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Chapter 10: The Imamate of Ja'far as-Sadiq

The sixth Imam, Abu 'Abd Allah Ja'far, the eldest son of Muhammad al-Baqir, was born in Medina either in 80/690 700 or 83/703-704.1 On his father's side Ja'far was of course a Husaynid descendant of the Prophet, and like his father he had a doubly strong relationship to 'Ali, since Muhammad al-Baqir was an 'Alid on both his father's and his mother's sides.2

On his mother's side Ja'far was the great-great-grandson of Abu Bakr,3 and thus he was the first among the Ahl al-Bayt who combined in his person descent from Abu Bakr as well as from 'Ali. His mother Umm Farwa was the daughter of Al-Qasim b. Muhammad b. Abi Bakr.4 Qasim married the daughter of his uncle 'Abd ar-Rahman b. Abi Bakr, and thus Umm Farwa was the great-granddaughter of Abu Bakr on both the father's and the mother's sides.

For the first fourteen years of his life Ja'far was brought up under the guardianship of his grandfather Zayn al-'Abidin. He observed the latter's acts of charity, his love for long series of prostrations and prayers, and his withdrawal from politics. At the same time, Ja'far noticed his grandfather's claims to the Imamate and his efforts, though meagre and limited, to collect around himself some devoted followers who resisted the popular appeal of the Imamate of Muhammad b. al- Hanafiya and then the latter's son, Abu Hashim. Ja'far also saw the respect with which Zayn al-'Abidin was held by the famous lawyers and scholars of Medina and elsewhere.5 In his mother's house young Ja'far saw his maternal grandfather, Qasim b. Muhammad b. Abi Bakr, considered by the people of Medina as one of the most erudite and esteemed traditionists of his time.6

Outside the family the childhood of Ja'far coincided with a rapidly growing interest in Medina in the acquiring of knowledge of Prophetic traditions and of seeking explanations of the Qur'anic verses. His boyhood also witnessed the culmination of Umayyad power, the final establishment of their administrative imperium, a period of peace and plenty, but hardly of religious fervour, as will be elaborated below. It seems probable that an environmental background of this kind in the life of a boy of

fourteen may have influenced his thinking and personality, giving his future work a certain direction.

With the death of Zayn al-'Abidin, Ja'far entered his early manhood and spent about twenty-three years under his father Muhammad al-Baqir. In all these years not only did Ja'far see his father's efforts to establish himself as the Imam of the House of the Prophet, but as the eldest son he participated in these activities. When Al-Baqir died, Ja'far was thirty-seven or thirty-four years old and was destined to live for a period of at least twenty-eight years as the head of the Shi'a following the elder line of the Husaynid Imams-a period longer than any other Imam of the House attained.7

Ja'far's fame for religious learning was great, greater than that of his father or of any other Twelver Imam except for 'Ali b. Abi Talib himself. Perhaps the earliest historical reference presenting Ja'far as one of the most respected and highly esteemed personalities of his epoch, and as having profound knowledge and learning, is Ya'qubi's statement that it was customary for scholars who related anything from him to say: "The Learned One informed us." Even the famous jurist of Medina, the Imam Malik b. Anas, is reported to have said, when quoting Ja'far's traditions: "The Thiqa (truthful) Ja'far b. Muhammad himself told me that ..." Similar compliments for Ja'far are attributed to the Imam Abu Hanifa, 10 who is also reported to have been his pupil Shahrastani said of Ja'far:

"His knowledge was great in religion and culture, he was fully informed in philosophy, he attained great piety in the world, and he abstained entirely from lusts. He lived in Medina long enough to greatly profit the sect that followed him, and to give his friends the advantage of the hidden sciences. On his father's side he was connected with the tree of prophecy, and on his mother's side with Abu Bakr."11

The Imamate of Ja'far as–Sadiq saw the most crucial period of Islamic history, both in political and in doctrinal spheres. It coincided with many epoch–making events, violent movements, the natural results of various undercurrent activities and revolutionary attempts, and above all the compromising attitude between the Ahl al–Hadith and the Muri'ites in their efforts to standardize a corpus of doctrine for the synthesis of the Muslim community, or Jama'a. The very existence of this many–sided and complex situation facilitated the rise of Ja'far's Imamate to a prominence not previously attained by the Imamates of his father and grandfather. Thus the fundamental point to be investigated is how the Imamate of Ja'far attained so great a prominence, as attested to by the testimony of Shi'i as well as Sunni sources, after having been reduced to an insignificant following by the abandonment of the line of the quiescent Imams by the majority of the Shi'is, who had been persuaded to join the extremist and revolutionary factions.

The answer to this question, however, cannot be found without examining a series of events and their ultimate results—the results which appeared in the success of the 'Abbasid house and the subsequent repudiation and frustration of the Shi'i cause. As Moscati has observed, after their success the 'Abbasids joined hands with the rest of the Muslims and pushed the Shi'is, on whose strength they had risen to power, into the role of an opposition 12 It is not possible, nor would it be desirable, to go into the details

of all those events of far-reaching consequences which took place before and during the Imamate of Ja'far and, as we have tentatively assumed above, made it crucial. Nevertheless, a broad outline and brief survey is necessary.

When the Umayyad's autocratic rule and their libertine way of life frustrated the expectations of Muslims, especially after the massacre at Karbala, many Muslims conceived the idea of Al-Mahdi; a leader they considered as directly guided by God. Though the use of the term Mahdi became the chief characteristic of the Shi'is, it had a great appeal among non Shi'is as well. The first to be proclaimed as the Mahdi was 'Ali's third son Muhammad, 13 born of a Hanafite woman.

The mass acre of Husayn, 14 the only surviving grandson of the Prophet, at Karbala, the destruction of the Ka'ba, the siege of Medina and the misfortunes inflicted on the pro 'Alid Kufans were sufficient grounds for a Mahdi uprising, though vengeance for "the blood of the Son of the Prophet" was the main cry. 15 The reluctance of Husayn's surviving son Zayn al-'Abidin to involve himself in political adventures caused the restless Kufan sympathizers of the House to seek the moral support of any other member of 'Alid descent. Thus, in the beginning it was perhaps not the personality of Muhammad b. al-Hanafiya which impressed the Kufans, but rather the basic need for a figurehead in whose name the movement could be launched. In fact, even Muhammad b. al- Hanafiya had always been reluctant to claim the role of the Mahdi for himself. 16

Mukhtar understood the situation only too well and made full use of it. He gathered the Kufan Shi'is in his house and declared:

"Al-Mahdi Muhammad b. 'Ali, the son of the Wasi; sent me to you as his trusted man, minister, and chosen supporter, and as his commander. He ordered me to fight against the blasphemers and claim vengeance for the blood of the people of his House, the excellent ones." 17

It is interesting to note that the emphasis is placed not on Muhammad b. al-Hanafiya, but on the "Mahdi" and on the "son of the Wasi" Ibn al-Hanafiya in fact may have agreed to Mukhtar's suggestions, when the latter said, "Your silence is your agreement," but nevertheless maintained an uncommitted attitude. In any case, Mukhtar might have so understood Ibn al-Hanafiya's behaviour, as he interpreted it before the people of Kufa.

Mukhtar's propaganda for Ibn al-Hanafiya's Mahdism gained the unqualified support of the great majority of the Shi'is, comprising both the Arabs and a large number of Persian mawali living in Kufa, who, as we have already seen, had by this time outnumbered the former. These mawali, who formed the backbone of Mukhtar's movement, called themselves shi'at al-Mahdi (the party of Al-Mahdi), Shi'at Al-Muhammad (the party of the Family of Muhammad), or the shi'at al-Haqq (the party of Truth). 18 Consequently, a sect in its own right, considerably well organized, active, and equipped with ideas of different extractions,

emerged with the name of the Kaysaniya, named after either the kunya of Mukhtar himself or the highly controversial figure of Abu 'Amra Kaysan, the mawla of Mukhtar. 19

Though Mukhtar's rule was soon ended by his being killed with the majority of his followers, Kaysanism, introduced by his followers to various provinces, became too widespread to be eradicated. These sectarians, some of whom lived as far away as Khurasan, continued to recognize Ibn al–Hanafiya as their Imam–Mahdi and to revere him to an extravagant degree. After his death in 81/700–701,20 the extremists of the sect believed in his concealment (ghayba) and return (raj'a), while the majority accepted the eldest of his sons, Abu Hashim 'Abd Allah, as the new Imam directly appointed by him.21 The former group was represented by three notable poets, Abu'l–Tufayl 'Amir b. Wa'ila, Kuthayyir, and Sayyid al–Himyari ;22 the last of these later became a follower of Ja'far as–Sadiq.

Kashshi records an interesting story about two men from the entourage of Ja'far as-Sadiq, As-Sarraj and Hammad b. 'Isa, who were known to believe that Muhammad b. al- Hanafiya was still alive. Ja'far reproached them and pointed out that Ibn al-Hanafiya was seen being buried, and his property had been divided and his widow had re-married.23 Nevertheless, the doctrine of "return" from that time became one of the chief characteristics of most branches of the Shi'is.

The messianic expectations of the Kaysanites, however, influenced a great number of the Muslims, Shi'is as well as non-Shi'is. Mahdism in fact became a common vehicle for the expression of the general feelings of the epoch, and was used as an effective instrument for political adventures.

There was a widespread dissatisfaction of both a political and a social nature which had many causes. The Arabs of Iraq were opposed to the hegemony of the Syrians. The non-Arab mawali resented the high-handed treatment meted out to them by the Arab ruling class, and the increasing number of Arabs entitled to the allowances must have added to the burdens imposed on the subject and conquered peoples. Because of the omnipresence of religion in every sphere of life, the social ferment and opposition against the existing regime were expressed in religious terms. General discontent, however, was not directed against the legal and religious foundations of the Islamic state as such 24. The laws contained in the Qur'an and the Sunna were the Word of God and the example of the Prophet under divine inspiration, and so they could not be wrong. But the rulers who applied these 1-aws, and whose duty it was to maintain and administer justice, were responsible for distorting or neglecting the commands of God and the custom of the Prophet. Thus the hope for liberation and a change in the political and social system meant not the abolition of the existing legal basis and the introduction of another law, but the faithful application of the divine rules 25.

Thus anti-Umayyad propaganda found expression mainly, and perhaps spontaneously, in religious terms. "The main concern of the Umayyads," as Schacht remarks, "was not with religion and religious law, but with political administration, and here they represented the organizing, centralising, and

increasingly bureaucratic tendency of an orderly administration. They were interested in questions of religious policy and theology insofar as these had a bearing on loyalty to themselves."26 To this another observation may be added. The close proximity in time of Umayyad rule with that of Muhammad and the Rashidun caliphs and the vast difference between their respective ways of life made the Muslims watch with shock and concern the personal lives, conduct, and behaviour of the Umayyads, addicted to wine-bibbing and singing-girls. Thus, with emphasis placed on their impiety and ungodliness, the Umayyads were regarded as usurpers, who deprived the family of the Prophet of their rights and inflicted untold wrongs upon them.27 The sack of Medina and the burning of the Ka'ba were also a black spot on the record of the dynasty.28

These observations by the Muslims led them to decry the Umayyads and depict their rule as an epoch of tyranny (zulm), at the same time placing before the eyes of the masses a hope for liberation. The victory of justice being understood as one of faith over impiety, it could be achieved only by divine sanction and under a God-inspired leader. Thus rather naturally the majority believed that this leader, Al-Mahdi, should be a man descended from the Prophet, or at least a member of his family, the Ahl al-Bayt. At the same time it should be particularly noted that the Messianic idea did not imply a mere passive waiting for salvation or spiritual guidance, a policy distinctly adopted by the legitimist line of the Imams: Ja'far and his predecessors. The concept of Yihad, which required every believer to expose his life and property in the cause of religion, did not allow for such a passive attitude.

The first 'Alid of the Husaynid line who rose against the tyranny of the Umayyads was Zayd, the second son of Zayn al-'Abidin. After the death of Zayn al-'Abidin, when his eldest son Al-Baqir, who became the legitimate Imam of the house, strictly followed his father's quiescent policy and restricted himself to the claims of religious leadership, Zayd proclaimed the principle of establishing good and prohibiting evil by force if necessary. Zayd preached that if an Imam wanted to be recognized, he should claim his rights sword in hand. It was, in fact, an expression of the deeply felt feelings not only of the Shi'is of Kufa, but also of the majority of Medinese, which Zayd understood only too well.

Thus many followers of Zayn al-'Abidin left Al-Baqir and went over to Zayd. They were joined by a considerable number of those of the Shi'is who had previously upheld the Imamate of Ibn al-Hanafiya and Abu Hashim, but the moderate views of Zayd's followers could not be reconciled with the extremist doctrines of the Kaysanites. At the same time, Zayd, by adhering to Wasil b. 'Ata' and his doctrines, gained the whole-hearted support of the Mu'tazilites, and his acceptance of the legitimacy of the first two caliphs earned him the full sympathy of the traditionist circles. These combinations reveal two fundamental points. Firstly, Zayd and his close followers rejected the ideas prevailing among other Shi'i groups. Zayd and his followers wanted no quiescent or hidden Imams, like Al- Baqir and Ibn al-Hanafiya.

The Imam, in their eyes, although he had to be a descendant of 'Ali and Fatima, yet could not claim allegiance unless he asserted his Imamate publicly. Secondly, Zayd realized the fact that in order to run

for the caliphate, he must have the main body of Muslim opinion behind him, and must, therefore, accept the main body of Islamic traditions. Thus he expressed this attitude by declaring his acceptance of Abu Bakr and 'Umar as legally elected caliphs. At the same time, he maintained the Shi'l belief that 'Ali was superior; nevertheless, he accepted the "Imamate of the Inferior" (Mafdul), that is, of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, as permissible in order to secure certain temporary advantages.29

After the death of Al-Baqir, Ja'far maintained his father's policy towards Zayd and his movement and remained a rather passive spectator. Being the uncle of Ja'far, Zayd had the superior position and Ja'far could not dare to deny his merits outwardly. It does not mean, however, that Ja'far did not have a close group of his own followers whom he inherited from his father and who resisted the Zaydite viewpoint Moreover, the concession to non-Shi'is 'given by Zayd, especially his emphasis on the rights of the first two caliphs, raised objections and ultimately caused many zealous Shi'is to abandon him. They revoked their oath and transferred their allegiance to Ja'far.30

According to one tradition Zayd said to the deserters: "You have abandoned me (rafadtumuni)" and zealous Shi'is have since been called Rafida.31 A party of Kufan Shi'is went to Medina and informed Ja'far of Zayd's ideas and activities. Maintaining his regard for his uncle, Ja'far simply said, "Zayd was the best of us and our master." 32

Zayd's revolt took place in Safar 122/December 740 and was unsuccessful. He himself was killed, and many of his followers were massacred.33 The Caliph Hisham then commanded that all eminent Talibis should publicly dissociate themselves from the insurrection and condemn its leader.34 Among them were 'Abd Allah b. Mu'awiya and 'Abd Allah al-Mahd,35 but the name of Ja'far as-Sadiq is nowhere mentioned. It shows that Ja'far must have shown himself distinctly and categorically opposed to the movements of the activist members of the family. It also recalls the time of Ja'far's grandfather, Zayn al-'Abidin, in the reign of Yazid, when, after the suppression of the Medinese revolt, all of Banu Hashim were forced to swear allegiance and declare themselves slaves of the Caliph, while Zayn al-'Abidin was exempted.36 Now Ja'far was spared in a similar situation, which indicates the continuity of the same policy in the legitimist line.

Zayd's son Yahya, however, continued his father's activities and managed to reach Khurasan in order to win the sympathies of the Kufan Shi'is, whom Al-Hajjaj and other Umayyad viceroys of Iraq had exiled to that distant province. But in 125/743, after three years' futile efforts, Yahya met the same fate as his father.37 Zayd's movement, in fact, was unable to captivate the hearts of the activist groups because he did not claim to be the Mahdi-an idea which had become so dear to the Shi'is masses. Moreover, his moderate policy eventually deprived him of the popular support of the Shi'is. Yet his revolt left a very deep mark upon the development of the whole Shi'i movement. Numerous learned men of Kufa, among them the great jurists Abu Hanifa an-Nu'man and Sufyan ath-Thawri, the traditionist Al-A'mash, the Qadi of Mada'in Hilal b. Hubab, and others, along with other leaders from other cities, supported or at

least sympathized with his cause.38

The movement of Zayd, however, though it ended in failure, paved the way for other claimants and offered ready ground for a more effective revolt. His and his son's deaths, which created a vacuum for active leadership, enhanced the prospects of two of their relatives and hitherto rivals: Ja'far as–Sadiq and Muhammad an–Nafs az–Zakiya. Since the former adhered to the quiescent policy of his father and grandfather, he was not inclined to make a bid for the leadership of an active movement with political implication.

Here we should note that the whole of Shi'ism at this stage was divided into three doctrinal groups. Firstly, there were the extremist and messianic groups originating from the Kaysanites; secondly, there was the moderate group which emerged from the teachings of Zayd and was backed by the Mu'tazilites and the traditionists of Medina and Kufa; and finally, the third group was under the personal influence of Ja'far as–Sadiq, who had been quietly propounding and expressing his own views and theories about the Imam and his function, which had neither Messianic pretensions nor Zaydite conciliatory moderation, as we shall see later.

Thus there remained only Muhammad an–Nafs az–Zakiya, from the House of the Prophet, who could attract both the Zaydites and the pro–Shi'i Mu'tazilites as well as a number of extremists on account of his Messianic claims. Though the actual revolt of An–Nafs az–Zakiya took place long after, in the sequence of events it would be in order to note that his Messianic movement in fact originates at this point.

Muhammad an-Nafs az-Zakiya was designated from his childhood for the role of Al-Mahdi by his father 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan al-Muthanna b. al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib, known as Al-Mahd. A grandson of Hasan b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib, Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah was renowned as one of the most virtuous men of his time and was famous for his religious learning and eloquence.39 When he reached manhood 'Abd Allah spared no efforts to extol the expected destiny of his son. A tradition from the Prophet on the authority of 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud was circulated, in which the Prophet is reported to have said:

"Even if there remains for the world but one single day, God will extend it until He sends a man from the people of my House, whose name will he the same as mine, and the name of his father will be that of my father. He will fill the earth with equity and justice, just as it now is filled with tyranny and oppression."40

As this tradition could also be applied to Muhammad al– Mahdi, the son of Manstir,41 another tradition was produced to assure the role of the Deliverer to An–Nafs az–Zakiya: "On the authority of Umm Salima, who reported; 'I heard the Apostle of God say, Al–Mahdi will be from the descent of Fitima.'"42

The candidature of An–Nafs az–Zakiya for the position of the Mahdi was supported not only by his close relatives, but also by the extremist Al–Mughira b. Sa'id al–Ijli.43 He had a reputation for being an extremist Shi'i, and Ja'far as–Sadiq repeatedly warned his followers not to accept Mughira's traditions.'44

Even after Al-Mughira was executed, his followers remained faithful to An-Nafs az-Zakiya.45 Besides, a number of moderate traditionists as well as the Mu'tazilites, led by 'Amr b. 'Ubayd and Wasil b. 'Ata',46 recognized the young 'Alid as the most suitable person to take the place vacated by Zayd and Yahya.47

After the death of Al-Walid b. Yazid, however, when the Umayyad dynasty was apparently disintegrating and the revolt of 'Abd' Allah b. Mu'awiya had gained a certain success in Khurasan, 'Abd Allah al-Mahd, along with other partisans of the 'Alid cause, decided to act.48 During a pilgrimage to Mecca, 'Abd Allah al-Mahd invited his relatives and followers to take the oath of allegiance to his son. That was done first in the Haram of Mecca and again at Al-Abwa, in the neighbourhood of Medina.49 According to Abu'l-Faraj,50 among those who took the oath were the three 'Abbasid brothers Ibrahim al-Imam, Abu'l-Abbas as-Saffah and Aba Ja'far al-Mansur (b. Muhammad b. 'Ali b. 'Abd Allah b. al-Abbas) as well as other members of the 'Abbasid house. There is no confirmation of this report that all these Abbasids took part in the ceremony at Al-Abwa Only the name of Aba Ja'far al-Mansur is given by some other historians.51

This latter report seems acceptable as Al-Mansur in his youth was a Mu'tazihte52 and a companion of 'Amr b. 'Ubayd,53 who probably induced him to pay homage to An-Nafs az-Zakiya. The only opposition from the Hashimites to An-Nafs az-Zakiya at Al-Abwa is reported to have come from Ja'far as-Sadiq's side,54 for he considered himself the only rightful person for the function of the Imamate, and was against any military organization.

However, in spite of An–Nafs az–Zakiya's popularity, neither he nor his father acted with sufficient energy, and they allowed the 'Abbasids to take the initiative. Both the father and the son were but passive spectators' to the great upheaval and downfall of the Umayyad dynasty. Indeed, all the necessary elements for a successful revolution were present, and it was only a matter of strike and action. Whoever could strike first would gain the prize.

Ideas as to who should and who should not be regarded as the Ahl al-Bayt were no doubt much confused at this time. Every claimant in 'Ali's family and their supporters and followers spread different theories to justify their own claims One group of the Shi'is held that after 'Ali only the sons through Fatima had the right to the heritage of the Prophet as the "family of the Prophet", and among them, since Husayn succeeded Hasan by the latter's expressed will, all rights were transferred to Husayn and his posterity to the exclusion of the Hasanid branch. This group, which we are referring to as the legitimist faction of the Shi'a, though it never ceased to make its existence felt, was undoubtedly reduced to a small minority at this particular time, after the Tawwabun movement. others believed that any descendant of 'Ali and Fatima, whether from the line of Husayn or Hasan, was entitled to the leadership

of the community. In this group come the followers of Zayd and An–Nafs az–Zakiya. The third and major group of the Shi'a in this transitional period, the Kaysanites, included also 'Ali's progeny by other women, in particular Muhammad b. al–Hanafiya and after him his son Abu Hashim. These distinctions were largely understood and observed by the more theoretical and legalistically–minded people in Medina and Kufa. The mass of the people, however, full of hatred, discontent, and the feeling of being suppressed by the Umayyad aristocracy, were ready to swarm around any member of the revered clan of the Talibis who could liberate them from their sufferings.

Swayed by these feelings, therefore, a large part of the local population of Kufa, especially of the lower classes, were prepared to range themselves with any anti–Umayyad movement. Such was the support given to the dubious claims of 'Abd Allah b. Mu'awiya,55 a great–grandson of 'Ali's elder brother Ja'far b. Abi Talib. Tabari mentions that the majority of his supporters consisted of the slaves and commoners of Kufa and the villagers of the Sawad.56 After an unsuccessful rising in Kufa, Ibn Mu'awiya managed to reach Persia and controlled a large area there until he was assassinated, probably by Aba Muslim.57 It might be accepted that Ibn Mu'awiya attained success in Persia by connecting himself with the Kaysaniya through the claim that he was the emissary of Aba Hashim. Ibn Mu'awiya's propaganda in Khurasan, however, made the task easier for a more vigorous leader to organize a successful revolt.

After all the preceding movements and revolts, the time was now ripe for a successful rising which was not, in fact, in favour of an 'Alid; but rather for the 'Abbasids, who had for some time been plotting in the background and watching for their opportunity. 'Ali b. 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbas b. 'Abd al- Muttalib was the first person of the Abbasid house to nourish political ambitions, but had nothing tangible to support him from a legal point of view. His grandfather Al-'Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet, had never claimed the caliphate for himself Moreover, his being a late convert to Islam and his opportunistic policy58 had marred his reputation among the Muslims. 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas too, though renowned for his learning, had no political a8pirations and always championed the cause of 'Ali b. Abi Talib.59 He was 'Ali's governor in Basra and also his personal representative attached to the arbiter Abu Musa al-Ash'arl.60 It is possible that 'Ali b. 'Abd Allah might have been inspired by certain rights based on old tribal customs. The Meccan clan of Priest-Sayyids included all the descendants of 'Abd al-Muttalib, and so, from the viewpoint of legitimism, their claims were better than those of the Banu Umayya, which were based mainly on political factors. The Umayyads on their part endeavoured to prove that the whole clan of the Banu 'Abd Manaf were the ruling house of the Quraysh.61

Nevertheless, even if 'Abbas, once the custodian of the Ka'ba, and his progeny had as strong a claim to supreme leadership as 'Ali b. Abi Talib, the 'Abbasids had neglected it for too long. Moreover, the fact that 'Ali was one of the earliest converts to Islam, while 'Abbas tarried until the conquest of Mecca, was detrimental to the position of the 'Abbasids within the Muslim community. Then, the Shi'is had accustomed themselves to the idea that the rights to the caliphate belonged to the 'Alids. Obviously, therefore, it was not possible for the 'Abbasids to claim the caliphate directly.

'Ali b. 'Abd Allah saw an opportunity, in inducing Abu Hashim, the son and successor of Ibn al-Hanafiya, who had no son and was a lonely person under the detention of the Umayyads in Damascus, to bequeath to the 'Abbasids his rights to the Imamate. He instructed his youthful son Muhammad to gain the Imam's favour and confidence. After some time, the Caliph Sulayman b. 'Abd al-Malik allowed Abu Hashim to return home. On his way to the Hijaz, it issaid that he was poisoned, either at the instigation of the Caliph Sulayman or by Muhammad on his own account.62

He died at Humayma, the headquarters of the 'Abbasids, where he stayed as the latter's guest. Before his death he made Muhammad b. 'Ali his legatee and gave him letters addressed to Shi'i circles in Khurasan.63 In this way Muhammad became Imam and was recognized by the majority of the Hashimiya sect, and thus "the 'Abbasids inherited the party and organization of Abu Hashim, along with his claims."64

Though the 'Abbasid movement was first organized and directed from Kufa, it seems that the 'Abbasids were not very sure of the Kufans, due to the latters' pro-'Alid sympathies, and so were afraid that the Iraqis would be unwilling to accept their claims to the Imamate. Although many of the Hashimiya sectarians recognized the validity of the 'Abbasids' claims, some of them refused to accept the transfer of the Imamate from the 'Alids to another branch of the Hashimites. This was particularly characteristic of the attitude of the Kufans, whose pro-'Alid sympathies were very strong. Some Shi'is believed that Abu Hashim was not dead, but had concealed himself, and that he was Al-Mahdi. Others admitted that he had died, but had appointed his brother 'Ali to the Imamate, which then passed from father to son in the same line.65

On the other hand, Khurasan was still largely a virgin land insofar as sectarian conflicts were concerned. The majority of the so-called Shi'is in that distant country were not so much interested in the differences between the various branches of the Ahl al-Bayt, but they were ready to follow any leader from the House of the Prophet against the Umayyads.66 Still, Abu Muslim, the chief organizer of the movement, though appointed by Ibrahim,67 the head of the 'Abbasid family, claimed to be acting on behalf of an Imam from the Ahl al- Bayt who had not yet been chosen or designated. In this way he gained the support of many who would not have been ready to support him had they known that the Imam from the family of Hashim would in fact be from the family of Al-'Abbas.68 The support given by the followers of Al-Mukhtar may strengthen this assumption.

However, Ibrahim was arrested by the orders of the Caliph Marwan b. Muhammad, brought to Damascus, and subsequently dispatched to Harran and imprisoned, where he died either of plague oras the 'Abbasids assert-was put to death at the Caliph's command.69 According to Ibrahim's instructions, his brother Abu'1-'Abbas, in the company of a third brother, Abu Ja'far 'Abd Allah, and fourteen other members of the family, left Al-Humayma and reached Kufa.70 In Kufa the local representative of the

'Abbasids was Abu Salama Hafs, a Kaysanite follower of Abu Hashim. At this critical moment Abu Salama is reported to have thought of breaking his allegiance to the 'Abbasids since he felt bound by loyalty to Imam Ibrahim, but not to his brothers.71 He lodged the 'Abbasid fugitives in a house and tried to conceal their whereabouts from the Khurasanian leaders in Kufa.72

According to what Jahshiyari and Tabari report, when the news of the death of Ibrahim al-Imam reached Kufa, Abu Salama "on the suggestion and advice of some other Shi'is of Kufa, intended to establish the Imamate of the 'Alids,"73 and accordingly he wrote letters to Ja'far as-Sadiq, 'Abd Allah al- Mahd, and 'Umar b. 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, asking each one of them in turn to come to Kufa in person and he would support their claims to the Imamate.

The messenger was ordered first to contact Ja'far, and only if he refused, then to go to 'Abd Allah, and in case of his refusal, to 'Umar b. 'Ali. When the messenger, however, presented the letter first to Ja'far, the latter called for a lamp, burned the letter, and said to the messenger, "Tell your master what you have seen."74 Mas'udi tells the story in a different colour, saying: "When the 'Abbasid leader Ibrahim al-Imam was killed by Marwan II, Abu Salama feared that this would mean the failure of their undertaking, and he attempted therefore to induce Ja'far as Sadiq, and in case he refused, then 'Abd Allah and lastly 'Umar b. 'Ali, to come to him in person and to openly declare his claims to the Imamate."75

The same story asserts that 'Abd Allah al-Mahd accepted the offer and was only too delighted to receive the help of Abu Salama. Ja'far as-Sadiq, in all the sources which have recorded this story, is reported to have severely warned 'Abd Allah "not to indulge and endanger his and his son's life in this game of power and treachery, as Abu Salama is not our Shi'a and the Khurasanians are not our followers." 'Abd Allah bitingly retorted, "You are jealous of me and my son."76 If this conversation is true it would throw light on Ja'far's extremely cautious policy of keeping entirely out of politics. As for Abu Salama, Moscati points out that in his wavering attitude "one can perhaps see a consequence of the deliberate ambiguity about the rights of the 'House of the Prophet', put into circulation by the revolutionary propaganda."77

The events in Kufa moved quickly in favour of the 'Abbasids. Their presence or concealment78 in Kufa was betrayed through one Abu Jahm to Abu Humayd, who, with other Khurasanian chiefs encamped in the vicinity of Kufa, came and at once paid homage to Abu'l-'Abbas79 as the Imam and Caliph, compelling Abu Salama to comply.80

Immediately after, Abu'l-'Abbas, together with hi8 supporters, went to the mosque where he made his inaugural speech. In this speech he named himself as-Saffah (the Bloodshedder) and identified the glory of God with his own interests and those of his house. He named "the Abbasids as the Ahl al-Bayt from whom uncleanness was removed", and denied that the 'Alids were more worthy of the caliphate.81 As-Saffah's address was followed by a speech from his uncle, Da'ud b. 'Ali, who emphasized that the rights of the 'Abbasids were legally inherited and there were but two legal caliphs in Islam: 'Ali b. Abi

Talib and As-Saffah. He added that the caliphate would remain in the hands of the 'Abbasids until they passed it over to 'Isa b. Maryam (Jesus).82

The accession of Abu'l-'Abbas was followed immediately by the first breach with the extremist Shi'is. The testament of Abu Hashim was of the utmost importance to the 'Abbasids, for at the onset of their propaganda it allowed them to take over the sectarian circles in Persia and so establish the nucleus of their own religio-political party. Once the aim was achieved, the 'Abbasids, on their own accession to the caliphate, justified their rights by different arguments, without even mentioning Abu Hashim's name. Now they found it necessary to allow the memory of the bequest to pass into oblivion, for its connections with Shi'i extremism were too strong and could be dangerous or embarrassing.

The first task, therefore, before As–Saffah was to break the alliance with the extremists and to remove those who supported the cause basically on that sectarian ground. Thus the first who had to pay with his life was Abu Salama, either on account of his strong connections with the extremist Shi'is or because of his alleged pro–'Alid leanings and his offer of support for their bid for the caliphate. The second reason cannot be completely ignored as an immediate cause of his assassination. There seems no difficulty in accepting that, at first, knowing nothing about Abu Salama's recent pro'–Alid activities, the 'Abbasids called him by. the title Wazir Al Rasul Allah,83 but as soon as As–Saffah came to know about his fickleness he successfully arranged for his assassination. This is what both Tabari and Mas'udi clearly describe as the reason for Aba Salama's assassination.84 Nevertheless, this immediate cause was coupled with As–Saffah's policy to get rid of revolutionary sectarians, of whom Abu Salama was the most powerful leader.

As-Saffah's rule lasted for four years, during which period the 'Alids in Medina, "disorganized by the frustration of their hopes",85 kept quiet and affairs remained stationary. But when Mansur assumed the caliphate in 136/753, the 'Alids, embittered by the usurpation of their rights by the house of 'Abbas, began to voice their complaints. On the other hand, except for the shi'at Bani 'Abbas, who regarded As-Saffah not only as Caliph and Imam but also as the Mahdi, the Shi'l masses were also dissatisfied; and this popular dissatisfaction, which became manifest even during As-Saffah's rule,86 grew with the accession of Al-Mansur. They felt that the expected Kingdom of Righteousness had not materialised: one evil rule had been replaced by another.

Thus, at the accession of Mansur, Muhammad an–Nafs az–Zakiya, who had long been coveting the role of Al–Mahdi, refused to take the oath of allegiance to him and started his Messianic propaganda. This angered Mansur, and in 140/758 he decided to compel An–Nafs az–Zakiya and his brother Ibrahim to pay him homage. He ordered the arrest of 'Abd Allah al–Mahd and many other 'Alids; of the thirteen arrested, some were cruelly scourged to try to force them to disclose the hiding place of the other fugitives, but in vain.87

It is important to note that though An-Nafs az-Zakiya tried to gain support in many parts of the Muslim

population,88 it was chiefly the people of the Hijaz, rather than Kufa, who enthusiastically responded to his appeal, and with few exceptions, swore the oath of allegiance to him.89 The traditionist circles of Medina wholeheartedly supported and upheld his cause; Malik b. Anas declared that the oath sworn to the 'Abbasids was no longer binding as it had been taken under compulsion.90 The Zaydites and Mu'tazilites of Kufa and Basra were also ready to help him.91 In Ramadan 145/December 762, however, a fierce battle was engaged and resulted in the utter defeat of the Medinese and in the death of An–Nafs az–Zakiya while fighting the 'Abbasid army. The experience and death of An–Nafs az–Zakiya resulted in many traditions, some of them attributed to Ja'far as–Sadiq, who was said to have foreseen the fate of An–Nafs az–Zakiya.92

An-Nafs az-Zakiya's abortive uprising was followed by another by his brother Ibrahim in Basra, where he was collecting supporters for the former. The Zaydite and Mu'tazilite circles of Kufa and Basra supported Ibrahim in a body.93

The jurists of Ku fa-Abu Hanifa, Sufyan al-Thawri, Mas'ud b. Kudam, and many others-wrote letters to Ibrahim inviting him to their city or backed him by issuing legal decisions (fatawa) favouring his cause.94 With a force of 15,000 men Ibrahim left Basra for Kufa to join his Kufan sympathisers, but was encountered by the 'Abbasid army at Bakhamra, which resulted in Ibrahim's death.95

This was the end of 'Alid risings of any consequence and of Messianic hopes aspired to by them or placed in them. Some of An–Nafs az–Zakiya's followers then found an outlet for their hopes in certain supernatural ideas. They regarded him as the Mahdi and refused to accept the fact of his death, asserting that orly a devil in human form had been killed in his stead, while he was concealed in a mountain in Najd.96 The failure of Ibrahim's revolt also practically marked the end of the Medinese desire to establish a caliphate of their own choice. The long cherished hopes of the Shi'is, especially those of activists and extremists, were frustrated.

All these events and circumstances, however, form the background against which the Imamate of Ja'far happened to fall. Rut before we try to examine his position and his standpoint in this religio-political setting, there remains still another vital aspect to be elaborated.

We have seen that the great Hashimite party of the Umayyad era was now split into 'Alids and 'Abbasids. So the struggle assumed a new form. It was no longer a deadly struggle between "a usurping dynasty" and a legitimist opposition, but rather between the two factions of Banu Hashim, each claiming legitimist rights for itself with the total exclusion of the other: the descendants of the Prophet's uncle and the descendants of the Prophet's cousin and daughter, 'Ali and Fatima. And to further complicate the situation, the house of 'Ali was itself divided into three factions: the line of Husayn; the line of Ibn al–Hanafiya; and the line of Hasan, which emerged later. Thus the house of

'Abbas was on one side, and the house of 'Ali, divided into three groups, was on the other.

The first 'Abbasid caliph, As–Saffah, fully anticipated this situation and from the very first moment of his caliphate began the task of justifying the rights of his house on legitimist grounds, as is evident from his inaugural speech discussed above. In this way he laid down the foundation of his family's policy in the forthcoming struggle t6 repudiate the claims of the house of 'Ali. But, owing to the fact that during the short lived reign of As–Saffah the 'Alids themselves could not come out with any serious or visible opposition, things remained rather confused and stationary.

It was Mansur who had to face the most threatening opposition from the 'Alids to the newly established authority of his house. Thus in order to save, strengthen, and consolidate his caliphate, Mansur concentrated his efforts on two basic and fundamental objectives. The first was to justify the rights of his house on legal and religious grounds. This logically implied the repudiation of the claims of the 'Alids through legal argumentation. The second was to gain for his caliphate the acceptance of the Muslim Jama'a.

This required the severance of all relations and connections with all revolutionary and extremist groups and organizations. Mansur realized only too well that Kaysanite Shi'ism, Rawandite extremism,97 revolutionaries of Abu Muslim's following (who held beliefs which comprised a mixture of Kaysanite Shi'ism and Mazdakism), or the Shi'at of 'Abbasiya, could not serve as the religious basis for the 'Abbasid caliphate. Repudiating all of the above groups, Mansur approached the traditionist circles (Ahl al–Hadith), which he recognized as the representative section of the Muslim community and the exponents of 'the Jama'a. It would be in order if we consider this aspect later and examine first his endeavour to vindicate the rights of his house to the caliphate.

The best and probably the most authentic and relevant documentary evidence in this connection is an exchange of letters between Mansur and his most serious 'Alid rival, Muhammad an–Nafs az–Zakiya. In order to understand Mansur's method of argumentation and his approach to the problem it is necessary to first consider An–Nafs az–Zakiya's letter to him. It reads:

"Our father 'Ali was the Wasi and the Imam. How is it that you appropriate his inheritance while we are still alive? You know that there is no one among the Hashimites who himself has points of excellence and honour comparable to our past and present, our descent and our cause ... We are the children of Fatima, the daughter of 'Amr, at the time of paganism, whereas you are not; we are the children of the Prophet's daughter Fatima at the time of Islam, and you are not.

And I happen to be the golden medium in the line of descent amongst Banu Hashim, and the best of them all as regards parentage. No Persian did I have for a mother and no slave–girls were on the maternal side of my ancestors...98 I was twice–born from the loins of Muhammad the Prophet ... amongst my grandfathers I have the highly esteemed in Paradise and the least tormented in Hell; I am

therefore the son of the best of the excellent people. 'As for the amnesty you have given me, may I ask what kind of amnesty it is? Is it the same that you gave to Ibn Hubayra or to your uncle 'Abd Allah b. 'Ali or the one that was given to Abu Muslim?"99

It is clear from this letter that first of all An–Nafs az–Zakiya claims his rights on the basis that his ancestor 'Ali b. Abu Talib was the Wasi and the Imam, and then he strengthens this by emphasizing the circumstance of his birth from both his father's and his mother's sides: sharaf from the father's side and dignity from the mother's side. At the end he alludes to the treacherous nature of the 'Abbasids. It is particularly interesting to note that in spite of his reference to 'Ali as the Wasi and the Imam, and to Fatimid descent, 100 the Hijaz was unanimous in supporting the cause of An–Nafs az–Zakiya.

It would be most revealing to see how Mansur argued against the claims of his 'Alid rival and how he justified his own rights to the supreme leadership of the community. Mansur replied to An-Nafs az-Zakiya in this way:

"I received your letter. You know that our greatest honour in the times of ignorance, namely the dispensing of water for the pilgrims and the guardianship of the well of Zamzam, become the privilege of 'Abbas alone among all his brothers. Your father ['Ali] litigated concerning this privilege with us' but 'Umar has given judgement in our favour so that we have never ceased to be in possession of this honour in the times of the Jahiliya as well as in those of Islam...

"Most of your pride is based on descent from the mother's side, 101 which would only deceive the uncouth and the common. God has not made the women like uncles, fathers, fathers–in–law and the responsible relatives... As for your claim that you are the son of the Apostle of God, Almighty God has rejected such a claim when he said, 'Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Apostle of God and the Seal of the Prophets.'102 But you are the children of the daughter. Verily it is a close relationship, but she is a woman who can inherit but cannot become an Imam. How on earth then could the Imamate be inherited through her?... You know that after the death of the Prophet no son of 'Abd al–Muttalib remained alive other than Al–'Abbas, and that 'Abbas inherited his rights as the uncle of the Prophet. Then more than one of the Banu Hashim sought the caliphate, but none attained it except the descendants of 'Abbas, and so the Siqaya and the inheritance of the Prophet, as well as the caliphate, belong to him and his progeny, and will remain in their possession. For 'Abbas was heir and legatee to every honour and virtue that ever existed in the times of the Jahiliya and of Islam." 103

This letter is a most important document for our understanding of the line of argument which Mansur adopted against his 'Alid rivals. If we analyse the contents of the letter the following points will be evident. Firstly, he resorted to the customary law of the Arabs according to which when the lather dies, the paternal uncle takes his place. Secondly, he placed special stress on 'Umar's ruling in favour of 'Abbas thus emphasizing the second caliph's authority in the same way as the Ashab al-Hadith. Thirdly,

'Abbas, as the uncle, had better claims to the heritage of the Prophet than 'Ali did as a cousin and son-in-law. Fourthly, he rejected any claim through Fatima, which was a great prerogative for commanding respect among the Shi'is in particular and among the Muslims in general. Finally, the 'Alids, due to the weakness of their legal claim, coupled with their lack of energy, successively failed in their attempts to procure the caliphate for themselves, while the progeny of 'Abbas attained it due to their better claims, coupled with competence and ability. It is also very important to note that both An– Nafs az–Zakiya and Mansur go back for their arguments of rights to the Jahiliya period and consider the prerogative of that time honourable and applicable to the Islamic era.

It is, however, evident from the support given to the risings of An–Nafs az–Zakiya and his brother Ibrahim, which took place after this correspondence, by the Ahl al–Hadith (whether of Murjite brand or otherwise) that they were not impressed by the arguments of Mansur for the alleged rights of 'Abbas; they continued to assert that the only just candidates to the Imamate were the 'Alids. We have pointed out that when An–Nafs az–Zakiya rose in rebellion, Malik b. Anas declared that the oath of allegiance taken by the inhabitants of Medina to the 'Abbasids was unlawful, as it had been enforced under duress. Similarly, during the revolt of Ibrahim b. 'Abd Allah, Abu Hanifa, Sufyan ath–Thawri, Al–A'mash and other Ku fan jurists and Ahl al–Hadith gave their most emphatic support and encouragement to those who wished to participate in insurrection. 104

After the reconquest of Medina and the suppression of the revolt of Ibrahim, Mansur ordered Malik b. Anas to be flogged, and considered Abu Hanifa as an enemy so dangerous that he imprisoned him until his death. 105 Apart from these few strong and rather irreconcilable personalities who actively opposed him and were to be severely punished, Mansur did not attack the traditionists as such. On the contrary, he regarded them as the basic element on which he could establish the foundation of a theocratic state, headed by the Khalifat Allah, the vice–regent of God, obedience to whom was an absolute religious duty (fard). 106 Thus, for example, when Mansur said in a sermon "Only I am the authority of God upon His earth," 107 he was not announcing himself merely as a defender of religion or its protector. He identified his interest with the faith of Islam and treated the will of God as synonymous with his own aims.

Gradually, however, whether because of the fact that no powerful member of the 'Alid house was ready to lead a rising, or due to Mansur's successful policy of blandishment or coercion, most of the Ahl al– Hadith and jurists of Medina and Kufa came to be reconciled with the caliphate. Eventually, willingly or unwillingly, they abandoned the 'Alid cause and ranged themselves obediently under Mansur's orders.

Now, keeping in view this religio-political setting of events, we are better able to examine the reemergence of the legitimist Imamate of the Husaynid line under the leadership of Ja'far as-Sadiq, and the role played by him in the midst of these circumstances. By an analysis of all that has been brought out above, one major and fundamental point is certain. All the successive claimants of the 'Alid house based their claims on the principle that they were the rightful Imams due to their virtues and

circumstances of birth, and that the Imamate and the caliphate cannot be separated: therefore it is exclusively their legitimist right as well as their religious duty to take the caliphate back from the usurpers, whether Umayyad or 'Abbasid. In other words, they thought it the function of the rightful Imam to run the caliphal administration, which is meant to establish the rule of justice and equality, and thus it is necessary for an Imam to be a caliph. This principle was accepted by the representative groups of the Muslim Jama'a–Mu'tazilites, Murjites, Ahl al–Hadith and the jurists of Medina and Kufa–which is evident from the wholehearted support given by them to the 'Alid claimants and to their risings. On the other hand, the 'Abbasids too held the same view that the Imamate and the caliphate are inseparable, and a rightful Imam alone has the right to command the caliphal authority. But at the same time they disputed and rejected the claims of the 'Alids for this office and asserted that only they themselves were the legitimist Imam–caliphs. Ultimately Mansur, however, succeeded in crushing the 'Alids and gaining the submission of the representative groups of the Jama'a.

This meant the complete collapse and defeat of the 'Alid claims to the Imamate, since, as they held, the Imamate was bound up with the caliphate, which they had failed to procure for themselves. This critical situation, however, required a fresh interpretation and elucidation of the whole concept of the Imamate.

It was at this point that the Imam Ja'far as–Sadiq emerged with his comprehensive interpretation of the function of the Imamate. He differed categorically from the hitherto dominating view that an Imam should be a caliph as well, and put forward the idea of dividing the Imamate and the caliphate into two separate institutions until such time as God would make an Imam victorious. This Imam, who must be a descendant of the Prophet through 'Ali and Fatima, derives his exclusive authority, not by political claims but by Nass, that is, explicit designation by the previous Imam, and he inherits the special knowledge of religion coming down in the family from generation to generation. Thus the sphere and domain of this Imam is chiefly religious leadership and the spiritual guidance of the community, not the temporal power.

We shall see in detail in the following chapter how Ja'far elaborated this theory of the Imamate and the nature and function of an Imam. But let us make it clear here that Ja'far was by no means the originator of this theory of the Imamate. We have already pointed out that the idea of a legitimist Imam inspired with special knowledge had already been adopted by Zayn al-'Abidin, and then it was further advanced by Muhammad al-Baqir. It was, however, the time and circumstances which provided Ja'far with a most suitable and propitious opportunity to elaborate and explain the ideas propounded by his father and grandfather. This great opportunity therefore made Ja'far's Imamate crucial.

Before we close this chapter, two more points are to be noted in passing. One is the question whether Ja'far, by presenting the theory pertaining to his own and his father's Imamates, thought of establishing a sect, group, or party of his own, separated from the rest of the Muslims, or whether he wanted his Imamate with the above–mentioned prerogatives to be accepted and acknowledged by the whole body of the Muslim. The audience of Ja'far and the wide range of people whom he addressed and tried to

convince is a sufficient proof that Ja'far himself did not intend to establish a separate sect which alone should follow his doctrine of the Imamate. But in the event, only those who had already a background of Shi'i inclination of one sort or another accepted Ja'far's doctrine of the Imamate and ultimately became a section of the Muslim community distinguishable from the rest of it.

The second point is that the doctrine of the Imamate and the function of the Imam elaborated by Ja'far at this stage provided a basic authority for the later Twelver theologians and theorists to explain and solve many problems of the pre–Ja'far period. This was done by applying Ja'far's theory of the Imamate to the actions of the Imams of the House who came before him, for example, 'Ali's acceptance of the first three caliphs, the abdication of Hasan, the inactive attitude of Husayn and the quiescent policies of Zayn al–'Abidin and Muhammad al–Baqir. All these questions were solved in accordance with Ja'far's explanation that it is not necessary for a rightful Imam to combine the temporal power in his person or even claim the political authority—the caliphate—if the circumstances did not allow him to do so. On the other hand, it can also be said that Ja'far's theory of the Imamate was in fact a natural corollary of his family's past history and experience.

- 1. For the former date, see Ya'qubi, Ta'rikh, II, p. 381; Ibn Khallikan, I. p.327; Ibn al-Jawzi; Safwa, II, p. 93; 'Amili, A'yan, IV, p. 54; Muhammad b. Talha, Matalib al-Su'ul, p. 89. For the latter, see Mas'udi, Muruj, III, p. 219; Sa'd al-Ash'ari, Maqalat, p. 79; Kulayni, Kufi; p. 193; Majlisi, Tadhkirat al-A'imma p. 139. It is difficult to choose between these two dates, but the former is probably correct, since Ibn Khallikan and others record his birth in the 'Amm al-Juhaf the year of the flood in Mecca, which according to Tabari, II, p. 1040, occurred in 80/699-700.
- 2. Ibn Sa'd, V, p. 320; Ya'qubi, II, p. 320; Qadi Nu'man, Sharh al-Akhbar, MS. fol. 32a.
- 3. Ibn Khallikan, I, p. 327; Qadi Nu'man, loc. cit.
- 4. Tabari, III, p. 2509; Ya'qubi, II, p. 381; Sa'd al-Ash'ari, Maqalat, p. 79; Ibn Khallikan, loc. cit.; Kulayni, Kufi, p. 194; 'Amili; A'yan, IV, p. 452
- 5. See Ibn Sa'd, V, p. 216; Ibn 'Imad, Shadharat, I, p. 104; Ya'qubi, III, p. 46; Kashshi, Rijal, pp. 7-79; Abu Nu'aym, Hilya, III, p. 135
- 6. Ibn Sa'd, V, pp. 189 ff; Tabari, II, p. 1183; Ibn Imad, Shadharat, I, p. 62
- 7. See Kulayni, Kafi; p. 193. His Imamate would have been of twenty-eight years' duration based on a birth date of 83/703-704; if 80/699-700 is accepted, his period in the Imamate would be thirty- one years.
- 8. Ya'qubi, II, p. 381
- 9. Qadi Nu'man, Sharh al-Akhbar, MS. Fo1. 42a
- 10. ibid., fo 1. 39a
- 11. Shahrastani, Milal, I, p. 166
- 12. S. Moscati, "Per Una Storia De la'Antica Si'a," RSO, 1955, p. 251
- 13. B. Lewis, The Origins of Isma'ilism, p.25
- 14. Husayn was also called "al-Mahdi; son of al-Mahdi', but this as yet had no messianic implications. See Tabari, II, p. 46
- 15. Baladhuri, V, p. 218; also see Tabari, II, pp. 606 f., 633
- 16. See Ibn Sa'd, V, p. 94
- 17. Baladhuri, loc. cit.

- 18. Tabari, II, pp. 672–710; Baladhuri, V, p. 253. For the other titles which they were given, see Tabari, II, p. 691; Baladhuri; loc. cit.
- 19. For the name Kaysaniya there are a number of suggestions, and the person of Aba 'Amra Kaysan has also been a great historical problem. For various suggestions and possibilities see Shahrastani, Milal, I, p. 147; Baghdadi, Farq, p. 26; Baladhuri, V, p.229; B. Lewis, The Origins of Isma'ilism, p.27
- 20. Ibn Sa'd, V, p. 115
- 21. Ibn Khaldun, 'Ibar, III, p. 172. Thus Aba Hashim became recognized as the official head of this branch of the Shi'a; see De Goeje, "Al-Baladhuri Ansab", ZDMG, 1884, p.394
- 22. See the verse of Kuthayyir in Aghani; IX, p. 14, and the eulogy of lbn al-Hanafiya by Al-Sayyid al-Himyari in Aghani; VII, p. 227
- 23. Kashshi, Rijal, p.314
- 24. W.Ivanow, "Early Shi'ite Movements", JBBRAS, 1939, p.3
- 25. ibid.
- 26. Schacht, An Introduction to Islamic Law, p.23
- 27. Mubarrad, Kamil, I, p.710
- 28. Jahiz. Rasa'il, "Kitab Fadl Bani Hashim", p.99; "Risala fi Bani Umayya", p.66. Also see the commentary on the Qur'anic verse XVII, 50 in the tafsir works.
- 29. See Montgomery Watt, "Shi'ism Under the Ummayyads", JRAS, 1960, pp. 169 f.
- 30. Tabari, II, p. 1700
- 31. Tabari, loc. cit. For the use and meaning of the word Rafidi see Montgomery Watt, "The Rafidites", Oriens, XVI (1963), p.116
- 32. Tabari, loc. cit.
- 33. Tabari, II, p. 1709; Abul-Faraj, Magatil, pp. 140 f.
- 34. Jahiz Bayan, I, p.311-312
- 35. ibid.
- 36. Mubarrad, Kamil, I, p. 260
- 37. See Tabari, II, p. 1774; Abul-Faraj, Maqatil, pp. 152 ff.
- 38. Abul-Faraj, Magatil, pp. 145 ff.
- 39. See Jahiz,, Bayan, I, p.353; Abul-Faraj, Maqatil, pp.233 ff.
- 40. Abu Da'ud, Sunan, II, p. 135
- 41. See Aghani, XII, p.85
- 42. Aba Da'ud, Sunan, II, p. 135; Ibn Maja, Sunan, II, p. 269
- 43. Sa'd al-Ash'ari, Maqalat, pp.74, 77; Nawbakhti, Firaq, p.59
- 44. Sa'd al-Ash'ari, Maqalat, p.77; Nawbakhti, Firaq, p.43
- 45. Nawbakhti, Firaq, p.52; Baghdadi, Farq, pp.36 ff.; Sa'd al- Ash'ari, Maqalat, p.74
- 46. Abu'l-Faraj, Maqatil, pp.209 f., 292 ff.
- 47. ibid.
- 48. Tabari, III, pp. 143 ff.; Abu'l-Faraj, Maqatil, pp. 206, 253
- 49. Tabari, III, p.52; Abu'l-Faraj, Maqatil, pp.209, 256. For Al-Abwa, see Yaqut, Mu'jam al-Buldan, I, p.79. According to another report, this homage was paid at Suwayqa; See Abu'l-Faraj, Maqatil, pp.293 ff.; E11 article 'Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah"
- 50. Abu'l-Faraj, Maqatil pp.208,253, 178
- 51. See, for example, Tabari III, p. 152
- 52. Tabari, III, pp. 143, 152; EI1 article "Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah"
- 53. Abu'l-Faraj, Maqatil, p. 209
- 54. Abu'l-Faraj, Maqatil, pp.207 f, 254 ff; EI1 article "Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah"
- 55. See Aghani, XII, pp. 213 ff; Tabari, II, pp. 1879, 1881; Montgomery Watt, "Shi'ism Under the Umayyads", p. 170
- 56. Tabari, II, pp. 1881, 1883, 1887

- 57. See Montgomery Watt, "Shi'ism Under the Umayyads",p. 170
- 58. See Montgomery Watt, EI2 article "Abbas b. 'Abd al-Muttalib"
- 59. Kashshi, Rijal, pp. 56 f.
- 60. See Kashshi Rijal, pp. 57 ff; Veccia Vaglieri, El2 article "Abd Allah b. 'Abbas"
- 61. Mubarrad, Kamil, I, p. 180
- 62. See Abu'l-Faraj, Maqatil, p. 126; Kamil V, pp. 32-9 S. Moscati, "Testamento di Abu Hashim", RSO, XXVII (1952), pp. 24-8
- 63. Mas'udi, Muruj, III, p.238; Abu'l-Faraj, loc. cit.; Kamil loc. Cit; Moscati, loc. cit; Bernard Lewis, El2 article 'Hashimiya"
- 64. Lewis, EI2 articles "Hashimiya" and " 'Abbasid"?
- 65. See Nawbakhti, Firaq, pp. 28-29; Nashwan al-Himyari; Hurr al-Ayn, pp. 159-60
- 66. For the readiness of the Khurasanians to follow any branch of the Ahl al-Bayt, see Ibn Qutayba, 'Uyun al-Akhbar, I, p. 204; Yaqut, Mu'jam al-Buldan, II, p.352
- 67. Aba Muslim was adopted by Ibrahim as a member of the Ahlal-Bayt; see Tabari, II, pp. 1937, '949. For Aba Muslim himself, see Ibn Khallikan, III, pp. '45–55; Mas'udi, Muruj, III, p.239; Ibn Qutayba, Ma'ani, p. 145; Dinawari, p.337; Tabari II, pp. 1949 f., '987 ff; R. N. Frye, "The Role of Abu Muslim", Muslim World, January 1947
- 68. See Wellhausen, Arab Kingdom, pp.492-566; Lewis, El2 article "Abbasids"
- 69. See Tabari III, pp.25 ff., 42 ff., Dinawari; p.357; Mas'udi, Muruj, III, p. 244
- 70. Tabari, III, p.27; Mas'udi, Muruj, III, p.253
- 71. Jahshiyari, Al-Wuzara' wa'l-Kuttab, p.83; Mas'udi, Muruj, III, p.253; Ibn Khallikan, III, pp.148 f; Tabari, III, pp.27 f.; Ya'qubi, II, pp. 345, 449
- 72. Mas'udi, loc. cit.; Tabari, loc. cit; Wellhausen, Arab Kingdom, p.544; S. Moscati, El2 article "Abu Salama"
- 73. Jahshiyari; Al-Wuzara' wa'l-Kuttab, p.86; Tabari; III, p.27
- 74. Jahshiyari, loc. cit.; Ibn Tiqtaqa, Al-Fakhri P. 109
- 75. Mas'udi Muruj, III, p.253 f.
- 76. See Ya'qubi loc. cit.; Mas'udi; loc. cit.; Jahshiyari, loc. cit
- 77. S. Moscati, El2 article "Aba Salama"
- 78. Ya'qubi, II, p.345, gives the period of concealment as two months; Tabari III, p.27, makes it forty day Other sources do not mention the precise period.
- 79. See Lewis, EI2 article "Abbisids"
- 80. Tabari, III, pp.28 ff.; Jahshiyari Al-Wuzara', pp.86 ff.; Ya'qabi II, pp.245 f; Mas'udi, Muruj, III, pp.255 f.
- 81. Tabari, III, pp. 29 ff Ya'qubi, II, p.350, says Abu'l-'Abbas did not speak at all because of fever. Mas'udi, Muruj, III, p.255 gives only a summary of the speech in two lines.
- 82. The speech of Da'ud is widely recorded, esp. Tabari, III, pp.31 ff; Ya'qubi, II, p.350. Mas'udi, Muruj, III, p.256 again only summarizes the main points.
- 83. See Tabari, III, pp.60 f.; Ya'qubi, II, pp.352 f.; Mas'udi, Muruj, III, p.270; Ibn Khallikan, II, p. 196
- 84. See Tabari; III, pp. 58 ff; Mas'udi, loc. cit.
- 85. Lewis, EI2 article "Abbasids"
- 86. See Tabari, III, pp.75 f., 85; Maqrizi an-Niza', p.52
- 87. Ya'qubi, II, p.369; Mas'udi, Muruj, III, p.295; Tabari, III, pp.151 ff.
- 88. See Tabari, III, pp. 149 ff.
- 89. Tabari, III, p. 199; Abu'l-Faraj, Maqatil, pp. 277 ff.
- 90. Tabari, III, p.200
- 91. Abu'l-Faraj, Maqatil, pp.291 ff.
- 92. Tabari, III, pp. 248, 252, 254; Abu'l-Faraj, Maqatil, pp. 248, 271; Shahrastani, Milal, I, p. 156
- 93. Tabari, III, pp.291-300. For the names and details see Abu'l- Faraj, Maqatil, pp.360 f., 365 ff.
- 94. Abu'l-Faraj, Maqatil, pp.365 ff.
- 95. ibid., pp. 344 ff.
- 96. Baghdadi, Farq, pp.36 ff., 148; Sa'd al-Ash'ari, Maqatil, p.76

- 97. The name Rawindiya is given to the sect which held that Aba Hashim bequeathed the Imamate to Muhammad b. 'Ali (the 'Abbasid). See Lewis, Origins of Isma'ilism, p.28
- 98. Mansur himself was a son of a slave-girl, and perhaps it was because of this that, though he was older than As-Saffah, Ibrahim al-Imam did not appoint him as his successor.
- 99. Mubarrad, Kamil, IV, pp. 114 f; Tabari, III, pp.209 ff.; Ibn Tiqtaqa, Al-Fakhri; pp.225 ff
- 100. Tabari, III, p. 189
- 101. i.e., Fatima, the mother of Abu Talib; Fatima, the mother of 'Ali; Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet; Fatima bint al–Husayn, the mother of 'Abd Allah al–Mahd; and finally Hind bint Abi 'Ubayda, a descendant of 'Abd al–Muttalib, the mother of An–Nafs az–Zakiya. See Abu'l–Faraj, Maqatil, p.202. Mansur belittled this "descent through women", being himself a son of a slave–girl.
- 102. Qur'an, XXXIII, 40
- 103. Tabari, III, pp.211 ff; Mubarrad, Kamil IV, pp. 116 ff.
- 104. Khatib al-Baghdadi, Ta'rikh Baghdad, XIII, p.380; Abu'l- Faraj, Maqatil, pp.366 ff., 365 ff.
- 105. Khatib al-Baghdadi; Ta'rikh Baghdad, XIII, p.422; Shahrastani, Milal, I, p.158. Abu'l-Faraj (Maqatil, pp.367, 368) asserts that Abu Hanifa was poisoned at the orders of the Caliph.
- 106. Tabari, III, p.426. See Arnold, The Caliphate, p. 51. This principle was also stressed by the later 'Abbasid caliphs; see Tabari, III, p.1565
- 107. Tabari, III, p.426

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