 520.
\item \textsuperscript{16} al-Ṭabari, iii, pp.562, 567.
\item \textsuperscript{17} al-Ṭabari, iii, p. 630.
\item \textsuperscript{18} ibn al-Nadim, p.224.
\item \textsuperscript{19} al-Kulaynī, ii, p. 13.
\item \textsuperscript{20} al-Ṭabari, iii, p. 650.
\end{itemize}
In contrast to his father, 'Ali b. Yaqtin was a sincere votary of Musa al-Kazim. Once 'Ali expressed to the Imam his anxiety about al-Ṣādiq's curse of his father. Al-Kazim allayed him by saying that a faithful man in the loins of an unbeliever was in the position of a pebble in a brick; when it rained, the brick was washed away, but the pebble stayed without being harmed.21

'Ali, in 168/784-5, was appointed by al-Mahdi to the presidency of the 
Dīwān Zimām al-Azimma (the audit and accounts department), which controlled all other diwāns.22 In 169/785-6, al-Hādi entrusted to him the kḥātim (the seal ring, i.e. the authority of signet). He probably carried on with his job as a high official during the time of al-Rashid until 178/795.23 Al-Ya'qūbī says that 'Ali dominated al-Mahdi in government affairs.24

According to 'Uyun, 'Ali b. Yaqtin had previously warned al-Kazim against al-Hādi's intention of arresting him. But this intention did not materialise because of the caliph's death.25 'Ali's financial contribution to the party of al-Kazim was very large and outstanding. This contribution concerned the Imam himself as well as the economic welfare of some followers. It is reported that the gifts which were sent to the Imam by 'Ali amounted to 300,000 dirhams. With this money al-Kazim arranged for the marriage of his three sons including al-Rida. Al-Kazim also burdened 'Ali with the expense of the dowries for their brides, so the latter sent 13,000 dinārs for the

22 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.522; al-Jahshiyārī, p.166.
23 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p.548; Khalifa, ii, p.480. Khalifa reports that 'Ali b. Yaqtin took over the kḥātim in al-Mahdi's time (ii, p.475). Al-Mas'ūdī's account that 'Ali was entrusted the kḥātim after the downfall of the Barmakīs in 187/803 (see al Tanbih, p.299) must be an error, for on that date 'Ali b. Yaqtin was not alive.
25 'Uyun, i, pp.64-5.
brides' dowers and the wedding banquet. 26 Ḥāl b. Yaqtin used to defray annually the expense for as many as 250 to 300 partisans to make the pilgrimage. Its cost is said to have amounted to as much as 10,000 to 20,000 dirhams for each person. 27 In this way, besides the performance of the pilgrimage rite, the followers and the sympathisers arranged to meet their Imām in Medina, so reciprocal confidence used to be renewed on this occasion. Whenever al-Kāẓim wanted to get or to rent a property, he would write to Ḥāl b. Yaqtin and the latter would fulfil his demand. 28 On al-Kāẓim's order, he would also return secretly to his followers the land tax they had paid previously. 29 Al-Kāẓim burdened Ḥāl b. Yaqtin with the duty of looking after 'Abd Allāh b. Yaḥyā al-Kāhili and his family and, in return, he guaranteed him paradise. It is reported that Ḥāl accomplished this by giving them money, food and other donations regularly. 30

These services carried out by Ḥāl b. Yaqtin seem to be very great and important in terms of the Imāmi party which had to function with restricted opportunities and in secret. That is why al-Kāẓim rejected Ḥāl's desire to give up his office. 31 Ḥāl was always unhappy in his work as a high official of a tyrant ruler and would often complain to the Imām of it. But al-Kāẓim said that "God has, near every tyrant (ruler), a vizier through whom He protects His companions". 32

26 al-Kashshi, p.434.
27 al-Kashshi, pp.434-5.
28 al-Kashshi, p.269.
32 al-Kashshi, pp.433, 435.
occasion al-Ka'сим said again: The expiation for working with the *sultan* is to do good for the *ikhwān* (brothers).³³

This striking loyalty of 'Ali b. Yaqīn formed material for some legendary tales about him and al-Ka'сим in Shi'i books of tradition. An example of them has it that one day al-Rashid sent some robes to 'Ali to honour him. 'Ali dispatched those robes to al-Ka'сим adding his *khums* tax. The Imam accepted all gifts and money, but returned a black cloak among them and wrote to 'Ali warning him to keep it. Afterwards, 'Ali was denounced by his servant to the caliph as being an adherent of al-Ka'сим; he would send gifts and tax to the latter on every occasion. Therefore, al-Rashid asked for the cloak from 'Ali in order to know the truth about the denunciation. 'Ali brought the cloak folded in a sealed chest and laid out in perfume. Hence, the caliph ordered a magnificent gift to be given to 'Ali and he had the informer servant flogged with a thousand lashes, after a hundred of which he died.³⁴ In another story, 'Ali b. Yaqīn wrote to al-Ka'сим questioning his view on rubbing the two feet (al-*mash* 'alā *rijlayn*) in the ritual ablution (*wudū*). Al-Ka'сим wrote back saying that the whole of each foot should be washed. 'Ali was surprised at this answer that was in conflict with the practice of the Shi'i in ablution. Again, suspicious al-Rashid watched 'Ali. However, when he saw that 'Ali was washing his feet, which was the proper practice of the Sunnis, his suspicion about 'Ali's Shi'ism ceased. Therefore, the lauer's situation with the caliph was restored. Afterwards, a letter came to 'Ali from al-Ka'сим saying that the dangerous situation has been removed, so now 'Ali should have performed the ablution as God ordered it, in which rubbing the feet was necessary instead of washing them for a true ablution.³⁵

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³³ Ibn Shu'ba, p. 303.

³⁴ *al-Irshad*, pp. 444-5; *al-Rawandi*, i, pp. 334-5; *Manaqib*, iv, p. 288

³⁵ *al-Irshad*, pp. 445-7; *al-Rawandi*, i, pp. 335-6; *Manaqib*, iv, p. 289
Apart from these tales, however, 'Ali b. Yaqtin could not save himself from being jailed due to his Shi'ism. Beforehand, al-Kazim had assured 'Ali that if he gave sufficient help to the needy partisans and treated them well when they needed him, "poverty would never come to his house, the edge of a sword would never touch him and the roof of a prison would never shade him". However, unfortunately, he was jailed in 178/793-4 and died in prison in 182/798 in Baghdad, while al-Kazim was also held in custody in the same city. Muhammed al-Amin, the crown prince, led 'Ali's funeral prayer.

Ja'far b. Muhammed b. al-Ash'ath

Another Imami high officer was Ja'far b. Muhammed b. al-Ash'ath al-Khuzai. Ja'far's father Muhammed was among the seventy naqib (chief propagandist) of 'Abbasiid revolutionary movement. After the establishment of the 'Abbasiid state, he worked as al-Mansur's lieutenant.

36 al-Majlisi, XLVIII, p.136. For a similar tradition, see al-Kashshi, p.433.


38 Akhbar al-Dawla, p.219.

39 Ya'qubi, iii, p.166. In al-Kafi, Muhammed b. al-Ash'ath is seen as a witness of the trick by al-Mansur in which he had sent some goods and money with a man, who planned to introduce himself as a Shi'i to the leaders of the 'Alids of Medina including al-Sadiq in order to understand whether they would accept these possessions. Al-Sadiq did not accept it, perceiving the trick, see al-Kulayni, i, p.475. If this tradition can be relied upon, it might indicate that the Imam had been previously warned of this trick by Muhammed b. al-Ash'ath, which could suggest that he was a secret adherent of the Imam al-Sadiq in the 'Abbasiid palace. Another account also might prove such a relationship. It is reported that al-Sadiq taught Muhammed b. al-Ash'ath a prayer over the Prophet, which is presented by Radi al-Din ibn al-Tawus in his Jamai al-Ubii', quoting from Kitab Mashayikh al-Shia of Ahmad b. Muhammed Ibn 'Uqda (d.333/944), see E. Kohlberg, A Medieval Muslim Scholar, p.263.
Ja'far b. Muḥammad was the president of the board of signet (khātim) in 170/786-7 and 171/787-8. He later became the governor of Khurāsān until 173/790. After his dismissal, he was assigned to be the commander of the caliphal police guard (harās) in Baghdad. It is reported that Ja'far b. Muḥammad was denounced by Yahyā al-Barmakī to Ḥarūn al-Rashīd because of his Shi'īsm. The vizier accused Ja'far of sending money and gifts to al-Kāẓīm, but he could not prove it. The vizier Yahyā is said to have been jealous of Ja'far, because the crown prince Muḥammad al-Amin had been put in the care of Ja'far by the caliph.  

Al-'Abbās b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. al-Ash'āth  

As well as Ja'far, his son al-'Abbās b. Ja'far was also involved in the Imami activities. Al-'Abbās was the governor of Khurāsān after his father between 173/789-90 and 175/791-2. In 171/787-8, when Ja'far became the governor of Khurāsān, he sent al-'Abbās against Kabul. Al-'Abbās conquered it. In 187/803, he participated in a summer campaign against the Byzantines. In 193/808, he was among the generals who accompanied al-Rashīd in his last journey to Tūs where he died. According to one narration in 'Uyun, al-'Abbās b. Ja'far corresponded secretly with 'Aīn al-Riḍā. Al-'Abbās especially requested al-Riḍā to tear up the letter

41 al-Ṭabarī, iii, pp. 609, 740; Khalīfa, ii, p. 498; al-Kamil, vi, p. 79.  
42 Khalīfa, ii, p. 502; al-Ya'qūbi, iii, p. 166; Crone, Slaves, p. 185.  
43 'Uyun, i, pp. 57-9; Maqātil, pp. 500-2; al-Īrshād, pp. 451-2  
44 al-Ṭabarī, iii, pp. 609; Khalīfa, ii, p. 498; al-Kamil, vi, pp. 82-3.  
45 al-Kamil, vi, p. 79.  
46 al-Ṭabarī, iii, p. 694.  
47 al-Ṭabarī, iii, pp. 733-4.
which he was afraid of passing into somebody's hands. An early source, Ibn Ḥabib, records that al-'Abbās and his son were appointed by al-Ma'mūn as private *shurṭa* for al-Riḍā when the latter was in Merv.

Dāwūd b. Zurbī

Dāwūd b. Zurbi al-Khindiqi was an Imāmi who was also said to have been an associate of Hārūn al-Rashīd. Al-Kashshi says that Dāwūd was "the closest person (*akhaṣṣ al-nās*) to al-Rashīd". It is reported that Dāwūd brought some goods or money to al-Kāẓim. The latter took some of it and left the rest for him. After al-Kāẓim had died, al-Riḍā asked him for it, so Dāwūd returned it to the new Imam.

Al-Ḥasan b. Rāshid

Al-Ḥasan b. Rāshid al-Kūfī, a *mawlā* of the 'Abbasids, is said to have been the vizier of al-Mahdi, al-Hādī and al-Rashīd, and also a follower of al-Ṣadiq and al-Kāẓim. However, there is no report in early historical sources about al-Ḥasan's vizirate and his link with the Imāms. Nevertheless, a narration from al-Ṭabarī could

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48  'Uyūn, ii, p.221.

49  Ibn Ḥabib, p.201.

50  al-Kashshi, p.312.


52  al-Māmaqānī, i, biography no: 2434.

53  A person named al-Ḥasan b. Rāshid appears in a sanad in al-Kashshi's Rijāl (p.152). According to this *isnād*, he relates from 'Ali b. Ismā'il Al-Mustafawi, the editor of Rijāl, says that this 'Ali b. Ismā'il is probably al-Maythami (*Fihrist* of Rijāl, p.184), one of the prominent figures from al-Kāẓim's *rijāl*. The one who relates from al-Ḥasan b. Rāshid in the same sanad is 'Ali b. Rayyān, a disciple of al-Riḍā (see al-Kashshi, p.552). Therefore, it appears that this al-Ḥasan b. Rāshid lived in the time of al-Kāẓim and he might be the same person who is in question.

Al-Najashi records al-Ḥasan b. Rāshid al-Ṭafawī in his work. He regards him as a *daʿīf ṭawī*. He does not give any further information about him. But if the *rijāl* in the *isnād* through which al-Najashi relates al-Ḥasan's book, *Nawadir* are
corroborate his closeness to the caliphal court as well as his Shi'ism. According to the narration, al-Rashid summoned Ibn Abi Dawud, who looked after the tomb of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ali in Karbala, to his presence. Ibn Abi Dawud was very worried about his personal safety. Al-Ḥasan b. Rāshid met him and counselled him to tell al-Rashid when he entered his presence, that al-Ḥasan b. Rāshid had appointed him to that position. Ibn Abi Dawud repeated these words before al-Rashid, therefore the caliph had al-Ḥasan brought and questioned him on that matter. Al-Ḥasan replied that the mother of al-Ḥādi had ordered him to do it. So al-Rashid did not do anything against Ibn Abi Dawud and sent him back to Karbala.54

Aḥmad b. Ḥamza b. Bazi' and Muḥammad b. Isma'īl b. Bazi'

Al-Najāshi records another two Imāmī viziers: Ahmad b. Ḥamza b. Bazi' and Muḥammad b. Isma'īl b. Bazi'. There is no report about Aḥmad in rijāl books. Muḥammad b. Isma'īl is said to have been the mawlā of the caliph al-Manṣur. He wrote two books on the pilgrimage and its reward. He is regarded as very trustworthy (thiqa ʿayn) as a transmitter. It is reported that Muḥammad was mentioned in a group in which 'Ali al-Ridā was present; the Imām said that he desired one who was of the kind of Muḥammad to be present in the group. Al-Najāshi narrates from him a hadith in which al-Ridā praised the Imāmis who worked for the government, but they functioned, in the meantime, for the cause of his party and helped the followers by using the opportunities given to them by their jobs.55

54 al-Tabari, iii, p. 752.

55 al-Najashi, pp. 233-4; al-Kashshi, p. 564.
'Abd Allah b. Sinān b. Ṭurayf

‘Abd Allah b. Sinān b. Ṭurayf al-Kūfī is accounted to have been the treasurer of al-Manṣūr, al-Mahdi, al-Hādi and al-Rashid. Al-Ṭūsī and al-Najashi say that he was a very venerable person among the followers and he was never impeached for anything. Although he is accounted to have been a disciple of al-Kāzim, no report is recorded about his link with the Imam.56

Ziyād b. Abī Salama

As far as is understood from a tradition in al-Kāfi, Ziyād b. Abī Salama, an Imāmi, was among the officers of the ‘Abbāsid court. Al-Kāzim asked him why he worked for the government. He answered that he was a man who was expected to be generous, he had also a family and there was nothing like the possessions from which he and his family could benefit. Al-Kāzim warned him saying:

"O Ziyād, if I fell down from a high mountain and was dismembered, this (condition) would be more desirable to me than that I should hold an office for one of them (i.e. sultāns) or I should tread on the carpet of one of them except for one of the following circumstances'.

(Ziyād) said: 'I do not know, oh, could I but sacrifice myself for you!" (The Imam) continued: "Except in order to drive away a grief from a faithful or to ransom his captivity or to settle his debt. O Ziyād, the smallest thing which Allah would do for one who holds for them (sultāns) an office is to cover him with a canopy made of fire until Allah concludes the judgement of creatures..."57

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Although J. Hussain regards in his article and book al-Waddah who was postmaster in Egypt where he helped Idrīs b. ‘Abd Allah escape to Morocco (see pp.137-8 above), as an Imāmi Shiʿi working as an agent (see Occultation, p.36. "New Lights", p.38), there is no evidence to prove it. No report about him is recorded in the rijāl books of the Imāmiyya. It must not be forgotten that especially after the time of the vizier Yaʿqūb b. Dawud, organised Zaydī group in the administration ranks of the state was as strong as the Imāmis. So it may well be that he was a Zaydi.

Two names in the judicial system of the caliphate are introduced in the Imamī rijāl books as the disciples of the Imams. They are also recorded among the Shi‘i authors.

Ḥāfṣ b. Ghiyāth b. Ṭalq al-Nakha‘ī

The first name is Ḥāfṣ b. Ghiyāth b. Ṭalq al-Nakha‘ī al-Kufī. He at first was the judge of East Baghdad between 177/793-4 and 179/795-6. He was later appointed to Kufa as chief judge which lasted for thirteen years. He died in Kufa in 194/809.58

However, the Sunni rijāl scholars do not mention Ḥāfṣ b. Ghiyāth’s Shi‘ism. According to them, Ḥāfṣ was one of the faithful scholars in hadith. His weak memory and the quantities of his mistakes (kathir al-ghalat) in relating ḥadīth are only comments against him which may have damaged him being a reliable ṭāwī.59

Al-Māmāqānī tried to defend Ḥāfṣ from the claims that he was a Sunni.60 He put forward that Ḥāfṣ’s acceptance of this judicial office for the ’Abbasid state was a result of “the full taqiyya” (al-taqiyya al-tamma), therefore this did not harm his Shi‘ism. He also quoted from al-Ṭūsī’s ’Uddat al-Uṣūl that Ḥāfṣ was one of those whose narrations were accepted as a source in legal matters by Imamī scholars.61

58 al-Ṭūsī, Fihrist, p. 113; al-Najashi, pp. 97-8; al-Khatīb, viii, pp. 192-3.


60 Although al-Ṭūsī records Ḥāfṣ in his Fihrist among the Shi‘i authors he states in his Rijāl that he was a Sunni (p. 118). Ibn Shahhrashub and Ibn Dawūd follow this statement in their accounts of Ḥāfṣ. See Ma‘alim, p. 43, Ibn Dawūd, Rijāl, Najaf 1392/1972, p. 291.

61 al-Māmāqānī, i, biography no: 3193; see ’Uddat, i, p. 380
Nūh b. Darrāj al-Nakhaʾi

Another judge who is stated as being an Imami is Nūh b. Darrāj al-Nakhaʾi. He was a pupil of the Sunni scholars Abū Ḥanifa and Ibn Abī Laylā. He became blind, but he managed to hide his blindness for three years. When it was realised, he was removed from his office. The Sunni sources again do not mention Nūh’s Shiʿism. He is usually regarded as a weak (daʿīf) rāwi not because he was a Shiʿi, but because he was a liar and fabricated hadith attributing them to sound rāwis. He died in 182/798.63

Al-Māmaqanī describes Nūh as "reliable" (al-ḥasan ka al-thiqa) although he cites al-Ṭūsī’s accusation of him being a Sunni. According to al-Māmaqanī, Nūh b. Darrāj’s poverty was not an excuse for accepting the office of judge as was put forward by some sources, but Nūh probably had permission from the Imam to accept it.64 However, in al-Kashshi’s report, the poverty of the family of Darrāj, who was a grocer, seems to have been very serious. Nūh explained his excuse for accepting the job by giving his brother Jamil b. Darrāj’s poverty as an example that the latter was not able to come to the mosque, because he had no loincloth to wear. 65

It seems likely that these two men were independent judges from all sorts of theological and legal schools like the majority of their contemporaries although they had an inclination towards the ‘Alids’ cause and sympathy for the descendants of the Prophet. They probably narrated hadith from the Shiʿi Imams as well as from other scholars who belonged to the Sunni or other groups.


64 al-Māmaqanī, ii, biography no: 12589.

65 al-Kashshi, pp.251-2.
The existence of such judges, who were recognised by both Sunni and Shi'i sides, in that period could show that traditions in which the Imams strictly ordered their followers not to follow the legal conclusions of Sunni scholars and jurists are not completely authentic. For an instance of such a tradition, 'Ali al-Rida told a companion who could not find in his region any Shi'i authority to ask for a formal legal opinion: "Go to local (Sunni) jurists and solicit his opinion about your matter. When he delivers his opinion, do the opposite of it, because it is sound (al-haqq)". Such traditions seem to reflect later Imami hostility against large Sunni occupancy of the judicial positions of the 'Abbasiid caliphate and to be tendentious in directing the followers to seek the conclusions of their own sect instead of bringing their disputes before Sunni judges.

Finally, it could be concluded that the Imami party, as well as benefiting from other high officials, seems also to have benefited from the judges who occupied very important positions for long years in the heart of the state.

II - Underground Activities of al-Kazim and al-Rida and the System of Wakala

With the growth of the Imami party under the leadership of al-Baqir and al-Sadiq, it became necessary for the Imams to appoint agents (wākil, plural wukalā') in order to manage the activities of the party effectively, especially in the main centres of the Islamic land where Shi'is were quite strong like Kufa and Basra. The Imams could also communicate by this way with their adherents, whom they could not otherwise meet because of the long distance between them as well as the oppressive

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66 'Uyun, i, 214.
regime of the 'Abbāsid government which did not always allow the Imams to move in freedom.

As will be seen, the main duty of the agents was to collect the khums, the zakāt, and all kinds of presents from the followers for the Imams. Their duty also included the private business of the Imams like buying and selling, letting or leasing real estate on their behalf. Furthermore, on the order of the Imam, it was the agents' duty to serve the needs of indigent followers living in the same region and, after their death, to undertake to look after their families. Sometimes agents were charged by the Imam to arbitrate between his followers in a dispute, to solve the problem using all possible means and to reconcile the sides with each other.

It is obvious that to unearth this underground network and to illustrate its structure are difficult tasks due to the secret nature of the system. We have only rare hints derived from the books of rijāl to deduce some dimensions of the network. Wardrobus notes this difficulty saying:

"It is notable that under later Imams from al-Jawad onwards, when written communications appear to have become accepted as the principal means of relaying messages, clearer evidence emerges. Until this time one must rely on scarce, and sometimes ambiguous, material when attempting to judge the extent and nature of Shi'ite activities on behalf of the Imāms. It must be pointed out that what is visible may be only the tip of an iceberg, and that there is no way that the dimensions of that part which remains underwater and invisible can be known. It must also be taken into consideration that only a proportion of the ashāb of each Imam, or those known as Shi'ite scholars or believers, were necessarily involved in active duties."67

The Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq has been indicated by Imāmi sources to be the first who used an underground communication system employing some agents in different regions. Of course, the previous Imāms had also often used such means to communicate and to have their business done, but, in the new system, agents were strictly personal ones and more formal representatives embodying a two-way relationship between the Imām and his followers, for example, channelling gifts, requests, questions etc. to the Imām in one direction, and delivering his responses in the other.

Mu'allā b. Khunays, a zealot Shi'i, was an outstanding agent of al-Ṣādiq. He associated with the extremist Mughira b. Sa'id and then participated in the revolutionary activities of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya. Probably for that reason, he was arrested and apparently executed by the governor of Medina, Dāwūd b. 'Ali. Al-Māmaqānī suggests that the real reason behind this execution was not Mu'allā's association with al-Nafs al-Zakiyya but his being an agent of al-Ṣādiq; his activities and loyalty to al-Ṣādiq had annoyed the government. Al-Ṣādiq proved his close tie with Mu'allā by pursuing this incident seriously; he went to the governor and called him to account for the murder. The governor Dāwūd put the blame on his chief police al-Sayrafi. Accordingly, the Imām ordered his son Ḥusayn ismā'il to kill al-Sayrafi, which he did.

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69 Wardrob, op. cit., pp.183-4; J. Hussain, Occultation, p.79.
71 al-Māmaqānī, ii, biography no: 11994.
72 al-Kashshi, p.378. According to the text of Idris's 'Uyun al-Akhbār, the name of the man who was punished is al-Sarrāqī and his killer is a group of al-Mu'allā's associates, not Ismā'il b. Ja'far, see 'Uyun al-Akhbār, p.327.
Another person we find whose activities as an agent are recorded is 'Abd Allah b. Abi Ya'fūr. He was a reciter of the Qur'an (al-qārī) in the Mosque of Kufa. It is reported that al-Ṣādiq charged him with some business in al-Nil. It is reported that al-Ṣādiq charged him with some business in al-Nil. The zakāt of Iraqi Shi‘is is used to be collected by 'Abd Allāh then he himself distributed it among needy people of the region. It seems that he was so successful in fulfilling his mission that al-Ṣādiq praised him saying: "I found nobody who accepts my direction and obeys my command except 'Abd Allāh b. Abi Ya'fūr". He died during al-Ṣādiq's lifetime. His office was undertaken on his death by al-Mufaddal b. 'Umar al-Ju‘fī, to whom al-Ṣādiq wrote saying: "I have charged you with my commission ('ahd), which was formerly with 'Abd Allāh b. Abi Ya'fūr".

We have seen that al-Mufaddal was a prominent supporter of Abu al-Khattāb. He had also great responsibility for the proclamation of the imama of Isma‘īl b. Ja‘far as successor to his father during the latter’s lifetime and introducing Isma‘īl to Kufan extremists and their ideas. Probably sometime after Abū al-Khattāb’s death, al-Mufaddal returned to the Shi‘i orthodoxy and made his peace with Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq.

Al-Kashshi, after reporting a tradition in which al-Kāzīm reflected his good opinion of al-Mufaddal, says that this tradition was concerned with the situation in which al-Mufaddal had followed correct way before he converted to the Khattābiyya. It seems likely that on the grounds of this report, subsequent scholars...

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73 al-Kashshi, p. 248. Al-Nil was a town of central Iraq to the south-south-east of Baghdad.

74 al-Mufid, al-Ikhtisās, p. 195.

75 al-Kashshi, p. 246; al-Najashi, p. 147; Ibn Dawud, p. 197.


77 see pp. 53-4 above.

78 al-Kashshi, p. 323.
of *rijāl* concluded that al-Mufaddal was a weak (*daʿīf*) *rāwi* and had corrupt opinions because of his sect, therefore his narrations were unsound and his books were not relied upon.\(^7^9\) However, al-Kashshi's judgement seems to be wrong because many traditions can be found in the same book of al-Kashshi in which al-Mufaddal was eulogised by both al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāzīm. Besides, after his death, again al-Kāzīm and the succeeding Imām al-Riḍā celebrated him in their sayings.\(^8^0\) For an example, al-Kāzīm asked one of his companions what was being said about al-Mufaddal. The companion related unpleasant remarks about him. Therefore al-Kāzīm said:

"Woe unto them! How bad a status they give him! In my opinion his (status) is not like this. For me there is nobody like him among them."\(^8^1\)

As a result, the Imāms' negative remarks about al-Mufaddal and narrations expressing his extremist opinions probably belonged to the time in which he associated with Kufan *ghulāt* like Abū al-Khaṭṭāb and agreed with their opinions.\(^8^2\) But, after returning to the orthodox line, he became a very prominent figure, probably due to his good nature in which loyalty, sincerity and devotion were predominant, and he served the Imāms al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāzīm as an agent although hostile stories about his past activities continued to circulate and his former beliefs remained questioned among the Shiʿīs.

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\(^7^9\) see al-Najashi, p.295; Ibn Dāwūd, pp.518-9.

\(^8^0\) see al-Kashshi, pp.328-9.

\(^8^1\) al-Kashshi, p.328.

\(^8^2\) The conclusion of al-.Maṣqāṭī in this matter is the same as our conclusion see *Tanqīḥ*, ii. biography no: 12084.
According to al-Kashshi, a large group of partisans from Kufa wrote to Ja'far al-Sadiq complaining about al-Mufaddal's bad reputation in Kufa in terms of his habits and the company he was keeping. Al-Sadiq sent a letter, in return, to al-Mufaddal, the contents of which the complainants were aware. However, al-Sadiq did not mention anything in it of what they had written about him, but, in contrast, he wanted al-Mufaddal to buy something for him. The men were disconcerted at the great sum of money required which they were also expected to find, but al-Mufaddal did not involve them in this task; instead, he bid them stay for a meal. He sent his servants to collect money. In a short time, before the guests finished meal, they had come in bringing it, which amounted to 2,000 dinars and 10,000 dirhams.

It is noteworthy to quote a report concerning al-Mufaddal in order to learn an interesting task of an agent. Abu Hanifa, a caravan driver of pilgrims, disputed with his son-in-law about a matter of inheritance. Al-Mufaddal invited them to his home, gave them 4,000 dirhams and then made them sign a promissory note as a voucher of the agreement. He explained that this money was not his own money; it was money which al-Sadiq had deposited with him to use to reconcile a disagreement taking place among the followers.

Al-Mufaddal's job continued under al-Kazim's imama. Musa b. Bakr said:

"I was in the service of Abu al-Hasan. I have never seen something reaching him unless it (came) from al-Mufaddal b. 'Umar. Sometimes I saw man who brought something, (but al-Kazim) did not accept it from him; (instead) he told him to send it to al-Mufaddal."

84 al-Mamaqani (ii, biography no: 12084) quotes it from al-Kulayni
As well as his job as a middle-man between the Imam and his followers functioning as the collector of money and goods, al-Mufaddal also carried out trade in fish on behalf of al-Kazim. He would buy fish (hitān = big fish), cut their heads off and then sell them in order to buy other fish with the profit.  

After the death of al-Ṣādiq, Mūsā al-Kazim, being quite young, about only twenty years of age, utilised his father's devout and experienced agents during the early years of his imāma. Especially after 170/786, the years during which a severe persecution against Shi'a was carried out, we have understood from the reports that the importance of such underground activities increased and the link between the Imam and agents became more formal and secret. According to al-Kashshi's report, al-Kazim went outside Medina to meet Ismā'il b. Salām and his friend who came over from Kufa with two camels loaded with goods sent by 'Ali b. Yaqtin. Although they wanted to visit the tomb of the Prophet, al-Kazim would not allow them to enter the city, probably for security reasons, and sent them back to Kufa.  

As another example of precaution, al-Kazim would not keep money with him. According to Ibn Babuya's report, in the time of Harūn al-Rashid, some of the trustworthy followers of the Imam in several centres would save the possessions which were gifts and other donations presented in al-Kazim's honour. The money which was donated to spend for poor and needy people would not be hoarded. It would be given them straightway. Only a little amount would be sent to Medina.

87 al-Kashshi, pp.436-7; al-Rawandi, i, p.327.  
88 Ibn Babuya, 'Uyun, i, p.92; idem, 'Ilal, p.236
There is no doubt that some Imāmī partisans who worked as high administrators and secretaries of the ‘Abbāsid state, such as ‘Ali b. Yaqtin, Ja’far b. Muḥammad b. al-Ash‘ath, his son al-‘Abbās and Dāwūd b. Zurbi, contributed largely to accumulate great riches to the possessions of the Imām and his party. We have already indicated this contribution.89 Another important contribution came from rich Shi‘ī merchants. In the cities of Iraq, the merchant class were largely Shi‘īs. Al-Karkh, the trade quarter of Baghdad, was a Shi‘ī stronghold. The party also had many votaries among the upper bourgeoisie.90 Indeed, the names of many Shi‘ī bankers (al-ṣayrafi) can be found in the biographies of the Shi‘ī rijāl.91 Rajkowski highlights “profit-making” activities of the Shi‘a using banking operations:

“Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq encouraged banking operations and numerous traditions are ascribed to him on this subject. Though usury (riba) was prohibited, there were aḥādīth on Ja‘far’s authority, which permitted profit-making by other, devious means. Thus Ja‘far allowed a money-lender to accept the repayment of a debt in better money, containing a larger percentage of gold than in coins given in the loan. Later more traditions were produced, providing loopholes for usury. They were, in all probability, fabricated by the money-lenders of Kufa”.92

The quantities of money and expansive commercial actions required the employment of more agents than had been needed before. According to the sources, Musa al-Kāzīm employed as his agents ‘Ali b. Abī Hamza, Mansūr b. Yūnus, Ḥayyān al-Sarrāj and ʿAbd b. Abī Bishr al-Sarrāj in Kufa, ‘Uthmān b. ‘Isā al-Rawāsī in

89 see pp.385-92 above.

90 Hodgson, Venture, p.390.

91 For examples, see al-Najāshi, pp.81, 156, 196, 205, 255, 259, 301.

Egypt, Ziyād al-Qindi,93 and 'Abd Allāh b. Jundab in Baghdad.94 Yunus b. Yaqub, who was formerly a Faṭḥi, is also counted among the agents of al-Kāzīm. He was a cattle-dealer and was reported to have died in Medina during the imama of al-Rida. The latter performed his funeral rites.95 Another person who seems to have been involved in the wakāla is Mūsā b. Bakr al-Wasiti. He was perhaps not an official agent, but at least being al-Kāzīm's servant in Medina he was involved in the Imam's personal business and the financial actions of the party. Once al-Kāzīm sent him on business to Syria.96

‘Abd al-Rahmān b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Bajali seems to have occupied a peculiar position among other agents. He was originally from Kufa, but resident in Baghdad working as a merchant of a kind of Persian-made fabric called al-sāburi. He was converted to the line of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq from the Kaysāniyya. Al-Ṣadiq complimented him on his being a good Shiʿi and commanded him to preach to the Shiʿis of Medina. Again al-Ṣadiq and al-Kāzīm rejoiced at 'Abd al-Rahmān, saying that he would go to paradise.97

‘Abd al-Rahmān's job as an agent began in the time of al-Ṣadiq and continued under al-Kāzīm.98 Due to his residence in Baghdad he worked as a linkman who

93 All these six men have been mentioned in the section concerning the Waqīfa as the notorious Waqifis who did not hand over the possessions which they kept to al-Rida after al-Kāzīm's death, see pp. 203-5 above.


95 al-Najashi, p. 311.

96 al-Kashshi, pp. 438, 328.


provided the flow of money and information between the Imam and Shi'i statesmen in the capital. Large amounts of money and goods delivered by 'Ali b. Yaqtin was usually conveyed to Medina by 'Abd al-Rahmân b. Hajjaj. 99

In reports we can see 'Abd al-Rahmân participating in a debate on tawhîd (unity of God) and sifāt Allâh (the attributes of God) arranged among the Shi'i doctors of Baghdad. In it 'Abd al-Rahmân, who was among the audience, listened to Hisham b. al-Ḥakam who put forward some anthropomorphic ideas which were contrary to the current views of the sect. Hence, 'Abd al-Rahmân rebuked Hisham and then wrote to al-Kāzim informing him of Hishâm's novel ideas. Afterwards he received an answer from the Imam confirming the official views of the sect about that matter. 100

'Abd al-Rahmân also carried out an important duty during a crucial time under the caliph al-Mahdi and al-Rashid. When al-Mahdi had a book written about heretical sects which also included accounts about the foremost companions of al-Sadiq and al-Kâzîm in order to pursue and punish them, it was 'Abd al-Rahman who took a letter from al-Kâzîm to Hisham b. al-Ḥakam, in which he warned Hisham of the dangerous situation and commanded him not to speak out in public. However, after a couple of months, 'Abd al-Rahmân had to take a second letter from al-Kâzîm. He scolded Hisham on behalf of the Imam, because Hishâm had not observed his command. 101

99 al-Kashshi, p.431.
100 al-Kashshi, pp.279-80.

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'Abd al-Rahmān died under al-Riḍā, but the exact date is not known. Although, once, after al-Kāzīm, he had become a Waqīfī, it is certain that he returned to the Imāmī line.

Certain reports show that agents and other followers used the ritual of the pilgrimage to communicate with the Imām and each other. Once al-Kāzīm wanted some adherents, who had come to Hijaz to perform the pilgrimage, to fulfil some business for him. However, only Hishām b. al-Ḥakam accomplished this task, so he had the blessing of the Imām for paradise.

Another report in which the theologian Hishām b. al-Ḥakam was involved in the agency system shows that al-Kāzīm, for a business which 'Ali b. Yaqtīn was required to do, wanted Hishām to assist 'Ali in doing it or to take it over for him. This was probably due to 'Ali b. Yaqtīn's being busy and his occupation as an 'Abbāsid official which required that he should not be involved in such activities in order to protect himself. It seems that Hisham, who had a shop in al-Karkh, the commercial centre of Baghdad, was a proper person to carry out such business with the help of other associates of his in the bazaar. In the continuation of the narration, it is also reported that al-Kāzīm deposited 15,000 dirhams with Hisham to use and later to return to him the capital leaving its profit for Hisham. It is obvious that to use

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102 al-Ghayba, p.210. There is no indication in the sources about 'Abd al-Rahman's agency for al-Riḍā. Because he died in the time of al-Riḍā, Jassim Hussain's account that 'Abd al-Rahmān controlled the leadership of the organisation of wakāla through the time of the ninth Imam al-Jawad must be a mistake. (J. Hussain, Occultation, p.81).

103 al-Ghayba, p.47; Manāqib, iv, p.336.

104 al-Kashshi, p.270.

105 al-Kashshi, p.269.
large sums of money to earn a profit, in order to increase the welfare of the partisans was the more reasonable than storing it in a safe.

There is no report concerning the link between the agents and al-Kazim when the latter was in detention for four years. Although there is also no account that Ali al-Riḍā continued to administer the network during his father's absence, a hint could intimate a link between al-Riḍā and some agents at that time: After al-Kazim's death when his written testament was opened and read at the court, al-'Abbās, the brother of al-Riḍā, who was deprived and put under the wardship of al-Riḍā according to the testament, threatened that he would kill the wākil Safwān b. Yahya. It is most probable that what infuriated al-'Abbās was the existence of a link between his brother and Safwān in financial affairs. This link might have been formed either at the order of al-Kazim or at the initiative of al-Riḍā who did not want the agent network to collapse. There is also another option that Safwān, as a loyal and responsible follower, might have needed to connect the network with the most favourite candidate for the post of al-Kazim; he might have thought that otherwise the network would not be able to continue its function without a proper administration. However, it seems to be that, during these years which coincided with the time of harsh persecution against Shi'ite elements, these activities more or less were disturbed and lost their former potency.

After al-Kazim's death, many of his agents did not accept his death and refused to deliver the possessions of the party which they were keeping to the new leader al-Riḍā. This situation was a serious blow to the wakāla system. A large amount of wealth remained in the hands of avaricious agents. Although some of them were persuaded to accept al-Riḍā like 'Uthman b. 'Isa al-Rawāsi and then

106 Al-Kulaynī, i, p.319. Also see p. 222 above.

107 For detailed information about this subject see pp. 202-7 above.
delivered the money to him, most of them maintained their allegations insistently. Therefore 'Ali al-Ridā's restoration of the wakāla network seems to have taken a long time.

Due to the geographical expansion of Shi'ism, Medina and Kufa were no longer the only centres of the Shi'a like in the days of al-Bāqir and al-Sādiq. The importance of the new capital Baghdad increased rapidly. The city grew swiftly because of the immigration from nearby cities like Kufa whose former significance lessened because of the attractive commercial opportunities in the capital. Thereupon the centre of Shi'i movements moved from Kufa to Baghdad. Moreover, Qum, a town in Central Iran, became a celebrated Shi'i centre. Its population was almost entirely Shi'i. The majority of them were immigrant Arabs, mostly belonging to the Ash'ari tribe. Especially after al-Ma'mūn had proclaimed al-Ridā as his heir apparent and had him brought to Merv, Imāmi-Shi'i activities in the towns of Khurāsān increased. As a result of the collapse of the agency system because of the emergence of the Wāqīfa on one hand and the broadness of the party activities on the other, it became essential to rebuild the underground network and to appoint many more agents in the new centres.

'Ali al-Ridā appointed 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Muhtadī as an agent over Qum. 'Abd al-'Azīz was a follower of al-Kāzim before becoming an agent of al-Ridā. He was described as "the most excellent of the residents of Qum". Other agents in charge of another town, Nishapur, were Ibrāhīm b. Salāma and al-Fadl b. Sinan.

108 al-Ash'arī, i, p. 94; Frye. The Golden Age, pp. 113 and 155
about whom there is no information other than their being al-Ridā's agent. 111 Ishaq b. Ibrāhim al-Ḥudaynī is also reported to have been an agent without there being any information about where he operated. He was introduced to al-Ridā by al-Ḥasan b. Saʿīd al-Ahwāzī. After listening hadith from the Imam, he accepted becoming a believer of the Imāmiyya. 112

It seems that after al-Kāẓim's death 'Abd Allāh b. Jundab carried on his mission in Baghdad until his own death. He was replaced by another prominent figure 'Ali b. Mahziyār. His father was a Christian convert to Islam from India. 'Ali himself is also said to have converted to Islam in his teens. He lived in Ahwaz. By virtue of the reports which state that he took over 'Abd Allāh b. Jundab, it is probable that his next settlement was in Baghdad. 'Ali b. Mahziyār was a prolific author whose books numbered thirty-three. 113 He also tried to persuade the Faṭḥis by writing letters to them. His well-known success was in the case of 'Ali b. Asbāt who was convinced by the former to give up his Faṭḥī belief. But, according to some reports, he later returned to his former sect and died holding its belief. 114

Hishām b. Ibrāhim al-‘Abbāsī was another agent of al-Ridā. He seems to have had an important role in the network. It is reported that all taxes, funds and gifts which had been brought from different regions had been collected by him before they reached


112 al-Kašshi, p.552; Ibn Dāwūd, p.51.

113 al-Kašshi, p.549; al-Nājashi, pp.177-8; al-Ṭūsī, Fihrist, p.231; Ibn Dāwūd, pp.251-2; al-Māmaqānī, ii, biography no: 8534.


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al-Riḍā. However, because of his later treachery, his office was probably undertaken by someone else.

Safwān b. Yahyā perhaps was the most celebrated one of al-Riḍā's agents. He was from Kufa. He was a merchant of sābūrī. He was accounted among the six jurists of al-Kaẓīm and al-Riḍā whose authentication of traditions from the Imam and whose ijmāʿ (consensus) were accepted as sound sources in legal area by later Ḥāfīẓ. The Wāqi'ah tried to tempt him by offering money, but did not manage it. He continued his office under the Imam Muḥammad b. Ṣafwān died in 210/825.

It is reported that Safwān, ʿAbd Allāh b. Jundab and ʿAlī b. Nuʿman were good companions. Each of them used to pray fifty-one rakʿa on every day. They promised to each other that if one should die the others would perform his prayers and the other Islamic duties for him as long as they lived. Safwān survived longer among them, so he prayed 153 rakʿa a day, fasted three months in a year, gave his zakāt three times and whatever he did as a work of supererogation he did the same on behalf of them until his death.

Another person who seems to have involved in wakāla was al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Washṣā, a Kufan Shiʿi. He was a trader in embroidered-fabric (washy). We

115 ʿUyun, ii, p.151.
116 For detailed information about Hishām al-ʿAbbāsī, see p.316 above.
118 For all the above-presented information about Ṣafwān, see al-Kashshi, p.504; al-Najashi, 139-40; al-Ṭūsī, Fihrist, 171; al-Ḥāfīẓ, al-Iḥtīṣām, p.88 Ibn Dawūd, 188-9.
have seen him carrying letters to al-Ridā from al-‘Abbās b. Ja‘far b. Muhammad b. al-
Ash‘ath who was the former governor of Khurāsān.\textsuperscript{120} It may be interesting to note
that al-‘Abbās told al-Washshā‘ to ask al-Ridā to tear up the letter for security reasons,
as was done by al-Ridā.\textsuperscript{121}

In conclusion, the time of Mūsā al-Kāzīm and ‘Ali al-Ridā might be regarded
as the archetypical period of \textit{wakāla} system for similar subsequent activities. The
rise of organised Shi‘i activities in the new centres coincided with this time. Because
of al-Kāzīm’s detentions on several occasions and al-Ridā’s unexpected succession to
the throne which led him to be taken to Merv, the conclusion might be reached that the
Imāmī movement was chiefly carried out at the hands of the qualified agents during
this time. This unquestionably provided very valuable experience for the agents who
would be employed by the following Imāms, some of whom would be kept under
surveillance in Baghdad or in Samarra for long periods and some would be
acknowledged in their childhood. It also could be put forward that the practice
inherited from some of the Imām’s agents, who seized the opportunity of their Imām’s
death to expropriate illegally his possessions with producing a belief system to legalise
their achievements, possibly encouraged the later \textit{wakils} who would stop the line of
the imāma at the twelfth Imām.

\section*{III - The Foremost \textit{Rijāl} of the Two Imāms}

Apart from the agents (\textit{wukalā‘}) whose main works as the Imams’ official
representatives were the business affairs of the party and passing information using an
underground network, the Imāms also felt the need for some persons who could

\textsuperscript{120} see p.391 above.

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Uyun}, ii, p.221.
represent them in religious and judicial matters in their absence as their deputies. Although some of the wukalā' had a reputation as scholars, too, having their own teaching circles and writing books on several religious subjects, such as Safwān b. Yahyā and 'Ali b. Mahziyar, they seem to have generally appeared as skilled businessmen and eminent individuals who had a close relationship with the state court. For that reason, it is useful to distinguish these two different duties in order to bring to light the activities of the party properly, even though a sharp and definite distinction is impossible. It must be remembered that the renowned theologian Hīshām b. al-Ḥakam was sometimes working as an agent.

The reasons for the appearance of powerful rijāl (plural of rajul, literally "a man", technically "a prominent personage") were mainly the same: Firstly, the great geographical expansion of the Imāmi Shi‘ism in parallel with the growth of the Islamic land made difficult for the followers living in distant areas to reach the Imām. Secondly, the frequent incarcerations or detentions of the Imāms resulted in the same difficulty even for those who lived in Medina where the Imāms were resident. 122 Takim touches on the same point emphasising the authority of the rijāl:

"The rise to prominence of certain individuals who could undertake the functions of the Imāms must be construed as a pragmatic response to the Imāmi community's dire need for leadership and guidance.... The authority of the rijāl, it must be noted, arose due to their functions as the agents of the Imāms and as exemplary models whose demeanour was a source of emulation. Authority, as conceived in Imāmi texts, was located not only in a living model (the Imām) but also in its investiture to his trained representatives. As such, the authority of the rijāl can be construed as a form of 'apostolic succession'..." 123

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the circle of the Imam or continue to represent him in other places as long as they recognised his imāma. It must also be stressed that the above-mentioned responsibility of the rijāl was appreciated, especially after Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, because no Imam after him seems to have been acknowledged as the single leader of all the Imāms.

After this brief introduction, we can now introduce the prominent rijāl of our Imāms.

1 - The Theologians

1.1 - Hishām b. al-Ḥakam

The most celebrated rijāl of al-Kāẓim was, of course, Hishām b. al-Ḥakam. He was born and grew up in Wāsiṭ. At first he moved to Kufa, then to Baghdad. He had a shop in al-Karkh bazaar. One report indicates that he was a merchant of cotton fabric (bayyāʿ al-karābis). He was the mawla of the Kinda tribe, belonging to its Banū Shaybān branch. He was previously a sectarian of the Jahmiyya who were the adherents of pure determinism. It is also reported that he was a pupil of Abū Shākir al-Zindiq. However, Hishām, when he was still young, came in contact with Ja'far

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126 al-Māmaqānī removes in this way contradiction between two different accounts concerned with Hishām's clientage (wali) in the sources. He says that, according to al-Suyūtī, the Banū Shaybān was a branch of the Kinda. He also adds, upon the report of al-Najāshī (p.304), that Hishām's belonging to the Banū Kinda was in terms of the treaty of association (wali), but his connection with the Banū Shayba was in terms of his settlement within this branch in Kufa, see al-Māmaqānī, ii, biography no: 12853, p.301. Nevertheless, another report from Ibn Hazm made Hishām belong to the tribe of Banū Asad, see Friedlaender, "The Heterodoxies", JAOS, 1908 (29), p.65.

127 al-Māmaqānī cites it from Ibn Shahrāshūb, see Tanqīḥ, ii, p.301.

128 al-Kashshī, p.278; Ibn Dāwūd, p.368. He was Abū Shākir al-Daysānī. Ibn al-Nadīm says about him that "he was among the chiefs of the theologians (miṣra'asāʾ al-mutakallimin) who professed Islam, but secretly believed in Zindiq" (p.338). According to the Sunni heresiographer al-Maṭṭī, Hishām at first
al-Ṣādiq thanks to his nephew ‘Umar b. Yazīd. After several meetings with the Imām he was convinced in the truth of Shi‘ism. In spite of all the miscellaneous views which he formerly held or was involved in at different times, he had an intimate relationship with ‘Abd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Ībādī, a prominent scholar of the Ībādiyya.

Hishām b. al-Ḥakam was also an associate of the vizier Yahyā b. Khālid al-Barmakī, who commissioned the former to direct symposia which were arranged in his salon. Hishām met and debated with many distinguished theologians of the time in the symposia such as the Mu‘tazīlīs Dirār b. ‘Amr (d. after 184/800), Abū al-Hudhayl (d. between 225-235/840-50), al-Nazzām (d.221/836), Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamir (d. after 205/820), Thumāma b. Ashras (d.213/828) and Sulaymān b. Jarir, the founder of the Zaydī sect the Sulaymāniyya. Another report also shows that he discussed the subject of the need for an Imām with ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd (d. about 140/761), the famous Basran Mu‘tazīli, in a debate which occurred in the Basra Mosque. If this narration is true, Hishām must have been a very young man when he debated with ‘Amr whose age was about sixty at the same time.

As a result of these connections, Hishām b. al-Ḥakam became very popular in a milieu of the elite of the state court and of famous scholars. His party, the Imāmiyya, was a Dahri (i.e. materialist), then he converted to the Dualism. Finally he accepted Islam, but reluctantly (kārīhān), see al-Tanbih, p.19.


appreciated his popularity as well. He was described as "one from those who ripped words open about the imāma and rectified the sect (madhhab) and the theory (naẓar)". The sources also illustrate his quickness at repartee. On one occasion, he was asked if Mu‘awiyah b. Abi Sufyān had joined in the battle of Badr. He answered: "Yes he had, but from that side" implying that he belonged to the Meccan polytheist army in the battle. Hārun al-Rashīd is reported to have said the following about Hishām after the former had seen his effective speech on the subject of the imāma in a discussion: "If a man like him was to remain alive, would my reign last even for an hour? By God, his tongue is more effective on the hearts of the people than a hundred thousand swords!"

Nevertheless, such vehement speeches and discussions probably put Hishām and his Imām in danger. Narrations indicate that Hishām’s open speaking, although it had been prohibited by al-Kāzīm since al-Mahdī’s reign, brought about al-Kāzīm’s arrest in 179/796, and consequently his death in 183/799. Hishām himself also had to escape from the capital and took refuge in his native city Kufa where he stayed in hiding until his death.

It is reported that during his illness Hishām did not ask for help from any physicians. He described his illness as "the sore of heart caused by the fear of execution". He died in the house of a friend of his. However, the pursuit of

135 Ibn Dāwūd, p. 367.
137 See pp.134-6 above.
139 al Kashshi, pp.257-8.
Hishām did not stop, therefore his corpse was put in a place in the district of Kināsa in Kufa and a document was attached to the corpse, on which was written “this is Hishām b. al-Ḥakam for whom the Commander of the faithful searches”. Afterwards the judge and other notables of the town testified to his death and the search was officially lifted. 140

Al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāšī state that Hishām moved to Baghdad in 199/814 and is thought to have died there in the same year. 141 However, if we consider his frequent participation in the symposia in the capital and his occupation in the bazaar of al-Karkh, it seems that his move to Baghdad was earlier. This account is also in contrast to the information reporting his escape to Kufa and his death there. Moreover, there is no report marking any of Hishām’s activity during al-Riḍā’s imāma which started in 183/799.

The conflict between two other accounts makes it difficult to decide which one of the following two dates is closer to the true date of Hishām’s death. One narration shows that after Hishām had escaped, Hārūn al-Rashīd immediately had al-Kāẓim arrested. 142 Upon this report, the date of al-Kashshi as 179/796 143 could be the date of Hishām’s death, because it is reported that the arrest of al-Kāẓim occurred in the same year and Hishām survived only two months after his escape to Kufa. 144 According to another report in which Yūnus b. Abd al-Raḥmān presumed that the

140 Ibn Bābūya, Kamāl, ii, 30-1.
141 al-Ṭūsī, Fihrist, p.355; al-Najāšī, p.304.
142 al-Kashshi, pp.258-62.
143 al-Kashshi, p.256.
144 al-Kashshi, p.267.
debate resulting in the pursuit of Hishām was later than al-Kāzim’s arrest.\textsuperscript{145} It seems reasonable to accept the account of Ibn al-Nadim that Hishām had died shortly after the downfall of the Barmakīs in 186/803.\textsuperscript{146} When al-Ash’ārī says that Hishām was a Qaṭʿī,\textsuperscript{147} if he intended by the Qaṭʿīyya those who accepted al-Kāzim’s death in contrast with the Wāqīfa and recognised al-Riḍā as their new Imām, Ibn al-Nadim’s record would become the more plausible one, because in 179/796, which the first account suggested as the date of Hishām’s death, al-Kāzim was still alive.\textsuperscript{148}

Hishām b. al-Ḥakam was a genuine Imāmī. We see him among those who acknowledged the imāma of al-Kāzim immediately.\textsuperscript{149} According to al-Ash’ārī, he was a Qaṭʿī, i.e. he accepted the imāma of al-Riḍā after al-Kāzim.\textsuperscript{150} Hishām’s contribution to the ideology of the Imāmiyya was very large. Among his books concerned with the doctrine of imāma were "the Book of the Imāma", "the Refutation of Those who Accepted the Imāma of the Inferior", "the Book of the Testament (waṣiyya) and the Refutation of Those who Reject it" as well as some other books written in the form of refutation of different ideas such as those of Aristotle, the Naturalists, the Muʿtazilis, Abū Jaʿfar al-Ḥwal and Hishām al-Jawālīqi, the last two of whom were also Imāmī scholars.\textsuperscript{151} All these books are not extant. Another book

\textsuperscript{145} al-Kashshi, p. 267.

\textsuperscript{146} Ibn al-Nadim, p. 175; Ibn Dāwūd, p. 368.

\textsuperscript{147} al-Ash’ārī, i, 63.


\textsuperscript{149} al-Nawbakhti, pp. 66-7; al-Qummi, p. 88.

\textsuperscript{150} al-Ash’ārī, i, p. 63.

\textsuperscript{151} al-Tūsī, Fihrist, p. 355; al-Najāshi, pp. 304-5; Ibn Shahrāshūb, Maʿālim, p. 72.
of his, "the Disagreement of the People on the Imāma", is supposed to have been used by al-Nawbakhtī as one of the sources of his own Kitāb al-Firaq al-Shī'a. 152

As well as narrations about Hishām’s views on the imāma, the title of one book also indicates that he believed in the waṣiyya doctrine, so he did not accept that people had right to elect their Imām (iḥtiyār al-nās) 153 and he thought that the most excellent person (afḍal) was entitled to become Imām, therefore the imāma of the inferior (mafdūl) in the presence of the afḍal was not legal. He also maintained that it was possible for prophets to commit sins although he believed in the sinlessness of the Imāms, because he thought that the prophets were warned of their sins by revelation, but since the Imāms received no revelation, they must have been infallible and sinless. 154

Hishām b. al-Ḥakam was a representative of anthropomorphic (tajsim) ideas in the history of Islamic theology. He claimed that God was a body which had the qualities of limitation, finiteness, length, width and depth; His length was the same as His width, His width was the same as His depth, one of which was not greater than the other. He described the object which he worshipped as seven spans measured by his own span which possessed colour, taste, smell and touch, but he also maintained that He did not resemble any creature nor did any creature resemble Him. 155


153 Also see al-Kashshi, p. 261.

154 al-Shahristānī, p. 159.

155 al-As‘arī, i, pp. 31-3; al-Baghdādi, pp. 67-9; al-Shahrastānī pp. 158-9; al-Malāti, pp. 20-5.
founder of the Hishāmiyya school which is counted by al-Shahristānī within the
gbūlāt Shi'a. 156

This anthropomorphism of Hishām which was very different to the teachings
of the Imāms created displeasure within the Imāmi Shi'a. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. al-Hajjāj
who listened to Hishām's opinions scolded him saying: "Woe unto you! Why do you
liken the words (kalām) of your God to a stick which is used to beat!", and then he
complained of him to al-Kāzīm. 157 At another time, a follower wrote to al-Kāzīm
asking him about the accuracy of Hishām b. al-Hakam's opinion that God was a body
(jīsm) and Hishām b. Sālim's view that God was in the form of man (šūra). The
Imām answered: "Leave (such) confusing matters alone and seek refuge of Allāh from
the Satan, the (true) doctrine is not what two Hishāms say". 158 Al-Ash'āri indicates
the true doctrine of the Imāmiyya that "God is neither a body nor form. He does not
resemble any creature. He neither moves nor stands and also He can not be felt." 159

156 al-Shahristānī, pp. 158-60. The sect was also called "al-Ḥakamiyya", see F. al-Rāzī, I'tiqādāt, pp. 64-5; al-Maqrizī, ii, p. 348.

157 al-Kashshī, pp. 279-80.

158 al-Kulaynī, i, 105.

159 al-Ash'āri, i, p. 35. Later authors of the Imāmiyya (muts'akhhirūn) always attempted to exonerate Hishām from responsibility for these beliefs. They either put forward some laudatory remarks of the Imāms about him and show them as evidence for Hishām's abandonment of these beliefs or they blamed "the enemies of the Shi'a" for trumping up these ideas against Hishām because of hostility or jealousy. For an example of such a plea, see al-Maṣmaqānī, ii, biography no: 12853, p. 300.

Al-Sharīf al-Murtadā devotes a section concerning with the defence of Hishām b. al-Ḥakam in his voluminous book al-Shāfi fi al-Imāma. According to al-Murtadā, the ideas which were attributed to Hishām did not actually belong to him; they were the results of misunderstanding of his ideas and his answers which were put forward in his conversations with his opponents in several debates and symposiums, see al-Shāfi fi al-Imāma, i, pp. 83-7.

It is also known that, at an earlier time, Sa'd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Qummi (d. circa 301/913), the author of al-Maqālāt wa al-Fīraq, wrote two books for the same purpose. The first book was "the Book on the Stains (mabhālib) of Hishām and Yūnus". The second one was a treatise of refutation written against ʿAli b. ʿIbrahim b. Hūshim al-Qummi's "Risāla fi Ma'nā Hishām wa Yūnus (the Treatise on the Meaning of [the ideas of] Hishām and Yūnus)", see al-ʿAjashī, p. 126-7, 184.
An alleged will of al-Kazim containing admonitions written for Hisham is fully narrated in some books of Imami tradition. According to some records, ‘Ali al-Rida made Hisham responsible for his father’s death, but when his followers, on one occasion, asked him whether they could be friends with Hisham, he said that they could. The question was repeated. Al-Rida gave the same answer.

Hisham b. al-Hakam’s two pupils became famous in their field. The first of them is Abu ‘Ali al-Sakkak (or al-Shakkal). He was also a participant in the symposia of Yahya b. Khaliq al-Barmaki. His work “the Book against One who Rejects the Necessity of the Imamah with the Designation (nass)” is recorded by Ibn al-Nadim.

The second is ‘Ali b. Mansur, a Kufan Shi‘i. His book “the Framework (tadbir) of the Unity (tawhid) and the Imamah” is said to have been compiled from Hisham b. al-Hakam’s teachings.

The conclusion of A.S. al-Nashshar is that Hisham b. al-Hakam never repealed his anthropomorphic ideas. He also examines the inconsistencies of al-Mufid in his defence of Hisham, see Nash‘at al-Fikr al-Falsafi, ii, pp.198-9.

160 al-Kulayni, i, 13-20; Ibn Shu‘ba, 283-97.

161 al-Kashshi, pp. 268, 278. According to al-Mamaqani, this matter should not harm Hisham’s good reputation, because he did not do it deliberately. He suggests that Hisham’s open speaking in spite of the prohibition by the Imam was not actually contrary to the shari‘a in the time of necessity (darura), because Hisham’s intention was only the confirmation of the imama, see biography no: 12853, ii, p 2015.


164 al-Najashi, p. 304.
1.2 - Hishām b. Sālim al-Jawiliqi

Another Imāmi theologian who is one of the two Hishāms from whom the Hishāmiyya sect derived its name is Hishām b. Sālim al-Jawiliqi.165 He was a slave from Juzjān and became the mawla of Bishr b. Marwān. He was a seller of provender, residing in Kufa.166 Al-Jawiliqi was a disciple of al-Sādiq and al-Kāzīm.167 He is described by al-Najāshi as a very trustworthy ṭawī (thiqā thiqā). His books on the pilgrimage, the exegesis of the Qurʿān and al-Miʿraj (the miraculous midnight journey of the Prophet to the seven heavens from Jerusalem) are recorded.168 It is also reported that after al-Sādiq’s death Hishām went to ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar and questioned him, but he was not satisfied with his answers, and then he went to al-Kāzīm and acknowledged him.169 He also debated with Muḥammad b. Bashir, the leader of the extremist wing of the Wāqifa. Saʿd al-Qummi says that Muḥammad was defeated by him in argument.170

We know Hishām b. Sālim much more for his anthropomorphic ideas. He claimed that God was a form of man. Adam was created in the pattern of God. He also maintained that the object which he worshipped as God was in the image of man, but did not have flesh and blood, being a diffused white light. According to him, God

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165 This sect was also called the Jawāliqiyya attributing to Hishām b. Sālim himself, see al-Kashshi, p.266; F. al-Rāzī, Iʿtiqādat, pp.64-5; al-Maqrizi, ii, p.348.

166 Juzjān was a large village in North Khurāsān between Marv al-Rūd and Balkh. Yāqūt reports that the people of Juzjān were called Jews, see Muʿjam al-Buldān, ii, p.149.


168 al-Barqī, Rijāl, p.48.

169 al-Najāshi, p.305.

170 al-ʿIrshād, pp.440-2; al-Kashshi, pp.282-4. Also see p.69 above.

171 al-Qummi, p.91.
possessed five senses and had hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth as well as black hair which was black light.\textsuperscript{172}

After examining these two Hishāms, it can be seen clearly that except for the doctrine of the imāma which was the heart of Shi‘ī ideology, the theological ideas of some rījāl like these men often contradicted those of the Imāms as well as those of each other. We have seen Hishām b. al-Ḥakam’s books written as refutation against the views of the Imāmī scholars Abū Ja‘far al-Ahwāl and Hishām al-Jawāliqī. Ibn al-Nadim also reports that Abū ‘Alī al-Sakkāk disagreed with his teacher Hishām b. al-Ḥakam on many theological questions except for the imāma.\textsuperscript{173}

1.3 - ‘Alī b. Maytham

‘Alī b. Ismā‘il b. Shu‘ayb b. Maytham al-Tammār\textsuperscript{174} must be recorded among the rījāl whose writings focused on theological questions. He was more usually referred to as ‘Alī b. Maytham or al-Maythami. His grandfather Maytham was a hero from the Shi‘a of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād (d.67/686), the governor of Kufa on behalf of the Umayyads, executed him in Kufa by cutting off his arms, legs and tongue.\textsuperscript{175}

‘Alī was originally from Kufa, but lived in Basra. If ‘Alī’s contemporaries, whose names are presented with his name in narrations, are considered, it can be concluded that he lived well into the last half of the second century H./765-815. He is

\textsuperscript{172} al-Kashshi, pp.284-5; al-Ash‘ari, i, p.34; al-Baghdadi, pp 70-1; al Shahristānī, p.159.

\textsuperscript{173} Ibn al-Nadim, p.176.

\textsuperscript{174} “al-Ṭayyār” in the Fihrist of Ibn al-Nadim (p.175) should be al-Tammar

\textsuperscript{175} al Mufid, al-Ikhtisāṣ, pp.75-6; al-Kashshi, pp.86-7.
included among the *shaykhs* of the ṫāfīdīs. He is also described as "the first who wrote about the doctrine of the imāma in theological terms". His book *al-Kāmil* and "the Book of Entitlement (Kitāb al-Istihqaq)" probably reflected his views on the imāma. His other books were written on legal matters related to marriage, divorce, and *mut'a*. Another of his books, "the Book of Hishām b. al-Hakam's Sessions" might have contributed towards the transmission of Hishām's thoughts and stories about his discussions in symposia to later traditionists, historians and heresiographers.

"Alī seems to be the champion of the Imāmiyya in Basra. He is reported to have engaged in discussions with Basran Mu'tazilis Dirār b. 'Amr, Abū al-Hudhayl and al-Nazzām. He is also reported to have been in prison for sometime. This probably occurred after 176/792 when a harsh persecution against Shi'a had began and it was probably the result of his propaganda of Imāmi ideology in his writings and discussions.

However, his opinion on "the imāma of the inferior (*mağfīl*)" was close to the Zaydi point of view rather than to that of the Imāmis. This is reflected in his following sentences:

"'Alī -peace be upon him- was the entitled one (*mustaḥaqq*) for the imāma since he was the most excellent (*afdal*) of men after the Prophet. The Muslims (*umma*) committed sin (*ithm*) not because they acknowledged Abū Bakr and 'Umar, but because they relinquished the *afdal* and they were not clear about 'Uthmān and

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177 Ibn al-Nadim, p. 175; al-Ṭūsī, Fihrist, p. 212.


179 al-Khayyāt, pp. 75, 103; al-Ṭūsī, Fihrist, p. 212; al-Najāshī, p. 176; al Mufīd, al-Fuṣūl al-Mukhtāra, pp. 6, 10-1, 55.

180 al-Kashshī, p. 262-3.
those who fought against 'Ali -peace be upon him-, and those who have not confirmed that they were unbelievers.\(^{181}\)

These words were typical Zaydi views on the imāma and 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.\(^{182}\) These views of 'Alī b. Maytham seem to be a result of the trend among an intelligentsia in which the Zaydis and the Mu'tazilis were more influential than the Imāmis. It may also show, as Watt indicates, that doctrinal Shi'a position in this early period was very fluid.\(^{183}\) However, 'Alī b. Maytham is not said to have accepted Zaydism. Although there is no report about his contact with al-Kā'im and al-Riḍā, we see him with Yūnus b. 'Abd al-Rahmān disputing with the Wāqifis. It was Ibn Maytham who named the Wāqifa "al-Mamṭūra" (the rain-drenched dogs).\(^{184}\)

1.4 - Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Nawfali

Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Nawfali was in prison with 'Alī b. Maytham.\(^{185}\) He lived in Basra like 'Ali.\(^{186}\) One report in 'Uyun shows that, in the days when al-Kā'im was arrested and brought to Basra, Muḥammad was denounced to the governor of Basra, 'Isā b. Ja'far, by 'Alī b. Ya'qūb b. 'Awn because of being among the followers of al-Kā'im. However, there is no indication in the report that this caused Muḥammad's imprisonment.\(^{187}\)

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\(^{181}\) al-Nawbakhti, p. 9.

\(^{182}\) see al-Shahristānī, pp. 135-8.


\(^{184}\) al-Nawbakhti, p. 69; al-Qummi, p. 92; al-Shahristānī, p. 145.

\(^{185}\) al-Kashshi, pp. 262-3.

\(^{186}\) Maqātil, p. 518.

\(^{187}\) 'Uyun, i, pp. 70-1.
In a narration of al-Kashshi, when the news of a debate which had taken place between Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and Sulaymān b. Jarir reached the prison, Muḥammad and 'Alī b. Maythām examined the arguments of Hishām and Sulaymān. Muḥammad's scholarly criticism of some of the arguments reported in the narration might reveal his large knowledge of theological subjects.

1.5 - Yūnus b. 'Abd al-Rahmān

Another renowned theologian is Abū Muḥammad Yūnus b. 'Abd al-Rahmān. He was the mawla of the family of 'Alī b. Yaqtin. He was born in the time of the Umayyad Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik (ruled 105-125 / 723-743) and died in 208/823 in Medina. Yūnus met al-Ṣādiq in Mecca during a pilgrimage, but he did not relate any tradition from him.

Yūnus is regarded as among four men about whom it is claimed that they had the ultimate knowledge of the prophets. Unlike the other rijāl who have just been mentioned, Yūnus seems to be a traditionist and jurist rather than a theologian. Most of his works were collections of traditions on several legal subjects. In addition to his books about the pillars of Islam and jurisprudence, he also wrote books on the imāma and bada' as well as on morality and more mystical subjects, such as "the Book of Asceticism" and "the Book of Good Manners (ādāb)."

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188 al-Kashshi, pp. 262-3.
As a result of his interests, Yūnus might have been the best of the rijāl of Ali al-Riḍā. The Qummi agent 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muhtadi complained to al-Riḍā that he was not always able to meet him, so he asked him from whom he could learn the knowledge of the religion. Al-Riḍā indicated Yūnus to 'Abd al-'Aziz. Al-Riḍā also said that Yūnus was in his epoch like Salmān al-Fārisī was in 'Ali b. Abī Ta'īb's epoch and guaranteed paradise to him three times.

After al-Kāẓim's death, Yūnus questioned al-Riḍā whether he was the true successor of al-Kāẓim and whether the latter was in occultation or not. Yūnus was convinced and said: "There is no Imam between me and God, but 'Ali b. Mūsā." Consequently, we see Yūnus disputing against the Waqīfīs. Beforehand, it is reported that the Waqīfīs had offered him money in the hope of enticing him, but Yūnus had not indulged them. Al-Riḍā also charged Yūnus to keep the extremist Muḥammad b. Furāt and his disciples away from genuine followers, to warn them of these extremists and to curse them publicly. He probably demonstrated the full experience which he had gained by disputing with the ghulāt Shi'a in one of his books which he wrote to reject the ideas of the extremist movements, "the Book of the Refutation against the Ghuslāt."
Yûnus b. 'Abd al-Rahmân was an anthropomorphist. He upheld the "pure anthropomorphism" (al-tajsim al-mahd) while Hishâm b. al-Ḥakam professed only the "anthropomorphism of meaning" (al-tajsim al-ma'na'wî). Yûnus claimed that angels bore the Throne of God (‘Arsh) and the Throne bore God; for according to tradition, the angels groaned under the weight of the magnitude of God on the Throne. Furthermore, he likened these angels to cranes whose thin legs could bear their bodies even though their bodies were much heavier and larger than their legs. Accordingly, Yûnus, with such opinions, was regarded as the founder of a heretical school, the Yûnusiyya.

Probably because of these outlandish ideas, 'Ali al-Riḍâ cursed Yûnus calling him zindiq. The Imam also ordered his followers not to pray behind Yûnus and his disciples. On one occasion, al-Riḍâ struck Yûnus's book on the ground saying that it was "the book of a bastard". Al-Riḍâ thought that Hishâm b. al-Ḥakam was responsible for such ideas of Yûnus, because "Abû al-Ḥarîth (Yûnus) is from the disciples (ghulâm) of Hishâm. Hishâm is from the disciples of Abû Shâkir. Abû Shâkir is zindiq". Al-Riḍâ's view on anthropomorphism is clear in traditions. He said: "Whosoever liken God to His creature is a polytheist". He maintained that for God there was no place (makân) and vision could not perceive Him.

201 Rajkowski quotes it (p.627) from Iḥṣâdīṣ Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balâgha.


203 al-Kâshshî, pp.491, 495-6.

204 al-Kâshshî, p.278.

205 'Uyûn, i.93.

206 'Uyûn, i. 94, 103-4.
denial that Heaven and Hell had been created also led him to be cursed by the Imam.207

According to some traditions, Yunus used to complain about the negative attitude of the Shi'a community towards him and told the Imams about this situation. The Imams comforted him. Yunus complained of being called zindiq. Al-Kazim said: "It does not harm you that when there is a pearl in your hand but people say that it is a pebble, and it is not beneficial for you that when there is a pebble in your hand, but people say that it is a pearl". Al-Riḍā also said to him: "Do not mind them, because their understanding does not reach out".208

Al-Tūsi points out that such accusations were usually brought by the Shi'is of Qum.209 Al-Māmaqānī, quoting al-Majlisi's conclusion, says that the Qummis did not approve of the use of reason (ıjtihād) on questions which were clearly answered by traditions.210 However, Yunus, as is seen in the narrations relating with him, often applied ıjtihād.211 Al-Kashshi made two Qummis, Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan and Ṭābi', Ḥasan b. Muḥammad, responsible for accusations against Yunus. But, he said that these men later repented of their accusations, therefore such traditions against Yunus might have been related before their repentance.212

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207 al-Kashshi, p.491.
208 al-Kashshi, p.488.
209 al-Tūsi, Rijāl, p.364; Ibn Dāwūd, p.381.
210 al-Māmaqānī, ii, biography no: 13357.
211 see the chapter of Yunus in al-Kashshi, pp 483 ff.
212 al-Kashshi, p.497.
In conclusion, the Imāms do not seem to have interfered with the independent intellectual activities of such theologian rijāl. Or, perhaps, they could not do it, because, using their advantage as being rijāl of more than one Imām, they always reserved their rights to criticise the present Imām's traditions and views. Moreover, because of their residence in the capital or populous cities like Kufa and Basra in contrast to the Imāms' residence, Medina, whose importance had decreased, these rijāl gained large popularity not only within the Shi'i community but also among the intelligentsia which was formed by the renowned members of several sects and the schools of thought. Hence, they were, with these features, the best persons for the Imāms to represent their party and the Imāmi community in that milieu.

There is no doubt that these theologians did their utmost to propagandise the doctrines of the party. It has been seen that all of them acknowledged the Imāms immediately, supported them in different ways and defended them against their adversaries either in their books which they wrote or in arranged discussions in which they spoke.

The Imāms did not omit expressing their true answers against the heretical ideas of these rijāl which raised serious questions within the community. They sometimes accused them, even cursed them, but, at the same time, extolled them, probably in order to keep their followers in unity under their guidance. The rijāl in return, remained loyal to the Imāms whose approval was needed not to lose their distinguished positions in the Shi'i community as the chief representatives of the Imāms, and they were always careful not to go so far in promulgating their different ideas. It seems that the existence of the doctrine of taqiyya led the followers to assume that these two different demeanours of the Imāms against these rijāl were indeed not contrary to each other.
Al-Kashshi says that Ḥadām scholars agreed on (ṣīmaʿa) six jurists living in the period of al-Kāzīm and al-Riḍā whose religious knowledge and authentication in jurisprudence must have been accepted. They are Yūnus b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān, Safwān b. Yaḥyā, Muḥammad b. Abī ʿUmayr, ʿAbd Allāh b. Mughira, Ahmad b. Muḥammad al-Baṣantī and al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb. However, in the place of the latter, there are three other candidates offered by some other scholars. They are al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. al-Faḍḍāl, Faḍḍāla b. Ayyūb and ʿUthmān b. ʿĪsā.213 Ibn al-Faḍḍāl, ʿUthmān, Safwān and Yūnus have been introduced earlier.214 Now other jurists will be presented.

2.1 - Muḥammad b. Abī ʿUmayr

Muḥammad was the mawla of the Azd tribe. He is also supposed to have been the mawla of the Umayyads, but the first report is regarded as correct. He was from Baghdad and lived there working in drapery.215

Muḥammad met al-Ṣādiq, but he did not relate ḥadīth from him. Most of his traditions were related from al-Riḍā. He also lived after al-Riḍā under the ʿimāma of al-Jawād. Al-Ṭūsī says that in the opinion of "the people of distinction" (al-khāṣṣa = the Imāmis) and of "the commonalty" (al-ʿāmma = the Sunnis and others), Muḥammad was one of the most trustworthy, pious and godfearing men.216 The Muʿtazili thinker al-Jāḥiẓ (d.255/869) is reported to have said about Muḥammad in his

213 al-Kashshi, p.556.
214 see respectively pp. 77-8, 205, 411, 427 above.
book, *Fakhr Qahtân ‘alā ‘Adnān*, that "Muḥammad is unique among his contemporaries in all things".\(^{217}\) In an account of al-Kashšī, Muḥammad is found to be more godly, understanding and excellent than Yūnus b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān.\(^{218}\)

According to the Ḥanbalī writer Ibn Baṭṭa (d.387/997), Muḥammad wrote ninety-four books,\(^{219}\) only seventeen of which are numbered by al-Najāshī.\(^{220}\) One of his books was "the Book of al-Riḍā -peace be upon him-," whose content is not known.

According to the reports, Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Umayr was arrested twice. The first arrest took place in the time al-Rashīd. The reason for this arrest is said to be that al-Rashīd forced him to accept the office of judge, but Muḥammad refused it. Another reason reported is that the government wanted to acquire the names and the locations of al-Kāẓim’s followers in Iraq, therefore he was tortured and beaten by the commander of the *shūra*, al-Sindi b. Shāhik. When he was just about to reveal what they wanted through the pain of the torture, another Shi‘ī prisoner Muḥammad b. Yūnus cried out telling him to fear God, so he became patient and did not speak.\(^{221}\)

His second arrest occurred after al-Riḍā’s death in 203/818, in the time of al-Ma‘mūn. The reason was the same. Muḥammad was required to accept the office of judge. He stayed four years in prison.\(^{222}\) His possessions were confiscated. His sister was also in hiding. It is reported that she buried her brother’s books which were later


\(^{218}\) al-Kashšī, pp.590-1.

\(^{219}\) Ibn Dāwūd, 287-8.

\(^{220}\) al-Najāshī, pp.229-30.

\(^{221}\) al-Kashšī, pp.591-2; al-Najāshī, p.229.

\(^{222}\) According to al-Mufīd, Ibn Abī ‘Umayr spent seventeen years in jail (*al-Ikhtiṣās*, p.86). If this information is true, it indicates that al-Rashīd kept him in prison almost for thirteen years. His second imprisonment lasted for four years (*al-Najāshī*, p.229).
ruined or she hid them in a room, but heavy rain ravaged them. After his release, without his books, Muḥammad transmitted hadith without appending isnād (called "mursal tradition"). Due to being a trustworthy (thiqā) narrator, Ibn Abī 'Umayr’s traditions were accepted without any isnād attached by Imām scholars like al-Ṭūsī.

2.2 - 'Abd Allāh b. Mughīra al-Bajalī

'Abd Allāh was a Kufan disciple of al-Kāzim. After the Imām’s death he was among the prominent Wāqifs. He said that during a pilgrimage rite he prayed to God to show him guidance. Immediately afterwards, it occurred to him to go to al-Ridā. He went to him and was persuaded to give up the Wāqifi beliefs. 'Abd Allāh is described as a very trustworthy rāwī (thiqā thiqā). The number of his books are supposed to be thirty.

2.3 - Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Naṣr al-Baṣantī

Aḥmad al-Baṣantī, a Kufan, was the disciple of al-Kāzim and al-Ridā. His books "the Book of the Collection" and "the Book of the Questions (Masā'il)" are said to have been narrated from al-Ridā. Al-Baṣantī is recorded among the converts from the Wāqifa.

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224 See al-Ṭūsī, 'Uddat al-Uṣūl, i, p.386.
226 Ibn Dāwūd, p.213.
227 al-Najāshi, p.149.
229 Ibn Shahrashūb, Manāqib, ii, p.392; Musnad al-Ridā i, pp 206 7.
2.4 - Al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb

Al-Ḥasan was an armour-maker. He was regarded as one of four bases (ruka) in his century. He died in 224/839.230

2.5 - Faḍḍāla b. Ayyūb

Faḍḍāla was an Arab Imāmī jurist living in Ahwaz. No further information is given about him.231

2.6 - Zakariyyā b. Ādam

As well as these jurists, Zakariyyā b. Ādam also must be mentioned. He was a disciple of ʿAlī al-Riḍā living in Qum. He told al-Riḍā of his wish to leave Qum due to his being disturbed by the rude people (ṣufahā') of the city, but the Imām exhorted him not to do it, likening him as the defender of the Qummi Shīʿa to al-Ḵāzem who was the defender of the Baghdadi Shīʿa.

ʿAlī b. al-Musayyab complained to al-Riḍā of his long journey from his city Hamadan to Medina and said that he was not always able to make it, therefore he asked the Imām from whom he could learn religious knowledge. Al-Riḍā recommended him to consult Zakariyyā b. Ādam on this matter.232

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231 Ibn Dāwūd, p.271.

232 al Muḥīd, al-Ikhtisās, p.87; al-Kashshi, pp 594, al Mamaqami biography no: 4236.
CONCLUSIONS

It is a fact that the party of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq fell into a state of chaos after the death of its leader who had done his job very successfully during a long and difficult thirty-five years. It is highly likely that al-Ṣādiq did not make any explicit designation for anyone of his sons to his position. Consequently, a number of the partisans discontinued the line of the imāma after his death, some of them declaring his occultation. A considerable number of extremist Shi'is, whom al-Ṣādiq had succeeded in keeping within the party, formed their own group proclaiming the imāma of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl b. Ja'far. The majority of the followers acknowledged 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far on the basis that he was the eldest surviving son of the previous Imām. Only a minority followed Mūsā b. Ja'far although later developments helped him to gain the mass of the party's support. It seems that the idea of some Shi'i groups that the Imāms were divinely chosen by God was not dominant among the Shi'is at that time. When there was more than one candidate for the new authority of the party and disputes arose among their followers, because every group had their own nusūṣ of designation, true or false, related from the previous Imām, the possession of 'ilm appeared as the most, perhaps the only, important factor which could prove the real claim to the imāma.

Mūsā al-Kāzım continued meticulously the non-intervention policy inherited from his father and grandfather. Under al-Kāzım's leadership, the particular Husayni-Shi'i movement which pursued a non-political line in its activities, despite the fact that it still preserved its opposing nature against the present non-ʿAlid rule, was clearly distinguished from other Shi'i groups. Thanks to this policy and the large application of taqiyya, al-Kāzım was saved from being a direct target of serious government persecutions until 179/796. He was arrested in this year by Hārūn al-Rashid as a part of the government's general policy against Shi'i opposition. Bold and incautious
behaviour and conduct by some important disciples of al-Kāẓim made this arrest likely and easy for the security officials. This confinement resulted in the death of the Imam in mysterious circumstances; whether he died a natural death or whether he was killed can never be known.

Al-Kāẓim seems to have used every opportunity to proclaim the succession of his eldest son ‘Ali to the leadership of the party in order to prevent a possible quarrel after him among his sons, and perhaps even among some of his brothers, as had happened at the beginning of his imāma. He wrote a testament which clearly indicated ‘Ali’s succession. He also declared it on several occasions in Medina as well as in Basra and Baghdad after his arrest. Although ‘Ali’s brothers were reportedly not pleased with ‘Ali’s new privileged position, they never challenged his designation. However, the Imāmi movement was damaged by another strife. The Wāqifa whose doctrine was mainly based on a Shi‘i belief in circulation that the seventh Imam would be the Qā‘im denied al-Kāẓim’s death and rejected the leadership of ‘Ali al-Ridā. This group caused a great division within the party. In order to propagandise its doctrine and strengthen its position in the community, the Wāqifa produced a large literature mainly on the belief of ghayba. The supporters of al-Ridā also did the same as a counter-attack. The output of these developments was later used by the Twelver Shi‘a in order to advocate the ghayba of the Twelfth Imam.

An important Shi‘i-originated revolt in 199/815 led by Ibn Ṭabāṭabā and Abū al-Sarāyā attracted many personalities from al-Ridā’s family. The Imam’s three brothers and one cousin took part in this episode as senior administrators of the revolt. His uncle Muḥammad b. Ja‘far attempted to carry on the revolt after it had been quelled. Their positions can be considered an indication of the dissatisfaction by members of the family with the policy of the non-revolutionary Husayni movement headed previously by al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāẓim. The present leader of the movement, al-
Riḍā, despite this large involvement from his family, did not change his party's traditional line. Furthermore, he co-operated with the 'Abbāsids to avert this anti-government danger.

The outburst of the Shi'i-originated revolts one after another against the 'Abbāsids, who were accused of infringing on the rights of the descendants of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, drove the caliph al-Ma'mūn to put into effect a plan of reconciliation between the two hostile camps of the Banū Hāshim, which would provide urgently needed peace and security for the state. As the most important step of this plan, he chose 'Alī b. Mūsā as his heir. He probably also intended, through the nomination of 'Alī al-Riḍā who was a respected scholar from the Prophet's descendants, to reunite political and religious authority within the caliphate. Since the Umayyads had come to power, in the eyes of many, the caliphal institution had lost its religious essence and this reunion would provide much strong legitimacy for al-Ma'mūn's rule. The vizier al-Faḍl b. Sahl was probably the author of this scheme, or at least he consented to it from the very beginning. 'Alī al-Riḍā accepted al-Ma'mūn's proposal reluctantly or he was forced to accept it. Despite the fact that al-Riḍā stipulated at the beginning that he would only accept this proposal if he was not involved in any political activity, he unexpectedly marked a historical turning-point in that period by disclosing the dangerous situation existing in Iraq caused by the anti-Ma'mūn 'Abbāsid movement in Baghdad, which had been concealed from the caliph by the vizier al-Faḍl for a long time. Al-Riḍā did this sincerely for the well-being of the state in view of his responsibility as a successor, and no other reason seems to have induced him to do it. Upon this disclosure, al-Ma'mūn set off for Baghdad to take control of the situation and, in order to make it easy, sacrificed his vizier on this journey. A short time later al-Riḍā died, most probably a natural death. Although al-Ma'mūn does not seem to be genuine in his nomination of al-Riḍā as his heir, he probably had not planned this political manoeuvre with the Imam only for a short period like two years. There was
no objection for him to continue it in Iraq. Nevertheless this death became opportune and very timely for al-Ma‘mūn. It made it easier for him to solve the serious conflict in Baghdad.

In the time of al-Kāzīm and al-Riḍā, the Shi‘i operation of infiltration into governmental ranks reached a very high level. The Imāmi party benefited largely from this secret occupancy of governmental positions. Again in al-Kāzīm’s time, the administrative hierarchy within the party was firmly established. Qualified appointed agents formed a network through which the affairs of the Imāmi community were directed successfully. Despite the fact that a number of Wāqifī agents damaged the continuity of the network towards al-Riḍā’s period by taking possession of the large wealth of the party, al-Riḍā succeeded in repairing the network and expanded its frame beyond the borders of Arabia and Iraq into Iran and Khurāsān. Besides, this period must be marked as the time of the rise of powerful rijāl. This seems to be a pragmatic response to the Imāmi community’s need for leadership and guidance in the absence of the Imām whose residence was distant from the centres where the mass of his adherents lived or his relation with them was cut off because of his frequent detentions. The Imāms do not seem to have interfered with the independent intellectual activities of such rijāl, particularly the theologians, who sometimes contradicted the official doctrines of the party. Because they were powerful and, often, rijāl of more than one Imām, they always reserved their rights to criticise the present Imām’s traditions and views.

Since in the circles of al-Kāzīm and al-Riḍā there were a considerable number of extremist partisans, non-Shi‘i traditionists deliberately shunned the traditions coming from these Imāms. Al-Kāzīm’s generosity and al-Riḍā’s outstanding asceticism, reported in both Sunni and Shi‘i works, drew the attention of some sufi movements. Some links were found in several sources between the two Imāms and
some famous early sufis, but these links have no basis in history and thus they remain unproved.

APPENDIX ONE

Works Attributed to al-Kāzim and al-Riḍā

I - Works Attributed to al-Kāzim

1 - Du‘ā’ al-Jawshan al-Ṣaghīr: This is a Shi‘i prayer. According to al-Ṭihrānī, at first ‘Ali b. al-Ṭāwūs (d. 664/1266) attributed it to al-Kāzim in his Muhaj al-Da‘awāt under the title of Du‘ā’ al-Jawshan al-Ṣaghīr. It was so called because a similar prayer attributed to ‘Ali Zayn al-‘Abidin was called al-Jawshan al-Kabīr.233 The first edition was made in Lucknow in 1871.234

2 - Ad‘iyat al-Ayyām al-Sab‘a: This is another prayer book which classifies the prayers according to which day in a week they were recommended to be said. The manuscript is in Paris National Library. It was also included by Hibat Allāh b. al-Ḥasan al-Īsāwī (flourished around 703/1303) in his book called al-Majmū‘ al-‘āḷīq min Azhār al-Ḥadā‘īq.235

3 - Al-Musnad: This pamphlet is made up by fifty-nine traditions which are said to have been related by Abū ’Imrān Mūsā b. Ibrāhīm al-Marwāzī from al-Kāzim when the latter was under the detention of al-Sindi b. Shāhīk in Baghdad. Mūsā al-Marwāzī is introduced by al-Najāšī as the teacher of al-Sindi’s children.236 The

233 al-Ṭihrānī, v, p.287. Also see Kohlberg, A Medieval Muslim Scholar, p.329.

234 see Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turāth), ii, p.251; Ellis, ii, p.396.

235 see Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turāth), ii, p.251.

236 al-Najāšī, p.291.
manuscript of **al-Musnad** is preserved in al-Zāhiriyā Library in Damascus. It was edited by Muḥammad H. al-Jalāli and published in Tehran.237

4 - **Waṣiyyatuhu ʿilā Hishām b. al-Ḥakam** 238: This alleged admonitory will of al-Kāzim for Hishām b. al-Ḥakam is fully preserved in al-Kulaynī’s *al-Kāfī* (i, pp. 13-20) and Ibn Shu’ba’s *Tuḥfat al-‘Uqūl* (pp. 283-97).

5 - **Waṣiyyat al-Nabī ʿilā Abī Ṭālib**: F. Sezgin records it among the works of al-Kāzim and says that a manuscript of it is preserved in Istanbul Resid Efendi Library.239

6 - **Masā’il ʿAlī b. Jaʿfar ʿan Akhīhi Mūsā b. Jaʿfar**: This work consisted of questions which ʿAlī b. Jaʿfar addressed to his brother al-Kāzim.240 Muhammad al-Bāqir al-Majlisi mentions this treatise among the sources of his *Biḥār al-Anwār*.241 Kohlberg suggests that there appears to be no evidence that Masā’il has survived.242 However, al-Ṭihrānī says that it is well-known and the whole of it is inserted in *Biḥār* in the chapter "*Iḥtijāj al-İmām Mūsā b. Jaʿfar*."243

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238 Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turāth), ii, p. 251.

239 Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turāth), ii, p. 251.

240 Kohlberg, A Medieval Muslim Scholar, p. 258.

241 *al-Muqaddima* of Biḥār, i, p. 12.

242 Kohlberg, A Medieval Muslim Scholar, p. 258.

243 al-Ṭihrānī, xx, p. 360. Also see Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turāth) ii, p. 252.
II - Works Attributed to al-Riḍā

1 - Fiqh al-Riḍā (or al-Fiqh al-Riḍawi): This book is a collection of traditions related to the several subjects of fiqh. The claim that the Imam al-Riḍā was the author of this book is highly suspicious. The book remained unknown until the time of Muḥammad al-Taqī al-Majlisi (d. 1070/1659), the father of the famous Muḥammad al-Bāqir al-Majlisi. The latter al-Majlisi tells about the story of the emergence of the book in the introduction of Biḥār al-Anwār. According to this report, a group of pilgrims from Qum brought a copy of this book to Mecca and showed it to the judge Amīr Ḥusayn al-Iṣfahānī. It seemed to be an early work and the date on it coincided with the time of al-Riḍā. Amīr Ḥusayn approved that the author was al-Riḍā. He also copied the book and took it to Isfahan. There M. al-Taqī al-Majlisi saw the book and he also stated his agreement with Amīr Ḥusayn’s judgement about it. Therefore al-Bāqir al-Majlisi used Fiqh al-Riḍā as a source for his Biḥār al-Anwār.244 Some later scholars such as Shaykh Yūṣuf al-Bahranī (d. 1186/1772), Bahr al-ʿUlūm Muḥammad Mahdī al-Ṭabāṣtābāʾī (d. 1212/1797) and Mirza Ḥusayn al-Nūrī (d. 1320/1902) declared that Fiqh al-Riḍā was the work of the Imām.245 The authentication of the book by Bahr al-ʿUlūm was published in the first edition of Fiqh al-Riḍā in Tehran in 1274/1858.246 However, according to M. Amin and Fadl Allāh, the majority of the Imāmi authorities including ʿĀyatullāh al-Khūʿī agree that it belongs to a later author rather than al-Riḍā, because it was impossible that such a book written by the Imām should remain unknown at the hands of the Qummi Shīʿa for as long as 850 years.247 Since most of the sentences in the book accord with those

244 al-Muqaddima of Biḥār, i, p.11-2.
245 M. J. Fadl Allāh, p.189; M. Amin, IV/3, p.185.
246 Ellis, i, p.265; Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turath), ii, p.253; al-Ṭibrānī, XVI, p.292.
247 M. Amin, IV/3, p.186; Fadl Allāh, p.189.
of Ibn Bābūya’s Man lā Yaḥḍurubu al-Faqīh,248 many authorities think that the
text of the book actually belonged to ‘Ali b. Mūsā b. Bābūya, the father of al-Shaykh al-Sadūq
Ibn Bābūya; the similarity of his name with that of the Imam led to the assumption that
the writer of the book was ‘Ali b. Mūsā al-Riḍā.249 The new editions of Fiqh al-
Riḍā were made in Mashhad (1985) and Beirut (1990).

2 - Ṣaḥīfat al-Riḍā: This is a collection of aḥādīth handed down through
al-Riḍā and collected by al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabarsi (d.548/1153). It was also
called Musnad al-Riḍā,250 al-Ridawiyyāt,251 Ṣaḥīfat Ahl al-Bayt.252 In
some of ‘Ali b. Mūsā Ibn Ṭāwūs’s works, the title was given as al-Ṣaḥīfa al-
traditions in the book is Ahmad b. ‘Āmir al-Ṭā’ī.254 The latter related the collection
from the Imam in the year 194/809-10. Al-Majlisi used Ṣaḥīfa as a source for Bihār
al-Anwār.255 However, it is reported that there was ʿirsāl (incompletion) in the
isnād of the book.256 Thus its authenticity has not been approved by the majority of

248 al-Muqaddima of Bihār, i, p.11-2.

249 M. Amin, IV/3, pp.185-6; Faḍl Allāh, p.191; H.M. al-Hasani, ii, p.426.


251 M. Amin, IV/3, p.187.

252 al-Tihrānī, xv, p.17; M.Amin, IV/3, p.188.

253 see Kohlberg, A Medieval Muslim Scholar, p.323.

254 For Ahmad b. ‘Āmir al-Ṭā’ī, see al-ʿNajāshi, p.73.

255 al-Muqaddima of Bihār, i, p.30.

256 M. Amin, IV/3, pp.186-7; Faḍl Allāh, p.198.
the authorities.  

The new editions of Şahifat al-Riḍā were made in Mashhad (1985), Beirut (1986) and Qum (1987).

3 - Al-Risāla al-Dhahabiyya fi al-Ṭibb  

This is a treatise containing traditions narrated from 'Alī al-Riḍā about medicine. It is reported that the Imām wrote it at the request of the caliph al-Ma‘mūn; the latter was so impressed by the work that he ordered it to be written in golden letters. The whole treatise is inserted in Bihār al-Anwār (LXII, pp.309-56). M. Amin gives two different isnāds with which the treatise was related. Both isnāds end with the name of the ṭawi Muḥammad b. Jumhūr al-‘Ammī. Al-Najāshi describes him as "unreliable" in ḥadīth and corrupt (fāsid) in madhhab, whereas he describes his son, al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Jumhūr, who related the treatise from his father, as reliable (thiqa), but adds that he used to relate ḥadīth from unreliable ṭawīs and rely upon mursal traditions.

Several manuscript copies of al-Risāla al-Dhahabiyya exist and the book has been published several times. Many books of commentary have been

257 Fadl Allāh, 198. Also see Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turāth), ii, p.254; Ellis, i, p.265.


259 al-Majlisi, LXII, pp.307. Also see M. Amin, IV/3, pp.182-4; Fadl Allāh, pp.194-6.

260 M. Amin, IV/3, p.182.

261 al-Najāshi, p.238.

262 al-Najāshi, p.46.

263 see Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turāth), ii, pp.243-4.

264 Some of its editions are: Tibb al-Ridā ed. Murtada al-Askari (Najaf n.d); Risālat al-Imām al-Ridā al-Dhahabiyya fi al-Tibb wa al-Wiqāya

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written on it. The earliest of them is Tarjamât al-'Alâwî li al-Tîbb al-Ridâwî of Diyâ' al-Dîn Faḍl Allâh b. 'Alî al-Râwandi (d. 548/1153). Sezgin also indicates an early Persian translation of the book which was made by Abû 'Alî al-Hasan b. Ibrâhîm al-Salmasî (lived around 624/1226). In the words of I. Perho in his book about the Prophet's medicine,

"The contents of the treatise indicates strong influence of Galenic medicine. The text has clearly been written by a person who has accepted and internalised the terminology and theoretical views of Galenic medicine. Imâm 'Alî al-Ridâ's treatise consists of dietary instructions and ways to prevent illnesses. There is only occasional advice on how to cure specific illnesses. The most obvious Galenic influence is present in the paragraphs explaining how the seasons of the year affect the temperaments of people. The text instructs what foodstuffs are the most beneficial in each month of the solar year starting from the first spring month adhâr (March). The Prophet is not mentioned in the text, but some of the expressions are clearly extracted from his sayings."

4 - Su'âlât al-Ma'mûn 'an al-Ridâ 'an ba'd Ay al-Qur'ân: This is a treatise containing a series of questions relating to the different verses of the Qur'ân which were put to 'Alî al-Ridâ by al-Ma'mûn, with the Imâm's answers. It was published as an extract in some other books. Ahmad b. 'Alî al-Tabarsi (d. early 6th/12th c.) relates in al-Ihtijâj a long tradition the contents of which are exactly the

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265 For a list of some of these books, see al-Tihrînî, xiii, p. 364; Faḍl Allâh, pp. 196-7.

266 al-Muqaddima of Bi'hâr, p. 30; al-Tihrînî, iv, p. 118.

267 Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turâth), ii, p. 254.


269 see al-Tihrînî, xii, p. 251; Fulton, p. 242; Brockelman, GAL Suppl ii, p. 573; Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turâth), ii, p. 254.
same as those of this treatise.\textsuperscript{270} However, I do not know whether Su'\'alat al-Ma'mūn consists only of this extended tradition related by Ahmad al-Tabarsi.

5 - \textit{Maḥd al-Islām wa Sharā'i' al-Din}: This treatise contains brief information about the articles of the Islamic faith, the regulations of several religious duties and some rules of the \textit{sharia}, which is alleged to have been written by al-Riḍā at the request of al-Ma'mūn. The treatise is preserved in 'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā (ii, pp.120-5). A group of authorities do not accept the authenticity of the treatise. They suggest that a consideration of the \textit{isnād} of the treatise and of the style of its text arouses a serious suspicion about its authenticity and, the clear contradiction between some statements given in the text and the official Imāmī opinions strengthens this suspicion.\textsuperscript{271}

6 - Sharā'i' al-Din: Al-Ṭīhrānī says that this treatise is a collection of 400 traditions about several subjects of the \textit{sharia}, which was related by al-Riḍā at the request of al-Ma'mūn.\textsuperscript{272} Sezgin gives the account of a book attributed to al-Riḍā, \textit{Sharā'i' al-Islām}, but he does not give any further information about its contents.\textsuperscript{273}

7 - Jawāmi' al-Sharī'ah: This treatise is preserved in \textit{Tuḥaf al-Ūqūl} of Ibn Shu'ba (pp.306-11). Its contents are similar to those of the above-mentioned \textit{Maḥd al-Islām} and \textit{Sharā'i' al-Din}. The treatise is said to have been dictated by

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{270} al-Ṭabarsi, \textit{al-Iḥtiyāj}, pp.426-32.

\textsuperscript{271} see Fadl Allāh, pp.199-200; H.M. al-Ḥasani, ii. p.427.

\textsuperscript{272} al-Ṭīhrānī, xiii. p.51.

\textsuperscript{273} Sezgin, \textit{GAS} (T. \textit{al-Turāth}), ii. p.254.
al-Riḍā to the vizier al-Faḍl b. Sahl at the request of al-Ma'mūn.  274 Another treatise, Itmām al-Sharā'i, the name of which is recorded by Sezgin 275 might be another name of Jawāmi' al-Sharā'i'.

8 - Uṣūl al-Dīn: This is another similar treatise which is alleged to have been written by al-Riḍā at the request of al-Ma'mūn. 276 The other names of the work are Wājib al-Iʿtiqād and Risālat Abī al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā ilā al-Ma'mūn. 277

9 - ʿIlal Ibn Shādhān : This work which details the reasons for several rules of the shari'a was supposedly transmitted by al-Faḍl b. Shādhān (d. 260/873) from al-Riḍā. Because of the fact that Ibn Shādhān was not a contemporary of the Imām, 278 some authorities have doubted the authenticity of this treatise. 279 The complete text appears to be preserved in 'Uyun Akhār al-Riḍā (ii, pp. 97-119). In a tradition, Ibn Shādhān was asked whether he arrived at these reasons (ʿilal) given in the text through his ijtihād. He answered that he had heard them from al-Riḍā. 280

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274 M. Amin, IV/3, p. 181.
275 Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turāth), ii, p. 254.
277 al-Tihrānī, xi, p. 7.
278 For the profile of Ibn Shādhān, see al-Najāshi, p. 216; al-Māmaqānī, ii, biography no: 9472.
279 see Fadl Allāh, pp. 200-1; Takim, p. 86; Kohlberg, 'Imam and Community', p. 34.
10 - Du‘ā' al-Yamānī: According to Sezgin, it is a treatise which was related on the authority of Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn b. Ibrāhīm b. 'Ali b. al-Khayyāt.281

11 - Qaṣā'id fi Madh Ahl al-Bayt.282

12 - Al-Musnad fi Faḍl Ahl al-Bayt.283

13 - Mawālid Ahl al-Bayt: The manuscript of this work is preserved in Lucknow Nasiriya Library. It deals with the names, titles and burial-places of the descendants of the Prophet.284

281 Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turāth), ii, p.254.
282 Sezgin, GAS (T. al-Turāth), ii, p.254.
283 Kahhāla, vii, p.250.
APPENDIX TWO

The Ismāʿīlī Version of the Argument: What Led al-Maʾmūn to Designate al-Riḍā as His Heir

We have three different stories about the designation of al-Riḍā reported in the three different Ismāʿīlī works. The first of them is the story narrated by Jaʿfar b. Mansūr al-Yamān (d. after 380/990) in his Asrār al-Nuṭaqāʾ. According to it, al-Maʾmūn realised that his forefathers had usurped the rights belonging to the ʿAlids, so he wished to return these to them. Because of the views of the scholars who the caliph had summoned from different regions to dispute before him, he decided to return the estate of Fadak and al-ʿAwālī (? the heights) to the ʿAlids. Hence, many ʿAlids came over to him. Among them was Ahmad b. Mūsā, surnamed ʿAlī al-Riḍā,²⁸⁵ who was appointed by the caliph as his successor. At the same time an Ismāʿīlī dāʿī also came over to him. He managed to attract the caliph's attention. The dāʿī stayed there for a long time and had many discussions with the caliph. He taught him "the real knowledge" and informed him about the existence of "the real Imam". When the education of the caliph became complete and the dāʿī realised that his faith was now sincere, he went away because he had fulfilled his mission. After a while, al-Maʾmūn examined al-Riḍā with different questions whose answers he had just learnt from his teacher, but he found in him no knowledge which he had expected to find in a real Imam, so it appeared that the fame about al-Riḍā spread amongst the masses was wrong. He thought that al-Riḍā would oppress the real faithful in future, therefore he executed him immediately.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁵ This seems to be a mistake as Ahmad is reported to have had nothing to do with al-Riḍā, or there might be something behind this as Ivanow says

Another two stories are narrated by the renowned Ismā'īli author Idrīs ʿĪmād al-Dīn (d. 872/1468). Although the two books in which these stories are narrated belong to the same author, the contents of the stories are different. The first story which is narrated in Zahr al-Maʿānī is similar to the above-mentioned version of Jaʿfar b. Mansūr. However, although, as far as have been seen, Jaʿfar’s story reflects obvious sympathy with al-Maʿmūn, even indicating his conversion to Ismāʿīlism, there is nothing in this regard in the story in Zahr al-Maʿānī. Idrīs reports that al-Maʿmūn’s return of Fadak was a trick in order to make the ‘Alīids rely on his sincerity. Al-Riḍā was among the people who were trapped by it. Afterwards, an Ismāʿīli dāʿī, who we have known in the first story, came over for the purpose of shielding the real Imām. He confessed that he was the Imām himself, and then was executed by the caliph.287

According to the last story, a dāʿī from the disciples of the Ismāʿīli Imām ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl arrived in Merv. He met with the caliph and discussed the existence of a “real Imām” with him. When al-Maʿmūn was no longer able to resist against the dāʿī’s arguments, he pretended to accept what the dāʿī put forward and began to ask who the real Imām was. The dāʿī had to indicate ʿAlī al-Riḍā in order to hide the true Imām. Hence, al-Maʿmūn summoned al-Riḍā from Damascus288 and then nominated him as his heir. Afterwards, as is known, he killed him to get rid of a potential danger.

The author maintains that after killing al-Riḍā, al-Maʿmūn supposed that the imāma has ceased. It encouraged him to deform the religion of God, so, in order to achieve this, he let the Greek Philosophy into religion. Therefore, the Imām Ahmad.

287 Idrīs, Zahr, translation, summary and comments made by Ivanow p 252
Arab. text. p. 61.

288 There is no other account that al-Riḍā had ever been in Damascus
the successor of the Imām ‘Abd Allāh, wrote Rasūl Ilkhān al-Ṣafā (the Epistles of the Brethren of Purity), the famous philosophic encyclopaedia, with the view to prevent Muslims from falling into al-Ma’mūn’s trap.289

From these stories two central figures have appeared. The first one is ‘Alī al-Riḍā, the Imām of the Twelver Shi’a, who was so stupid and imprudent that he could not see the obvious manoeuvre of the caliph, and he was so ignorant that he did not know what a "real Imām" must know. The second figure is a learned Ismā‘ili dā‘ī who was knowledgeable and persuasive insofar as he managed to convince the caliph with his knowledge and led him to convert to Ismā‘ilism or, according to another story, who was so devout and loyal that he sacrificed his life in order to protect his Imām. Consequently, it is obvious to see that these stories were written in a form of historical reports, but adding strong controversial elements directed against the Twelver Shi’a in the cause of Ismā‘ilism. Furthermore, inaccuracies in the reports render them unreliable. As Ivanow observes:

"As ‘Alī al-Riḍā was dead by 203/818, all this is nothing but a tissue of anachronism: Imām Ahmad most probably had not yet been born, and the Encyclopaedia of the Ilkhān al-Ṣafā did not exist. But it is all extremely typical of those "highly secret truths, reserved for the few highly initiated and trusted", which are what esoteric works usually contain when they touch on historical matters".290


290 Ivanow. The Rise of the Fatimids p 252.
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