

al-Imam al-Mansur ‘Abdullah b. Hamzah b. Sulayman (d. 614/1217): a biography by his disciple Al-Faqih Humayd b. Ahmad al Muhalli (d. 652/1254) in his work Al-Had’iq al-Wardiyyah fi Manaqib A’immah al-Zaydiyyah, v. 2: a critical edition. PhD thesis.

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The University of Glasgow
Faculty of Arts

Al-Imām al-Manşūr ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah b. Sulaymān
(d. 614/1217)

A biography by his disciple

Al-Faqīh Ḥumayd b. Ahmad al-Muḥallī
(d. 652/1254)

in his work

Al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardiyyah fī Manāqib A’immah al-Zaydiyyah, v.2

A Critical Edition Submitted by

Abdulla al-Shamahi

As a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Arabic and Islamic Studies

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(Section A)

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to
the memory of

my parents

and to my family for their help and patience.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my deep appreciation to my original supervisor the late Professor John Mattock, The head of The Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, for the long hours that I spent with him discussing the primary material of this thesis.

I also wish to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Dr. M. Siddiqui, the head of Theology and Religious Studies and the Director of the Centre for the Study of Islam, for her constant guidance, patience and encouragement during the final part of my writing up this thesis. I also seize this opportunity to thank Ms. Eileen O'Neil, The Clerk of the Faculty of Arts for her support during this crucial time.

The list of acknowledgements is far too long to mention. To all those prominent scholars, individuals and institutions all around the world; the UK, Europe, USA, Yemen and a number of Arab countries, who were all of tremendous help in the preparation of this thesis, to them all, I convey my greatest respect and gratitude.

Abstract

This is the biography of the Zaydī Imām, ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah, who stood against the Ayyūbīd’s rule in Yemen, of his time. The biography covers the Imām’s life, family background and relations with other sects. These include the Shī’ah and the Zaydīs, particularly those of the Muṭarrāfis.

The biography also gives a detailed picture of the Imām’s relations and conflicts with the local Ayyūbīds in Yemen.

As the author considered the Imām a great authority in the field of religion and thinking, we find a large amount of quotations from the Imām’s works, both poetry and prose. The author, as the Imām did, gave special attention to the authority of the Fāṭimī ‘Alawīd’s descendants in the field of religion, and in particular how the post of Imāmate should be acquired only by them.

The importance of this work comes from the fact that it is the only surviving complete biography of this Imām, written by one of his well known and distinguished contemporaries.

The highly classical Arabic which the author used to write the biography, increased the prestige of the work, and added importance to it. This reflects Al-Muḥallī’s authority in the fields of Arabic language, literature and history.

The thesis consists of two main parts; Section A (or 1) is a short introduction and study to the text and its author, followed by the English translation of the Arabic text, while Section B (or 2) is the edited Arabic text (the biography). Finally the conclusion, will illustrate the main points in the whole work.

I hope the work I produce can represent a valuable addition to Yemeni history, literature and beliefs.

Transliteration

<u>D</u>	ض	'	ء
Ṭ	ط	B	ب
<u>Z</u>	ظ	T	ت
'	ع	<u>TH</u>	ث
<u>GH</u>	غ	J	ج
F	ف	Ḥ	ح
Q	ق	<u>KH</u>	خ
K	ك	D	د
L	ل	<u>DH</u>	ذ
M	م	R	ر
N	ن	Z	ز
H	ه	S	س
W	و	<u>SH</u>	ش
Y	ي	Ṣ	ص
ā	آ		
ī	ي		
ū	و		

The Methodology Used in Verifying the Text

As the text in the second volume of *al-Ḥadā'iq* (that dealing with Imām Ibn Ḥamzah), is the only surviving complete biography of this Imām, written by one of his well known and distinguished contemporaries, it is very important from an academic view point to verify the authenticity of it's contents. Also the text contains an extensive amount of highly classical Arabic in poetry and prose, along with a substantial amount of material dealing with history and beliefs, making it essential to make this work available to readers, in a modern academic style, in both the Arabic and English languages. In order to fulfil these aims I focused on the following:

1. Comparing the part of the text that deals with the Imām by use of the Vienna Manuscript (as the Principle Copy), along with the other copies to be described later, and with use of the Dīwān's copies if necessary.
2. Describing in the footnotes all significant differences between the Principle Copy and the other copies.
3. Recopying the manuscript, using modern standard spelling in place of obsolete spelling practices, without indicating so in the notes. For example; *scripto deflective of alif* in words like "Hārūn", "al-Qāsim", "*salām*", "*thalāthmi'a*"; substitution of *yā'* for *hamza*, etc.
4. As the script in most of the manuscripts is only sparsely provided with diacritical dots, variants of pointing have been fully indicated in the notes, especially where the correct reading seems doubtful.
5. All glosses in the manuscript are quoted in the footnotes, if they are contributing further historical or linguistic information.

6. Explaining the meanings of some words in the footnotes, particularly those in verse, and clarifying some phrases, with reference in some cases to their origins in dictionaries and language books. The following references and dictionaries were consulted for this purpose, and often no note of them was made, as they were extensively used:

- *Lisān al-‘Arab*, Ibn Manẓūr
- *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, al-Zabīdī
- *Mujamal al-Lughah*, Ibn Fāris
- *Asās al-Balāghah*, al-Zamakhsharī
- *al-Kāmil fī al-Lughah*, al-Mubarrid
- *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, al-Fayrūzabādī
- *Shams al-‘Ulūm*, Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī

7. Mentioning both the Sūras of the Quaranic verses and the numbers of these verses.

8. Noting the transmission of Ḥadīths and traditions, using the Ḥadīth’s indexed dictionaries and computer programmes and referring to both Sunnī and Shi‘ī sources.

9. Exploring the meanings of the proverbs and aphorisms mentioned in the text and referring them to their origins in the different collections, such as *Majma‘ al-Amthāl* by al-Maydānī and *al-Mustaqṣā fī Amthāl al-‘Arab* by al-Zamakhsharī.

10. Attributing the verses of poetry in the text to their poets, and to the sources in which they were cited, as much as possible. All the qaṣidas said by the Imām Ibn Ḥamzah, were referred to their places in his poetry collection (Dīwān), in both copies (1ـ) and (2ـ). On some occasions I also referred them to the Imām’s other two Dīwān copies, (San‘ā’) and (London).

11. Putting the proper names and places mentioned in the text in focus, when necessary.

12. Finding out more about some of the individuals whose names are mentioned in the manuscript. In doing this I referred to the major biographical studies which record the lives of scholars and individuals, especially the sources of the Zaydī Ṭabaqāt and Tarājim, particularly those written by Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 1100 H), Ibrāhīm b. al-Qāsim (d. 1153 H) and Ibn Abī al-Rijāl (d. 1092 H), along with the more recent references, such as *al-Jāmi' al-Wajīz* (al-Jindārī), *Hijar al-'Ilm* (al-Akwa'), and *A'lām al-Mu'allifin al-Zaydiyyah* (al-Wajīh). I also referred to the *Ansāb* books, such as:

- *al-'Inās bi 'Ilm al-Ansāb*, Ibn al-Maghribī (d. 418 H)
- *Jamharah Ansāb al-'Arab*, Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456 H)
- *al-Muqtadab min Kitāb Jamharah al-Nasab*, Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626 H)
- *Ṭurfah al-Aṣḥāb fī Ma'rifah al-Ansāb*, al-Ashraf al-Raṣūlī (d. 696 H)
- *Qalā'id al-Jumān fī al-Ta'rīf bi Qabā'il 'Arab al-Zamān*, al-Qalqashandī (d. 821 H)
- *Nihāyah al-'Irāb fī Ma'ārifah Ansāb al-'Arab*, al-Qalqashandī
- *al-Iklīl* vol.1 and 2, al-Hamdānī (d. 360 H)
- *Mu'jam Qabā'il al-'Arab*, Kaḥālāh

13. Providing additional information about certain places, towns, and geographical locations mentioned in the text. As many of these places are in Yemen or Arabia, the old Yemeni geographical sources are very useful, particularly those by al-Hamdānī (*al-'Iklīl* and *Ṣifāh Jazīrah al-'Arab*). Some modern references were also of great help, such as *Majmū' Buldān al-Yaman wa Qabā'ilahā* (al-Ḥajrī) and *Mu'jam al-Buldān wa al-Qabā'il al-Yamaniyyah* (al-Maḥḥafī).

14. Authenticating the author's reports and quotations as much as possible, using other sources. I also made some comparison between them, giving my comments or judgements if necessary. *Al-Ṣimṭ al-Ghālī al-Thaman* (Ibn Ḥātim) was of great use in this matter, followed by *Ma'āthir al-Abrār* (al-Zuhayf). The importance of these two books is in that they, in particular *al-Ma'āthir*, quoted their information from the same source as al-Muḥallī, namely *al-Sīrah al-Manṣūriyyah*. This was written by Abū Firās Du'thum, a contemporary of both Imām Ibn Ḥamzah and al-Muḥallī himself. *Al-Sīrah al-Manṣūriyyah* is the main *Sīrah* (biography) for Imām Ibn Ḥamzah, and is known now as *al-Sīrah al-Ṣaghīrah*. It was in six volumes, however they were all lost except the two we refer to, which were edited by Dr. 'Abd al-Mu'tī, of Ṣan'ā' University. A good part of our text by al-Muḥallī was derived from *al-Sīrah*, and ofcourse al-Muḥallī directly received information in person from people around the Imām, who were older than himself. Abū Firās Du'thum was one of these person's and al-Muḥallī had also studied under him (see pages 33 and 133 in section B for more details). In the editing of the text, I refer a lot to these two surviving volumes of *al-Sīrah al-Manṣūriyyah*.

15. Commenting on some significant issues in the text, in order to maximise their benefits.

16. Translating the whole text which took a very long time and unpredictable effort. In order to carry out this translation I needed to hold lengthy studies and discussions with individuals who had expert knowledge of Arabic language and literature, as well as with individuals with expert knowledge of English language and literature, so that I could determine the correct phrases and words to translate the text. I referred to a number of references and dictionaries for this purpose, such as:

- *The Arabic-English Lexicon*, Edward Lane
- *The Arabic-English Dictionary*, Cowan

- *The Dictionary of Religious Terms (Arabic-English)*, al-Malikī & Ibrāhīm
- *Mu‘jam Lughāt al-Fuqahā, Qal‘ahjī*
- *Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran*, John Penrice
- *The Meaning of the Glorious Quran*, Pickthall
- *Vocabulary of the Holy Quran*, Nadwi
- *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Brown
- *A Dictionary of Literary Terms (English-French-Arabic)*, Wahba
- *A Dictionary of Theoretical Linguistics (English-Arabic)*, Khulī
- *The Oxford Thesaurus*, Laurence Urdang.

The text itself is considered a work of art, it is also a historical document, and thus translations must represent both the style and meaning of the original. On some occasions, in order to achieve this, I translated only the general meaning of certain parts of the text, placing the translation in brackets [].

In referring to certain pages within the this thesis, the following style is sometimes employed, eg: [192B/1:196/2:309], where “192B” refers to the folio number of the edited manuscript, “1:96” is Section A page 96, and “2:309” is Section B page 309.

Section A

Chapter One

The Introductory Chapter

1.1. Essential Background to the Text

1.1.1. Arabia and Its People

The Arabian Peninsula, with Makkah its sacred heart, is the Arabs' first homeland, and is normally divided by historians into northern and southern parts. The South, or Yemen¹, is associated, in ancient times, with a succession of states and civilizations². History has preserved some information about some of these, but the older ones have left us nothing apart from some vague names that provide little definite information.

Historians speak of three different stages of the Arabian population³:

1. Al-‘Āribah, who are also called al-Bā’idah. These included al-‘Amāliqah, or the Giants, and the ‘Ād people.
2. Al-Muta‘arribah who included the Qaḥṭān tribes; and
3. Al-Musta‘ribah, to whom the ‘Adnān tribes belonged.

The first stage includes extinct tribes of whom we have only some historical accounts. Among these are al-‘Amāliqah, or the Giants, as well as the ‘Ād, Thamūd and Jurhum. Al-‘Amāliqah's first place of abode was in Yemen. Indeed some of them settled in Yemen, while others left for Africa, Iran, Syria and Iraq. They were the predecessors of the Sumerians and the Chaldeans, as well as other ancient nations. They are also believed to have been the predecessors of the Semitic groups, including the Babylonians, Arabs, Hebrew, Phoenicians, Sumerians and Arameans. Indeed a number of expert historians believe that Arabia is the original place from where all Semitic peoples emerged⁴.

Pre-Islamic history of Yemen leaves a number of gaps which present an uneasy path to tread for any historian. However, as already mentioned, in tracing this history we may look at three stages:

1. The ancient Arabs who preceded al-‘Amāliqah.

2. Al-Ba'idah or extinct tribes of which some records survive, such as al-'Amāliqah, 'Ād, Thamūd, Qaḥṭān, Ya'rub and Jurhum, as well as others who lived in Oman and Ḥadramut.
3. Arab tribes whose heritage survives.

The second stage is that of the extinct tribes, which is also known as al-'Arab al-'Āribāh, of whom we only have a few historical accounts. We have no remains or written records to mention their kings or rulers, or even the time period in which they flourished or how they became extinct.

Story tellers and lineage recorders mention that Ya'rub was able to expand his rule to cover most of the Arabian Peninsula, after defeating the 'Ād people in Yemen and al-'Amāliqah in Ḥijāz. He made his brother, Jurhum, a ruler of Ḥijāz, and assigned to his brother Oman the area now known after him. He also appointed his other brother 'Āmir b. Qaḥṭān, nicknamed Ḥadara Mawt, to rule over the area that derived its name from him, Ḥadramut. It was this brother of Ya'rub that was able to overcome the 'Ād people in this area. He earned a reputation for extensive killing wherever he fought. When he joined a force to take part in a battle, people would exclaim, Ḥadara Mawt, which means, 'Death has arrived.' This became his nickname, which was also given to the area he ruled.

It is to Ya'rub ibn Qaḥṭān that historians claim that Yemeni tribes go back. These included Ma'īn, Saba', Kahlān and Ḥimyar⁵. Under Ya'rub, the Qaḥṭānīs were able to extend their rule to the entire area of the Yemen, absorbing all its former inhabitants who descended from the 'Ād tribes. Qaḥṭān goes back deep in history, as he is mentioned in the Torah as Yaqtan or Yaqtān ibn 'Āmir, or the Prophet Hūd, [peace be upon him]⁶. Thus, we can say that Qaḥṭān lived in the seventh or eighth millennium BC.

The second Jurhum tribe, which belonged to the Qaḥṭān family of tribes, was an extension of the first Jurhum. It lived in the Ḥijāz, not far from Makkah, before Prophet Abraham arrived in the place where Makkah is today, bringing his son Ishmael. Subsequently, Ishmael lived and grew up among the Jurhum people and his wife belonged to Jurhum. He spoke Arabic, Jurhum's language, which he passed

on to his offspring who came to be known as the ‘Adnanites. It is the ‘Adnanites that are called al-‘Arab al-Musta‘rribah. It is established that Abraham lived in the third millennium BC, and was a contemporary of Ḥamūrābī.

The second Jurhum tribe continued to rule in Makkah until the third century AD, when it was overpowered by Khuzā‘ah, a Qaḥṭānī tribe that belonged to al-‘Arab al-Musta‘rribah. We have many of their historical accounts⁷.

1.1.2. History and Society in Pre-Islamic Yemen

The history of Yemen based on archaeological remains is the history of the states reigning there. The best known of these were Ma‘īn, Saba’ and Ḥimyar. Some historians mention that these states go back to around the tenth century BC, and continuing up to 525 AD. The system of government in all these states was a monarchy, with each state divided into a number of governorates loyal to the central government, but in a more or less decentralised system. Most of these states depended on trade, and did not have large armies, except for Ḥimyar, which had to give much attention to the military aspect, considering its need to defend itself against both the Byzantines and the Persians⁸.

All three Yemeni states, Ma‘īn, Saba’ and Ḥimyar, particularly the first, had what may be termed as commercial colonies, or international markets in African, Asian and Mediterranean areas. The geographical location of Yemen helped these states to extend their commercial influence⁹. Their social systems were of a co-operative and capitalist colour¹⁰. Taxes were levied for three different authorities: the King’s treasury, the clergy, and tribal chiefs together with the ruling elite. Agriculture flourished as it was run on the basis of an equitable system that looked after the interests of both landowners and peasants¹¹.

In architecture, the building of palaces, large buildings and dams¹²; in methods of farming and irrigation; and in trade, they were the leaders of the old world, except perhaps for the Phoenicians who were the leading seafarers and traders.

Yemeni society recognized five classes:

1. Soldiers whose task was to ensure security;
2. Peasants;
3. Handicraftsmen;
4. Traders;
5. The aristocracy, including the ruling class, clergy, scholars and tribal chiefs.

This last class decided matters through consultation, which enabled it to overlook the functioning of the rest of society. It had the authority to legislate in times of peace and war¹³. This is reflected in the Qur'anic account of the contacts between the Queen of Sheba, or Saba', and the Prophet Solomon: "She said: O you nobles! Give me your opinion on the problem with which I am now faced. I would never make a decision unless you are present with me." (27: 32)

The last national monarchy in Yemen before the advent of Islam succumbed to the Abyssinian onslaught in the sixth century. Internal support by Yemenis who had earlier converted to Christianity was highly instrumental in weakening Yemeni resistance to Abyssinian invaders supported by the Byzantines.

Despite the Abyssinian victory in 525 AD, which led to the occupation of the southern coastal areas, up to Ṣan'ā' and Ma'rib, the occupying forces remained unable to bring the entire country under their control. Yemeni resistance was able to restrict the Abyssinians in a much smaller area, within only 47 years of occupation. They drove the Abyssinians out of Ṣan'ā' and most northern areas. The only territory remaining under Abyssinian control was Aden, the south eastern coastal area and Ḥaḍramut. They remained there until Sayf ibn Dhī Yazan was able to inflict a heavy defeat on them in 595 AD¹⁴. Sayf ibn Dhī Yazan was able to score his last victory against the Abyssinians only after he received Persian support. However, after his death, the Persians could not extend their rule in Yemen much beyond Ṣan'ā' and its adjacent areas. In fact, the Persians continued to be in conflict with the Hamdānis until the advent of Islam.

Judaism¹⁵ also found its way into Yemen when a number of people in the top echelons of society became Jewish converts. Indeed, its presence was greater than that of Christianity¹⁶. This explains why Yemen welcomed the Jews who fled Byzantine persecution, when the Byzantines destroyed Jerusalem and massacred nearly a million Jews in the first century AD. It was in Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula that most of the Jewish refugees sought safety and security¹⁷. However, with the advent of Islam, the Yemeni population gave a unique example of a whole community, with a diversity of religious beliefs, turning to a new faith¹⁸.

1.1.3. Conflict Over Winning Control

This goes to show that proper government within a state flourished for a long period in the south of Arabia, while in the north, tribal society run by chiefs of tribes was in vogue¹⁹. History shows that in the south, the Arabs exercised political dialogue and consultation, particularly in the more important situations that required momentous decisions. We have already referred to the Qur'anic account of the Queen of Sheba consulting her nobleman concerning her contacts with the Prophet Solomon: "She said: O you nobles! Give me your opinion on the problem with which I am now faced. I would never make a decision unless you are present with me." (27: 32) Other reports confirm such consultation in Arabian history. We may cite here the case of the Battle of Dhī Qār in 610 AD²⁰, when Arabian tribes came into a strong alliance to face a common external threat, and thus were able to defeat the Persians²¹.

Despite this tendency to discussion and consultation, Arabian history shows a more prominent phenomenon prevailing before and after the advent of Islam. This is the phenomenon of rivalry between different sides, leading to a conflict to win control. Indeed, on occasions the conflict seems to divide communities, tribes and even families. Numerous were the local battles (*Ayyām al-‘Arab*) fought between close clans and tribes to achieve control²². Indeed, the conflict between the ‘Adnanites and the Qaḥṭānites should be seen as a long-standing rivalry over control.

This may be surprising, considering the fact that for long the Arabs valued fine speech and literary expression. Needless to say, such fine expression reflects rational thinking and coherent argument²³. One cannot but wonder at the fact that such ability to express rational thinking and argument was not allowed a wider field of play. That would have provided a better way of resolving differences, instead of resorting to open and armed conflict.

With the advent of Islam, we see a marked transformation. Islamic values and principles spread an air of brotherhood and equality of mankind. Oppression and unjustified killing are strictly forbidden. Moreover, consultation is the overriding method of determining the course of action society should follow: “Their rule is [determined by] consultation among themselves.” (42: 38) The Prophet always consulted his companions on all questions of common concern. Muslims would even take up any issue with the Prophet, if no revelation was given to him about it. The Prophet showed his willingness to agree to any sound and properly argued view, even if this was in conflict with his own view. We see this in practice on several occasions, including the Battles of Badr, Uḥud, and the Moat. Needless to say, only a civilised society gives prominence to values of free discussion and proper consultation.

It is in the overall leadership of society that the principles of consultation and exchange of views need to be seen in full play. Their presence or absence determine whether a society is run by tyranny or by somewhat broader principles of consultation. For example as a result of this among some Zaydis there was the belief that the position of supreme political power should be tempered by the contribution of consultation with prominent religious scholars of the community.

To put it another way, it is illogical that a ruler who has assumed power by force, of any type, should claim to uphold the principles of consultation (*Shūrā*). Gaining power by force and consultative choice are mutually exclusive. They are on opposite ends of the spectrum. Besides, imposition is the same, whether done by physical force, military power or by claims of any divine right. It is always contrary to consultation, or *shūrā*, to use the Islamic expression.

Perhaps we can make an exception in a case where the post of Imām does not mean the exercise of power to conduct the affairs of the state. This reduces the Imām to a merely ceremonial role. But this is contrary to what is enshrined in Islamic thought concerning government and the role of the Imām, where the Imām has an active if somewhat different role to play in both the Sunnī and Shī‘a sects²⁴.

1.1.4. Islam and the Extension of Conflict

Perhaps the hardest and most determined conflict in post-Islamic Arab history is the conflict between the Hāshimītes and the Umayyads, the two Qurayshī clans descending from ‘Abd Manāf. When we look at this conflict we realise that it was an extension of an old rivalry dating back to pre-Islamic days. As we have already mentioned, rivalry over leadership and position of influence was commonplace in Arabia²⁵. We should look at this rivalry between the two Qurayshī households in terms of this old conflict. Many historians agree²⁶ that this old conflict between the Hāshimītes and the Umayyads continued well into the Islamic period. It is not surprising that al-Maqrīzī, a prominent historian, devotes a whole book to this rivalry, *Al-Nizā‘ wal Takhāṣum fīmā bayn banī ‘Umayyah wa banī Hāshim*.

Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān refers to this old conflict as the main reason for the Umayyad opposition to the new faith. The Umayyad clan considered that the spread of Islam would lead to the lowering of their rank and the supremacy of the Hāshimītes!

Abū Sufyān is reported to have been asked by the Prophet about his reasons for fighting him, and whether he had believed that he was God’s messenger. In reply, Abū Sufyān said: “I was perfectly aware that you always told the truth and you never lied. We fought you because, considering my position in the Quraysh, you came up with something that leaves no room for positions of honour. Therefore, we fought you in defence of our positions.”²⁷

It seems that this initial opposition to the new faith on the part of most of the Umayyads, increased hostility to them. Hence, when Abū Sufyān's eldest son, Yazīd, was appointed governor of Syria by the Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Abū Sufyān had the following words of advice to his other son, Mu'āwiyah: "This group, al-Muhājirīn, [i.e. the early Muslims from Makkah who migrated to Madinah with the Prophet] were ahead of us in the new faith. Their early acceptance gave them a higher position, while our late conversion held us back. Thus, they became leaders while we fell behind. Now they have given you some great responsibility. Therefore, do not stand in opposition to them. You are seeking something which is still beyond you, but you may very well get it."²⁸

To be fair, the Umayyads were not the only clan to take such a hostile attitude to the new divine message. Similar hostility was shown by several other Qurayshī clans, such as Makhzūm and Jumah. Indeed, a number of notable personalities from the Hāshimite clan took a similar attitude. The Prophet's own uncle, Abū Lahab, was extremely outspoken in his hostility to Islam, as was the Prophet's cousin Abū Sufyān ibn al-Hārith. Similarly, his cousin 'Aqīl ibn Abī Ṭālib took a negative attitude, as did several others.

Arabian rivalry is epitomised by the war that ensued from a race of two horses, known as Dāḥis and al-Ghabrā'. Securing a position of influence was the common denominator motivating most of the actions of all these groups. Perhaps their hostile attitude to the new message of Islam should be viewed in this light. It is not surprising that some Arabian tribes express their willingness to adopt Islam, provided that the Prophet would agree that they would be in power after he had gone. Needless to say, the Prophet refused all such conditions²⁹. He explained that Islam was a faith providing guidance for mankind, not a heritage to be bequeathed or a kingdom to be inherited.

However, in order to preserve the historical facts and objectivity, we must beware of giving much credence to the reports that add too much spice to the rivalry between the two branches of the 'Abd Manāf clan prior to Islam³⁰. Nor can we look at this rivalry in the pre-Islamic period in absolute terms. There were too many interests common to both houses, the Umayyads and the Hāshimites. This led to

considerable cooperation and coordination between the two, and indeed with other Arab and non-Arab parties as well³¹. Such cooperation was instrumental in enhancing the Quraysh's position as an economic power and its successful role in Arabian trade³².

It must be remembered that the entire Umayyad clan embraced Islam after the fall of Makkah. Most of them did extremely well in supporting Islam and helping it to reign supreme. Suffice it to say, the movement to spread Islam into more areas which the Umayyads continued throughout their reign was far more than anything that took place under the Abbasids who succeeded them. Nevertheless, some people are fond of repeating that the Umayyads were hostile to the Prophet when he was delivering his message, ignoring the fact that many other Qurayshī clans were similarly hostile.

It may be that the fact that the Umayyads were the ruling clan in the Muslim world for a considerable period of time reawakened old rivalries among people who were keen to regain some influence. The most effective counter propaganda used by opponents was to emphasise the former role of the Umayyads in opposition to the Prophet and his message.

Again the killing of al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib at Karbalā' during the reign of Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah heightened anti-Umayyad feelings, particularly among the Persian elements. Al-Ḥusayn, the Prophet's grandson, held a particularly distinguished position of honour among the Persians after he had married the daughter of Yazdijird III³³. This marriage established an alliance between two of the most honourable houses. Persians attached an element of holiness to their monarchs. Hence, they considered that the offspring of this marriage between al-Ḥusayn and Yazdijird's daughter to have the purest Arab blood from their father coupled with the purest Persian blood from their mother. Hence, to the Persians, al-Ḥusayn's offspring were the ones who had the strongest claim to the Caliphate³⁴. This explains the fact that all revolts against the Umayyads relied heavily on Persians.

It should be noted that several national, religious, political and economic factors came into play to enhance hostility to the Umayyads in Persian circles, giving them a leading role in the final defeat of the Umayyads and the collapse of their rule.

Al-Husayn's death at the hands of Umayyad soldiers and the trials endured by the 'Alawīs under the Umayyad rule are well known. However, the total sum of persecution of the 'Alawīs at the hand of their Abbasid cousins is far greater than what they endured throughout the Umayyad period. We need to remember, however, that the Umayyad history was written down during the Abbasid reign. The whole atmosphere was hostile to the Umayyads. In fact, the Hāshimite rivals of old were still rivals now and they held the reigns of power. Thus, old rivalries were hardening new hostilities. In such circumstances, what sort of account could be given of the Umayyad period?

This seems to be a plausible explanation of the multitude of negative stories about the Umayyads in books of literature, history and biographies. Many of these are self-contradictory, far-fetched and obvious fabrications.

With the collapse of the Umayyad rule, rivalry between the two branches of 'Abd Manāf descendents came to a close. The Hāshimites were now in full control, with nothing left for the Umayyads.

1.1.5. Divine Right as a New Ideology Tool in the Conflict

Unfortunately another long-drawn conflict comes to the surface, with the same old mentality of rivalry for control. However, this time, it employs new tools of ideology, trying to give one side a divine right against the rest of people. As time passes, this new philosophy becomes more complex and entrenched, adding further concepts, beliefs and traditions reflected in varied literature. The same old Hāshimī branch is now engaged in conflict against its 'Alawī cousins. The rivalry between the two started during the Umayyad rule, but came into the open, using verbal and armed conflict when the Abbasids became the sole rulers.

The Hāshimī movement against the Umayyads, with both its Abbasid and ‘Alawī proponents, was united, calling for the appointment of a unanimously approved person from among the Prophet’s household. But the two branches harboured different intentions. The ‘Alawīs considered that both branches pledged loyalty to Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan, nicknamed al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah, whose father used all his guiding influence to ensure unanimous acceptability for his son. The Abbasids, however, made a counter move, claiming that the ‘Alawīs had relinquished their right when Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah, the son of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, abdicated in favour of the Abbasids.

Despite this rivalry between the two branches within the Hāshimī movement, it remained largely united, at least at the surface. After the overthrow of the Umayyads, we find many ‘Alawī figures praising and supporting the new regime, emphasising that both the Abbasids and ‘Alawīs remain united. Moreover, when the Abbasids began to tighten their grip on power, they tried to reassert their unity with the ‘Alawīs by giving priority to chasing and punishing the killers of ‘Alawīs during the Umayyad reign.

A fundamental and lasting split within the Hāshimī household came soon after the establishment of the Abbasid rule. It started with the revolt of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah in Madinah and his brother Ibrāhīm in Basrah. It was a very serious revolt that greatly worried the second Abbasid Caliph, Abū Ja‘far al-Manṣūr, who apparently was uncertain that he could emerge clearly victorious.

It appears to me that the ‘Alawīs were largely surprised that their cousins were able to overthrow the Umayyads and kill the last of their Caliphs, Marwān ibn Muḥammad. Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣḥāhānī mentions in *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn* a report of far-reaching significance, stating that ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan, al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah’s father, sent a letter to Marwān ibn Muḥammad disclaiming all knowledge of the revolt of Ibrāhīm, the Abbasid Imām³⁵. It is thought that this letter might have led to the discovery of Imām Ibrāhīm’s plot, despite his being in hiding. He was subsequently arrested and executed. It may also be the case that this letter caused Abū Ja‘far al-Manṣūr’s change of heart against ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan and his two

sons, Muḥammad and Ibrahīm. It should be remembered that ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan was later imprisoned by Abū Ja‘far al-Mansur and died in prison.

Is it possible that ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan wrote this letter to Marwān ibn Muḥammad to prevent a single-handed victory by the Abbasids? Perhaps! Or it might have been the case that he wanted to save his own skin, should the Umayyads emerge victorious. They would have certainly killed many of his Abbasid cousins.

1.1.6. Yemen and the Expansion of the New Ideology Conflict

This conflict and rivalry in the early Islamic period, first between the Umayyads and the Hāshimites, then between the Abbasids and the ‘Alawīs, could not remain an internal conflict within the ‘Abd Manāf or the Hāshimite clans. Large communities and populations were dragged into it, as the Islamic state stretched over vast areas. One of the communities that were dragged into the midst of this conflict was the people of Yemen. Indeed Yemenis were party to this conflict, whether they were in their own area in southern Arabia or in their other settlements in northern Arabia, or Syria, or Iraq. In both the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, Yemenis took part in this conflict, fighting in both camps. The real motives driving the people of Yemen to play such a role in this conflict may be difficult to assess, but they undoubtedly included some religious motives. In certain cases, they might have taken sides as a means of livelihood.

By nature, Yemenis are hard fighters, living in a mountainous and rough area. This means that both people and country provided a most suitable location for a rebel or an adventurer to pursue his case. This has led to long periods of conflict and instability in Yemen.

Despite the fact that Yemen was a province of the Umayyad state first, then of the Abbasid Caliphate, the weakness of the central government in Baghdad in the second stage made Yemen a good launching place for any ambitious rebel, and for those who disputed the authority of the central government. Its being far from the

seat of the Caliphate, Yemen provided a haven for rebels, particularly in the mountainous areas inhabited by hard fighting tribes.

One of the most distinguished figures that arrived in Yemen in the second Abbasid stage (232-656H)³⁶ was Imām al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq, Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Qāsim al-Rassī in the year 280 H. Al-Hādī belonged to the Ḥasanī branch of the ‘Alawī Fāṭimī tree³⁷, and had come to Yemen from al-Rass, an area not far from Madinah³⁸. He established the Zaydī Hādawī³⁹ Imāmate in Yemen, which continued up to the twentieth century. This Zaydī Imāmate was able to establish its state in Yemen, albeit intermittently. However, its stronghold was mostly in the rough mountainous areas in the far north of the country, particularly in Ṣa‘dah. During more than a thousand years, the Zaydī Imāmate represented for the most part a rival entity to the central government in Yemen. In other periods, it was functioning within the framework of the larger central government. It was able to rule the entire country only in brief periods. This was due to a host of factors, some of which related to the composition of the people of Yemen and some to the nature of the Imāmate itself⁴⁰.

As the Zaydī Hādawī Imāmate was established in Yemen, it called on the people to strictly adhere to the Qur‘ān and the *Sunnah* and to emphasise the right of the Fāṭimīs ‘Alawīs to be the rulers and the Imāms. The Caliphate should be theirs. The Abbasids, who were in government in Baghdad, had no rightful claim to it⁴¹. Indeed the rise of the Zaydī Imāmate in Yemen did not only introduce a geographical shift in the inter- Hāshimite conflict between the ‘Alawīs and the Abbasids; it also committed the people of Yemen to a new type of conflict.

With the arrival of Imām al-Hādī ibn al-Ḥusayn in Yemen, Sa‘dah became the seat of the Zaydī Imāmate. With the passage of time, the ‘Alawī household became well established in Yemen. There were several ‘Alawī Fāṭimī authorities in the country, particularly after the fourth Islamic century (10th Century AD). Then came al-Muhājir Aḥmad ibn Īsa⁴² al-‘Alawī (d.354 H), who arrived in Ḥadramut from Basra in Iraq in 318 H, advocating a different brand of Shi‘ite thought, which is that of the main Imāmī school⁴³. This differs fundamentally from the more moderate brand held by Imām al-Hādī and his offspring in the far north of Yemen⁴⁴.

Now we find that the struggle for power and influence was not the only cause of tension and rivalry within the 'Alawī household in Yemen. Intellectual and *Fiqh* differences provided more apparent causes of conflict⁴⁵.

It was thought that the 'Alawīs in Yemen, particularly those in the northern mountainous areas and al-Mikh^lāf al-Sulaymānī, would form a solid unit without internal differences. But rivalry and conflict seem to be a chronic problem, starting with the sons of Imām al-Hādī⁴⁶ and frequently re-emerging. Time after time, we find that the sons of an Imām falling out after the death of their father, or leading a revolt against an existing Imām, pressing their claim to the Imāmate in succession to their father. Not infrequently conflict erupted very fiercely among brothers and cousins, which was nothing less than a brutal struggle for power. This ongoing conflict within the 'Alawī household led to catastrophic events, causing much destruction of land, tilth and progeny⁴⁷ and claiming its real victims among the long suffering Yemeni people, who never had anything to do with such conflict.

Indeed, division was created among Yemeni people, with one section of the population turned against another, and inter-tribal warfare. Things were so bad that at times, some Imāms were conducting battles against the civilian population, and calling these conquests. Needless to say, a conquest of this sort brought in its wake much killing, looting and enslavement of prisoners of war, in total travesty of Islamic values and principles which prohibit the violation of people's rights, bloodshed and confiscation of property, let alone the rape of chaste Muslim women. Thus, the country which is supposed to be treated as a single, integral entity and a land of Islam, was viewed as three separate parts: a land of Islam, and a land of unbelief (*dār al-kufr*), and a land of transgression (*dār al-fisq*). This last one could be treated in the same way as the second, i.e. a land of unbelief, or *kufr*, if the Imām felt so, for a certain purpose of his.

Rulings condemning people as apostates were issued, and something called *kufr al-ilzām*⁴⁸, or becoming an unbeliever in consequence of one's actions, was established as a legal method. These provided a platform for persecution. The whole community was thus preoccupied with its own internal conflicts. Nothing was heard

of dangers that were threatening the very foundation of Islam throughout the world. Indeed, neither the Crusades nor the Tartars' invasion figure in anyway in the literature or policies of the time. To the Imāms in Yemen, these events might just as well have taken place on another planet!⁴⁹

Imām al-Manṣūr ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥamzah was foremost among those who issued rulings and fatwas denouncing his opponents as unbelievers. These were none other than common people who had no power or influence. Most of them did not even take a dissenting stand. They were simply Bedouins and peasants who led a simple and normal life, practising their faith according to their level of education. Others were preoccupied with their studies, and these included some highly religious and devout students and scholars⁵⁰. Nevertheless, they fell victim to the rigid trend pronouncing them as unbelievers. Thus, many of them were put to death, their schools and mosques destroyed, and their families persecuted. It was all a painful tragedy, and a heinous crime committed against all mankind.

The Zaydī Imāms never had strong popular support in Yemen. However, certain internal or external conditions could give a particular Imām a suitable platform to establish his authority as a popular leader trying to achieve certain objectives. He could thus win strong popular support. Yet when such conditions are no longer in play, the Imām could easily find himself in the same old position, with little following, or indeed he may become a solitary figure, surrounded only by his own entourage or household.

Imām al-Hādī, Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥusayn, provides a good example. In the third Islamic century, the Yemen was suffering from unending inter-tribal conflicts. A delegation from a few tribes that were involved in such conflicts went to al-Rass near Madinah to invite al-Hādī to bring about reconciliation between the warring factions⁵¹. He came over hoping to be able to achieve that goal. When he did not find the response he desired, he went back to al-Rass. Yet more delegations travelled to renew their invitation to him to come back. This time he decided to stay, and was able to establish his authority, with the support of Yemeni tribes, and take over Ṣan‘ā’. Nevertheless, there were times when he did not receive enough support from the

tribes, even those close to him and had considered giving up leadership. At the same time, when his support in Yemen was in decline, he received supporters from Persia (*al-Ṭabariyīn*) who put themselves under his command⁵².

There is no doubt that Imām al-Hādī was a scholar of the highest calibre, and a leader in tune with the feelings of his people. Otherwise, he could not have gained his special prestigious position in Yemeni society, memory of which continues to the present day. No doubt, the successive battles he fought against al-Qaramiṭah in Yemen gave him and his successors a position close to the hearts of most Yemenis. By nature, the people of Yemen turn away from those who try to press rigid and extremist views. Al-Hādī took a strong stand against the *Bāṭiniyyah* forces who had their secret designs. All this placed al-Hādī in a position that was close to the *Sunnah* schools in and outside Yemen.

It was the later introduction of the rigid philosophy that gave exceptional importance to the ‘Alawī Fāṭimī lineage that undermined al-Hādī’s tradition and deprived the Zaydiyyah of the position it could have had in the whole of Yemen and in the Muslim world⁵³. The text we are looking at in *Al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardiyyah* reflects this narrow concept and illustrates the rigid exclusivity advocated by Imām ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥamzah in his poetry and prose writings, as well as his rulings and fatwas.

Imām ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥamzah had an undoubted literary talent that enabled him to express his argument in fine poetry and powerful prose, employing highly expressive figures of speech, historical accounts and useful examples. His writings were full of quotations from the Qur’ān and the hadith. This fine literary talent enabled Imām ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥamzah to put his argument in a powerful style. Thus, his influence on the *Hādawiyyah* school was strong indeed. He may be described as a second al-Hādī of the Zaydī school of thought in Yemen. We hardly find anyone among the Zaydī scholars who does not refer to him and his rulings, side by side with Imām al-Hādī. Indeed some Zaydīs give him a higher scholarly standing than al-Hādī himself⁵⁴. One needs only to glance at the comments on *al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardiyyah* to confirm this.

While Imām ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥamzah’s standing was so high among the Zaydīs and their supporters, particularly within the ‘Alawī Fāṭimī household, he had a commensurately negative influence among the majority of non-‘Alawīs. This is due to his strong support of the narrow trend that attached special position to ‘Alawī Fāṭimī descent⁵⁵.

Imām ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥamzah placed very strong emphasis on Fāṭimī descent, giving it ample exposition in his poetry and prose writings. Yet its practical effect was to reduce every person who does not belong to the ‘Alawī Fāṭimī descent to an inferior position and make him a second class citizen in all respects, including faith and official standing. In other words, Imām ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥamzah considered all Yemenis, whose descent goes back to the Qaḥṭān tribes, to be of a lower class. This applied also to the ‘Adnanites who did not belong to the ‘Alawī Fāṭimī descent.

This was no simple matter. It had universal application in all aspects of life. Imām ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥamzah considered those of the ‘Alawī Fāṭimī descent to belong to the Prophet’s household⁵⁶, and they were the only ones who counted in this life, and until the Day of Judgement. They were the ones to have precedence in politics. They provided governors, rulers, commanders, as well as all the Imāms who enjoyed complete overall authority. In knowledge and scholarship, they were the top scholars who summed up all wisdom. Anyone else, broad as his knowledge may be, is merely a humble disciple who looks up to them for guidance. Referring to the founders of the great *Sunnī* schools of *Fiqh*, Imām ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥamzah says: “They were only the disciples of the true Imāms, our forefathers.”⁵⁷

Socially they were the masters and others were subordinate. They were equal to one another, while others were not their equals. A woman of ‘Alawī Fāṭimī descent is forbidden to marry anyone belonging to any other descent, because such a marriage lowers the Prophet’s standing. Imām ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥamzah issued his ruling on this point. To emphasise his ruling, he considered the fact that the Prophet and ‘Alī married their daughters to men who did not belong to their descent as a case of desperate need, similar to the permission to eat carrion in case of extreme lack of any other food.

Needless to say, such ideas cannot find proper and genuine support in an environment where the people are reduced by these very ideas to a position of second class citizens. Such ideas condemn themselves to extinction. They may survive in books, and may be studied in schools and institutes, but they cannot find any great following. What supporter would agree to be humiliated, even though such humiliation is done in the name of religion?

Besides, if this class of people, i.e. those of the 'Alawī Fāṭimī descent, are the life boats that ensure safety, how can one determine which of them to take when they are fighting one another? With whom is safety assured, when they all claim to be on the right path?

Hence, Imām 'Abdullāh ibn Ḥamzah did not score much success in his address to the masses. Indeed, he stirred dissent among both 'Alawīs and Qaḥṭānīs. Al-Muḥallā expresses this very well, saying: "Numerous were dissenters, particularly among his own people." Imām 'Abdullāh ibn Ḥamzah himself reminds the people of Yemen, saying: "It is only too often that you let down the offspring of al-Husayn and al-Hasan, following the example of other people before you."⁵⁸

al-Muṭarrafiyyah, a group representing an educated and intellectual trend, questioned the Imām's actions and rulings, pointing out their objections. This placed them in a position of disfavour with the Imām. He seized the first opportunity to denounce them as unbelievers and apostates. He then fought them, shedding their blood, destroying their property and enslaving their families.

Undoubtedly, the scholarly standing of Imām 'Abdullāh ibn Ḥamzah gave him a position of high respect and prestige, and he managed to gain wide popular support. However, once this rigid and ethnic trend is allowed to surface, people are alienated and begin to withdraw their support. Some people suggested that there were only two ways for such ideas to follow. The first is to ensure a complete revision of such narrow thoughts of the superiority of certain descent, and to follow instead a moderate line. This means a complete return to a middle way, free of such rigidity. Failing that, its only hope of survival is to surround itself with groups of ignorant and blind supporters who may be ready to defend it in blind fanaticism⁵⁹.

Apparently, this second option was the preferred one prior to the September 1962 revolution in Yemen.

Notes

¹ Ḥusayn al-Waysī, *Al-Yaman al-Kubrā*, pp.1-3. The historian, Philip K. Hitti in his book *History of The Arabs*, made an important point, namely that historians knew little about the people of the south and south-western regions of Arabia. These were people who had states and whose inscriptions extend from North Arabia to Ethiopia, who organised the spice trade and who undertook amazing public works (p.55). Unfortunately some modern authors dealing with the history of the region in their writings have also proved that they know little about South Arabian ancient history. Their knowledge does not surpass that of the northern parts of the peninsula. Much of their judgments on the South comes through their understanding of the North resulting in many inaccuracies and mistakes. The writings of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and Georgei Zaydān are a typical example of their school of thinking, which is termed amongst modern historians as “*madrassah al-shak al-‘arabī*” (The Arabian School of Doubts). Of its strange conclusions is denying the Arab ethnicity of the Arabs of the South and of their language and script. I was shocked to find that this school of thinking had influenced some present writings, as in the work of the late Isma‘īl al Fārūqī and Lois Lamyā al Fārūqī in their encyclopedia *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, where it is stated that the Arabic language originated in the northern parts of Arabia, while the South had different languages (pp.20, 22).

² ‘Adnān Tarsisī, *Al-Yaman wa Ḥadārah al-‘Arab*, pp.71-87.

³ Al-Shamahi, *Al-Yaman al-Insān wa al-Ḥadārah*, p.32. Aḥmad Fakhrī, *Al-Yaman Mādītha wa Ḥadīruha*, p.60. Note that Jawād ‘Alī in his book *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-‘Arab Qabl al-Islām* agrees with the same three stages that describe the Arabian population, except that in the first stage they are known only as al-Bā‘idah while in the second stage the term al-‘Āribah is used to describe the Qaḥṭān tribes. (Jawād ‘Alī, *Al-Mufaṣṣal*, v.1, p.354. See also: Muṣṭafa Ṣādiq al-Rāfi‘ī, *Tārīkh Ādāb al-‘Arab*, v.1, pp.37-41, and the genealogy of the Arab tribes in al Fārūqī, *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, English pp.7-9, Arabic pp.38-40).

⁴ Al-Shamahi, *Al-Yaman*..pp. 31-33. Jawād ‘Alī, *Al-Mufaṣṣal*..V.1, p.630.

⁵ ‘Adnān Tarsisī, *Al-Yaman*..p.17.

⁶ Jawād ‘Alī, *Al-Mufaṣṣal*.. v.1,pp.355,630.

⁷ Al-Shamahi, *Al-Yaman*.. pp.32-53.

⁸ Al-Shamahi, *Al-Yaman*.. p.83. See also P.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp.45-48, who states that Alexander the Great had planned “to make Arabia the seat of empire”, and see C. Brockelmann, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, p.3.

⁹ P.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p.42. Tarsisī, *al-Yaman*..pp.36-42. C. Brockelmann, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, p.3. John Bagot Glubb, *A Short History of The Arab Peoples*, p.24.

¹⁰ I. Manfred, *Short History of the World*, part 1,V.1, p.169.

¹¹ Tarsisī, *Al-Yaman*.. pp.30-31.

¹² P.K. Hitti relates the great appreciation of South Arabian society’s prestige and wealth in the ancient writings of Strabo and Pliny. Strabo’s describes “cities adorned with beautiful temples and palaces”. (P.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 48. C. Brockelmann, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, p.3. Tarsisī, *al-Yaman*.. pp.44-58. For further details on the old geography of Yemen, refer to al-Hamdani, *Ṣifāh Jazīrah al-‘Arab and Al-‘Ikhl*).

¹³ Al-Shamahi, *Al-Yaman*..p.84. Tarsisī, *Al-Yaman*..p.32.

¹⁴ C. Brockelmann, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, p.3.

¹⁵ After the advent of Islam and the large conversion of Yemenis, the Jews in Yemen became a religious minority, but not an ethnic one due to their Yemeni origins. During Islamic history they did not suffer persecution as a result of their religion, as can be proved by their participation in numerous positions in society (Jawād ‘Alī, *Tārīkh al-‘Arab Qabl al-Islām*, v.6, p.514. Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh*, v.1, p.198. Brockelmann, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, p.3). Prior to their large immigration in the middle of the last century to Palestine, they were known for their

wealth and their activities of which include commerce and jewellery making. Some of their dignitaries were famed in Yemeni society and were very close and respected by the Muslim Yemeni rulers, to the extent that they often intermediated between Yemeni Muslim individuals and those rulers. Even at present, the Jews of Yemeni origin do not have any difficulty entering or leaving the country, even those who had left for Palestine or other places are able to return and would be granted Yemeni citizenship and passports ('Abbas 'Alī al-Shāmī, *Yahūd al-Yaman*, pp.18-19. Aḥmad Fakhrī, *Al-Yaman Mādīha Wahādīraha*, pp.80-82). Bernard Lewis in his book *The Jews of Islam* gave a detailed account of Jewish activities and participation in life throughout the Muslim lands during the different stages of Islamic history. He mentions a number of those Jews who became well known, describing the Jews of Yemen as a "community enjoying a rich and varied cultural life of its own" (p.113, see also pp.96-97, 102-105, 109). R.B. Serjeant tells of a Jew in the first half of the sixth century Hijri "to whom a sultan of the Yemen gave control of the monies (amwāl) of Aden and introduced taxes exacted from the merchants.." (R.B. Serjeant, *Society and Trade in South Arabia*, I:62). Serjeant also reported that a fanatical *sayyid* (those descended of 'Alawī Fāṭimīs) al-Maḥaṭwarī at the end of the 17th century, massacred many Bānyiyans and Jews, or forcibly circumcised them. However he was suppressed and Yemeni society would certainly not have approved of his actions (Ibid. p.73). As Judaism is a religion that comprises different races and ethnicities, the Jews of Yemen are considered to have some of the oldest origins (for further details see: 'Abbās 'Alī al-Shāmī, *Yahūd al-Yaman*, pp.22-23, 25-37 also refer to the writings of: A.C. Haddon, Jules Huxley, A.M. Saunders, Charles Singer, Charles Seligman, Eugene Pittard, Israel Wolfinson and Ripley, noting that at least the latter two authors are Jews who agree with the above points).

¹⁶ It was clear that Christianity and Judaism were competing with each other in pre-Islamic times in Yemen, and that there was tension between their followers. Although Christians managed to found a number of churches around the country with Najrān being their big centre, Judaism was more established and was seen as a national religion (for more details on Christian-Jewish relations see: J. Spencer Trimmingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, pp.292-301).

¹⁷ Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh*, v.2, p.38. Tarsisī, *Al-Yaman*, p.23-24. Jawād ‘Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, v.1, p.658.

¹⁸ The Christian Yemenis on the whole were no less positive about the rise of Islam than their non-Christian counterparts. This is illustrated by the reports of the Yemeni Christian delegation from Najrān to the Prophet Muhammad (S), noting that Najrān was an important centre of Christianity in the region (see: Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, v.2, pp.185-186, 196. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, pp.89, 90, 95. Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, v.1, pp.267-268, and *Al-Mausu‘ah al-Yamaniya*, v.2, pp.808-809. Al-Nadawī, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*, p.386).

¹⁹ D. Nelson and others, *Al-Tārīkh al-‘Arabī al-Qadīm*, pp.39-40. See also P.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp.30, 32, 49.

²⁰ C. Brockelmann, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, p.8.

²¹ P.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p.28.

²² Sa‘d Zaghlūl ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, *Tārīkh al-‘Arab Qabl al-Islam*, p.290. Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh*, v.2, pp.38, 40, 68, 70, 158, 161 and *Al-Muqaddimah*, pp.17, 116-117. See also P.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp.27-28, where he considers the conflict amongst Arabs to be representative of their feelings of individualism, which is part of their ‘*asabiyyah*’ identity or their loyalty to their clan or tribe. This description of Arabs by Hitti is more accurate for the Arabs of Northern Arabia than those of the South who had managed to establish long running statehoods, overcoming their ‘*asabiyyah*’. However this feeling of individualism amongst the Arabs is an important factor in halting the potential rise of dictatorships in the region as each Arab feels equal to those that would be in power.

²³ C. Brockelmann, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, p.11.

²⁴ Refer to “The Post of Imāmate”, Section 1.2. page 48.

²⁵ Ibn Khaldūn notes that the Arabs are competitive in leadership and will rarely accept the authority of each other (Ibn Khaldūn, *Al-Muqaddimah*, v.2, p.515. See also Watt, *Mohammad in Mecca*, pp.16-17).

²⁶ Aḥmad b. Yahyā al-Balādhirī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥamīdullāh, v.1, pp.61, 63.

Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh al-'umam walMulūk*, v.2, pp.252-253.

Ibn al-Aṭhīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tarīkh*, v.2, p.10.

Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Maqrizī, *Al-Nizā' wal Takhāṣum fīmā bayn banī 'Umayyah wa banī Hāshim*, pp.40-41.

²⁷ Al-Balādhirī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, Part 4, v.1, p.10.

²⁸ Ibid, Part 4, v.1, p.11.

²⁹ Similar to this request was that of Hūdḥah b. 'Alī of Yamāmah who offered his conversion in exchange for a place of power. However his offer was not accepted by the Prophet (S) (See Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, v.1, p.201, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Zād al-Ma'ād*, v.2, p.58. Al-Nadawī, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*, pp.310-311). A similar incident occurred with 'Āmir b. al-Ṭufayl and others (see Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*, v.4, p.97).

³⁰ P. Henri Lammens, *Calife Omayyade*, p.151.

³¹ M. Watt, *Mohammad in Mecca*, pp.12-13, 17.

³² Watt believes in addition to the religious motive, that the growing commercial success of the Meccans was an incentive for Abrahah to lead an army to Mecca to destroy the Ka'bah (M. Watt, *Mohammad at Mecca*, pp.13-14. See also John Bagot Glubb, *A Short History of the Arab Peoples*, pp.26-28).

³³ See E.G. Browne in his book *A Literary History of Persia*, in which he said: "Now whether this marriage really took place or not, it has been accepted by the Shī'ites as a historical fact for many centuries". Browne counts Aḥmad b. Ishāq al-Ya'qūbī (d.a. 292/905) as an early author who confirms the marriage. Browne further indicates that a holy mountain very close to Tihrān was still named after her

“the Kūh-i-Bībī-Shahr-bānū” (p.131). The Arab historians gave her different names such as “Ḥarār” (al-Ya‘qūbī), “Ghazālah” (Ibn Sa‘d), “Sulāfah” (al-Nawbakhtī), and Sallāmah (Al-Ya‘qūbī, *History*, v.2, p.247, Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, v.5, p.163, Al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shī‘ah*, p.54, Al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharat al-Dhahab*, v.1, p.194, Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, v.4, p.386, 399, Ibn Kathīr, *Tārīkh*, v.9, p.90).

³⁴ Some of the non-Arabic races of the conquered countries, who became converts to Islam, in early Muslim history, for one reason or another clung to their old beliefs and even endeavoured to smuggle into Islam some of their most cherished ideas which were essentially un-Islamic and for the most part even anti-Islamic. The result of these endeavours was the formation of a large number of sects with a peculiar, often grotesque mixture of extremely heterogeneous elements (Israel Friedlaender, *The Heterodoxies of the Shi‘ites*, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, v.28, pp.2, 36-37). The doctrine of the “Divine Right of Kings” in Persia in Sāsānian times, was one of the old beliefs which was smuggled into Islam. This is why Browne believed that Gobineau was right in asserting that the doctrine of the Divine Right of the House of Sāsān has had an immense influence on all subsequent Persian history, more especially in the tenacity with which the Persians have clung to the doctrine of the Shī‘a or sect of ‘Alī. To them the idea of electing a Caliph, or a spiritual successor to the Prophet, natural enough to the democratic Arabs, could not appear otherwise than revolting and unnatural. In the case of ‘Umar, the second orthodox Caliph, there was an element of personal hatred against the destroyer of the Persian Empire, which though disguised under a religious garb, is nevertheless unmistakable (Gobineau, *Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l’Asie Centrale*, p.275, E.G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, p.130. See also K.M. al-Shaybī, *Al-Ṣilah bayn al-Taṣawuf wal Tashayyu‘*, v.1, pp.163, 249, H.I. Hasan, *Tārīkh al-Dawlah al-Fātimyyah*, pp.60-61, 418).

Although the “divine right” idea was adopted from the Sassanians it should be noted that some Arabs accepted the notion as well.

³⁵ Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyīn*, p.227. For this unexpected move by the ‘Abassīds to cease power from the ‘Umayyads, see Shawqī Dayf, *Tārīkh al-*

Adab al-‘Arabī, v.3, pp.305-308. For more historical accounts see Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, v.4, pp.402-451. Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, v.7, p.94. Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, v.2, pp.15-19.

³⁶ Historians divided the Abbasid period into two stages. The first stage began in 132H, the year the Umayyad Caliphate collapsed, and continued until the death of Wāthiq b. al-Mu‘taṣim in the year 237H. The second Abbasid stage began when al-Mutawakkil b. al-Mu‘taṣim became the Caliph in 232H, and continued until the fall of Baghdad in the hands of the Tartar in 656H, during the era of the Caliph al-Muṣṭa‘sim (Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, *Tārīkh al-Islām al-Siyasī*).

³⁷ This Fāṭimī lineage should not be confused with the Fāṭimīs of Egypt and the Caliphate established in Cairo, as unlike the Fāṭimīs of Yemen, those of Egypt branched off from Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148 H) (*Al-Mawsū‘ah al-Yamanīyyah*, New Ed. Vol.1, p.319; Bernard Lewis, *The Origins of Ismailism*, pp.72-73).

³⁸ ‘Alī b. M. al-‘Abbāsī, *Sīrah al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn*, p.17. Note that Imām al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn came to Yemen twice. The first was in the year 280H, when he came to a place called al-Sharafah, not far from Ṣan‘ā’. Where he stayed for a short period of time, and soon returned to Ḥijāz as the people of Yemen did not pay enough respect to him or his call. The second visit to Yemen was in 283H, when he returned accompanied by a number of his followers and relatives, and here he stayed until his death in 298H (Al-Muḥallī, *Al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardiyyah*, v.2. A.M. Ṣubḥī, *Al-Zaydiyyah*, pp.150-151. A.S. Nu‘mān, *Al-Imām al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn*, p.141. A.A. Al-Jirāfī, *Al-Muqataṭaf min tārīkh al-Yaman*, p.70. H.C. Kay, *Yaman*, p.315. Kay noted that al-Muḥallī, in his book *al-Ḥadā’iq* was silent over most particulars given by al-Khazrajī).

³⁹ Imām Zayd b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d.122H), is the founder of the Zaydī madhhab. Many consider the Zaydiyyah one of the Shi‘ite sects, however the Zaydīs do not agree with or believe in the same beliefs as the other Shi‘ite sects. This is why many scholars consider the Zaydīs to be the closest madhhab to the other Sunnī schools (Ibn Abī al-Rijal, *Maṭla‘ al-Budūr*, MS.; A.S. Nu‘mān, *Al-*

Imām al-Hādī, p.17). It is important to note that many Shi'ite sects took the name Zaydī or Zaydiyyah without following the actual beliefs and thinking of Imām Zayd himself. This is clear with the Zaydī Imāms of Yemen and the Caspian Sea, some of whom can be considered to be extreme rather than moderate Shi'ah. See "The Zaydiyyah", Section 1.2. page 46.

⁴⁰ Al-Shamahī, *Al-Yaman*, p.337. Also see the long extensive study regarding the Hādawī Imāmate and the Hādawī Zaydī Madhhab in Yemen, Ibid, pp.113-123, and A. Al-Shāmī, *Tārīkh al-Yaman*, v.3, pp.107, 112-114, 145.

⁴¹ 'Alī b. M. al-'Abbāsī, *Sīrah al-Hādī Yahyā b. al-Ḥusayn*, p.17, 36-37. A.M. Şubhī, *Al-Zaydiyyah*, pp.151-152. A.S. Nu'mān, *Al-Imām al-Hādī*, p.128.

⁴² M.A. al-Shaṭīrī, *Adwār al-Tārīkh al-Ḥadramī*, v.1, pp.152-153. A. 'U. al-Saqqāf, *'Idām al-Qūt fī Dhikr Buldān Ḥadramut*, p.160. A.A. al-Sharajī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Khawāṣ*, p.195. We must note here that some writings raise some doubts about the authenticity of al-Muhājir's lineage, and the actual time of his arrival in Ḥadramut. Some historians put a later date for his arrival in Ḥadramut at around 540H, as it was mentioned by Muḥammad al-Ahdal in *Al-Manhaj al-A'dal*, and in *Al-Mashra' al-Rawī* (I.A. al-Akwa', *Hijar al-'Ilm wa Ma'aqiluh fī al-Yaman*, v.4, pp.2002-2003. See also Salāh al-Bakrī, *Tārīkh Ḥadramut al-Siyāsī*, v.1, pp.77-78).

⁴³ Karāmah M. Ba-Mu'men, *Al-Fikr wal-Mujtama' fī Ḥadramut*, p.414. M.A. al-Shaṭīrī, *Adwār al-Tārīkh al-Ḥadramī*, v.1, pp.156-157.

⁴⁴ It should be noted that the hardline 'Alawī Ḥusaynīs of Ḥadramut do not accept in the same level of nobility of lineage, even the other branch of the 'Alawīs, namely the Ḥasanīs due to the extent of their racial thinking and beliefs. They went so far as to claim that the Ḥusaynīs of Ḥadramut were the only pure Ḥusaynīs in the world (Karāmah M. Ba-Mu'men, *Al-Fikr wal-Mujtama' fī Ḥadramut*, pp.247-249, 37-371).

⁴⁵ David Thomas Gochenour III, *The Penetration of Zaydī Islam into Early Medieval Yemen*, pp.46-47.

⁴⁶ See *Sīrah al-Hādī* about the conflict between the brothers, al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad and al-Qāsim b. Aḥmad, the grandsons of the Imām al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn and how their followers were fighting each other (‘Alī M. al-‘Abbāsī al-‘Alawī, *Sīrah al-Hādī*, pp.408-409).

⁴⁷ As a result of the bad reputation that these conflicts gave the Hādawī Zaydī mathhab, some scholars of this school called for a change in the Hādawī theory for the Imāmate. The contemporary Hādawī ‘Alawī scholar Aḥmad al-Shāmī is one of those who called for the ‘Fāṭimī ‘Alawīs’ to stop their despicable claim for acquiring the post of Imāmate (Aḥmad M. al-Shāmī, *Tārīkh al-Yaman al-Fikrī*, v.1, p.121).

(NB. *Hādawī ‘Alawīs and Fāṭimī ‘Alawīs*:

Fāṭimī ‘Alawīs: The Fāṭimī ‘Alawīs referred to here are descendents of Imam ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib from his marriage to the Prophet Muḥammad’s daughter Fāṭima, and are also considered to be Zaydīs.

Hādawī ‘Alawīs: The Zaydīs in their teachings relied, at first, upon various Fāṭimī ‘Alawī authorities such as, Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī al-Ḥasanī (d.246 H), Imām al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn (the grandson of Imām al-Qāsim), Imām al-Nāṣir al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī al-‘Uṭrūsh al-Ḥusaynī (d.304 H), and Imām al-Mu’ayyad Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥasanī (d.411 H).

Zaydīs of Yemen were well known for following the teachings of Imām al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn, and were known as Hādawīs, Hādawī Zaydīs, Hādawī Alawīs, or of the Hādawī mathhab, whilst other Zaydīs were known as Qāsimīs, Nāṣirīs, or Mu’ayyadīs, according to which Imām they followed. (Muḥammad al-‘Amrānī, *Al-Zaydiyyah*, p.8; ‘Abdullah al-Shamahī, *Al-Yaman*, pp.114-118, 337-338; Aḥmad Ṣubḥī, *Al-Zaydiyyah*, pp.2, 61, 150; *Al-Zaydiyyah, The Encyclopedia of Yemen*, New Edition).

⁴⁸ *Kufr al-ilzām* is in Arabic “*an yulzam al-ghayro ‘alā mā yagūl bihī bimā lā yagūlo bihī*”. To implement the label of *kufṛ* on a person according to the interpretation of the accuser of what the accused said or did, ie. becoming an

unbeliever as a consequence of the interpretation of one's sayings by others, when the accused in fact does not believe in *kufr* and never intended it by his words. There is no doubt that *Kufr al-ilzām* was a tool used by some against their enemies, with no solid evidence for the accusation, as was used by some Hādawī Imāms and their jurists (*fuqahā*). Imām ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamza, with no restrictions, used *Kufr al-ilzām* against his opponents within the Zaydī Hādawī circle such as *al-Muṭarrafiyyah* or those who were not Hādawīs, commonly known as Ahl al-sunnah. One of the reasons that Imām ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamza used to issue his judgment of *Kufr al-ilzām* against the *al-Muṭarrafiyyah* was their scientific explanation for different processes in Nature, such as the fall of rain. In this process, in which evaporation rises from the seas, clouds gather and are carried to the land where they then fall as rain, the Imām considered this explanation *kufṛ* for he claimed it contradicted the Qur’ān. Another example of *Kufr al-ilzām* was to accuse a male non-‘Alawī Fāṭimī of *kufṛ* for marrying an ‘Alawī Fāṭimī woman. The reason for this accusation of *kufṛ* was that by marrying into this sacred lineage, he was desecrating its Prophethood status, and whoever desecrates the Prophet (S) was no doubt a *kafīr*. Many scholars of the Zaydī school in Yemen at the time of Imām ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamza, and even before and after his era, opposed using *Kufr al-ilzām*. Some important Zaydī dignitaries who were contemporaries of the Imām, and who also opposed using *Kufr al-ilzām* were al-Muntaṣir bi Allah Muḥammad b. Mufaddal, known as al-‘Afīf, and also his nephews Yaḥyā and al-Mahdī the sons of al-Manṣur (Sulaymān al-Muḥallī, *Al-Burhān al-Rā’iq min Wuraṭ al-Madā’iq*, Ms. ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamza, *Rasā’il*, part1, pp.59-61, 181-227 and *Al-Fatāwa*, pp.472-477, 151. Ja‘far b. Aḥmad, *Maqāwid al-Inṣāf fī Masā’il al-Khilāf*, pp.53-55. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Shawkānī, *Al-Sayl al-Jarrār*, v.4, pp.576, 584-585. A. al-Shāmī, *Tārīkh al-Yaman al-Fikrī*, v.3, pp.86-87, 142-143. *Al-Mausū‘ah al-Yamaniyyah*, v.1, p.870. Wilfered Madelung, *Religions and Sects in Medieval Islam*, XIX, pp.75-79. H.C. Kay, *Yemen*, p.318-Kay mistook *al-Muṭarrafiyyah* as a “designation for the Sunnite Muslims”. It could be that Kay could not believe that Imām ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamza would destroy a Hādawī sect as he did with *al-Muṭarrafiyyah*).

We should here note that *Kufr al-ilzām* is a term derived from *ilzām*, the well known term in the field of Muslim theology (*ʿIlm al-kalam*). *Kufr al-ilzām* is also known as *Kufr al-maʿāl* which is considered to be part of a general legal term known as *Kufr al-taʿwīl*; a term well discussed within the different schools and groups of the Muslim faith. Moderate Muslim jurists including moderate Zaydis, do not accept putting the term into practice within a Muslim legal framework, as issuing *kufr* judgments should only be given on solid grounds and with clear evidence (Al-Shawkānī, *Kitāb al-Sayl al-Jarrār*, V.4, pp.372, 576, 584; Al-Maqbalī, *Al-ʿAlam al-Shāmikh*, pp. 412-413; Al-Wazīr, *Al-ʿAwāsim wa al-Qawāsim*, V.4, pp. 361, 367-8; Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, V.28, pp.501-543; Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyah al-Mujtahid*, V.6. p.197; Al-Shāṭibī, *Al-Iʿtiṣām*, V.2, p. 197; Al-Jurjānī, *Al-Taʿrīfāt*, pp.203-4; Al-Zarkashī, *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt*, V.2, pp.43, 45; Ṣubḥī, *Al-Zaydiyyah*, V.2, pp.150, 261; Ṣubḥī, *Fī ʿIlm al-Kalām*, p. 43; *Takfīr*, *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition).

⁴⁹ In the period of the 6th and 7th century Hijri, we find three dominant Imāms: al-Imām al-Mutawakkil Aḥmad b. Sulaymān, al-Imām ʿAbdullāh b. Ḥamza and al-Imām Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn. During this period we rarely find any mention of important events like that of the Crusades and the invasion of the Tartar on the Muslim world, in their biographies, poetry collections and any other contemporary writings. On the other hand we find a non-Zaydī ruler in Yemen concerned with the Tartar invasion, and participating in defending the Muslim region from the Crusade threat. Al-Khazrajī, an important Rasūlī historian, reported of the Rasūlī king al-Muzaffar that “he had five hundred horsemen in Egypt, who warred against the Franks. He loaded their beasts of burden from Yemen with what he sent to them by way of presents and rarities.” (Al-Khazrajī, *Al-ʿUqūd al-Luʿluʾiyyah*, v.1, p.234. Translated by J.W. Redhouse. See also p.158 and al-Shāmī, *Tārīkh al-Yaman*, v.3, pp.253-254). Five hundred horsemen was a huge number by the military scale of the time, especially when we consider that Ayyūbids got control of the whole of Yemen with only one thousand horsemen. On occasions of military victory over the Tartars in Egypt and Syria, we find news of big celebrations in Yemen by the

Rasūlids (Al-Khazrajī, *Ibid*, p.273. David King, *Rasūlids*., Majallah al-Iglīl, issue 3, 1981, pp.222-224. Muḥammad M. al-Mujāhid, *Madīnah Ta'iz*, p.24).

⁵⁰ The Muṭarrāfis were known as scholars, worshippers and God-fearing people. They played an important role in introducing the Hādawī madhhab to ordinary people, and were extremely successful, especially during the rule of the Ṣulayhīds who were Ismā'īlīs (D. Gochenour, *The Penetration of Zaydī Islam into Early Medieval Yemen*, p.186). See "The Muṭarrāfiyyah", Section 1.2.5. page 54.

⁵¹ Muḥammad Muḥsin al-Zāhirī in his book *Al-Dawr al-Siyāsī lil Qabīlah fi al-Yaman*, notes that the Yemeni tribes through their experience with the political system in the Yemen, in times of conflict and when neither tribe is strong enough to overcome the others, will agree to appoint an external arbitrator to solve the problem facing them, and on some occasions they even agree to ask the arbitrator to assume political power. This is what happened with Imām Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn (Muḥammad Muḥsin al-Zāhirī, *al-Dawr al-Siyāsī lil Qabīlah fi al-Yaman*, pp.168-169). This agrees with Ibn Khaldūn's theory of the necessity of *al-'Aṣabiyyah al-Kubrā* (the great loyalty) in order to establish a state (Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddimah*, v.2, p.515).

⁵² Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-'Abbāsī, *Sīrah al-Hādī*..pp.183, 186, 221-222, 229, 234, 242, 247. After al-Hādīs death in 298H, the loss of supporters for his sons and grandsons was apparent. His son Aḥmad gave up his duties as Imām and remained in his house in Ṣa'da until his death in 322H, and prior to this his brother al-Ḥasan was killed (*Ibid*, pp.406-407).

⁵³ The great importance of the Zaydī Hādawī political theory comes from considering the post of Imām as an elected position rather than an appointed one, which is the case with the Shi'ite sects. By looking at the required qualities of any candidate for the post of Imām, we see clearly the maturity of the Zaydī Hādawī madhhab in the field of politics and in establishing statehood. However this political theory was under great threat from the racial motives surrounding it, and this gave the opportunity for those extremists and hardliners among the Shi'ite sects to come through and dominate the scene, as occurred in the Caspian Sea region, (Ṭabaristan,

Daylamān and Gīlān, where the Zaydī sects were overcome by the other hardline Shi‘ite sects) by the first half of the tenth century Hijri (Wilfred Madelung, *History of the Zaydī Imāms of Ṭabaristan, Daylamān and Gīlān*, pp.13-14). For further information regarding the Imām’s qualities and the differences between the Yemeni and Caspian Zaydīs, see “The Zaydiyyah” section 1.2. page 46, and in particular “The Post of Imāmate” section 1.2.1. page 47, and “The Zaydīs and the Divine Right Theory” section 1.2.2. page 50.

⁵⁴ Al-Muḥallī, *Al-Ḥadā’iq*. V.2, F.156B-157A.

⁵⁵ This exclusivist way of thinking reached the extent that the ‘Alawīs Fāṭimī claimed they had their own method of narrating Hadith from the Prophet Muḥammad (S). This method comprised only narrators of high esteem of the ‘Alawī Fāṭimī lineage, and was known as *silsilah al-dhahab* (the golden narrators). Those raising this claim quote Imām ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamza’s verse: *kam bayna qawli ‘an abī ‘an jaddihī*.

What a difference between my saying “from my father from his grandfather

from my father’s ‘father’”, who is the guiding Prophet [143B]

and a youth who says our scholars related to us

(the authority of) this narrative is certainly not like mine (in its accuracy)!

Take that which is close and leave the far;

the near will compensate for the far.

A number of Zaydī scholars denied such a claim, commenting that a method in narrating Hadith such as this, was theoretically great but practically it could not exist. The famous scholar Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Wazīr criticised this method for those reasons, adding that in Imām al-Hādī’s book *al-Aḥkāṁ*, the Imām himself was unable to quote a single Hadith according to this golden method (Ṣārim al-Dīn al-Wazīr, *Al-Fulk al-Dawwār*, pp.77-78). It was really the moderate approach of the Zaydiyyah which was maintained in Yemen. It was kept by the presence of great knowledgeable scholars such as Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Wazīr (775-840H), Ṣāliḥ al-Maqbalī (1047-1108H), Ḥasan al-Jalāl (1014-1084H), Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Amīr al-Ṣan‘ānī (1099-1182H), Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Shawkānī (1173-1250H). (Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-‘Amrānī, *Al-Zaydiyyah*, pp.7-15).

⁵⁶ The contemporary scholar Ibrāhīm b. ‘Alī al-Wazīr gave a good definition in his introduction to Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Ḥasanī’s book *al-‘Uqūd*, explaining who *Āl al-Bayt* are. He defined them as all those following the steps of their grandfather the Prophet (S), also his wives and those who respect them. He quotes Prophet’s (S) saying concerning Salmān the Persian “*Salmān minnā Āl al-Bayt*” (Salmān is one of us, we the people of the house of prophethood). However al-Wazīr exaggerated when he claimed that the best leaders throughout history were only those of *Āl al-Bayt* (Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Ḥasanī, *Al-‘Uqūd al-Lu’liyyah fi Ba’d Ansāb al-‘Usrah al-Ḥasaniyyah*, pp.7-8). The well known scholar Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Shawkānī (d.1250 H) in his book *Nayl al-Awṭār*, concluded that the different interpretations of who *Āl al-Bayt*, *Ahl al-Bayt* or *al-‘Itrah* are, is as follows: (1) The wives and offspring. (2) The wives only. (3) Banū Hāshim and Banū ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, as supported by Imām al-Shāfi‘ī. (4) Fāṭimah and ‘Alī, their two sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn and their children. (5) All the relatives of the Prophet (S). (6) The whole Muslim nation, and this is supported by al-Nawawī in his study of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and also by other scholars like al-Azharī and Nashwān b. Sa‘īd al-Ḥimyarī (Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awṭār*, v.2, pp.302-303. Ismā‘īl b. ‘Alī al-Akwa‘, *Nashwān b. Sa‘īd al-Ḥimyarī*, pp.48-50). The question of who *Āl al-Bayt*, *Ahl al-Bayt* or *al-‘Itrah* are is of religious importance especially within the Shi‘ite sects because of its connection with the question of Imāmate. However Muslim scholars may argue that if it was important to have a prophetic lineage in order to continue the religious mission, then Allah would have bestowed upon the Prophet (S) sons to avoid the ongoing confusion regarding who should take up the Imāmate position. A confusion which has existed not only between the Shi‘ah and the Sunnīs, but even amongst the Shi‘ah themselves. Al-Muḥallī in *al-Ḥadā’iq* (v.2, F.175A) indicates to the argument over the Imāmate amongst the Shi‘ite sects by mentioning the Imāmī Shi‘ite poet al-Shumayṭī (al-Simṭī), who was well known for his long qasīdah regarding who had the right to be the true Imām. Al-Shumayṭī did not believe the Zaydī Imāms had any right to the Imāmate because of their Ḥasanī lineage, and even did not accept the right of some other Ḥusaynīs to the Imāmate. Therefore it is not surprising that Imām ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamzah wrote a whole book (*Al-‘Iqd al-Thamīn fi Ahkām al-A‘immah al-Hādīn*) criticising the Imāmī Shi‘ite

sect in their Imāmate doctrine and defending the position of the Zaydī Imāms. This book is a very good reference for those dealing with Islamic history and beliefs. (Imām ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamzah, *Al-‘Iqd al-Thamīn fī Aḥkām al-A’immah al-Hādīn*, pp.78-79. Al-Jāhiz, *Al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*, v.1, p.23, v.3, pp.75, 356. Al-Jāhiz, *Al-Burṣān wal ‘Irjān..*, pp.230-231, 357. Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyīn*, p.354. Shawqī Dayf, *Tārīkh al-Adab al-‘Arabī*, al-‘Aṣr al-‘Abbāsī al-Awwal, v.3, pp.190-192).

⁵⁷ Al-Muḥallī, *al-Ḥadā’iq*. v.2, F.152A. Also in *al-Ḥadā’iq* we find similar paragraphs repeating the same ideas, such as that which the Imām ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamza is quoted to say: “*Naḥno ahl al-taḥrīmī wal taḥlīl wal-tanzīli wal ta’wīl..*” translates as “We (the ‘Itra) are the people who know what is prohibited and what is lawful and know the revealed Qur’ān and its explication. We are also the symbols of guidance, the moons of darkness, the seas of knowledge, the mountains of forbearance...” (Al- Muḥallī, *al-Ḥadā’iq*.v.2, F.152B). Also note that the same ideas occur in the letter sent by one of the supporters of Yaḥyā ibn ‘Abdullāh, who rebelled against Hārūn al-Rashīd, to Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥadramī in Egypt. (*Akhbar Fakh*, p.50). Reference may also be made to the history of Imām Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn, Abū Ṭayr, particularly his epistle. Taking part in advocating his cause, one leading figure in his group, who was our scholar al-Muḥallī, publicly vowed that “there is none on the surface of the earth, vast as it is, who is better than Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn.” (*Sīrah*, p.63). The same repeated ideas we find with one of Imām Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn’s contemporaries, namely Ḥumaydān b. al-Qāsim when he quoted both Imāms ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamza and Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn in their claims (see Ḥumaydān, *Majmu‘ Ḥumaydān*, Ms.).

⁵⁸ Al-Muḥallī, *Al-Ḥadā’iq*.v.2, F.152B.

⁵⁹ With reference to the draft of a letter Aḥmad Muḥammad Zabara (a high ranking jurist close to Imām Aḥmad, who was the last ‘Alawī Fāṭimī Imām in Yemen in modern history. Zabara was also the husband of the Imām’s daughter) wrote on behalf of Imām Aḥmad, to the leader of the Yemeni opposition movement, Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Zubayrī. The main points in this letter draft were: (1) Not

to think of overpowering the Imām as they are bound to fail because of the great support for the Imām amongst the tribesmen (*Qabā'il*). (2) Not to consider improving the life standard of the *Qabā'il* or of educating them. (3) Not to consider introducing modern techniques to the people of Yemen through new schools, hospitals and roads. Not to engage themselves with the *Qabā'il*, for it was sufficient for them to remain simple folk, farming the land, needing no more learning than how to pray, and not needing shoes, proper clothing or proper medicine. They must be left in their hardships, of which they are satisfied. (4) To give the Imām complete obedience. (Ismā'īl al-Akwa', *Hijar al-'Ilm wa Ma'āqiluh fi al-Yaman*, v.2, p.604). Serjeant tells of some people in Ḥadramut who believe that the Ḥadrami Sayyids are serviced by the Jinns (R.B. Serjeant, *Society and Trade in South Arabia*, XIV, p.224).

1.2. The Zaydiyyah

The Zaydiyyah is a Muslim school of “open thinking” (*Ijtihād*¹), named after Imām Zayd b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn (d.122 H). Many consider Zaydīs to be Shī‘a, however they actually do not believe in a number of beliefs held by other Shī‘a groups, a number of which will be referred to in this section². Because of their practical terms for the Imāmate and their distinguished way of thinking, they were considered to be the practical group of the Shī‘a³.

The moderate nature of the Zaydīs is clear throughout their writings, literature, beliefs and practices during their long history⁴. Zaydīs openly rejected the extreme Shī‘a views among the Imāmīs and particularly those of the Bāṭinīs, denouncing it as an unacceptable corruption of the Muslim religion. The list of Zaydī writings on this subject is extensive and highly recognised such as the works of Imām ‘Abdullah Ibn Ḥamzah, particularly in his well known book *Al-‘Iqd al-Ṭhamīn*, where he is highly critical of Imāmīs for what he considers their extreme belief in their Imāms. We also find other Zaydī writings criticising the extreme Shī‘a (*ghulāt*), particularly of the Bāṭinīs such as those writings of the great Zaydī Imām Yahyā b. al-Ḥusayn (d.298 H) in his book *Al-Aḥkām*, Naṣḥwān b. Sa‘īd al-Ḥimyarī (d.573 H) in his book *Al-Ḥūr al-‘Īn*, Ḥumayd al-Muḥallī (author of *Al-Ḥadā’iq*) in his book *Al-Ḥusām al-Battār*, Imām Yahyā Ibn Ḥamzah (d.749 H) in two of his famous works *Al-‘Ifḥām* and *Mishkāt al-‘Anwār*, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Daylamī (d.711 H) in his work *Qawā‘id ‘Aqā‘id Āl Muḥammad*, and Imām al-Mahdī Aḥmad b. Yahyā al-Murtadā (d.840 H) in his well known book *Al-Manniyyah wa al-‘Amal*⁵.

It is my opinion that the reason for this moderate nature of the Zaydīs is their identification of the conflict and tensions between the Sunnīs and the Shī‘a as originally generated by political and not ideological motives. This recognition is expressed directly and indirectly in their writings.

It is imperative to point out the belief among Zaydīs that there were two stages of Shī'ism; the early stage which comprised the original version of Shī'ism and a later stage which became more and more radical with time. As they put it, during the early stage, at the time of Imām 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, Shī'ism did not mean more than the political and military support for Imām 'Alī in his disputes and conflicts against his opponents. Imām 'Alī's supporters were not different in their beliefs and religion from the rest of the Muslim community⁶. Zaydīs also mention in their literature that Imām Zayd b. 'Alī in his rebellion during the Umayyad Period was supported by a number of different Muslim groups, whilst the extreme Shī'a or the Rāfidīs denied him their support⁷.

Also, I view another reason for the moderation of the Zaydīs, which existed alongside their method of *ijtihād*, was their committed adherence in their views and beliefs to the revealed texts of Islam; the Qur'ān and Sunnah, refusing the Bāṭinī interpretation (*Bāṭin*⁸) of these texts.

The geographical location of Yemen with it being next door to Mecca and surrounded by a huge Sunnī population, made moderation a necessity for the Zaydīs of Yemen, a way of life which continues to the present day.

1.2.1. The Post of Imāmate

The Zaydī terms and required qualifications for the Post of Imāmate, apart from lineage, were not generally different from those of the Sunnī schools⁹.

The required qualifications for the Post of Imāmate are as follows¹⁰: A male with liberty, sanity, majority, knowledge of the law (*shari'ah*) as required for the judgeship (with special emphasis on knowledge in religious matters), probity (*'adāla*) as required for legal testimony, ability to render independent judgement (*ijtihād*) in law, most of his rational judgements are right (*aghlāb ra'yih al-ṣawāb*), piety, moral integrity, generosity with the ability to not overspend, and the capability of carrying out the political and military duties of office (in which he

should have the physical fitness and the courage to stand in leading wars and to fight).

If there is more than one person in the same era qualified for the Post of Imāmate, Zaydīs had two different opinions on the matter; The Caspian Zaydīs permitted for more than one Imām to exist, whilst the Yemenī Zaydīs did not accept this in the beginning, although the practice was accepted later on¹¹. Should the Zaydīs want to choose between the existing Imāms, the matter is usually left to a committee of *Ahl al-Ḥal wa al-‘Aqd* (the most prominent Zaydī scholars) to make the choice according to certain principles, such as choosing the individual who first came to the post. However if this was at the same time, then one would be identified based on the committee’s criteria to voluntarily, if not forcibly, leave the post to the other. Generally, choosing between candidates would be based upon the best qualified, if there is no distinction between them in qualification, then the position would go to the oldest¹².

All the different sects of Islam agree that the *Imāmah* or the Imāmate, after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, is the supreme leadership which carries all the religious, political and otherwise life duties of the Muslim community. They also agree that the establishment of an Imām¹³ is obligatory (*wājib*); Sunnīs, Mu‘tazilites, *Khārijīs* and Zaydīs mainly put this obligation upon the Muslim community according to the common view because of his functions under the revealed law not on rational grounds, whilst the Imāmīs (Twelver *Shī‘a*) and the *Ismā‘īliyyah* (*Ismā‘īlism*) believe the Imāmate is obligatory on rational grounds. In other words, the establishment of an Imāmate, in the Imāmī and Bāṭinī thinking, is incumbent upon God by virtue of his benevolence (*lutf*), and not upon mankind. This is the reason why the Imām must be designated by God through the Prophet or another Imām¹⁴. Whereas, in the instance where the *ummah* (Muslim nation) is without a true leader (Imām), the Zaydīs believe the obligation to find the right person for the Imāmate lies upon *Ahl al-Ḥal wa al-‘Aqd*¹⁵, who also have the right to dismiss the Imām should he prove incompetent in the role¹⁶. Thus we find the Zaydīs, like the Sunnīs, leave the door of Imāmate open to anyone qualified, unlike the Imāmīs who only believe in the designation (*naṣṣ*) of twelve Imāms, and the *Ismā‘īlīs* who base the number of Imāms on a cycle of seven¹⁷.

These Shī'a groups believed that their Imāms were divinely chosen, and they considered them Imāms before even their births. The Imāms could not be appointed by people, nor could they be dismissed or judged¹⁸. The Imāmīs, for instance, believed their twelve Imāms to have a higher status than prophets and angels¹⁹. Some Shī'a groups went further, attributing their Imāms with superpowers such as knowing the unseen, foretelling the future and having control of the universe²⁰. Such beliefs in Imāms were rejected in principle by the Zaydīs as they believed that giving divine attributes to Imāms was against *waḥdāniyyah* (oneness of God), and a form of *tashbīh* (anthropomorphism). In other words, they viewed some of these beliefs, particularly those of the *ghulāt* (the extreme Shī'a) as being against the basic principles of Islamic teachings²¹. Both the early Zaydī Imāms, like Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm (d.246 H) and his grandson Imām al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn (d.298 H), and the later Zaydī Imāms, like the Caspian Imām Abū Ṭālib Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn al-Hārūnī (d.424 H)²², rejected such beliefs in Imāms.

Imām 'Abdullah b. Ḥamzah strongly criticised the Imāmīs on their Imāmate theory, writing his book *Al- 'Iqd al-Ṭhamīn* in which he discusses these beliefs in detail, and strongly rejects them, including their claims in:

- a) *al-naṣṣ al-jalī* (the clear revealed text evidence; Quranic or prophetic designation) in 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib to be the Imām after the Prophet's death²³,
- b) *al- 'Iṣma* (Imām infallibility),
- c) *'ilm al-ghayb* (Imām to know the future or the unseen),
- d) *al-taqiyyah* (action of covering beliefs, or Imām to practice dissimulation to cover his own beliefs), and
- e) *al-ghaybah* (Imām's occultation).

Imām Ibn Ḥamzah anger against the Imāmīs²⁴ is evident in *Al- 'Iqd al-Ṭhamīn*, to the extent that he accuses the sect of being created by the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs (*bid'ah 'Abbāsiyyah*) to act as agents for them against the Zaydī Imāms who represented the real challenge against the 'Abbāsīds²⁵. He states that such a description of an Imām, as befits Imāmī beliefs, would be impossible to exist in reality, and that the real aim was to distract the people away from the true Imāms, ie. the Zaydī Imāms. Furthermore Imām Ibn Ḥamzah claims that should it be possible for such an Imām to exist then he would be the first to follow him²⁶.

It is of importance to mention that most Zaydī scholars consider that before an Imām can be accepted as legitimate he must fulfil two vital requirements for the Post of Imāmate; firstly his open call (*da‘wah*) to his allegiance and secondly his rise (*qiyām*) against illegitimate rulers²⁷. In fact, these two requirements places the Zaydīs in an identifiable position amongst all the other Islamic sects, whether Sunnī or Shī‘a, as a legitimate revolutionary movement, or as some have called them, the Khārijīs of the Shī‘a²⁸.

This philosophy of *da‘wah* and *qiyām* in Zaydī political theory contrasts completely with that of the Imāmīs, in which the Imām hides himself (*taqiyyah*) and does not call openly for his Imāmate²⁹. In fact, according to Imāmī doctrine, the twelfth and final Imām went into *ghaybah kubrā* (the major occultation) leaving the Imāmīs in a period of *Intizār* (waiting) for his return. Recently the controversial idea of *al-faqīh al-Imām* was invented by some Imāmīs in order to solve the problem of the Imām’s long absence. The post of *al-faqīh al-Imām* is elected and not designated; the required qualifications for which are:

- a) *Al-Fiqāhah* (knowledge of Sharī‘ah law),
- b) *Al-‘Adālah* (probity), and
- c) *Al-Kafā‘ah* (capability)³⁰.

It is interesting to observe that these requirements for the Imām are more or less the same as those under the Zaydī and Sunnī schools, and thus illustrate the Imāmīs’ huge shift from their old position³¹.

1.2.2. The Zaydīs and the Divine Right Theory

The adoption of the Divine Right Theory for the Imāmate among the different Shī‘a groups, gradually gave a religious colouring to their disputes amongst themselves and also deepened their argument with the Sunnī groups, although the Zaydīs played an important role in keeping these differences between the Shī‘a and Sunnīs to a minimum.

The Caspian Zaydī Imāms and their vast amounts of literature which adopted the Divine Right Theory, substantially influenced the Yemeni Zaydīs as early as the era of Imām Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn³², whose grandfather al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī had originally lived in the Caspian region. This influence was more apparent during the sixth century Hijrī following the import of large amounts of Zaydī literature to Yemen, which Imām Ibn Ḥamzah then used considerably in his arguments and literary works. This later Caspian Zaydī influence led to an extensive conflict amongst the Yemeni Zaydīs; a tragic example of this was the bloody campaign led by Imām Ibn Ḥamzah against the Muṭarrāfīs. Their view that nobility and knowledge were not inherited but were achievable through hard work and good deeds by anyone regardless of lineage, was one of the Imām's motives for standing against them³³.

The influence of the Divine Right Theory upon some Zaydīs was expressed in certain terms and beliefs, such as claiming infallibility for some of their Imāms³⁴. However, Imām Ibn Ḥamzah openly rejected this belief and dismissed it as being a quality of an Imām³⁵. When he described Imām 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib as *al-Waṣī al-Ma'sūm*³⁶, he explained that what he meant by *Iṣmah* (immunity) for Imām 'Alī was only immunity from practicing the major sins (*al-Kabā'ir*), and not that Imām 'Alī was an absolute *Ma'sūm* like the Prophet³⁷. Although Imām Ibn Ḥamzah did not claim infallibility, it is evident that he saw himself as a symbol of guidance for his followers, to which they had no right to question or judge him³⁸. Thus, in effect, he put the Divine Right Theory into practice through his policies with the people around him, and through his *fatwas* and teachings which were heavily influenced by the Zaydī literature arriving from the Caspian Sea region. Rulings of *kufr* and *fisq*, and the curse of Allah would be implemented upon those who did not accept his Imāmate, were not under his authority, or those who attempted to question his actions or practices³⁹.

A high standard of religious knowledge is one of the vital requirements of a Zaydī Imām. In practice this knowledge could be gained through the ordinary teaching system, whereby youngsters attend teaching circles in mosques, *madrasas* (religious schools) or other places such as scholars' houses. These scholars and their students

would come from a number of different social or ethnic backgrounds. However when some Zaydī Imāms speak of their knowledge, they speak of it in tones which ascribe divine inspiration to it; an influence of the Divine Right Theory. Likewise, the same terms describing an Imām's knowledge, are used by some Zaydī followers. Although knowledge was not believed to be inherited in its entirety among the Fāṭimī 'Alawī descendants, they did believe it to be strictly taught from father to son⁴⁰, a belief unapproved in reality and rejected by many other Zaydīs.

In conclusion, the influence of the Divine Right Theory upon some Zaydīs, including Imām Ibn Ḥamzah, was apparent through their claim that the Fāṭimī 'Alawī descendants, or as they referred to them "the 'Itrah, Ahl al-Bayt, or Āl al-Bayt", were the nobles of high class and the masters of Muslims in all aspects of life; they were the symbols of guidance, the people of knowledge, the authority in religion and the leaders among people⁴¹. In accordance with this thinking, we find that some Zaydī biographers of Imāms collected a substantial amount of material on the *Karāmahs* surrounding those Imāms, in order to present them as persons who were supported by divine powers and who could work marvels⁴². However, Zaydīs did not consider *Karāmahs* to be requirements for an Imām, but on occasion they did place it as a supporting quality⁴³.

1.2.3. The Zaydīs and Extremism

The damage of extreme views amongst the Sunnī and Shī'a sects cannot be denied throughout Muslim history and up to the present day.

It is my view that the Divine Right Theory would not have done a great deal of damage to the Shī'a movement had it not been accompanied with the ideas of those carrying extreme views. The Zaydiyyah during its long history was unable to get away from the influence of those extremists. Professor W. Madelung recently wrote an important article about the Zaydiyyah in which he discussed the influence of the radical Zaydī Kūfī school known as Jārūdiyyah on some Zaydī Imāms and teachings in the Caspian region. One of the radical ideas of the Kūfān Zaydiyyah

which Madelung pointed to was how they considered the land under Sunnī domination as an abode of unbelief by ingratitude (*dār kufr ni'mah*)⁴⁴.

Imām 'Abdullah b. Ḥamzah openly supported Jārūdiyyah, and considered it the correct Zaydī group⁴⁵. This could explain some of his *fatwās* and practices against those not under his authority, of whose land he raided, wealth confiscated, children and women enslaved, and whose men he killed⁴⁶.

1.2.4. The Zaydīs and the Companions of the Prophet (*Ṣaḥābah*)⁴⁷

The Zaydīs often declared themselves to be the real Shī'a, denying that other groups represented true Shī'ism. The Imāmīs, for example, they accused of straying from the correct path, and of becoming the Party of Satan (*Ḥizb al-Shayṭān*)⁴⁸. However, Imām 'Abdullah b. Ḥamzah *did* accept the Imāmīs as a Muslim group, but he criticised them for their extreme views against the Prophet Muḥammad's Companions (*al-Ṣaḥābah*), and for their extreme faith in their Imāms. He rejected the Bāṭinīs, not only for their views against the *Ṣaḥābah*, but also for what he believed was a corruption of the whole Muslim religion, in their "internal" interpretation (*Bāṭin*) of Islamic teachings and beliefs. He viewed them as acting against Islam, and thus identified them as Non-Muslims⁴⁹.

Concerning the question of the *Ṣaḥābah*, there is no doubt that Imām Zayd b. 'Alī had a great deal of respect for them, and in particular for the first three Caliphs. However the later Zaydīs believed, as did the other Shī'a groups⁵⁰, that Imām 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was the most excellent of Muslims (*al-'Afdal*) after the Prophet, and should have been the Imām following the Prophet's death (*bilāfaṣl*). Although they did to an extent recognise the first two Caliphs (*al-mafdūl* or the less excellent) Abū Bakr and 'Umar, and also 'Uthmān for the first few years of his Caliphate⁵¹.

The Zaydīs have always shown general respect for the *Ṣaḥābah*, considering them the linking chain that delivering the Islamic religion to later generations of Muslims, and terming those who rejected the *Ṣaḥābah*, the Rāfidīs⁵² (the Rejecters).

Nevertheless this respect did not, in the Zaydīs opinion, put them above reproach or judgment, and as such the Zaydīs would not shy away from questioning some of the *Ṣaḥābah*'s acts or practices⁵³. Whereas the other *Shī'a* groups rejected the *Ṣaḥābah* and labelled them with *kufṛ*, accusing all but a rare few individuals of turning away from the true path⁵⁴.

1.2.5. The Muṭarrafiyyah

The Muṭarrafiyyah is a Zaydī sect in Yemen, which is named after one of its leading figures Muṭarraḥ b. *Shihāb* b. 'Amr al-*Shihābī*, who died after 459H during the *Ismā'īlī* Sulayḥī period in Yemen.

Due to the lack of independent Muṭarrafi sources, it is difficult to build a complete picture about them. The majority of information concerning them was compiled by their opponents and consequently must be taken cautiously. Their only source which was known to have survived was *Al-Burhān al-Rā'iq* written by the Muṭarrafi scholar Sulaymān al-Muḥallī⁵⁵, who stated that Muṭarraḥīs were in line with the *Mathhab* of Imām al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn and his grandfather al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī.

However, the Muṭarraḥīs were among the Zaydīs who were not encouraged by the Divine Right Theory, and indeed rejected the doctrine of the Caspian as well as the contemporary Fāṭimī 'Alawī Yemenī Zaydī Imāms, including Imām Ibn Ḥamzah⁵⁶. As a result the Muṭarraḥīs insisted on human equality in six respects: their physical constitution (*al-khalq*), sustenance (*al-risq*), life (*al-ḥayāh*), death (*al-mawt*), obligation to worship (*ta'abbud*), and recompense (*al-mujāzāh*)⁵⁷. In addition the Muṭarraḥīs rejected the idea of nobility (*al-sharaf*) that is inherited from the father to the son, distinguishing their views from that of their contemporary Zaydī Imāms in Yemen and those of the Caspian region. Instead they reserved nobility as a term to be identified with those who worked hard and did good deeds⁵⁸. The Muṭarraḥīs limited the authority of *Ahl al-Bayt* to only nine whom they identified by name, starting with Imām 'Alī b. Abī Ṭalīb and ending with al-Nāṣir Aḥmad, the son of

Imām al-Hādī Yahyā b. al-Ḥusayn⁵⁹. As such, they did not accept the authority of any of the other descendants of Imām ‘Alī, a view which was the complete opposite of that of the Fāṭimī Zaydī Imāms, including Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah.

It was clear in Muṭarrāfi thinking that knowledge (*al-‘ilm*) was not inherited through certain lineages⁶⁰, but could only be developed through hard effort and study. They practically and philosophically rejected the Divine Right Theory carried from the Caspian Zaydīs to Yemen, a theory which reached the point that it would not accept *ijtihād* from non Fāṭimī ‘Alawī descendants or as they put it, *Ahl al-Bayt*⁶¹. This notable approach by the Muṭarrāfis was to be expected, as the majority of them were of not of Fāṭimī ‘Alawī descent. Unlike the Zaydī Imāms, the Muṭarrāfis were also open to various philosophies and scientific ideas, and so it was natural for them to reject the Divine Right Theory, which reduced them to second class citizens⁶².

One of the most radical ideas of the Muṭarrāfis was their view that God had initially created the world of four elements, water, air, wind (*riyāḥ*) and fire; the inherent transformations and interactions of which, rather than the direct action of God, was what brought about changes in the world⁶³. The other Zaydīs stood in opposition to these views, calling the Muṭarrāfis *al-ṭaba‘iyyīn* (the naturalists) as an accusation against their corrupted belief.

With their scholarly background, the Muṭarrāfis managed to found many *hijars* (abodes of emigration) in numerous tribal areas, as spiritual and teaching centres for the Zaydī *mathhab* during the Ismā‘īlī Ṣulayḥī period. These *hijars*, which gradually became protected enclaves in tribal territories, were places the Muṭarrāfis kept the Zaydī school alive, at first during the total collapse of the Zaydī state, and later when there was no mention of the existence of a Fāṭimī ‘Alawī Zaydī Imām⁶⁴.

The Muṭarrāfis were very serious about the question of the Imāmate; any lack in the qualities of the existing Imām would send them straight into a battle of words with him, for in their view the Imām should be the best of the best (*al-afḍal*)⁶⁵. It was in this fashion that the Muṭarrāfis kept a close scrutiny on Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah’s actions and judgments, igniting a tense atmosphere between them until

the Imām became angry and turned against Muṭarrāfis, accusing them of destroying the Zaydī Imāmate with their arguments⁶⁶. And thus it was clear that Imām Ibn Ḥamzah's firm stance against the Muṭarrāfis was for political and not religious reasons. His campaign against them was unequal, bloody and ruthless, with the majority of Muṭarrāfis being unable to defend themselves as they were only a people of knowledge and not experienced fighters⁶⁷.

Attention should be drawn to the apparent influence of the Mu'tazilite school upon the Zaydīs in general, except in the question of the Imāmate which the Mu'tazilites essentially did not consider a Fāṭimī lineage a requirement of. This Mu'tazilite influence began with the influence of the theological doctrine of the Baghdād school of the Mu'tazilah on the Old Zaydīs of Yemen, of which the Muṭarrāfis were in favour of. Whilst the Caspian Zaydīs and their contemporary Yemenī Imāms, including Imām Ibn Ḥamzah, were influenced by the Baṣran school (*al-Jubbā'iyyah*)⁶⁸.

It should be noted that there were two important changes that the Caspian Zaydīs introduced to Zaydī thinking. Firstly, the idea that Zaydīs should recognise each other's way of thinking⁶⁹; an idea which had Imām Ibn Ḥamzah put into practice, he would not have reacted as he did to the Muṭarrāfis. Secondly, the acceptance of two Zaydī Imāms in one era; an idea that the Muṭarrāfis did not accept even if the Imāms' regions were far apart⁷⁰.

1.2.6. The Zaydiyyah and the Mu'tazilah

The close contact between the Zaydīs and the Mu'tazilites, with their strong Sunnī background, allowed for each sect to greatly influence each other⁷¹, and played an important role in the Zaydīs being considered moderate *Shī'a*. The contact between the two schools first began with Imām Zayd b. 'Alī and Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā (d.131 H).

Although the Zaydīs admitted this closeness⁷², Imām Ibn Ḥamzah was one of the Zaydī Imāms who denied any Mu'tazilite influence, reflecting his adoption of the

Divine Right Theory for himself and Fāṭimī 'Alawī descendents in which the 'Alawīs were considered the masters in all aspects of life, where they had influence upon others, but could not themselves be influenced⁷³.

Nonetheless, this closeness between the two schools could be seen through a number of shared views and beliefs⁷⁴, such as:

- 1) Their agreement upon *'Usūl al-Dīn* (The Principles of Religion), through which the Zaydīs adopted the famous Five Principles (*al-'Usūl al-Khamsah*) of the Mu'tazilites⁷⁵.
- 2) Their closeness to the Sunnī schools of thinking⁷⁶, which is what caused the Zaydīs to be considered as the moderate Shī'a. It is for this reason that we find the Sharī'ah law of the Zaydīs of Yemen to be very close to the Ḥanafī school, and the Zaydīs of the Caspian region to be very close to the Shāfi'ī school⁷⁷. This agreement between the Sunnīs and the Zaydīs in most of the issues of *'uṣūl* and *furū'* is a well known fact among Zaydī scholars⁷⁸. The closeness between the two sects⁷⁹ is apparent and remains to the present day in Yemen, which in my opinion is one of the main factors why the Zaydī school continues there; whereas the Caspian Zaydīs opened up to the other Shī'a groups and finally converted to those beliefs⁸⁰.
- 3) Their rational way of thinking in different fields, such as encouraging *ijtihād* and refusing *taqlīd*⁸¹. The Zaydīs prohibited *taqlīd* in *'Uṣūl al-Dīn* for anyone who has the ability to think for himself. In effect the Zaydī school encouraged its followers to think for themselves, and not to copy others blindly. It is for this reason that we find Zaydī literature full of arguments and debates between the Zaydī traditionalists (*muqallidūn*) and those of *ijtihād*. Good examples of the campaign against *taqlīd* are the great Zaydī thinker Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Wazīr (d.840 H), particularly in his renowned literary work *Al-'Awāṣim wa al-Qawāṣim*, and the great Zaydī scholar Ṣāliḥ b. Maḥdī al-Maqbalī (d.1108 H) in his two books *Al-'Alam al-Shāmikh* and *Al-Arwāḥ al-Nawāfiḥ*. Al-Wazīr, al-Maqbalī and other Zaydī

scholars, before and after, stood against *taqlīd*, not only amongst Zaydīs but also amongst the different Sunnī groups. In addition, these scholars stood firmly against *takfīrī* elements in both the Shī'a and Sunnī camps, rejecting *takfīr* rulings, particularly those against the Mu'tazilah.

However, it should be noted that due to the Zaydī involvement in politics and military engagements against their opponents⁸², we find that they have concentrated on the practical and visible aspects of *al-'Uṣūl al-Khamsah* beyond the principles, whereas the Mu'tazilites in their dealings with these five principles, engaged mostly in philosophical and theological works and discussions. As such, the Zaydīs for instance gave a broader meaning to *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf*, considering it a political issue, and adding it as one of the Imām's duties. Furthermore they considered *jihād* as a way of implementing and practicing it⁸³.

Notes

¹ Refers to the general meaning of *Ijtihād*, which is the opposite of *Taqlīd* (see section 1.2.6. “The Zaydiyyah and the Mu‘tazilah”).

² This lead some contemporary Muslim scholars to class the Zaydiyyah as a sect of Islam independent of the *Shī‘a* groups (‘Alī Sāmī al-Najjār, *Nash’ah al-Fikr al-Falsafi fī al-Islām*, V.2, pp.156, 160). Also, the contemporary Imāmī scholar Muḥammad Jawād Muḡhniyah, in his book *Al-Shī‘a fī al-Mīzān*, does not accept the Zaydiyyah as a *Shī‘a* sect for not believing the Imāms to be divinely designated as is held in Imāmī beliefs (Muḡhniyah, *Al-Shī‘a fī al-Mīzān*, p.36).

It is important to note that the aim of this briefing of the Zaydī school in comparison with other *Shī‘a* groups in the past, is not to judge groups presently in existence which bear the same names, for a number of changes have occurred since then in their beliefs and views over the time course of Muslim history. Also attention should be drawn to the fact that the Sunnīs and *Shī‘a* were not the only groups to exist within Muslim society; others included the *Khārijīs* and the *Abādīs*.

³ *Zaydiyyah, The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Old Edition.

⁴ Even Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah insisted in his literary works that he was a moderate in his thinking and practices, an example of which in the text is: “*I am not a Jabrī, nor am I a Rāfiḏī nor a Qadarī..*” (153A/1:115/2:90).

⁵ See footnote in Section B, page 215 of this thesis.

⁶ (Imām Abū Ṭālib al-Hārūnī, *Al-Da‘āmah*, p.230; Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī, *Al-Ḥūr al-‘īn*, pp.234-235; Imām Aḥmad b.Yaḥyā al-Murtadā, *Al-Manniyyah wa al-‘Amal*, pp.88-89.)

This nature of early Shī'ism is well recognised by many contemporary scholars such as W. Madelung, W. Ivanow, F. Daftary and the critical Shī'a scholar Aḥmad al-Kātib (W. Madelung, *The Zaydiyyah, The Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition; W. Ivanow, *Studies in Early Persian Ismailism*, pp.7-8; F. Daftary, *The Ismailis*, pp.39-40; Aḥmad al-Kātib, *Taṭawwur al-Fikr al-Siyāsī al-Shī'ī*, p.11 and other pages; The Text, Part 2, p.210 F).

Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyyah (d.728 H), the great Ḥanbalī scholar, confirmed a similar view that the conflict between 'Alī and his opponents was a *fitnah* rather than on religious grounds. He also added that the Khārijīs were the first group to give the conflict with 'Alī an ideological nature (Ibn Taymiyyah, *Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, V.3, pp.216-217).

⁷ Imām al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn, *Al-Aḥkām*, V.1, pp.444-454; Imām Abū Ṭālib al-Hārūnī, *Al-Da'āmah*, p.230; Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī, *Al-Ḥūr al-'Īn*, pp.239, 241; Imām Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Murtadā, *Al-Manniyyah wa al-'Amal*, pp.88-89, 93, 96.

⁸ Bāṭinīs gave the Imām the authority to interpret the revealed texts as he wished, even if that interpretation was against the clear meaning of the text or was even against the actual rules of the Arabic language and its grammar (Muḥammad Amīn al-Ṭawīl (A moderate Bāṭinī author), *Tārīkh al-'Alawīyyīn*, p.249). Also see footnote in Section B, p.209 of this thesis.

⁹ It should be noted that in Yemen some Zaydīs, such as the famous Zaydī scholar Nashwān b. Sa'īd al-Ḥimyarī (d.573 H), did not take lineage as a necessary requirement for the Zaydī Imām. Some contemporary Zaydī scholars like Muḥammad al-Manṣūr and Aḥmad al-Shāmī, also expressed the same view (Nashwān b. Sa'īd al-Ḥimyarī, *Al-Ḥūr al-'Īn*, pp.204-205; Aḥmad al-Shāmī, *Tārīkh al-Yaman*, V.1, pp.117-122; Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Wazīr, *Al-Zaydiyyah wa al-Imāmah*, *Al-Balāgh Periodical*, pp.3, Issue No. 581).

¹⁰ Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan al-Raṣṣāṣ, *Miṣbāḥ al-'Ulūm (al-thalāthīn mas'alah)*, pp.22-23; Aḥmad b. Qāsim al-'Ansī, *Al-Tāj al-Muthhab*, V.4, pp.405-410; *Imama, Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition; Wahba al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuh*, V.8, pp.6178-6184. Also see the author, al-Muḥallī, in the text where he mentions some of Imām Ibn Ḥamzah's qualities (Section A, pages 123-124).

¹¹ 'Alī Muḥammad Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, p.102.

¹² Aḥmad b. Qāsim al-Ansī, *Al-Taj al-Muthhab*, V.4, pp.410-411. Also refer to the text Section A, page 96, footnote 1.

It should be noted that on many occasions, if not the most, that the requirements for the Imāmate were violated for numerous reasons, resulting in the Post of Imāmate being occupied by individuals not fulfilling the aforementioned qualifications.

¹³ According to the Ismā'īlīs, Imāms were only those who came after 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, with 'Alī himself being known as a *Waṣī* which in their beliefs has a higher status than an Imām (The Ismā'īlī Dā'ī 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Walīd, *Tāj al-'Aqā'id wa Ma'din al-Fawā'id*, p.60).

¹⁴ Al-Walīd, *Tāj al-'Aqā'id wa Ma'din al-Fawā'id*, pp.76-78; Al-Walīd, *Dāmiḡh al-Bāṭil wa Ḥaṭf al-Munādil*, V.2, p.91; A Tāmir, *Tārīkh al-Ismā'īliyyah*, pp.73-77; *Imama, The Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition.

¹⁵ Al-Ansī, *Al-Taj al-Muthhab*, V.4, p.404.

¹⁶ Al-Imām al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn, *Al-Aḥkāṃ*, V.2, p.464; Imām al-Nāṭiq bi al-Ḥaq Abū Ṭālib Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn al-Hārūnī (d.424 H), *Al-Da'imah fī al-Imāmah*, pp.223-224.

¹⁷ Muḥammad al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Shī'a fī al-Islām*, p.87; *Imama, Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition.

¹⁸ *'Ithnā 'ashariyyah and Ismā'iliyyah, Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition.

¹⁹ Abū Manṣūr Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Ṭabarsī, *Al-'Ihtijāj*, p.506; Rūḥ Allāh al-Khumaynī, *Al-Ḥukūmah al-Islāmiyyah*, p.47.

²⁰ Al-Ṭabarsī, *Al-'Ihtijāj*, pp.433-438.

²¹ Imām al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn, *Al-Aḥkām*, V.1, p.454; Imām Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Murtadā (d.840 H), *Al-Maniyyah wa al-Amal*, pp.100-101; Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, *Al-Rasā'il*, p.94; *Ghulāt, Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition.

²² Al-Hārūnī, Imām Abū Ṭālib Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn, *Al-Da'āmah fī al-Imāmah*, pp. 159, 185, 191, 199.

²³ Imām Ibn Ḥamzah made an exception for the Imām 'Alī and his two sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn as being Imāms through designation, although not by *al-naṣṣ al-jalī* (clear evidence of designation) but by *al-naṣṣ al-khaṭī* (hidden evidence of designation). He also called 'Alī a Waṣī, which is the famous title for 'Alī in all *Shī'a* groups. As a result of Imām Ibn Ḥamzah's belief in *al-naṣṣ al-khaṭī* for 'Alī's Imāmate, he did not consider the Prophet's Companions as having committed a major sin for not recognising 'Alī as Imām directly after the Prophet, due to the evidence for designation not being with a clear direct divine command. Throughout the text Imām Ibn Ḥamzah only accuses the Companions of *jahl* (ignorance):

“They were (the Companions) told of the rules of precedence- if they had (only) known.

But they did not and ignorance is a great affliction.” [151B/1:112/2:77]

And also:

“They said: “the *Waṣī* is the fourth”, but I said to them:

“He is the second to the Prophet with no (doubt of) lies or poor judgement.”

[192B/1:215/2:309]

However according to early Zaydī beliefs, Imām Ibn Ḥamzah’s accusations of ignorance for the *Ṣaḥābah* was a major shift from the early Zaydī teachings in particular, and the *Shī‘ī* in general, which had accepted the first three Caliphs before ‘Alī without any hesitation (Al-Ḥimyarī, *Al-Ḥūr al-‘Īn*, p.34; Al-Murtada, *Al-Maniyyah wa al-‘Amal*, p.88).

²⁴ Al-Muḥallī throughout the text (175A/1:160-161/2:227) noted that the Imāmīs were unfair to the Zaydī Imāms, and did not hesitate in insulting them, however they did not speak the same of Imām Ibn Ḥamzah.

²⁵ The text is full of examples of how the Zaydī Imāms were the real challenge to the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs, see for example: 153A/1:115/2:89-90.

²⁶ Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah, *Al-‘Iqd al-Thamīn fī Aḥkām al-‘Immah al-Hādīn*, pp.147, 178, 333, 344, 378, 388, 422, 505.

²⁷ Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan al-Raṣṣaṣ (d.621 H), *Miṣbāḥ al-‘Ulūm (al-thalāthīn mas’alah)*, p.22; Imām Yaḥyā b. Ḥamzah (d.749 H), *Al-Risālah al-Wāzi‘ah*, p.52; *Imāmah, Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition; Alī Muḥammad Zayd, *Mu‘tazilah al-Yaman*, p.182.

²⁸ Ayman Fu‘ād Sayyid, *Tārīkh al-Mathāhib al-Dīniyyah fī bilād al-Yaman*, p.224; Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Dujaylī, *Al-Ḥayāh al-Fikriyyah fī al-Yaman*, p.191.

²⁹ Al-Ṭabarsī, *Al-Ṭiḥtāj*, p.432.

³⁰ Al-Qabanjī, *Al-Mathhab al-Siyāsī fī al-Islām*, p.207.

³¹ See the critical contemporary Imāmī author, Aḥmad al-Kātib, for his discussion of this challenge before the Imāmīs and how the Zaydīs had in the past tried to persuade them on this issue (Al-Kātib, *Taṭawwur al-Fikr al-Siyāsī al-Shī'ī*, pp.5-6).

³² See section A, pages 26-27 of this thesis.

³³ Sulaymān al-Muḥallī, *Al-Burhān al-Rā'iq*.

³⁴ Al-Maqbalī, *Al-'Alam al-Shāmikh*, pp.21, 471.

³⁵ Imām 'Abdullah b. Ḥamzah, *Al-'Iqd al-Thamīn*, pp.406-407.

³⁶ 149A/1:109/2:65.

³⁷ Imām 'Abdullah b. Ḥamzah, *Al-Shāfi*, V.3, pp.119, 145; Section B, pages 65-66 of this thesis.

³⁸ 149A-149B/1:109/2:64,67,70.

³⁹ See the following examples: The story of the man who tried to copy abuses on the Imām's biography [160A/1:109/2:136]; The curse of Allah upon those not recognising his Imāmate [162B/1:113/2:155]; The Imām's poetry: "Whoever seeks success should abide by us, for disobeying us has become forbidden" [169A/1:126/2:184]; killing those who refused to follow him [169B/1:126/2:185]; Raiding the land of the enemies, ie. those not under his authority, confiscating its wealth, enslaving its children, or killing its men [173B/1:139/2:206]; Zaydī scholars being crucified or punished for expressing their opinions or views against supporting the Imām [174A/1:159/2:219].

⁴⁰ See the claim of Imām Ibn Ḥamzah: "What a difference between saying from my father.." [143A-143B/1:99/2:38-39]. See also Section B, pages 1-3 of this thesis.

⁴¹ See text: 149B/1:109/2:69-70; 152B/1:114-115/2:85-86; 153A/155B/1:115-129/2:92:113; 165A/1:136-137/2:168.

⁴² See the text for Imām Ibn Ḥamzah's *Karāmas*: 158B-161A/1:125-129/2:129-142.

⁴³ Al-Maqbalī, *Al-'Alam al-Shāmikh*, p.300. See the text Section A, pages 98 and 125.

⁴⁴ *The Zaydiyyah, Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition.

⁴⁵ Imām Ibn Ḥamzah, *Al-Risālah al-Nāfi'ah, Majmū' al-Rasā'il*, V.2, p.469.

⁴⁶ 173B/1:158/2:206.

⁴⁷ These were the followers of the Prophet Muḥammad who had met him during his lifetime. They were the individuals who strove to assimilate his teachings, the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. They also wrote, memorised and transmitted Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. The importance of the Ṣaḥābah in Islam is that they were the generation who played an essential role in transferring the Islamic teachings, Qur'ān and Ḥadīth from the Prophet Muḥammad to following generations. Denying the Ṣaḥābah generation or damaging their reputation, meant breaking the link between the Prophet and the next generations. During early Muslim history, Muslim scholars developed a science known as *'Ilm al-Rijāl*, which in part dealt with identifying the proper Ṣaḥābah. The scholars of this science identified the Ṣaḥābah to different classes, according to their individual history (*Ṣaḥābah, Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition; Glasse, *Ṣaḥābah, The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*).

⁴⁸ Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, *Al-Rasā'il*, p.91; Al-Imām al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn, *Al-Aḥkām*, V.1, pp.444-455.

⁴⁹ (Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah, *Al-Risālah al-Nāfi‘ah*, *Majmū‘*, V.2, Part 1, pp.469-470.) Imām Ibn Ḥamzah was pointing out that some Bāṭinī groups, in their extreme, believed that ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was a rank higher than the Prophet himself, never mind their views on his Companions (Ibid; *Bāṭiniyyah*, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition).

⁵⁰ Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, pp.74-75; *Zaydiyyah*, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition.

⁵¹ Imām Yaḥyā b. Ḥamzah, *Al-Risālah al-Wāzi‘ah*, pp.26-27; Ṣubḥī, *Al-Zaydiyyah*, pp.71-72; Sharaf al-Dīn, *Al-Zaydiyyah*, pp.111-113, 121-124.

⁵² Imām Yaḥyā b. Ḥamzah, *Al-Risālah al-Wāzi‘ah*, pp.27-36; Al-Maqbalī, *Al-Arwāḥ al-Nawāfiḥ*, p.22; Al-Wazīr, *Al-‘Awāṣim*, V.3, p.457. Al-Wazīr also quotes some Zaydī Imāms as saying that the *Ṣaḥābah* were *‘Udūl* (trustworthy), even those who did not support Imām ‘Alī and those who engaged in fighting against him (Ibid., V.2, pp.224, 226, 232, 233).

⁵³ Al-Maqbalī, *Al-‘Alam al-Shāmikh*, pp.374-375.

⁵⁴ Al-Mas‘ūdī (d.346 H), *‘Ithbāt al-Waṣiyyah*, pp.153-157; Al-Baḥrānī (d.699 H), *Al-Najāh fī al-Qiyāmah*, pp.184; Al-Badrī, *Shubuhāt wa Rudūd*, p.293.

⁵⁵ Sulaymān b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Muḥallī who lived in the Sixth Century Hijrī (Al-Wajīh, *‘Alām al-Mu‘allifīn al-Zaydiyyah*).

⁵⁶ ‘Alī Muḥammad Zaid, *Tayyārāt*, p.81; *Al-Muṭarrafiyyah*, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition, *Al-Muṭarrafiyyah*, *Encyclopedia of Yemen*, New Edition.

⁵⁷ Sulaymān al-Muḥallī, *Al-Burhān*.

⁵⁸ Sulaymān al-Muḥallī, *Al-Burhān*.

⁵⁹ ‘Alī Muḥammad Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, p.203.

⁶⁰ Sulaymān al-Muḥallī, *Al-Burhān*.

⁶¹ Al-Maqbalī, *Al-‘Alam al-Shāmikh*, p.498.

⁶² ‘Alī Muḥammad Zaid, *Tayyārāt*, p.71-80.

⁶³ Muṭarrāfiyyah, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition.

⁶⁴ Muṭarrāfiyyah, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition; Muṭarrāfiyyah, *Encyclopedia of Yemen*, New Edition.

⁶⁵ Sulaymān al-Muḥallī, *Al-Burhān*.

⁶⁶ ‘Alī Muḥammad Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, pp.99, 101.

Also see the Imām’s reactions towards Muṭarrāfis throughout the text, examples of which are:

“How can there be obedience when there is defiance to the authority of the Imām!”

[149A/1:109/2:64]

“Censure yourself, not your Imām (*Ittahim nafsak li imāmik*)” [149A/1:109/2:67]

The author, Ḥumayd al-Muḥallī, also considered any questioning of the Imām’s practices as “abuses (*maṭā’in*)”, an act of anti-Imām propoganda [160A/ 1:109/ 2:136]. He also accused the Muṭarrāfis of turning their back on their pledge of loyalty to the Imām [164B/1:136/2:167].

⁶⁷ See Ibn al-Nassākh’s letter on behalf of the Muṭarrāfis to the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph, which urgently requests the Caliph’s military assistance in order to halt Imām Ibn Ḥamzah’s violence, aggression and oppression of the Muṭarrāfis [177A/ 1:167/ 2:239].

⁶⁸ *Muṭarrafiyyah and Mu'tazilah, Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition; Muṭarrafiyyah, Encyclopedia of Yemen, New Edition.*

⁶⁹ Al-Maqbalī, *Al-'Alam al-Shāmikh*, p.488; Madelung, *The Zaydiyyah, The Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition.*

⁷⁰ 'Alī Muḥammad Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, p.102.

⁷¹ *The Mu'tazila, The Encyclopedia of Yemen, New Edition.*

⁷² 174B/1:159/2:222.

⁷³ 155A/1:119/2:102; 163B/1:134/2:162; 165A-165B/1:136-137/2:168-170.

⁷⁴ 174A/1:159-160/2:223.

⁷⁵ *Mu'tazilah, Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition; Aḥmad Ṣubḥī, Fī 'Ilm al-Kalām*, V.1, p.123; 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *Mathāhib al-Islāmiyyīn*, V.1, p.55.

⁷⁶ Al-Wazīr, *Al-'Awāṣim*, V.2, pp.39, 45, 53, 83, 104, 131, 335-346.

⁷⁷ Al-Maqbalī, *Al-'Alam al-Shāmikh*, pp.12, 15.

⁷⁸ Al-Wazīr, *Al-'Awāṣim*, V.4, p.197.

⁷⁹ Imām 'Abdullah b. Ḥamzah confirmed this closeness between the Zaydīs and the Sunnīs. See the text: 152A/1:114/2:84. Also see al-Wazīr, *Al-'Awāṣim*, V.4, pp.203, 206, 258-260.

⁸⁰ Madelung, *The Zaydiyyah, The Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition.*

⁸¹ *Mu'tazilah, Al-Mawsū'ah al-Yamaniyyah, New Edition; Al-Wazīr, Al-'Awāṣim*, V.2, p.127.

⁸² 174A/1:158-159/2:206-207,218-219.

⁸³ Thus we find in the *bay'ah* or pledge of allegiance to Imām Ibn Ḥamzah [163A/1:133/2:161] terms like *jihād* and *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf* mentioned in a religious style for political motives; a practice also employed with other Zaydī Imāms. In this respect, al-Muḥallī in the text [161B/1:129/2:150; 162A/1:132/2:156; 166A/1:138/2:172] gave the religious justification for Imām Ibn Ḥamzah's rise (*qiyām*) to the Imāmate post, as a part of *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf*.

Chapter Two

The Author and his Era

2.1. Yemen Approaching and During the Sixth-Seventh Century Hijrī

Not since the collapse of the great Himyarite Yemenī State in the Pre-Islamic Era, did Yemen have the chance to experience another comparable state, until the first half of the seventh century Hijrī, when the Rasūlids managed to control the whole of Yemen¹. This was not long after the departure of al-Mas'ūd, the last Ayyūbīd ruler in Yemen in 625H².

The Rasūlids continued to rule Yemen for over two centuries, from 628-858 H³. There is no doubt that the Ayyūbīd's military campaign⁴ during the late sixth century Hijrī (569H), united Yemen⁵, an occurrence which facilitated Rasūlīd rule later on.

The earlier rise of Islam in Arabia (sixth century AD), and its spread in the area created a large and significant change in the history of Yemen. The religion was practiced and influenced thought among Yemenis to some extent during the early Islamic period, however later on we find it often misused by different factions conflicting with each other. Gaining power being the usual motive behind these local conflicts.

The Sunnī-Shī'ī conflict was not a major issue in this period of Yemeni history, as the conflict itself was not particularly religious, as illustrated by each sect fighting within itself and not just with each other⁶.

2.2. The Zaydī Imāms

The Zaydī Imāms from the third century Hijrī and through the seventh century Hijrī were unable to unite Yemen under their rule. Also no Zaydī Imām was able to establish a state since the collapse of Imām al-Hādī's rule in the beginning of the fourth century Hijrī. It was a fact that all the Imāms after al-Hādī did not gain the support of the Yemenis, even those of a Zaydī background. Al-Muḥallī in the text

al-Ḥadā'iq approved this fact on many occasions. As a result, Imām Aḥmad b. Sulaymān (d.566) was the only Imām in Yemen after al-Hādī who managed to survive for some time and to have significant power, enabling him to be well known among the Yemeni people of the time. However his tragic demise quickly ended the powerful Zaydī Imāmate. Therefore it was not a matter of wonder that Yemenis did not hear of a Zaydī Imām after Imām Ibn Sulaymān for some time until the rise of Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah in 593 Hijrī.

2.3. Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah

Yemen, including Ṣana‘ā’, was under the Ayyūbīds, when ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah arose as a Zaydī Imām in al-Jawf in 593H⁷. The long conflict between the Ayyūbīds and the Imām (593-614H) contributed a great deal to his reputation and status. He was also a good poet, speaker, author and theologian and *Al-Shāfi* was one of his famous works, which consisted of four volumes.

His fame as a person who stood against the Ayyūbīds and as an ‘*Ālim* (scholar) was the reason some rulers and Amīrs outside of Yemen, respected him. This included Ayyūbīd Amīrs inside and outside Yemen⁸. The Amīr of Makkah, al-Sharīf Qatādah b. Idrīs (d. 617H) made a *khutbah* in Makkah in the name of al-Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah. The Imām also sent missionaries (*du‘āh*) to places outside Yemen, as far as Daylamān and Gīlān, in the regions south-west of the Caspian Sea⁹. Al-Muḥallī in our text *al-Ḥadā'iq* gave an account of these activities of Imām b. Ḥamzah. Al-Muḥallī also justified Imām b. Ḥamzah’s measure of bloody repression against the Muṭarrafiyyah Zaydī sect. A repression which in my opinion, has it’s political motives over the post of Imāmate, where the Muṭarrafiyyah expressed their opinion that all people were equals¹⁰, which could mean the acceptance of non ‘Alawī -Fāṭimī descendents for the Imāmate post. A practice, which as explained earlier, was prohibited in Imām b. Ḥamzah’s interpretation of Islam.

The early and sudden death of Imām b. Ḥamzah in 614H put an early end to this new phase of Zaydī Imāmate after al-Imām al-Hādī Yaḥya b. al-Ḥusayn (d.298H). And with no opponent, this left Yemen in the hands of a strong Ayyūbīd presence, supported by the Yemeni people.

2.4. Imām Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn and the conflict over the post of Imāmate

The strong personality and reputation of Imām b. Ḥamzah with his long experience in his conflict against the Ayyūbīds, kept the different factions of the Zaydīs peaceful to a degree. However with his death, the conflict among the Zaydīs over the post of Imāmate began again. As a result, Amīr Muḥammad b. Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah (d.623) stood for this post as *Muḥtasib*¹¹ as he was not fully qualified for the post of Imāmate (*Shurūt al-Imāmah*, according to the Zaydī school). Amīr Muḥammad in his claim for the post stood against a well known Zaydī scholar, Ibn Maḥfuz (d. 636H)¹². Ibn Maḥfuz made himself known as Imām but did not continue for long in the post of Imām due to a lack of support for him among the majority of Zaydīs. Al-Muḥallī in this short conflict between Amīr Muḥammad and Imām ibn Maḥfuz, unexpectedly supported the claim of the less qualified candidate for Imāmate; Amīr Muḥammad the son of the late Imām¹³. Although the Zaydīs were divided amongst the two Imāms, Ibn Maḥfuz left the conflict aside and fully concentrated on his intellectual activities until his death later on.

The transfer of power from the Ayyūbīds to the Rasūlīds, encouraged Amīr Muḥammad the son of the late Imām al-Manṣūr to attempt to get control of Ṣan‘ā’ from the Rasūlīd Amīrs. However he failed miserably despite his good number of supporters and fighters¹⁴. He was badly injured and over a thousand of his fighters were killed. He did not live long after this attempt to control Ṣan‘ā’ and died in the same year.

In fact this battle and the death of Amīr Muḥammad, the son of Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah, opened the door to good relations between the Rasūlīd rulers and the Zaydīs, particularly those of Ḥamzite descent.

Amīr Aḥmad, the son of Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah, was the head of the Ḥamzite family at that time, after the death of his brother Muḥammad¹⁵. He played an important role against the new Zaydī Imām Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 656H). Later on many Zaydīs including some Zaydī scholars, supported Amīr Aḥmad in his fight against this new Zaydī Imām¹⁶.

Al-Muḥallī, the author, stood firmly in favour of the new Imām, Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn, fighting alongside him against Amīr Aḥmad, the son of the late Imām. Amīr Aḥmad b. Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah and the Zaydīs around him were openly supported and financed by the Rasūlī Sulṭān of his time, al-Muzaffar (d. 694H)¹⁷.

It was during this tough conflict amongst the Zaydīs, that al-Muḥallī was tragically killed in a battle in 652H¹⁸. A few years later the Imām Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn was killed in cold blood by the Zaydīs themselves!!¹⁹

2.5. The Author: Ḥumayd al-Muḥallī²⁰

Faqīh Ḥumayd, Abū ‘Abdillāh, was the son of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abdulwāḥid b. ‘Abdulrazzāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Yazīd b. Ya‘īsh al-Muḥallī (al-Maḥallī) al-Wādi‘ī al-Tamīmī al-Ṣan‘ānī al-Hamdānī. Some Zaydī Sources call him : “Ḥumayd al-Shahīd (the Martyr)”, because he was killed on the battle field defending Imām Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn, as explained earlier.

Al-Muḥallī was born in 582 H, in a well known, academic, Zaydī family (bayt ‘ilm). His father was one of the distinguished figures whom Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah would rely on in some open debates (*munāzarāt*) with the local Bāṭinīs²¹. Thus al-Muḥallī received his early education, surrounded by learning, and encouraged and supported by his close relatives to learn and seek knowledge. We find the names of prominent scholars (both Zaydī and non-Zaydī)²² among those al-Muḥallī received

his education from, in a number of different fields, ranging from studies in Qurān, Ḥadīth and Fiqh to Arabic language and literature.

Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah was one of those scholars al-Muḥallī studied under²³, and due to his high abilities and impressive talents he soon became very close to the Imām, and one of those distinguished individuals in the Imām’s circle. Despite his young age, we find that al-Muḥallī would participate in discussions and debates in the Imām’s presence as indicated in our text “al-Ḥadā’iq”.

Later on, al-Muḥallī became a well known scholar in the fields of history and fiqh, as well as an authority in the Arabic language and its literature. He played an important political role on two occasions; the first soon after the death of Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah, in encouraging the late Imām’s son Amīr Muḥammad, to stand for the post of Imāmate²⁴, and the second, at the time of Imām Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn.

Imām Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn respected al-Muḥallī a great deal as he considered him to be his master in the field of knowledge, and it was al-Muḥallī who took care of the Imām’s early education at a young age. This is why al-Muḥallī had an esteemed status with Imām Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn, allowing him to play an important role in his time. Many historians believe that al-Muḥallī’s death in 652 H, was a great loss to the Imām in his campaign against his opponents²⁵; the Ḥamzite nobles and their supporters, the Rasūlīd rulers. The extent of this loss is illustrated by reading the Imām Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn’s biography (*Sīrah*).

As an author, al-Muḥallī wrote a number of books in various fields, but primarily in the areas of religious and theological studies²⁶. Amongst those works, are three important titles, one missing and the other two still available in libraries around the world. The missing title is, *al-Ḥusām al-Battār fī al-Rad ‘alā al-Qarāmiṭah al-Kuffār*, in which al-Muḥallī challenges the Bāṭinī beliefs and Qurmuṭī thinking. Some parts of this book are quoted by some later authors and scholars such as Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Daylamī al-Ṣan‘ānī (d. 711 H), in his book, *Quā’id ‘Aqā’id Āl Muḥammad fī al-Rad ‘alā al-Bāṭiniyyah*. One of the other important

books of al-Muḥallī is, *Maḥāsin al-Azhār fī Fadā'il al-'Utrah al-Akhyār*, which is of religious and also historical importance²⁷. And the third important title is our text *al-Ḥadā'iq*.

Notes

¹ Al-Maghafī, *Mu'jam*, v.1, pp.687. Al-Shamahi, *al-Yaman*, pp.145-146.

² Al-Khazrajī, *al-'Uqūd al-Lu'lu'iyah*, v.1, pp.38-41, 52-55. Ibid, *al-'Asjad al-Masbūk*, MS. Ibn Ḥātim, *al-Ṣimt*, p.201.

³ Ibn al-Ḥusayn, *Ghāyah al-Amānī*, v.1, p.420, v.2, p.585.

⁴ For a more detailed explanation of the Ayyūbīd military campaign see: Bates, *Yemen and it's Conquest by the Ayyūbīds*, p.181; Smith, *The Ayyūbīds and Early Rasūlids*, p.31; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, v.13, pp.85-87; Ibn Wāsil, *Mufarrij al-Kurūb*, v.1, pp.237-243; Ibn Ḥātim, *al-Ṣimt*, pp.15-16; Bā Makhramah, *Tārīkh Thaghr 'Adan*, v.2, pp.36-38.

⁵ Ḥusayn, Jamīl Ḥarb, *al-Hijāz wa al-Yaman fī al-'Aṣr al-Ayyūbī*, pp.83-92. It should be noted here that the Ayyūbīd's efforts to unite Yemen, were part of a larger campaign in the region to create a united front against the Crusaders. This stand against the Crusaders, no doubt gained them a good reputation and increased the support for their legitimacy to rule, amongst the Muslims in the region. A fact which was against them later on, resulting in their collapse when the Mamlūks raised the flag of Jihād to fight the Mongols and succeeded in defeating them at the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt in 658 H. This played an important role in making the Mamlūks a significant power, and thus the Ayyūbīd influence decreased until it virtually disappeared (Al-Shamahi, Abdulla, *The 'Ulama of Damascus*, p.13).

⁶ See the extensive study regarding the history of the religious sects in Yemen by Ayman Fuād Sayyid in his book, *Tārīkh al-Mathāhib al-Dīniyyah fī Bilād al-Yaman*.

⁷ Ibn Ḥātim, *al-Ṣimt*, pp.41-42. Also see the text p.158. Smith, *The Ayyūbīds and Early Rasūlids*, pp.77-80. Aḥmad, *The History of Ayyūbīds in Yemen*, pp.144-145.

⁸ Al-Jirāfī, *al-Muqtaṭaf*, pp.116-117.

⁹ Madelung, *Arabic Texts*, p.12.

¹⁰ ‘Abd al-‘Āṭī, *al-Muṭarrafiyyah fī al-Yaman*, p.118.

¹¹ Ibn al-Ḥusayn, *Ghāyah al-Amānī*, v.1, pp.415-416. Ibn Ḥātim, *al-Ṣimt*, p.172.

¹² Zabārah, *A’immah al-Yaman*, pp.143-151.

¹³ According to Ibn al-Ḥusayn, it was al-Muḥallī himself who encouraged Amīr Muḥammad for the post of Imāmate, after the death of his father Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah (Ibn al-Ḥusayn, *Ṭabaqāt al-Zaydiyyah*, MS).

¹⁴ Ibn Ḥātim, *al-Ṣimt*, pp.180-183.

¹⁵ Ibn al-Ḥusayn, *Ṭabaqāt al-Zaydiyyah al-Ṣughrā*, MS.

¹⁶ Al-Ḥamzī, *Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā, Sīrah al-Imām al-Mahdī Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn*, MS. Zubārah, *A’immah al-Yaman*, pp.152-176.

¹⁷ Ibn al-Ḥusayn, *Buhjah al-Zaman*, MS. Al-Khazrajī, *al-‘Uqūd al-Lu’lu’iyyah*, v.1, pp.50, 85, 88, 284. Al-Yāfi‘ī, *Mir’āh al-Jinān*, v.4, pp.225-227.

¹⁸ Al-Ḥamzī, *Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā, Sīrah al-Imām Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn*, MS. Zubārah, A short biography was written for al-Muḥallī in the beginning of *al-Ḥadā’iq* manuscript of the Ṣan‘ā’ Great Mosque (ص). Ibid, *A’immah al-Yaman*, p.166.

Al-Khazrajī, *al-‘Uqūd al-Lu’lu’iyyah*, v.1, p.115. Ibn Abī al-Rijāl, *Maṭla‘ al-Budūr*, MS. Al-Jindārī, *Tarajim Rijāl al-Azhār*, p.13. Kaḥālāh, *Mu’jam al-Mu’allifīn*, v.4, p.83.

¹⁹ Ibn al-Ḥātim, *al-Ṣimt*, pp.326-328.

²⁰ An extensive biography of al-Muḥallī has been written by Ibn Abī al-Rijāl in his book, *Maṭla‘ al-Budūr*, MS.

²¹ Ibid, Al-Qāsim, Ibrāhīm, *Ṭabaqāt al-Zaydiyyah al-Kubrā*, v.1, p.421.

²² Ibn Abī al-Rijāl also mentions the name of a Shāfi‘ī Shaikh as one of the scholars al-Muḥallī studied under, Al-Shaikh Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Ḥadramī. However looking at *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyyah* references, it seems that Ibn Abī al-Rijāl has mixed two names up; Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. ‘Alī al-Yamānī appears to be the proper name. (see: Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyyah*, v.2, p.63. Al-Subkī, Tāj al-Dīn, v.4, p.262. Al-Fāsī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, v.1, pp.415-416. Al-Ja‘dī, *Ṭabaqāt Fuqahā al-Yaman*, p.247.)

²³ Ibn al-Qāsim, *Ṭabaqāt al-Zaydiyyah*, v.1, p.422.

²⁴ Ibn al-Ḥusayn, *Ṭabaqāt al-Zaydiyyah*, MS.

²⁵ Ibn Abī al-Rijāl, *Maṭla‘ al-Budūr*, MS.

²⁶ A full list of al-Muḥallī’s works (which are unpublished yet) can be found in *‘Alām al-Mu’allifin al-Zaydiyyah*, by al-Wajīh, pp. 408-409.

²⁷ Dayf, *‘Aṣr al-Diwal wa al-‘Imārāt* (as part of *Tārīkh al-Adab al-‘Arbī*), p.86.

Chapter Three

The Manuscript

3.1. Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardiyyah

As mentioned previously, this work by al-Muḥallī is considered much more important than his other work, *Maḥāsin al-Abrār*, as a historical source. In *al-Ḥadā'iq*, the author gathers much of his information from Abū al-Faraj al-ʿIṣfihānī (d. 356 H) and his book, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, and also from *al-ʿIfādah fī Tārīkh al-Aʿimmah al-Sādah*, of Abū Ṭālib Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 424 H). In addition the author uses contemporary sources, such as Muḥyī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Walīd al-Qurashī¹, who himself wrote a short biography of al-ʿImām ʿAbdullah b. Ḥamzah².

Al-Ḥadā'iq, was an important source for the Ismāʿīlī historian, ʿImād al-Dīn Idrīs al-Anf (d. 872 H). It was also extensively used as a source until the seventh century, and was regarded by later historians to be a reliable source of the history of the Zaydī Imāms in Yemen to some extent³. Al-Jindārī (d. 1337 H) mentions in his book, *al-Jāmiʿ al-Wajīz*, that there is no other source better than *al-Ḥadā'iq* for the history of the Yemeni (Zaydī) Imāms⁴.

Generally, *al-Ḥadā'iq*, which consists of two volumes, is a biographical work about the Zaydī Imāms. In the first volume, the biography of Imām Zayd b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 122 H) and eleven other Imāms are accounted, starting with Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 41 H) and ending with Imām Ibn Ṭabāṭabā (d. 199 H). This first volume was edited by M.F. Kubais of Ayn Shams University of Cairo⁵. The second volume covers eighteen biographies, starting with Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm b. Ismāʿīl (d. 226 H) and ending with Imām ʿAbdullah b. Ḥamzah (d. 614 H). As Al-Muḥallī is a contemporary of the Imām Ibn Ḥamzah, he gives extensive coverage of the Imām's life, making this part in the second volume of *al-Ḥadā'iq*, the most important of its contents.

3.1.1. Copies of al-Ḥadā'iq

There are many copies of *al-Ḥadā'iq* in Yemen and in some other libraries around the world, which were copied in different periods. I located some of these copies and chose five of the second volume.

Generally there are no major differences between all the copies, in the section dealing with Imām Ibn Ḥamzah. However due to the sophistication of the language used by al-Muḥallī in his writing and when he quotes others, especially Ibn Ḥamzah's poetry and prose, we find that this made it an arduous task for copyists that were not highly qualified for the role. For example missing a dot from a word, can give a totally different meaning to that word. The script in the old copies of *al-Ḥadā'iq* is rarely provided with diacritical dots, making it easy for less qualified copyists to commit mistakes when making new copies. It is not only the copyists that are to blame for this messy work, but also the readers who were not qualified enough in the Arabic language and its literature, and so for example in attempting to make dotless words clearer, they often added the dots incorrectly to words.

The major challenge for me when I first saw the Vienna copy was how to recognise the words, as most of the words were without dots. I must admit that the other copies of *al-Ḥadā'iq*, which were copied around the tenth century Hijrī were of little help in this matter as they often failed to add the dots correctly. It is no wonder that a whole day could be spent with one line of text attempting to identify it.

3.1.2. Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used to refer to the five copies of *al-Ḥadā'iq* (2nd volume) which I used to edit the section dealing with Imām Ibn Ḥamzah:

- 1- ف (F), for the Vienna manuscript.
- 2- ش (Sh), for the Chester Beatty manuscript in Dublin.

- 3- ص (S), for the Ṣan‘ā’ manuscript, of the Sharqiyyah library in the Great Mosque.
- 4- ل (L), for the British Library manuscript in London, No.Or.3786.
- 5- لا (LA), for the second copy of the British Library manuscript in London, No.Or.3813.

As the text contains a great deal of Imām Ibn Ḥamzah’s Poetry, I referred to the four copies of the Imām’s Dīwān (poetry collection) using the following abbreviations:

- 1- د ١ (D1), for the manuscript owned by Bayt Sharaf al-Dīn in Kawkabān, Ṣan‘ā’.

The Dīwān is in Naskhī script, copied by Mudrik b. ‘Imrān b. As‘ad b. ‘Adullah...Al-Zawāḥī, in the seventh century Hijrī. This copy was presented to (*nusikha li..*) Sulaymān b. Ibrahīm b. Ḥamzah, the Imām’s nephew, then the copy was in the hand (*ḥawzah*) of the Imām’s grandson, from his son Muḥammad. This copy of the Dīwān is authentic and accurate, despite missing some folios at the end of the copy.

- 2- د ٢ (D2), for the manuscript owned by Bayt al-Kuhālī of Ṣan‘ā’.

This copy is also a beautiful Naskhī script, copied by Aḥmad b. Ṣālih b. Sulaymān al-Ḥamzī, in 652 H. It was copied from an original manuscript (*al-’Um*), which had been copied (*nisākhah*) in 616 H by ‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Akwa’. There is a copy of the Dīwān of the Imām’s son, Muḥammad, towards the end. However, unfortunately, the copyist made numerous bad mistakes in this work, damaging its accuracy and authenticity.

- 3- (London), for the manuscript in the British Library in London, No.Or.3815.

This manuscript of Naskhī script, is thought to have been copied around the eighth century Hijrī. Although it appears reliable as a secondary reference, there are some missing parts. See the pages missed just before the second

section in the Dīwān (55A), and the missing section on page 64A. The entire last part of the Dīwān was even added later on and has different handwriting.

- 4- (Ṣan‘ā’), for the manuscript, of the Sharqiyyah Library in Ṣan‘ā’ Great Mosque.

This copy is in beautiful Naskhī script, and was in the possession of a grandson of the famous Imām, al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad (d. 1029 H). Unfortunately this copy is unsuitable on its own as a reference due to the numerous mistakes made by the copyist. For example, I counted more than 14 mistakes in just one *qaṣīdah* (p.51).

3.1.3. Al-Ḥadā’iq Titles

I should note that this work *al-Ḥadā’iq* is designated in the five mentioned copies as follows:

- 1- ف : *Kitāb al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardiyyah fī Manāqib A‘immah al-Zaydiyyah*, followed by the author’s name as follows : *taṣnīf al-faqīh al- ajal al-awḥad al-’Imām qidwah ahl al-’Islām muḥyi ‘ulūm al-’utrah al-kirām ḥusām al-Dīn raīs al-mutakallimīn ‘umdah al-muwahḥidīn shiḥāk al-kafarah al-jahidīn, Abū ‘Abdullāh, Humayd b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Muḥallī, ṭawwal Allah muddatah wa ḥarasa muhjatah, wa ja‘ala fī jannāt ‘adnin manzilatah.*
- 2- ش : *Al-sifr al-thānī min al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardiyyah*, followed by the author’s name as follows: *li Humayd al-Shahīd, raḥimahu Allah ta‘ālā.*
- 3- ص : *Al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardiyyah*, followed by the author’s name as follows: *li Humayd al-Shahīd, raḥimahu Allah ta‘ālā.* This manuscript of *al-Ḥadā’iq* contains both volumes 1 and 2 in one.
- 4- ل : *Al-juz’ al-thānī min al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardiyyah fī sīrah al-’Itrah al-zakiyyah min a‘immah al-Zaydiyyah, ‘alayhim al-salām*, followed by the

author's name as follows: *taṣnīf al-faqīh al-adīb, lisān al-mutakallimīn, wa 'umdaḥ al-Shī'ah al-amjadīn, al-faqīh, Ḥumayd al-Shahīd, taghammadahū Allah bi riḍwānih, wa askanahu faṣīḥa jinānih, āmin.*

- 5- ﷺ : *Al-juz' al-thānī min al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardiyyah fī manāqib a'immah al-Zaydiyyah, wa aḥwāl Ahl al-Bayt, 'alayhim al-salām, wa raḥmat Allah wa barakātuh, followed by the author's name as follows: li al-faqīh al-fādīl, wa al-shi'ī al-munādīl, wa al-ḥibr al-kāmil, wa al-'ālim al-'āmil, Shams al-Dīn, Ḥumayd b. Aḥmad al-Muḥallī al-Shahīd, kāfāh Allah bi mā hua ahluḥ, āmin, wa jazāh 'an ahl baytiḥ afdal al-jazā', āmin.*

3.2. Description of the manuscripts used

The five manuscripts of al-Ḥadā'iq used, as indicated earlier, are as follows:

3.2.1. The Vienna, Glaser 116, Manuscript (ف)

This copy of the Vienna manuscript is of the second volume, and it contains 233 folios. There are 20 lines to a page, and an average of 10 words to a line. The pages dealing with The Imām 'Abdullāh b. Ḥamzah range from pages 140A to 202B (60 folios). The style of handwriting is clear Naskhī. The manuscript was completed in Jumada 11, 639 H, and collated with the author's signature. The copyist, Maṣṣūr b. As'ad al-Yūnisī al-Ḥarāzī, is clearly mentioned on the last page of the manuscript (page no. 233A). This makes the manuscript the oldest we have so far.

The title page of the manuscript starts on page 2B, showing the name of the manuscript followed by the author's name. The name of the person, this copy was written for is clearly mentioned at the bottom of the title page, giving the name of al-Shaykh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Mutamayyiz. However some owners names which were written on the left and bottom margins are unclear, perhaps due to the age of the manuscript. The name of Imām al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad is still legible. Reading through the whole text, we can rely on the authenticity and accuracy of this copy of the manuscript, and as it was written in the life time of al-Muḥallī, I consider it as the principle copy when editing the text.

3.2.2. The Chester Beatty Manuscript (ش)

The microfilm I received of this manuscript shows it contains 173 folios. There are 21 lines to a page, and an average of 13 words to a line, with the Naskhī

style of handwriting. The pages dealing with the Imām ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamzah range from page no. 95A to 140A.

The manuscripts were completed in Hijrah al-Rūs (near Ṣan‘ā’) on Monday, Rajab 17th 1009 H, as clearly indicated on page 162A. It was also mentioned on the same page, that all the book was read and heard, line by line (*qiṣāṣah*) in the presence of our lord (*mawlānā*) Amīr al-Mu‘minīn al-Mu‘ayyad bi Allah Muḥammad, the son of Amīr al-Mu‘minīn al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad. This reading was completed on Thursday afternoon, 10th of Rajab, 1034 H. The copyist, Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Nasrī, is clearly mentioned on the left side of the same page. The end of *al-Ḥadā’iq* text is also on this page (162 A), as the copyist puts it in writing: “*wa kānā al-farāgh min hādihā al-kitāb*”, however the manuscript continues with a collection of different material and quotations in mostly the same handwriting. The title page of the manuscript starts on page 1B, showing the name of the manuscript followed by the author’s name as mentioned earlier. The name of Amīr al-Mu‘minīn al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad, was mentioned in the middle left of the title page as the copy’s owner, and is surrounded by illegible writing.

A lot of attention was clearly paid to writing this copy, as it is very neat and tidy, unfortunately some pages of the manuscript have been badly affected by damp, making them very difficult to read. Before finding the Vienna manuscript, I considered using this copy, from the Chester Beatty library, as the principle copy in editing the text, even if I was unable to read certain pages due to the damp damage.

3.2.3. The Ṣan‘ā’ Manuscript (ص)

This copy of from al-Sharqiyyah Wagf library in the Ṣan‘ā’ Great Mosque, is different from the other copies as it contains the two volumes of *al-Ḥadā’iq*

together, without any partition or division. It is comprised of a total of 217 folios, of Naskhī handwriting. There are 25 lines to a page, and an average of 10 words to a line, but the number of lines increases to 33 in the section dealing with Imām Ibn Ḥamzah (173B-202B), and the words to 15.

The whole work was completed on Thursday 15th Ramaḍān 1072 H, as mentioned on page 216B. The title page of the manuscript starts following a few folios which include a short biography of the author al-Muḥallī, written by the famous modern historian, Muḥammad Zubārah, who also added an index for all the manuscripts contents. As mentioned before, the title and the author name are both written in short form on the title page, and the library stamp is found on the top left and the middle left of the page. It is also written on this page that the book was endowed (*wagf*) to the library Great Mosque by al-Qāḍī Muḥammad ‘Alī Qays, and in the bottom centre there is a note that this book is to be kept in the library Mosque following the instructions of “our lord (*mawlānā*)” Amīr al-Mu‘minīn al-Mutawakkil ‘Alā Allah (Imām Yahyā Ḥamīd al-Dīn), dating Sha‘bān, 1339 H. The same note of the Imām’s instructions can be found again on page 187B, accompanied by the library’s old stamp.

Generally, the manuscript is well written, but on many occasions, someone has crossed out words replacing them with other words of the same meaning, and some of the poetry phrases are not placed in the right order.

3.2.4. The British Library Manuscript (J)

This copy of the second volume (Or.3786), is described by Rieu (Supplement, p.329f, no.534), who estimates that it was written in the eighth century Hijrī. The style of writing is clear Naskhī, copied by ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abdilla Abū Ṭālib. The manuscript contains 239 folios, with an average 18 lines to a page, and 12 words to a line.

The manuscript's title page starts on page 2B, showing the volume number and the manuscript title, accompanied with the author's name. The names of the two owners are clearly written on the bottom left side of the page; the first is the name of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥsin Abū Ṭālib, and the other name underneath it is, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥsin b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad, and is dated Rabī' Akḥar. The folios dealing with Imām Ibn Ḥamzah range from 143 to 209.

The text in general is reliable and its writing is clear to an extent, despite mistakes made by the copyist, and incorrect alterations to words and phrases by readers. However, the authenticity and accuracy of the manuscript has been no doubt damaged by this.

3.2.5. The British Library Manuscript (٧)

This is manuscript Or. 3813, which is described by Rieu (Supplement, p.331, no. 536), and who estimates that it was written in the 11th century Hijrī. Rieu's estimation is supported by a date of ownership for Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Luqmān, of Rajab 1069 H, as written on the title page.

The style of writing is clear Naskḥī, and continues throughout in an especially neat and tidy manner. The handwriting on the last page is still Naskḥī, but obviously different from that of the rest of the manuscript. It contains 278 folios, with an average of 17 lines to a page, and 11 words to a line. The title page shows the volume number of *al-Ḥadā'iq*, and the manuscript's full title, along with the author's full name and titles. The names of previous owners are written all around the title page with some dates. Some of the names are crossed out, making them difficult to read, but one which remains legible is for Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Luqmān, dated Rajab 1069. There is a small note at the bottom left of the page, to say that the manuscript was partially compared with another copy, and thus is not a full comparison. The centre left bears the stamp of the British Museum.

The folios dealing with Imān ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamzah range from No. 186 to N. 244. Despite the beautiful handwriting throughout the manuscript, including the section dealing with the Imām, the copyist himself has made some huge mistakes in a number of places. Some correcting was undertaken in the actual text (*muqābalaḥ*), as seen in writing in two places (the title page, and the margin on page 178B), but was only carried out for part of the manuscript. It appears that the person who undertook these limited corrections, was not qualified enough to do the job, as he himself carried out other, new mistakes.

Notes

¹ Brockelmann, *The History of Arabic Literature*, v.6, p.46.

² Ibn al-Ḥusayn, *Ṭabaqāt al-Zaydiyyah*, MS. Al-Muḥallī was also a contemporary of two other authors who each wrote biographies for Ibn Ḥamzah. They are, ‘Alī b. Nashwān and Abū Firās Du‘thum. Unfortunately Ibn Nashwān’s work, which was in ten volumes, is lost. Also Abū Firās Du‘thum’s work which was in six volumes, only two of which have survived. Historians report that there was direct contact between al-Muḥallī and the other two biographers, giving al-Muḥallī a lot of help when writing the biography of Ibn Ḥamzah in *al-Ḥadā’iq* (Anonymous, *al-Sīrah al-Manṣūriyyah*, MS).

³ Sayyid, Ayman, *Maṣādir Tārīkh al-Yaman*, p.127.

⁴ Al-Jindārī, *al-Jāmi‘ al-Wajīz*, MS.

⁵ Sayyid, Ibid, p.128.

Chapter Four

The Text Translated

4. Al-Imām al-Mansūr bi-Allāh (peace be upon him)

He is *Amīr al-mu'minīn* Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullāh b. Ḥamzah *al-Jawād* [140B] b. Sulaymān *al-Bar al-Taḡy* b. Ḥamzah *al-Najīb* b. 'Alī *al-Mujāhid* b. Ḥamzah *al-Amīr al-Qā'im bi'amr Allāh* b. *al-Imām al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah* Abū Hāshim al-Ḥasan b. *al-Sharīf al-Fāḍil* 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yaḥyā *Najm Āl al-Rasūl* b. Abī Muḥammad 'Abdullāh *al-'Ālim* b. al-Ḥusayn *al-Ḥāfiẓ* b. *al-Imām Turjumān al-Dīn* al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm *al-Ghamr ṬabaṬaba* b. Ismā'īl *al-Dībāj* b. Ibrāhīm *al-Shebh* b. al-Ḥasan *al-Ridā* b. al-Ḥasan *al-Sibt sayyid shabāb ahl al-jannah* b. *Amīr al-mu'minīn sayyid al-'Arab* 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib sayyid Quraysh (peace be upon them):

A lineage on which the early morning sun was
tender and as if the break of morn (were its) garments

As for the Imām's mother, peace be upon him* (pbuh), she is *al-Sharīfah al-Fāḍilah* (the noble and the graceful) Zaynab ibnat Ibrāhīm b. Sulaymān, descendant of the Imām Muḥammad *al-Khārij* (The Rebellious) in Tāhart, a land in the west. He was a man of sound character and he rode a donkey and wore woollen clothes. His father was the Imām Yaḥyā b. 'Abdullāh, peace be upon them (pbut).

The Imām was (pbuh) from a great family tree that rose in the sky of glory and grandeur and which yielded sweet fruit. Its branches clothed themselves in beauty and happiness, from which emanated varied, extraordinary knowledge, and its buds burst open with wonderful understanding. It has clear blessings for the world, continuously yielding fruits; it is blessing, healing, pure, sprouting, and its fruits are within reach. Yaḥyā b. Mu'ādh - may Allāh have mercy on him - was asked: "What do you say of *Ahl al-Bayt* (pbut)?" He said: "What can I say about clay kneaded in the water of prophethood and planted in the soil of the Divine Message! What emanates from it save the fragrance of righteousness and the amber of piety; what would you think about a house filled with the *tanzīl* (sending down of the Qur'ān) and praised by *al-Malik al-Jalīl* (Allāh). Their

* "him" refers back to the Imām, and not his mother, as is the actual translation of the Arabic manuscript.

fathers' amulets were made of the down of Gabriel's feathers. Who can be equal to them or even close to them?! ”

They are a company whom to love is *Dīn* and to hate is
kufṛ, while closeness to them is refuge and protection. [141A]

Loving them guards against evil and affliction
and perpetuates beneficence and favours;

They are remembered first after Allāh's invocation
in all things, and with them speech is sealed.

If the pious are counted, they would be the first.
Or if it is asked, 'Who are the best on earth?' The answer would be: them.

No generous person can surpass their generosity
Nor can a people be close to them, even if of noble birth.

They are the saviours when a crisis befalls
Like lions of the den they spring forth when fighting breaks out.

Avarice refuses to call at their yard
(their) nature is generous and their hands bestow generosity.

Here then is his noble breed - peace be upon him - and his superior and exalted background.

He was born (peace be upon him) in 'Ayshān on the outskirts of Hamdān on the twenty first night of Rabī' al-Ākhir of the year 561. It was related that during his birth (pbuh), which was at night, the lamp-light increased by itself more than usual, until it almost reached the ceiling and remained that way. His biographer ascribed the story to *Shaykh* 'Awād b. Mas'ūd al-Junubī - may Allāh have mercy on him - who cited the lady attending his birth.

His father Ḥamzah b. Sulaymān (peace be upon him) had two dreams about him (al-Imām). In one he saw a man of great honour and high status, authority, dignity and esteem. He asked: “Who is he?” He understood from the answer that this was his son, bearing the name ‘Abdullāh b. Aṣḥkur or Yaṣḥkur al-Kūfy. Upon his birth (pbuh), a messenger brought his father the glad tidings, and his father said: “If you are bringing the glad tidings of ‘Abdullāh, then you should know that someone else has done that before you”. On his return home, his wife [141B] asked that the baby be named ‘Abdullāh, then he recounted the story to her.

In the second dream he saw a light emanate from himself which covered the whole world. He narrated the dream to his grandmother, the noble and graceful Sayyidah ibnat-‘Abdullah al-Ḥarāzī. She remarked: “Conceal the dream because it has been foretold that he will either emerge from you, or from your son al-Manṣūr, or whomsoever we indicate”. He then told a man who was amazed, but when the whole dream was told to him, the man said: “Rejoice Ḥamzah, for an Imām will arise from your progeny”, and Allāh fulfilled his dream.

His father (pbuh), Ḥamzah b. Sulaymān, was visited by a group of people from Banī Ṣuraym, then from the Ajārim, then from ‘Arār, and asked him to stand for *qiyām* (candidacy for Imāmate), and to defend them against ‘Alī b. Ḥātim b. Aḥmad who was at the time in control of their land. He said: “The relief of your plight is not in my hands but in the hands of this boy (al-Imām)”, who was then ten years of age, or younger. We [the author] heard this on the authority of someone who cited Ḥamzah.

As for Ḥamzah, he was one of the most noble and distinguished men of his time. He was well acquainted with many sciences and had lived with the al-Qāḍī al-‘Ālim Shams al-Dīn Ja‘far b. Aḥmad (may Allāh sanctify his spirit). It was related that al-Qāḍī considered that he (Ḥamzah) was qualified for the Imāmate, and said: “If he had called upon us (to pledge loyalty to him as Imām) we would have responded.”

Ḥamzah was known for his generosity, dignity, purity, devotion and courage. Of his generosity (it was told that) a guest met him when he had nothing to offer; so he tore up (part of) his loose outer garment and exchanged it for some food for the guest. When the

Imām al-Manṣūr's wife reproached him for his over-generosity, he said (of Ḥamzah) with pride:

My father left his sons a will
and I will not forget my father's will.

[142 A]

He sold his father's legacy for his guest
and tore his outer garment without a second thought.

And of his piety, what we were told by some brothers is that according to al-Imām al-Manṣūr bi-Allāh, Ḥamzah was hit on his leg during the battle of al-Sharazah, and he couldn't walk. Some riding animals passed by him but he did not allow himself to ride any, although, in his condition it was permissible to do so.

As for Sulaymān b. Ḥamzah, he was graceful, knowledgeable, God-fearing, and without equal in his time. The author of the Imām's biography related, according to the two noble and virtuous (*al-sharīfayn al-fādilayn*) princes Ya'qūb and Ishāq, the sons of Muḥammad b. Ja'afar, (may Allāh have mercy on them both) that when they heard the news of Sulaymān's death they said: "We have now given up all hope in the *Qā'im* (candidate for Imāmate) from *Ahl al-bayt* of Allāh's Prophet (may Allāh's praises be upon him and his *Āl*) in our time". They were then asked: "Was he (Sulaymān) qualified for the Imāmate?" They answered: "Yes, he was."

As for Ḥamzah b. 'Alī, he died young at the age of twenty, coming from his father's area or thereabouts, going towards Ḥarad, intending to meet Prince Ghānim b. Yaḥyā al-Ḥasani.

As for 'Alī b. Ḥamzah - may Allāh be pleased with him - he was one of the most eminent people of his time, and the most graceful of his contemporaries, nominated for the Imāmate and suitable for leadership. He was one of the five qualified for the Imāmate¹ gathered together in one era - this was mentioned by the author of the biography of al-Imām al-Mutawakkil 'alā-Allāh (pbuh). 'Alī b. Ḥamzah was contacted by al-Imām al-Sayyid the late Abū Ṭālib (pbuh) who after enquiring about the best of *Ahl al-Bayt* (pbut), was directed to him ('Alī b. Ḥamzah). His grave (pbuh) is in dhī-Bayn and he was

in charge of the fortress of Bukar. He was of high reputation, well remembered, and the object of praise, granting many magnificent gifts to those who praised him. Among that which was related [142B] about him was that a poet from Ṣan‘ā’ called ‘Alī b. Zakarī came to see him and said:

Renounce poetry and praise the best element of Hāshim
‘Alī, the doom of the adversary in battle.

He is a graceful youth rising above all people
with knowledge and intelligence outweighing others.

He gives succour to the orphans, satisfies the guest, bestower
of gifts on people day and night.

You see people at the courtyard of his house
like pilgrims of the House of Allāh crowding the wide valleys.

In another poem, calling him to the *qiyām* (candidacy for the Imāmate), the poet says:

Someone said dhī-Bayn was joyous
when she met the noble Hāshimī,

One of the most daring, the finest of *Banī Hāshim*
finder of the aggressor and rescuer of the drowning.

He was brought up with generosity by Abū Hāshim
and Ḥamzah the pious, generous and kind.

So he grew up like a sword firm in will,
nay, like the sea, he meets you with a cheerful face.

He never drank wine nor was stirred
by the songs of maidens in the valley of al-‘Aqīq,

Nor did he call upon the cup-bearer before daybreak
to bring him the pure nectar of wine.

Arise and revive the truth and its advocates
for you are worthy of that which is hoped for.

As for Ḥamzah b. Abī Hāshim, he was the *Qā'im bi-Amr* Allāh, the *Muhtasib* (self-appointed 'acting' Imām) in the way of Allāh and the hostile one against the enemies of Allāh. Both those who agreed and disagreed with him attested to his excellence. The Imām al-Mutawakkil 'alā-Allāh (pbuh) mentioned him, in some of his treatises on the wretched *al-Muṭarrafiyyah*, among other members of *Ahl al-Bayt* (pbut) who disapproved and refuted *al-Muṭarrafiyyah's* school of thought. He had well-known battles and commendable episodes with Banī al-Ṣulayhī. One day he (pbuh) was in the mosque of Ḥalamlam where the people of *al-Tarf* (*al-Muṭarrafiyyah*) were gathered together, wanting reconciliation with them regarding outstanding matters [143A]. Someone close to the mosque uttered a sound to disperse the people so that they would depart without reaching an accord. When Ḥamzah (may Allāh sanctify his soul) heard him, he said: 'Who is it that changed our assembly, may Allāh change his colour!' And Allāh afflicted him with leprosy in his presence after his invocation. The people saw the afflicted person and he became a clear sign to them of (Ḥamzah's) *karāmah*² (association with extraordinary events) and grace. He never ceased to participate in *Jihād* until his death and he (pbuh) was slain in a battle in al-Manwā towards the end of the year 459. He said while fighting on the day he was slain:

I pierce with a stab that raises dust,
a stab of a youth whose supporters are far-away
and whose dwelling is far removed from his kinsfolk.

And in the same context the poet of Al-Mukarram says,

We killed at 'al-Manwā' a grand noble of yours

and I was not pleased with his killing.

His army was composed of fifteen hundred (1,500) horsemen and fifteen thousand (15,000) footmen. Ninety elder men from Hamdān stood by him defending him until they perished. Ten of Hamdān's chiefs were killed with him, each one of them had ten sons and ten daughters. Allāh speedily avenged his death; in less than a year, his murderer 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī was killed by Sa'īd b. Najāḥ on the ninth of Dhī al-Qi'dah, 460. His paternal cousins were also killed and his women were enslaved. The Imām (pbuh) mentioned him in a poem saying:

What a difference between my saying "from my father from his grandfather
from my father's 'father'", who is the guiding Prophet [143B]

and a youth who says our scholars related to us
(the authority of) this narrative is certainly not like mine (in its accuracy)!

How fine is the deep insight of a fair person
in the requirements of publication and citation!

Take that which is close and leave the far;
the near will compensate for the far.

Mentioning Ḥamzah (pbuh), he also said:

Did my grandfather Ḥamzah not revive true guidance
with his sword and fiery will,

Unflinching until he tasted the cup of his fate
amidst a cloud of dust and the galloping horses.

And his descendent my grandfather 'Alī ' the exalted,
the symbol of knowledge and the most pious of the pious,

He was not deterred in his battle with ‘Āmir’
by excess of threats and intimidation.

He means ‘Āmir b. Sulaymān al-Zawāḥī who was killed by Prince al-Muḥsin b. al-Ḥasan between Thilā’ and Shibām. Al-Muḥsin avenged the blood of Ḥamzah b. Abī Hāshim (pbut). Şultān ‘Āmir b. Sulaymān met his fate when he charged towards Prince al-Muḥsin and he (al-Muḥsin, pbuh) feigned that he was fleeing and then turned round, thrusting the lance into ‘Āmir’s throat. ‘Āmir’s son swerved towards him (al-Muḥsin) but a Shi’ī (fighter) who was a staunch and loyal Zaydī swiftly took out an arrow from its sheath, launching it at the son, which resulted in his (the son’s) demise. A poet from the Zaydīs said:

We killed ‘Āmir and his son
Yahyā who were the ‘kings’ of Ḥimyar.

And he said in praise of al-Muḥsin mentioning the stabbing:

What praises can describe Muḥsin, a great lancer,
when the horses were amidst a cloud of dust and obscurities,

The Sharīf’s hand bestowed on him a stab
guaranteeing him, from it, a red death.

The Imām al-Manşūr bi-Allāh said:

And his descendent is my grandfather Sulāymān al-Ridā’;
his noble deeds were more than could be counted. [144A]

And Ḥamzah, quick to ascend sublime paths
mentioned by every devout and right-minded person.

By Allāh, between me and Muḥammad is none
but a person with guidance and raised by an equal.

And I am the one whose deeds you have seen,
and what you see leaves no need for my verbal witness:

Ask (about us) for we have presented our case (for the Imāmate)
to people from Aden to Sindad.

The *Shaykh* of the Prophet's *Āl*, Prince *Imād al-Dīn* Yaḥyā b. Ḥamzah - may Allāh grant him long life - told me that, according to some of his relatives, after Ḥamzah (pbuh) was buried, his sons wanted to transfer (his remains) from the burial site. They spent some time circling the grave at night until the convenient moment. When they carried him in a *shamlah* (woollen cloak) at night, a bright light emanated from him, to the extent that the frills of the *shamlah* could be seen. After transferring him from his first burial site, they buried him - may Allāh be pleased with him - in Bayt al-Jālid.

As for Abū Hāshim al-Ḥasan b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān (pbuh), he was one of the graceful members of *al-'Itrah*. He authored a book entitled *Siyāsah al Nafs* (Discipline of the Soul) on the subject of *zuhd* and *wa'z* (asceticism and admonition). He (pbuh) did not live long, although he conquered Ṣan'ā' in the year of 426, where he resided. He fared well until the wretched al-Ḥusayn al-Marawānī - may Allāh not have mercy on him - opposed him. Abū Hāshim died in Nā'iṭ in Ḥāshid region. His tomb site there is well known and frequently visited. He had come from the Ḥijāz accompanied by his two sons Ḥamzah and Muḥammad - reported on earlier.

As for his other grandfathers, they are eminent men to be emulated; and glorified lords who attained the high standing of nobility and ascended the exalted heights of honour. Glory is bound to them and truth is attributed to them [144B]. And what of a people who are the descendants of prophethood and whose lineage is 'Alawī (of 'Alī). Its

substance is manifest and its essence is pleasant. Do they have an equal or is there anyone like them?! Verily they are a company of nobility and sound bearing, good and generous.

These are the attributes of his forefathers (pbut) to whom he belongs by his noble origin and deeds. O ye who distinguishes between the claims, how do you see then this lineage and these deeds? And if these are *their* attributes and status then how do you see *his*! Verily his virtues are honourable and his standing is high and exalted. He (pbuh) and his grandparents are, as some (poets) of the past have said, to which they (al-Imām al-Manşūr and his forefathers) are most suited and most deserving:

They are members of a family of whom the Lord of the Throne sees their merits
and builds for them a resting place in everlasting heavens.

They are the feeders (of the hungry) whenever a crisis befalls:
the deeper the roots, the riper the fruits they bear.

It is as though the last amongst them in glory is their first;
noble origins and manners harmonise.

If they venture or boast
or contend for superiority or pre-eminence they prevail;

The earth competes for their dead when they are buried
as (buyers) at the dealers compete for silver.

His Description (peace be upon him)

He (pbuh) was tall and perfect in body. He had a shiny complexion and an aquiline nose, and his eyesight was excessively sharp. He had a fair beard, as if its white hair were bars of silver in their radiance and clarity, and was clothed with perfection, awe and grace, outshining his contemporaries in physical appearance as he did in manners. It was related to us by some people who saw him in his childhood and in the prime of his youth that

when he prostrated the light of his face could be seen glittering parallel to him, as the light of the sun glitters when it is reflected from water on to a wall.

When he died (pbuh), white hair covered his cheeks in particular. Some people told him to dye it, but he said extemporaneously [145A]

They said: dye white hair, since white hair is a defect
in the eyes of young, elegant and pleasing maidens.

So I responded: it is as you said (but) its awe
is contrary to your verdict; in the eyes of the maidens

We are the ones who have struck people to uphold
the white path: how can we accept its blackening!

He (pbuh) possessed true intuition and perspicacity as his close associates knew. He is considered one of the sound prognosticators (of his time), and much did he speak of events beforehand, and they occurred as he foretold. This explains the meaning of the Prophet's saying (pbuh): "Beware of the believer's perspicacity, for he sees with the light of Allāh."

As a poet said:

The shrewd man who expresses his thoughts
as if he has already seen and heard.

Some of his virtues and affairs (pbuh):

His *manāqib* and *aḥwāl* (virtues and affairs) are obvious and it is not possible to examine them (all) thoroughly. but only to mention (them) briefly. However, for the benefit of those who are not well-acquainted with him (pbuh), we will mention a few. Otherwise his affairs are apparent and the light of his nobility is dazzling.

He (pbuh) grew up in the most noble manner and the purest tradition. He was known not to have any interest in play nor an inclination towards amusement and music. I was informed by a most reliable person that when still a young man, he (pbuh) excelled in the learning of the Qur'ān, achieving his objective, although (despite his young age) he regretted the loss of time in which he could have learnt more, and was deeply saddened by this. Some of his brothers informed his father (pbuh) of this, who called and spoke with him. He said, "son, no more time has passed than the amount required for you to reach the level of knowledge at which you are now. You are facing the future, so prepare for it."

He then turned to the study of wide areas of knowledge, and took to literature, until he penetrated its profundities, collecting pearls from its depth, and greatly excelled in it. [145B] He memorised many *shawāhid* (quotations - examples of textual evidence illustrating language rules) which were unknown to any of his contemporaries. I was told by the Grand Prince, the *Shaykh* of the Prophet's *Āl* in his time, and revivalist of truth in his era, 'Imād al-Dīn *dhū al-Sharafayn* Abū al-Muzaffar Yaḥyā b. Ḥamzah b. Sulaymān - may Allāh prolong his life and glorify his status that he saw the Imām (pbuh) with a volume of poetry, and the Imām said to him: "I have read it three times and learnt it by heart. Take it and ask me about any *qaṣīdah* (a poem of ten lines or more) you wish." The Grand Prince said: 'I took it and started asking him from its beginning, middle and end. I would mention a line of the *qaṣīdah* and he would recite the whole *qaṣīdah*, until he had recited several *qaṣīdahs* in this manner.'

The scholar jurist (*al-Faqīh al-Ālim*) Jamāl al-Dīn 'Imrān b. al-Ḥasan b. Nāṣir - may Allāh perpetuate his happiness - informed me of someone who was gifted in memorising poetry, both old and contemporary, who claimed: 'I have memorised about a hundred thousand lines of poetry, and someone else knows twice as many' referring to a *littérateur*, but we consider our memorising as insignificant compared to that of the Imām (pbuh). Whenever a line of a *qaṣīdah* was mentioned as clarification for any uncommon word from the Qur'ān or from the Sunnah, or any Arabic sayings, he would recite the whole or most of the *qaṣīdah* (to which the line belonged) and perhaps the occasion for which it was written and the author's origin, and he would also recount much of the poet's other

verse. Besides this, there are many other aspects which testify to his superiority. In addition to this, he (pbuh) was well versed in the detailed history of Arabs.

The Imām then travelled to study under the great scholar *Husām al-Dīn* Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Raṣṣāṣ (may Allāh be pleased with him), who was the pre-eminent scholar of the Zaydīs in his time, transcending his contemporaries. Raṣṣāṣ became the leader of judge *Shams al-Dīn*'s followers (may Allāh consecrate his soul), and the Imām (pbuh) resided with Raṣṣāṣ and was tutored by him, and read [146A] the Two Principles (the two '*uṣūls*': '*uṣūl al-Dīn* and '*uṣūl al-Fiqh*'), surpassing his colleagues, and forging ahead of both the old and young. The Imām, (pbuh) told me that he used to write ten principles of '*uṣūl al-Dīn* on one side of a tablet, and ten principles of '*uṣūl al-Fiqh* on the other. He said "I would read each three times, learning them by heart", and thus he combined the study of both these subjects.

The Imām (pbuh) authored a work on the subject of '*uṣūl al-Dīn* before the age of twenty. Among the valuable works he assumed as a youth while studying under his *shaykh* al-Raṣṣāṣ - may Allāh consecrate his soul - was the book *al-Jawharah al-shaffāfah* (The Transparent Jewel). It is a response to a treatise, authored by an Egyptian, called *al-Risālah al-ṭawwāfah ila al-'ulamā'i kāffah* (The Circulating Treatise Addressed To All Scholars), including issues relating to *al-'uṣūl* (the Two Principles) written in mostly intricate and dry language. The treatise comprised a hundred and forty issues and it came from an Ash'arite philosopher. Such a treatise circulated in many countries, but no scholar took it upon himself to respond to it or to even contemplate defining its meanings. It finally reached the above-mentioned *shaykh* (Raṣṣāṣ), who was a radiant sun for the people in the science of *al-kalām* (theology), and one of the foremost scholars of Islam. The *shaykh* - may Allāh be pleased with him - instructed the Imām to respond to it. The Imām (pbuh) responded to it in the finest and clearest expression, brief in language and exhaustive in meaning. *Al-Jawharah al-shaffāfah* came in eloquent language imitating a unique chaplet. After praising Allāh the Most High, and praying for the peace and blessings for the Prophet and his family, the Imām (pbuh) started by saying: "*al-Risālah al-ṭawwāfah* (The Circulating Treatise) reached us in Yemen with its rein broken and its veil removed, having crossed vast, hostile and unknown terrain. One wonders how many valleys and wastelands did it cross, and (how many) highlands did it ascend [146B].

It approaches people yet turning to no-one

Until it reached us making Mudar lowlier than us.

However it brought that which soothed the hearts, and didn't compare to A'shā's tongue." He (pbuh) went on to say, "and when it reached the most erudite scholar of Yemen, Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan, the treatise saw what dazzles the mind with light and sends back the eye weak and downcast. As a result the treatise contracted its hand and humbled its pride, and handed him the leads saying: 'I was prepared for you, O best guide (to the straight path)'. It tied its charge where excellence settled and it came to the one who became the scholars' focus of attention. *Shaykh* al-Raṣṣāṣ was, at the time, absorbed in other writings and treatises, which no one but he could unravel or clarify. He therefore referred *al-Risālah al-ṭawwāfah* to me saying: 'untangle its knots and straighten its crookedness'. I complied with this honourable command, despite my preoccupations and lack of deep insight, seeking the help of the Eternal, Infinite and Everlasting Lord." [The author, impressed by this illustration of the Imām's eloquence, lead him to the following comment:] Consider then these golden fragments and excellent, Arabic style.

So he (pbuh) assumed the writing of his critique (in response to *al-Risālah al-ṭawwāfah*), which was like the work of a craftsman in its artistry and accuracy, and like water in freshness and clarity. He completed the response in perfect style and lucidity and called it *al-Jawharah al-shaffāfah rādi'at al-ṭawwāfah* ('The Transparent Jewel, Checker of the Circulating (Treatise)'). He accompanied it with the following lines of poetry which he (pbuh) recited to me when I was at his residence in the fortress of *Zafār* - may Allāh protect it:-

This (*al-Jawharah*) is a trust (in the hand) of whom it reaches
until he delivers it to Egypt;

It (*al-Jawharah*) is magnificent and clear and illuminates the darkness
of the night like the pearl of the sea;

It is *'Adliyyah*, heading towards its target,
so do not stand in its way, oh *al-Jabry*.

If you find in it aught that displeases you
regarding my belief - my fault is not your burden;

Leave me and what I included in it, for by it
I seek salvation in the morn of resurrection.

And so this work issued from him (pbuh), as a proof of his eminence and perfection [147A], demonstrating that he is of nobility at its highest.

His (pbuh) literary works include *Sharḥ al-risālah al-nāṣiḥah bil adilah al-wāḍiḥa* ('The Explication of the Advisory Treatise with Clear Evidence') which comprises two parts. The first is concerned with *'uṣūl al-Dīn* (the fundamentals of Religion) including: *tawḥīd*, justice, prophecies, *al-wa'd* and *al-wa'īd* (the promise of reward and warning of punishment in the hereafter) and what follows from them. The second is concerned with the virtues of the *'Itrah* (Prophet's progeny) - pbuh - including charming and useful anecdotes of their lives and history. It is really an outstanding work.

Among his works is *Ṣafwat al-ikhtiyār* ('The Best Choice'), on *'uṣūl al-Fiqh* (the fundamentals of jurisprudence) and *al-Shāfi* ('The Healing Book') on *'uṣūl al-Dīn* (the fundamentals of Religion), which is made up of four volumes. The first consists of the history of the *Qā'ims* (candidates for the Imāmate) from the *'Itrah* (Prophet's progeny) - peace be upon them - and those suitable for *qiyām* (candidacy for the Imāmate) amongst them, even though they did not assume the *qiyām*, including an account of those who opposed them, from among the Umayyids and the 'Abbasids, from the time of *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* ('Alī b. Abī Ṭālib) - pbuh - to the time of the Imām al-Manṣūr bi-Allāh (pbuh).

He also authored *Ḥadīqah al-ḥikmah al-nabawiyyah fī tafsīr al-'arba'īn al-saylaqiyyah* ('The Garden of the Prophet's Wisdom on the Explication of the Forty Ḥadīths (Traditions)'), which constitutes one of the best and outstanding compilations. It includes complete definitions of words explained through examples of Arabic *shawāhid* (textual

evidence) and complete clarification of meanings. I heard him (pbuh) saying that he completed writing the second volume of the compilation in seven or eight days, at a time when he was also engaged in the preparation of armies, to be sent to various destinations. I saw that volume in his own writing (pbuh), i.e., the draft - which is a cause for wonder since no line is corrected and there are no additions except occasionally - which is a very unusual feat. This is the case although this draft contains very beautiful expressions and well-chosen words very rare in a book of its kind. An example of the contents (147B) is his mention of the meaning of the word *inābah* which means (to seek God's pleasure through) devotional acts and those acts which lead to salvation (on the Day of Resurrection). He then said; 'And with that one will gain the abode of eternity and the everlasting pleasure of God.

[He then continued to describe paradise, encouraging people to strive for it and for its pleasures, and warned against worldly pleasures and desires, giving examples of peoples and dynasties who rose to great heights in this life (and) then lost everything and were forgotten. In particular, he mentions the tyrannical Umayyid dynasty and how powerful they were - "each one of them used to be praised on eighty thousand different pulpits (*minbars*) every Friday in the presence of people [148A]". The biographer (*al-Muḥallī*) mentions these extracts and descriptions as examples of the Imām's literary excellence. He explains: "these are examples of his unique and valuable words of which we intended only to give an indication and not to detail." The biographer then goes on to mention other literary works of the Imām:]

His (pbuh) compilations include *al-Risālah al-hādiyah bil adillah al-bādiyah* ('The Guiding Treatise with Clear Evidence') dealing with the issue of *saby* (prisoners of war) in great detail, and which is a very important piece of work.

His (pbuh) writings also include *al-Durrah al-yatīmah fī tabyīn aḥkām al-saby wa al-ghanīmah* ('The Unique Pearl Explaining the Laws of Prisoners of War and Booty') in which he mentions details of some valuable biographies, and explains certain issues in the appropriate categories in the jurisprudence of the '*Itrah*†peace be upon them† arguments like rubies in weight.

[The author (the Imām) goes on to emphasise the importance of following the Imām as he is *walī al-amr*. One should not question the Imām's actions but one should just follow. "How can there be obedience when there is defiance to the authority of the Imām! (149A)." The Imām substantiated this view by quoting verses from the Qur'ān: "If they had only referred it to the Messenger, or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have known it from them (direct)" (Surah 4 verse 83), and say "Obey Allāh, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you" (Surah 4 verse 59).

The Imām also reminds the reader of the infallibility³ of Imām 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (*al-Waṣī al-Ma'ṣūm*), and that whoever challenges this is a *kafir*, especially since the Prophet (Muḥammad) attested to 'Alī's infallibility. He continues to support this idea of the supreme authority of the Imām when he says "Censure yourself, not your Imām", (*It'tahim nafsaka li imāmik*).

Having knowledge without understanding of this idea of the supreme authority of the Imām is meaningless - "A little knowledge requires a lot of practising (actions)".

The importance and authority of *Āl Muḥammad* in the field of knowledge is emphasised: "Knowledge has its masters and Religion has its authority. *Āl Muḥammad* (peace be upon him and them) are the masters of knowledge and the authority of Religion is with them. If they proceed, do so with persistence and if they hold back, do so with restraint. To overtake the Imām is to lose high status, to follow him is (to gain) religion and honour, and to go before him is shameful and transgressive."

The Imām responded to criticism regarding the matter of prisoners of war (*al-sabiyyah*) by alluding to the example of the rebellion of Banī Ḥanīfah against the authority of (the Caliph) Abū Bakr as support for his view!

He condemns those who dwell on less important matters relating to the Sunnah whilst ignoring matters of primary importance, such as the status of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib: "You have exaggerated in following the Sunnah, such as in plucking out the hairs of the armpit, and ignored the importance of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib" (150A).

Al-Muḥallī goes on to quote extracts from the Imām’s book *al-Durrah al-yafīmah*, which rebuke those questioning his authority:]

He (pbuh) also says: “Our need from he who posed the question is aid and assistance (instead of criticism)... The honest and truthful one (the Prophet, may the blessings of the Lord of the worlds be upon him and his *Āl*) said: ‘Whoever prepares a fighter or supports his family will have a reward equal to his.’ If this is so, then what of someone who not only fails to support the fighter’s family, but instead engages in stinging criticisms and back-stabbing (of the fighter), dissuades him through doubts and illusions; and then bites his hands as though he regrets (his actions)...”

[He then goes on to explain his motives for writing *al-Durrah al-yafīmah*:]

“Since friends repeated the question and close friends deserve an answer, we authored this treatise and named it *al-Durrah al-yafīmah fī tabyīn aḥkām al-saby wa al-ghanīmah* (The Unique Pearl Explaining the Laws of Prisoners of War and Booty), written in circumstances which confuse the mind at rest and compels the restful to (rise and) follow the departing [150B]. We have not been able to explain (the subject) in detail although it is satisfactory and praise be to Allāh and one does not need to search elsewhere...

His books (pbuh) include *al-Ajwibah al-kāfiyah bi al-adillah al-wāfiyah* (‘The Sufficient Answers with Substantial Evidence’) where he says,

“If the stallion is angered on the day of fighting
do not blame it if it snorts;

I am the son of the one who coached and tamed the cavalry horses
(during bloody fighting) in which their blood emulates the rain.

Would my right be denied by casting doubts
and could people withhold the moon’s light?!

If my life is scrupulously and faithfully examined
it will be, by your life, the best of biographies.

Am I not the one who tore up the garments of darkness
with a sharp mind, splitting stones and hair ?!

And with a decisiveness I inherited from ‘Alī (b. Abī Ṭālib)
and a firmness learned from ‘Umar (b. al-Khaṭṭāb)

My tongue (in eloquence and sonority) is like the faucial bag of the camel
or like the sharp Yemeni sword (in its stinging).

His writings include *al-Ajwibah al-rāfi‘ah li al-ishkāl wa al-fātiḥah li al-aqfāl* (‘The Answers that Solve Problems and Open Padlocks’), *al-Nāṣiḥah al-mushīrah bi tark al-i‘tirād ‘alā al-sīrah* (‘The Advisory Guide to Refraining from Objecting to the Prophet’s sīrah/Biography’) and *al-‘idāḥ bi ‘ujmah al-ifṣāḥ* (‘Clarifying the Unclear in *Al-Ifṣāḥ*’). These books are mostly concerned with biographies (of the Prophet). People’s knowledge of religion had deteriorated so much over time that numerous objections (to views held by religious scholars) were raised. In these books he (pbuh) therefore detailed evidence that testifies to the correctness of his deeds, such as baffles the mind and deters the ignorant.

[151A] When criticism and reproach of his conduct increased, especially that he should respond in accordance with the Imāms’ teachings rather than refer to biographies of the Prophet, he (pbuh) said in some of his writings: “He burdened us with what we could not carry, and he did not enter the house through its door, because the biographies of the Prophet and his companions are the source of *shar‘ī fatwās* or religious conduct. The one who asks me to do so (not to refer to the Prophet’s biographies) is like a person who says, ‘take me to such and such a place, but do not use the road that leads to it.’ Did not the Imāms (peace be upon them) base their writings on Allāh’s book, the Prophet’s example and the *salaf*’s conduct (may Allāh be pleased with them all) as sources?! The response (fatwā or giving judgments) could be either one of the *‘usūl* following the previous ones or not in agreement, in which case it is a school of thought and therefore requires *tarjīh* (judging preferences) or *ta‘līl* (justification).”

He (pbuh) then said: “What we have mentioned is a field of knowledge which, if not mentioned in the past in the Imām’s writings (peace be upon them), should be appended to them. The followers of this school (*al-Hādawiyyah*) have praised Allāh for the gifts he bestowed upon them, since the guiding and the pious people are from amongst them, with their extensive knowledge, and for the continuity of this prestige, and their responsibility weighs heavily upon them.”

Any person with the simplest amount of knowledge who asked him (pbuh) would request (challenge him to produce) evidence (in support of his *fatwā*), and he (pbuh) would treat them with gentleness and kindness, as these qualities were well known characteristics of his (and were widely known by people about him).

His books also include *al-Risālah al-kāfiyah ilā ahl al-‘uqūl al-wāfiyah* (‘The Sufficing Treatise to those with Perfect Minds’) and *al-Risālah al-nāfi‘ah bi al-adillah al-qāfi‘ah* (‘The Useful Treatise with Definitive Evidence’) (in which) he mentions ‘Alī (b. Abī Ṭālib) - pbuh - [151B] and his conquest of Khaybar and his right (to the Khilāfah) and those companions who (wrongfully) assumed the Khilāfah before him:

“They were told of the rules of precedence - if they had (only) known,
but they did not and ignorance is a great affliction.

They proceeded under his (the Prophet’s) banner but retreated
with horses stumbling and heroes fleeing

When conquest looked distant
and doubts and thoughts filled the minds of earthly people

He (the Prophet), fulfiller of his promises called Abū Ḥasan (‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib)
in the morn’, and by this call eyes were transfixed:

He came like a lion following his leader
because of a soreness and near-blindness in one eye.

He (the Prophet) spat on it (the eye) spittle like the taste of honey
and the fragrance of musk not sprayed by a perfume vendor,

And he said ‘take this and with determination Oh Abū Ḥasan’
and conquest was attained when the rest of the army were deserting⁴”

He wrote many *da‘wahs* (exhortations calling people to consider him as Imām) starting with *al-da‘wah al-‘āmmah* (‘The General Call’), written in a fine and unique style of language, attesting to his great knowledge. Many calls followed including ones addressed to Ismā‘īl (*al-Malik al-Mu‘iz* Ismā‘īl b. Ṭuḡṭakīn b. Ayyūb), Jukū (b. Muḥammad al-Kurdī), *Khawārizm Shāh* and his last call to the people and soldiers of Yemen which was written in 612 in Kawkabān. In it he combines great knowledge with admonition, so that it touches the heart and deters from the perpetration of sins. It also contains much about the nobility of the *‘Itrah* (pbut) and news of many of the ‘Abbasid Caliphs, including their maltreatment of each other, and chosen items from biographies. It also contains exhortations to the *Jihād* etc. Nothing like it was ever produced before; it is one of the wonders of knowledge, and his speech (pbuh) usually is a cause for wonder [152A].

[The author quotes some examples of the Imām’s literary prowess in his *da‘wah*:]

He (pbuh) also said, “Come hither, may Allāh have mercy on you, to the brightness of the glass’ light, the essence of the olive oil, and to a banner, which as long as it flutters above the Muslim’s head, he will not go to hell, a banner under which wine is not drunk and music is not listened to, and where any forbidden acts practised openly are followed by the prescribed punishment on its perpetrator, whether stoning or a lesser penalty. As for him who hides (his sins), he is left to Allāh to be judged. How far apart are he who assures evil-doers and he who frightens them; he who is attracted to them and he who combats them; he who expropriates them and he who does not; he who expels them and he who receives them as guests! We have never heard musical instruments before, may Allāh have mercy on you, and did not know what they were until we destroyed them in front of our own eyes, as we have mentioned in verse:

We do not know alcohol save when we spill it,
nor evil doing except when we denounce it;

I am the son of the one for whom the verses of the book
weaved a sheet that covered my whole body.

He (pbuh) also said: “We have never been contrasted with (the opinions of) Abū Ḥanīfah, al-Shāfi‘ī, nor Mālik, so observe, ye traveller, where you place your foot. These are the scholars of the ‘*Ummah* who follow, praise be to God, our fathers the Imāms†may Allāh have mercy on both.” [In comparing the Imāms of ‘*Itrah* to the other Imāms of the Muslim schools of thought, the Imām says:] “Is the (strong) tree (*nab’*) to be equated with the (weak) grass, the heavy rain with the drizzle [152B], or the black smoke with the clouds?! He who fools himself does not do himself justice, nor does he who humbles himself elevate it.’

He (pbuh) also said: ‘We (the ‘*Itrah*)⁵ are the people who know what is prohibited and what is lawful and know the revealed Qur’ān and its explication. We are also the symbols of guidance, the moons of darkness, the seas of knowledge and the mountains of forbearance, so do not, may Allāh have mercy on you, deviate from our course and do not follow paths not trodden by us, as *fitnah* (temptations) are expelled by us and mercy is bound to us. Following the truth is a better protection and the path of the (Prophet’s) progeny is a better guide to salvation. How far apart are those who belong to Ahl al-Kisā’ and those belonging to Nahawand and Nasā! He who has done good is not equal to the evil-doer, nor is he who forbears like the one who is harsh.

O people of Yemen, you have for a long time been acquainted with *fitnahs* (suffering) and have drunk the cups of misery. You have rejected the progeny of al-Ḥusayn and al-Ḥasan, and you customarily did not follow their model. Reflect on (your position) to absolve yourselves from us today and from Allāh tomorrow. For certainly Allāh did not create you in jest nor will he leave you heedlessly neglected. He (pbuh) also said: “One strongly wonders at a person who accepts *al-wa’d* and *al-wa’id* yet indulges his desires. Make your souls retributive and censuring if you want success on the Day of

Resurrection. Do not bar it (your soul) from the good path and do not choke it with its lusts. Heaven is beneath the gleam of the sword and the points of the spears. Swim in the seas of death, dare the blades of swords and belittle fear. Be at the forefront (of the battle) and do not stay behind, wear hard shields, not light clothes, and ride the fast animals not the slow, if you want to reach the place of ripe fruits (paradise). Verily religion has its preachers and we are amongst their masters, and it has protectors so be among the best of its defenders.” He (pbuh) also said in it: “Allāh’s religion is indeed guarded by us (the ‘*Itrah*) and surrounded with our awe and dignity. Allāh still has in us a devotee [153A] who is active (fights) with the sharp edges of spears and the blades of swords. The hearts of the mighty tremble for him on their thrones and are pressed (as if) on sharp stones. How many show attachment to piety, when it was not their habit - out of fear and respect for us. Did not Hārūn, the so-called *al-Rashīd*, wear wool and sleep on coarse woollen covers when Yaḥyā b. ‘Abdullāh (pbuh) revolted for *qiyām* in Daylam, and appeared to be righteous - though he was not known to be righteous!” He (pbuh) also said: “I am not a *Jabrī*, nor am I a *Rāfiḍī* nor a *Qadarī* nor a Mu‘tazalite nor a *Murjī* nor *Nāṣibī*. This is either a source of pride or shame, (for) there is a difference between mirage and water, between rain and liquefied copper. So cup (water) from the river of Ṭalūt and leave the army of Jālūt. Avoid the rough waves of revenge in the war of Fāṭimah’s sons. How far apart are righteousness and transgression, the dead and the living, giving and withholding, *naḥṭh* (copying the action of spitting, using the lips and the tip of the tongue, but without the production of saliva) and cauterizing. Do not reject in pride the clear evidence lest ill-fortune strike you down. Closely follow your guide and be assisted by him, and do not destroy yourself and your progeny. Prefer not your argument, but make your heart soft in submission. Sever not your line of assistance from the Creator and do not make what is easy difficult:

Are there Imāms other than the Prophet Muḥammad’s sons?⁶

Verily you try to move a high mountain!

And is he whose sole ambitions are to gather spoils

Or drink alcohol deserving of the status of Imām?

Hold fast to the Prophet's children, for indeed

They are a most perfect rein for Allāh's Religion,

So that you may survive with the survivors from everything that destroys.

When the gathering (in the hereafter) is told 'enter (paradise) with peace'

The people will be called, on the day of judgement, after their Imām

so prepare to meet Allāh with the best Imām.

"Do not take the company of the coward, and be accounted as one. It is a profitable word if the hearts [153B] of those who know accept it. Purify your soul, for those who do so have succeeded, and do not corrupt it, for therein lies failure and indignity."

He (pbuh) also said: "How can a sane man be confused about the rights of the Prophet's *Āl* when their rights are acknowledged and well known? Surely *Ḥadīth Al-Ghadr* is not hidden, so where are the people of loyalty? It is upon us to erect the proof and upon the 'Ummah to make use of it, for the born child only has to cry out (as a sign of life) for it to have a share in (its) inheritance (hence our right to the Prophet's inheritance of leadership). What is the excuse of those who have heard the loud call to righteousness but have neglected it and exceeded its bounds? That which has been written has come to pass and whoever has betrayed will soon perish. For every message there is a set time and place, and the disobedient will be sent to hell. O ye who seek guidance but not from the people of guidance, you are like the seeker of pearls amongst stones, and rubies in mud. The good and the bad are different qualities; slow animals compete not with fast ones. There is a big difference between the camel's hump and its ribs, the high and the low, the ugly and the beautiful, the wild and the tamed. If you desire salvation, then go with the guiding ones, for there is a difference between he who leads and he who seduces. Follow the way of righteousness and you will be righteous and do not go astray from that which is good lest you be removed from it. And be like the haughty camel in holding on to the right path, and like a lion escaping from sin and ruin. Let Muḥammad's *Āl* (peace be upon him and his gracious family) be to you like the head to the body, and the eye to the head, for you cannot have a body without a head or a head without an eye.

“He who has heard our call, *Ahl al-Bayt*, is not harmed by approaching us and inspecting our affairs: if he sees righteousness, he can follow it with certainty; and if he finds in us - may Allāh forbid - transgression, he may part with the rest of those who have already parted, but only after he succeeds in having absolute confidence and peace of mind. The wise person is cautious when warned even if the warner might possibly be lying.

“If you seek the road to sanctuary [154A], then know the conditions of the Imāmate and seek them in him who claims it, if you are one who understands (the conditions). The claimers are all asserting the same claim (to the Imāmate), but what a difference there is between a small puddle and flowing water, doubt and certainty. Preferences are expressed between things of similar high standard but there is no difficulty in choosing between things which are obvious in their differences: Not equal are the pearl and the sea shell, nor the couch and the hard rug, nor the olive tree and the *lasafa* (thorny tree). How far apart are he who claims the Imāmate - and his witnesses are Zurzur, al-Mauṣilī, Barṣuma, Ḥanjafah and Sallāmah - and he who claims it and fills the country with righteousness and knowledge, with the signs of goodness apparent in him, and both the virtuous and the knowledgeable attest to his status.

“He who is fair to himself will look deeply into its (the soul’s) salvation, and whoever earnestly seeks guidance is in turn striving for the life of his soul. It is not harmful to oneself to exert an effort for a little while to gain a huge kingdom, to hold oneself accountable for the small and the minute in order to attain dignity and security on the Day of Resurrection and be delivered from the horrors of the calamity. May Allāh have mercy on him who holds the reins of his horse and flings himself, for the sake of Allāh, into the battle, stands under the shade of the swords, makes the reflections of metal his light, cuts through the cloud of dust, and shouts to the leading squadron of the enemy: ‘Fight and do battle’, and shouts in his loudest voice because of his high standing and noble intention: ‘O ye filed army and crowded assembly, Muḥammad’s children will suffice for me, I have no substitute for them, nor an Imām. I will not (cowardly) turn my back on nor desert them.’

“We have related with this narration that the Muslims have pledged - ‘the pledge of Islām’ (*bay‘ah*) - to protect the Prophet (pbuh) and his descendants⁷ after him against that which they protect themselves and their descendants against. He who fulfills the pledge fulfills it to Allāh. And he who falls short perishes; so consider on whom there will be misery and accountability [154B]. O champions of *al-Dhuryah* (the Prophet’s descendants), where are the righteousness-seeking souls, the pure origins, the noble lineages, the pleasant morals, and the pleasing creeds? Where is he who refuses lowliness and how can I find him? Come hither to the glory of the world and the hereafter, and the wearing of the latter’s luxurious garments. Come forth to fraternities where there are no obscenities nor vile deeds, where there are no surprise encounters with snakes or serpents; where insulting nicknames are not uttered and there is no play with monkeys nor dogs encouraged to fight; where stringed and musical instruments and pipes are not played; and where cock-fights are not staged nor rams’ horns lock in brawl.

“It (what we call the people to) is either a *dhikr* (remembrance of Allāh) or *fikr* (reasoning), or an understanding of the Prophet’s life or the Book (Qur’ān), or an admonition for those with understanding. The generous angels are at ease with them (the fraternities) and so are noble humans. They hear in them neither foolish talk nor offence and they encounter no abominable sin or derogatory actions.

Therefore - may Allāh have mercy on you - restore with good care the authority to its rightful owners and the Religion to its origin and source from the family of the House of Prophethood, the origin of the message, the receptacle of revelation and the frequented place of angels, so that the bow is returned to its craftsman and the house is inhabited by its builder, in order that matters proceed according to righteousness and you may enjoy the raindrops of that cloud. May Allāh bring you together in piety, bless you and bless on your behalf, guide you to that which is good, and put right the close and the far ones of you: {Say thou: ‘This is my way; I do invite unto Allāh, with a certainty of knowledge myself and whoever follow me. Glory to Allāh! And never will I join gods with Allāh!} (S12 V108). I did not admonish you until I admonished myself nor preach to you until I had preached to myself: {...I wish not, in opposition to you, to do that which I forbid you to do. I only desire (your) betterment to the best of my power; and my success (in my task) can only come from Allāh. In Him I trust, and unto Him I turn}” (S11 V88). These

are a few of *al-d'awah al-'āmmah*'s fine examples [155A] though written in highly eloquent expressions.

In one of his writings, he (pbuh) says in response to a book (or letter) from some 'Ajams (Ayyubids): 'The *fawāṭim* (the plural of Fāṭimah, the first-name of the mother of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and also the name of their grandmother and great grandmother) tied amulets around our necks and the Hashemites wound turbans around our heads. The fierce battle and the striking of skulls distinguishes between the sound and the useless. Every group we have met in battle or described has fallen back in defeat!'

He (pbuh) also said in this book: 'As for the scholars of *'adl* and *tawhīd*, those who believe in the promise and the warning, they say what we say, are inclined towards us and practise our teachings. They regard loyalty to us as a refuge and disagreement as an affliction. They have followed our call in all parts of the world, secretly and openly, and spread verse and prose in our praise as well as our books which will reach - if Allāh so wills it - all lands green and barren.

[The Imām then warns the Ayyubid author and the like, using prose and poetry, against disagreeing with the Imām, threatening them with defeat in battle and reminding the author (155B) of their defeat in the battle of Wuṣāb.]

In the same book, the Imām says (continuing to rebuke the Ayyubid author): 'You do not know where you are whipping your tongue, directing your objections and where you are biting. You are blinded and deafened by conceit and you are now like a crow on the top of a tree which does not differentiate between the fruits of the palm tree and the swelling fruit of the '*uṣhar*' tree. You deny transgression without knowing the identity of the transgressor, and you warn against tyranny when you are the personification of tyranny. You do not know the bad habits so that you may prevent yourself from performing them and you are not heedful of admonition so that you may reflect on it. You are, therefore, like stray cattle; you do not know the good from the bad, except that which you easily recognise; you do not learn from your difficulties in life; you play when you prosper and you become miserable when there is hardship. You have classified the people of the house of remembrance and mercy, the progeny of Prophethood and the origin of wisdom as

Kharijites. Woe unto you! Who (besides them) could be within the fold of Islam?! You are merely of the most inferior of the lowest class who are easily swayed and swept away by the slightest breeze.'

After mentioning several earlier Imāms (pbuh) he (pbuh) also says in this book 'You claim that these are Kharijites; you should learn the way in and out (of this Religion), before you are crushed by the grinding canine teeth, which will deny you drink that is fresh and will quench your thirst with that which is foul. You should distinguish between slender horses and ponderous camels, and between [156A] the weak-legged animals and the dust-raising elephants. How far apart are the *nab'* and the '*ushar* trees, the core and the skin, the fire and the smoke, and copper and pure gold! You have changed and replaced, lost and neglected and you thought that debt can be cancelled by overpowering the creditor, and that money can be legally owned through theft. There should be bounds set by *sharī'ah* which limit any behaviour and which curse those who transgress them. *Al-bāṭil* (falsehood) is a cause for disunity, even if large numbers are attracted to it, and *al-ḥaq* (truth) is a source of unity, even if its party are small in number.

[The Imām continues to address the Ayyubid author and stresses that no matter what he does and however hard he tries, he will never 'lessen the sea of our glory, deny us our forefather's honour, nor blunt our sharpness!']

A swelling sea is not affected
if a young lad throws a stone into it.

He (pbuh) also said: 'Woe be to you! How far apart are the (high) camel hump and the (rest of the) camel! Indeed the scorpions have quarrelled with the snakes, the grasshoppers have gloated over the eagles, foxes have dared the lions, spiders have sniggered at the production of silk, the furless young camels try to compete with the sturdy male ones, and the heavy water-carrying camels with the fast slender ones. Vast is the difference between the highest and the lowest, and between the sick and the healthy:

Not the same are the adult and the baby sand-grouse
nor is the flock amongst the people like the herdsman.

He (pbuh) is the author of *al-Ikhtiyārāt al-Manṣūriyyah fī al-masā'il al-fiqhiyyah* ('The Manṣūr's Choices on Issues of Islamic Jurisprudence'), which was recounted by some of his companions and contains unusual *Fiqh*. Also amongst his works is *al-Fatāwa* ('The Fatwas') consisting of responses to questions, organised in the standard form of Islamic jurisprudence books.

He (pbuh) was a leading expert in the field of *Fiqh* [156B]... and was able to deduce many unfamiliar and meaningful conclusions quite effortlessly. I was informed by the noble *faqīh* and scholar *Jamāl al-Dīn*, 'umdaḥ al-Muslimīn (the reliant source) 'Imrān b. al-Ḥasan b. Nāṣir - may Allāh bestow on him happiness- who quoted his father the noble scholar al-Ḥasan b. Nāṣir - may Allāh have mercy on him - as being wont to say: 'His knowledge of *Fiqh* (pbuh) was pure like that of the Prophet's companions, may Allāh be pleased with them. I was told by one of our eminent scholars, the noble *faqīh Bahā' al-Dīn* 'Alī b. Aḥmad al-Akwa' - may Allāh be pleased with him - that if the Imām's opinion (pbuh) on a matter of *Fiqh* was unclear to me, I would seek and find that it (the Imām's opinion) was similar to that of *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* ('Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, pbuh) or Zayd b. 'Alī (peace be upon them both). I once heard our *shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn* Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan al-Raṣṣāṣ - may Allāh be very pleased with him - observe: 'I fear that the Imām's Imāmate (pbuh) will drive people away from his successor.' I said, 'and why is that?' He replied: 'Because people will request from him (i.e. the successor) knowledge which they are used to receiving from the Imām and perhaps this might not be possible.

When his writings were issued to al-Jīl and al-Daylam, delivered there by *al-da'īs* (the two propogators) in the year 604, and the *sādah* (the noble masters) of *Ahl al-Bayt* and the scholars of the Zaydīs looked at it, they competed to pledge *bay'ah* (loyalty to his Imāmate) to him like thirsty camels compete for water. They said: 'He is more knowledgeable than al-Nāṣir li al-Ḥaq'. We heard this from those who came to us from them. This is in spite of the fact that they do not consider anyone an equal to al-Nāṣir li al-Ḥaq (pbuh) especially in al-Jīl.

I was told by someone whom I trust, *al-faqīh* Ṣaleḥ b. Muḥammad - may Allāh have mercy on him - from Tihāmah, who was one of the righteous servants of Allāh, that he

heard al-Sayyid (the noble master) *Nizām al-Dīn* Yaḥyā b. ‘Alī al-Sulaymānī - may Allāh sanctify his soul - saying: ‘Our Imām is more knowledgeable [157A] than al-Ḥādī (pbuh).’ I was told by another person whom I trust also, relating what some of our most eminent scholars used to say - may Allāh be pleased with them - that he used to say the same. This *sayyid* - may Allāh have mercy on him - was one of the most knowledgeable and with the most understanding of his contemporaries. The Imām (pbuh) said of him:

Had Yaḥyā desired loyalty,
he would have become the imām of the Imām.

(The Imām) encouraged him to *qiyām* (to rise for the Imāmate) in other verses of poetry which include:

It is not the time for tears (in remembrance of loved ones) in the presence of
the most glorious,

a noble learned and pure Hashemite;

Al-Ḥindī (sword) reminds me of his firm determination
and his prophetic dream in the most critical events.

O he who gathered all traits of nobility since his early life
just as the beads’ string threads together the rubies.

When a case proves perplexing to judges,
he tackles the most difficult part of it with decisiveness.

May you proudly remain a cause of nobility and health,
may you live and whoever seeks your enmity perish.

O Yaḥyā I see the wing of Islam is cut
and a falcon does not rise without its wings;

None but you, the symbol of guidance, is fit for the Imāmate,
since in Religion you are the most knowledgeable of scholars⁸.

Whoever studies his writings⁹ (pbuh) will know that he had a superior status. This is because he was not distracted from writing his literary works by the many people around him. I saw him in one crowded morning session, while he was continuously writing his commentary on the Qur'ān; he would be interrupted with questions about matters of religion and life, and he would answer whilst his pen continued writing speedily which reveals a high level of mastery. I saw in the handwriting of a trusted person that the Imām had continuously written down his replies from early morning until afternoon, up to a particular section. [157B] I counted what he wrote and found it to be about five *kawāmil* (sections). This is probably a cause for wonder but there should be no wonder for {...that is the Grace of Allāh, which He will bestow on whom He pleaseth...} (S5.54). He (pbuh) would rarely study before writing a response to an issue, as answers came naturally to him. If, for example, he was asked to provide evidence for a matter, he would cure the questioner, satisfy his thirst, clarify the path, and provide indisputable evidence.

He (pbuh) was always of high standards of piety (*al-wara'*) and caution, which suited his vast knowledge and talent. There are many stories and accounts in this regard, but only a few will be mentioned by way of illustration. Many people used to come to him at different times with money and other gifts which he would accept, and they would then tell him of their complaint or require that a right of theirs be returned to them, after which he would return to them all their money and gifts soon after meeting their needs. Once a man gave him a Dinar while a beggar was asking him (for money), and he gave the Dinar to the beggar, but when the (original) Dinar's owner returned with a different complaint, the Imām gave him a Dinar as compensation and requested from the man to absolve him from the responsibility of the first Dinar. The man insisted that the Dinar was a gift (*bir*) to him so the Imām said, 'we accept your Dinar and this one is a *ṣadaqah* (charitable donation) for you'. I saw him (pbuh) one day holding a Dirham which he wanted to pay back to *Bayt al-māl* (the treasury) for taking something that was very trivial, and had been taken in confusion from a group that was given *amān* (assurance of safety).

He (pbuh) was known since his youth for giving preference to others over himself, for his generosity to visitors and for satisfying petitioners. He used to give when he had in

abundance, otherwise he would borrow. These virtues were an intrinsic part of his nature, and there is no need for further detail.

His firm resolve [158A], the challenging of his peers, and his confrontation of the enemy horsemen were qualities of his that no-one could dispute or doubt. There are many occasions where he broke spears and blunted swords. He was a model for his soldiers for he used to walk firmly towards death, and when the dust (of the battle) settled he won the best praises from those who dwell on earth and in heaven. This is attested by the Battle of ‘Ajīb, when the exchange of swords lessened (and the battle died down) and his vast army was defeated; he faced the enemy and refused to turn back until Prince ‘Imād al-Dīn hit him with his spear when his soldiers were dispersed and he decided to be patient and gain martyrdom. Allāh, the Exalted and Most High, protected him from the enemies’ plots, with the elevation of the word of al-Dīn, the extinguishing of the burning fire of the deniers of the faith and eradicating the perversions of the wrongdoers.

He also had a high status on the Day of Ṣan‘ā’ when his company were small in number, not enough to defend himself with, whereas his enemy was large in number and included up to seven hundred of the ablest ‘*Ajam* (Ayyubid) horsemen - and the Imām was their target. He entered Ṣan‘ā’ without any fear of death and his *mu’adhīn* called for prayer with the prophetic *adhān*, whereupon he prayed and was not distracted by the great event. Then Allāh raised his fortunes, increased his army and instilled terror in the hearts of his enemies.

The same occurred in the Battle of Dhamār when he led his army and drove back his ‘*Ajam* (Ayyubid) enemies despite their many numbers, just as a herdsman would drive his sheep. A person who was present at the battle told me (the author) that he saw him alone attacking them, which he (pbuh) mentioned in some of his poems:

And in Dhamār I left the whole army behind
and struggled for the *Dīn* of He whom I worship.

[158B] Also in the Battle of Hirrān when he fought without head protection where, by the end of the day, his position of high status became clear.

Many days for him were bright in which he repeatedly launched himself at the enemy and was ashamed to turn back. He was the centre of the fighting when its fires raged, its knights clashed, and the matched opponents dared each other. At that moment, he would be submerged in the midst of the battle and its deepest waters, either breaking lances on the necks of the wrong-doers or striking, with the sword, the chief of aggressors.

He (pbuh) was of good judgement and sound opinion; hence, his commands took root in different regions. Whoever was acquainted with him necessarily knew his astuteness, intelligence and sound intuition, surpassing those who mastered similar qualities. The light of his opinions would shine in the darkest nights of calamity and anguish, inspiring sound opinions from others, and eliciting a variety of profound and hidden truths.

As for the *karāmāhs*¹⁰ (extraordinary events) with which he alone was endowed, they are beyond count. Many of them are bound to be well known as they are recent, but we shall draw attention to just a few for those who are not well-acquainted with them because their dwellings are far away. One example is that the honourable and eminent Prince ‘Imad al-Dīn, the *shaykh* of the very noblehearted ‘Itrah - may Allāh guard Islam with his presence - related, according to his maternal aunt the Imām al-Manşūr bi-Allāh’s mother - a very pious woman - that she said ‘We spent one night without any food when the Imām (pbuh) was young’. She was awake when he slept and she heard him chew for a while (and) then he burped. She placed her hand on his stomach which felt like he had just eaten. When he woke up [159A] she asked him what he had eaten and he told her that some food, looking like salt, was brought to him from which he ate till he was satisfied.

Among his *karāmāhs* is also that our *shaykh Bahā’ al-Dīn* Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan al-Raṣṣās - may Allāh consecrate his soul - narrated that when he (pbuh) entered Şan‘ā’ for the first time, he saw above him (pbuh) and his army a formation of eight, nine or ten white birds of a kind he had not seen before, and this is a well known event.

It was also told that Imām’s horse and his female mule returned carrying his armour. This happened when he entered the mosque to pray and was surrounded by (enemy) soldiers - about seven hundred horsemen, so well-armoured that only

their eyes could be seen. He remained in the central mosque and prayed both al-maghrib and al-‘ishā’ prayers until the army was dispersed by the grace of Allāh and his blessing (pbuh). He left the mosque and headed towards a house of a man of the town. Neither the Imām, his companions nor his servants had any knowledge of the whereabouts of the animals (the horse and mule). While they were at the house, the horse and female mule returned, with the armour, to the door of the house, with the benevolence of Allāh the Most High.

The story of the arrow (*al-nushshāb*) with which he opened a door, an unusual way (of opening doors) among the people of the town, is a famous event which no-one of knowledge and experience can deny.

The account of the cripple is also an example and it occurred the second time he (pbuh) entered Ṣan‘ā’. The cripple was on all fours when he (pbuh) stroked him and Allāh the Most High cured him. This event was also clear and was witnessed by a large group of people in the town who saw the (cripple) both in the condition he was in first and afterwards.

It was also narrated that he (pbuh) touched and prayed for a man who had lost all his teeth, and he was granted a full set of teeth once again [159B].

It was also mentioned that as he (pbuh) entered into Shibām on the last night of Jumād al-Ākhirah in the year 594, a bright light fell on the house after the last ‘ishā’ prayer. The light encompassed the surrounding area, so that even an old man whose eyesight was weak and who used to stumble on his way back from the last ‘ishā’ prayer saw the light as he left (the mosque) and said to his companions, ‘Tonight I can distinguish between the small white and black pebbles’. The narrator of his biography, *al-Sīra al-Imāmiyyah al-Manṣūriyyah*, said: ‘I myself am a witness to that. I saw the bright light and delayed the maghrib prayer, confused by that light, until the darkness of night fell, and thereafter I was in my house and thought that it was the moonlight until someone reminded me that it was the end of the month. I then went out to the hall and saw the light clearly reflected on the walls. I thought no one but us had seen it, but Muslims continued to recount the story, starting from the following morning, in al-Ghayl Mosque.

Among his *karāmās* is what was narrated by the author of the biography, on the authority of the trusted one, that the people of Dhamār related that on the day the Imām (pbuh) entered they saw a huge army of horses and men blocking the horizon. There was also a strong wind which battered their eyes and faces, and stopped them from fighting effectively. Whenever they lifted their bows, the arrows would either fall on the ground or break mid-air. The Imām's horsemen (pbuh) were one hundred and twenty and the footmen were less than a hundred. The events ended with (the Imām's victory and) taking booty and captives.

The *karāmāhs* stories include [160A] the famous and well-attested incident in which a man from the wretched *al-Muṭarrafiyyah* approached Banī 'Ubayd in the region of Zāhir in Hamdān requesting some *zakāt* when he was told that it was paid to the Imām (pbuh), but he started to curse. He then left to the outskirts of the village where Allāh set on him a female dog that was known for not harming anyone. The dog jumped at his mouth and pulled out his tongue and attacked it with its fangs. He remained in this state until people fled from him. Nevertheless, he did not learn from the lesson and remained in his *kufr*, so the Imām (pbuh) commanded that he be beheaded. Ḥasan b. 'izwī al-'Usayfirī - may Allāh have mercy on him - says of the incident in his poem:

Inform *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* of a case
which, with your grace, has spread and become well known.

I was informed of a Muslim dog in al-Ra'sayn
which for its friendship I called Qīṭmīr;

The dog heard him who cursed you,
so it ran and bit his tongue as a warning.

This is a miracle which was recounted to you,
written in the heart of every page.

The author of his biography cited a trustworthy person saying that a man wanted to copy abuses written by Muḥammad b. Nashwān on the Imām's biography. He started copying and when he had written eight lines, three of his fingers became stiff, forcing him to stop writing. His fingers then became normal, but when he resumed writing they became hard again and he had to stop for several days. The man then resumed writing again and managed eight pages when Allāh afflicted him with pain in one of his eyes around which there were three warts. As a result he abandoned the project and had to lie down in pain. He then repented to Allāh the Most High [160B] and decided to refrain from copying and so was restored to full health.

The author of his biography also told a narration, based on a reliable source, that a young boy from Ṣan'ā' suffered an ailment in his eyes until they became white and he was unable to see. A blessed amulet, from the Imām (pbuh), was given to him. As soon as it was hung (on him) he was able to see and he resumed his job as a tailor.

Karāmāhs stories also include one about a man who said that one of his young daughters complained of bad conjunctivitis. Her eyes became white and it was feared that she might lose her eyesight. The man said, 'I approached the Imām (pbuh) with some oil and he puffed on it. We placed some of it on her eye and she was cured and was relieved of both pain and inflammation.'

Another example of the *karāmāhs*, narrated by his biographer, is about some of the Imām's companions (pbuh), some fifteen or more, himself (the biographer) included, who said: '(We accompanied) the Imām to the village of 'Utām in the Bakīl region. We were very hungry, and the owner of the house which we visited brought half a measure (*ṣā'*) of bread or less to break the fast with. He gave it to us after he ate a few mouthfuls and with his blessing we ate until we were satisfied'. The biographer said that everyone of us swore that he had had enough.

His biographer also quoted a reliable man who said that a group of people were in a certain place and amongst them was a *Muṭarrafi* man who repeatedly cursed the Imām *al-Manṣūr bi-Allāh* (pbuh). None of those present denounced him until Allāh sent a thunderbolt which carried him out of the group then burnt him, and the smoke rose from

his smouldering body, at which point the rest of the group fainted due to the gravity of the incident.

The *karāmāhs* include the story narrated by his biographer on the authority of a trustworthy person who said that a man from al-Bayād was afflicted with blindness [161A]. He had a dream in which he was told to return to the creed of the Imām al-Manşūr bi-Allāh (pbuh) and Allāh would remove his blindness. He followed the dream and repented leaving his old creed. Only three days passed and the man regained his eyesight.

His biographer also narrated, on the authority of a reliable source, that a man met a group from *al-Muṭarrafiyyah* who told him to curse the Imām (pbuh). No sooner did he utter the words than Allāh afflicted him with lameness. He then repented to Allāh the Most High and supplicated, using the Imām al-Manşūr's (name) for *tawassul*, and the affliction was removed.

There is also the famous story in which it is told that Wurdasār once approached Ḥuṭh and demolished the Imām's residence (pbuh) and then returned to Şan'ā'. In less than a week, Allāh the Blessed and Most High, sent forth a great flood not experienced before in Şan'ā' where he Wurdasār had built a huge and well-decorated palace that was destroyed by the flood, which also swept away a lot of his wealth and valuables. Wurdasār himself hardly survived and no trace of the palace remained. There are many more examples of the Imām's great *karāmāhs*.

Anecdotal heroic poetry and prose also mention and describe him (pbuh). His biographer quoted the noble Prince *Badr al-Dīn* Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥādy li al-Ḥaq (pbuh), may Allāh consecrate his soul, saying: "In an old book, which was almost destroyed by decay, for it was a hundred and twenty years old, I found mention of the Imām al-Manşūr's *qiyām* (pbuh), which would occur in 593." The Imām (pbuh) [161B] proceeded from al-Jawf to Dār Ma'in in order to obtain the *bay'ah* (pledge of loyalty) and called on people to revolt and fight for the cause of Allāh in the first of *Dhī al-Ḥijjah* in 593, which is in agreement with what was mentioned in the said book.

The biographer also quoted the gracious and noble Sulaymān b. Badr b. ‘Abdullāh b. Ja‘far who said that he found a correct account given by Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyyah in poetry:

A trust is kept with me for *Āl* Muḥammad
I was given it and made one of its trustees.

If you see the two stars mourn in the direction
of the North Star, in the morning and the evening,

Then there appears the honour of *Āl* Muḥammad
and its rise to victory over its enemies.

There are also lines from an old poem in which the author mentioned the Kharijites, the eye-witness descriptions of the Ghuz (Ayyubid soldiers) and then mentioned *al-Qā'im bi al-Ḥaq* (the Imām) in which he said:

They (the Ayyubids) are the people of *fusūq* (perversion) and open
homosexuality,
of torture and hitting with hard wood.

They rejected *al-Dīn*, then occupied themselves
with the striking of people for love of gold.

They abandoned *al-fard* (obligatory) and Sunnah (voluntary) worship
not knowing (the way of) Allāh, they are not Arabs.

They are like jinns; whoever sees them
flees in fright and terror.

They transport wealth from the land of Saba' (Sheba)
towards Egypt, Damascus and Ḥalab.

Whenever people were troubled by them
in all the wide lands as well as in the hills

Al-Qā'im appeared from the land of Saba'
from Yemeni dwellings and Shāmī descent.

His name is the same as that of the Prophet's father;
he is 'Abdullāh who removes anguish;

He fills the earth with justice just as
it was filled with oppression, and this is certain.

Favours appear in his days
and you see falsehood, because of him disappear, [162A]

And you see the grey-haired man in the Imām's State
hoping, every day, that he would become young again.

Whoever ponders on these descriptions (in the above poetry) would agree that it verifies what we mentioned earlier about the bad practices and behaviour of the Ghuz (Ayyubid soldiers) which were openly witnessed. The Imām, therefore, only (pbuh) declared his *qiyām* after people were greatly afflicted in the planes and in the difficult terrains by these '*Ajams*. When he says "*al-Qā'im* appeared from the land of Saba' ", it is because the Imām al-Manşūr bi-Allāh (pbuh) declared his *khurūj* (for the Imāmate) from the region of al-Jawf. The Imām is "from Yemeni dwellings and Shāmī descent" because his grandfather Abū Hāshim al-Ḥasan b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān (pbuh) arrived from Ḥijāz to Yemen. The poem then declared his name as 'Abdullāh. None of our Imāms (peace be upon them), up till now, meet these descriptions. Then the appearance of favours in the Imām's time (pbuh) is mentioned in the poem, which was evident at the time; for example, iron was very scarce and there was much demand for it, but in the Imām's time it became abundant, a situation which was well-known by everyone.

As for the (prophetic) dreams¹¹ which virtuous people had, indicating his prestige (pbuh), they are manifold, including the following: His biographer narrated that *al-Sharīf al-Fāḍil* (the eminent and pious) al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥasan b. Ja‘far b. al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Ja‘far b. al-Qāsim said: ‘In *Sha‘bān* of the year 604 I saw in a dream a man making the usual *adhān* until he finished the two *shahādāt* (testimonies) then he said, ‘I bear witness that ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamzah is an Imām who must be obeyed’.

Other accounts of dreams include a story told by the people of Jaylān in a letter they sent to the Imām (pbuh) after they accepted his *da‘wah* (call for the Imāmate) and performed [162B] Friday prayers (in the Imām’s name), in which they said that one of their scholars, *al-faqīh* al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, had a dream in which he heard a loud voice, coming from the sky, say: ‘O people, heed Allāh the Almighty and the purest Imām, the brightest light, and the shiniest symbol ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamzah, lest the curse of Allāh be upon you all.

The author of his biography also narrated that a man saw someone approach him in a dream with a paper which he was told to read. It had in it: ‘In the name of Allāh, the Gracious, the Merciful, to ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamzah – *Amīr al-Mu‘minīn* - (here) are glad tidings of heaven and amnesty from hell for killing *al-Muṭarrāfiyyah*.

These types of stories about his *karāmāhs* and others (prophetic dreams and anecdotal heroic poetry and prose) are abundant. None of the earlier, rightly guided and guiding Imāms (peace be upon them all) were known to receive anywhere near as much (honour), let alone equal the Imām al-Manṣūr bi-Allāh (pbuh). This is because he arose at a time when the majority of people shunned *al-Dīn*, and *Jihād* against transgressors weakened to the extent that members of his *madhhab* (school of thought) were the largest group of deserters, except those guarded by Allāh the Lord of the worlds, and they are few. Allāh the Exalted, the Most Majestic, willed that people’s hearts should be moved towards his call and be exhorted to obey him by bestowing upon him these *karāmāhs*, time after time: {....as for those who believe, -their faith is increased, and they do rejoice. But those in whose hearts is a disease, - it will add doubt to their doubt, and they will die in a state of unbelief} (S9,V124-5).

The *Bay'ah*¹² (Pledge of Loyalty to him, pbuh), the Duration of his Imāmate and his Final Days (pbuh)

His general *da'wah* (pbuh), which is the call to the Imāmate took place when he travelled from the al-Jawf to al-Ḥaql in *Dhī al-Qi'dah* 593 [163A]. He proceeded to the *hijrah* of Dār Ma'in where he stayed for four months less a few days. At this time '*ulamā*' (scholars) met him and held discussions and debates with him. As a result, they found him to be a sea not exhausted by the bailer, and an ocean not decreased by giving. The questions related to *uṣūl* and *furū'* of religion, both the *ma'qūl* and the *masmū'* (the logically inferred and the transmitted tenets), the meanings of difficult Qur'ānic verses, and the deep and far-reaching lessons and values of al-Ḥadīth (traditions), after which they agreed that his horse outshines all in the field of superiority, and that he is the triumphant, not the runner-up. So they were confident that he was the most deserving amongst his contemporaries to orchestrate the affairs of the 'Ummah, and it was hoped that he would be the one to remove the distress.

When it was Friday the thirteenth of Rabī' al-Awwal 594, he (pbuh) and his company proceeded to the main mosque and people pledged loyalty (*bay'ah*) to him. The first to come forward (for bay'ah) were the two Amīrs, the *dā'īs* to Allāh, the two *shaykhs* of *Āl al-Rasūl* (peace be upon him and his *Āl*), *Shams al-Dīn Yaḥyā* and *Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad*, sons of *Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā b. al-Nāṣir b. 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad b. al-Mukhtār b. al-Nāṣir Aḥmad b. al-Ḥādī ila al-Ḥaq Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm* (peace be upon them). They were then followed by the dignitaries from among those of high moral excellence from *Āl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them), then all their other '*ulamā*' (scholars) among their supporters (may Allāh be pleased with them). The phrasing of his bay'ah (pledge), peace be upon him, was that he (the Imām) would say after extending his hand: 'I pledge loyalty to you according to Allāh's Book and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (pbuh), to enjoin what is right and to forbid what is wrong (*al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*), to support our allies and fight our enemies and to embark on *Jihād* for the sake of Allāh under our command [163B]'. If the man addressed said, 'Yes (I accept)', the Imām would respond with: 'You are bound by this and you are in a covenant with Allāh. You are also bound by the strictest covenants and obligations which Allāh imposed upon his prophets'. The man then says 'Yes'. Then

the Imām (pbuh) would say: ‘Allāh is the warden over what we say’, or perhaps he would emphasise and say: ‘And we (pledge to) make good our tongues with the truth and shall not deviate, in fear of Allāh, by the reproof of anyone,’ He would maybe add, ‘And to bear (ourselves) with patience in times of misery and distress, and in battle’.

He (pbuh) then wrote his *da‘wah*, and endowed it with wonders and extraordinary expressiveness, which is well known and needs no recounting. He said in its beginning: ‘Peace be upon you! I Praise to you Allāh, beside Whom there is no deity, the Living, the Self-Subsisting and Self-Sustaining, to Whose existence His signs attested and to Whose justice and wisdom attests clear proof. He (Allāh) sent to every nation a messenger to become a witness over their deeds and a guide to virtue. He followed Prophethood with the Imāmate to realise its commands in the land until the time when none are held accountable. He Who has no partner said: {...thou art truly a warner, and to every people a guide} (S13,V7}. And may the praise of Allāh be upon him who was sent with the ability of profound sententiousness and wonderful wisdom, whose rank is raised above all humans, Arabs and *Ajams*, and (praise) on his family (who are) the light of darkness and the keys to (resolve) all ambiguities’.

He (pbuh) then spoke in eloquent language adorned with quotations from al-Kitāb (the Qur’ān) and the Sunna and said: ‘Do you see ‘Abdullāh tempted with a world about which he has knowledge of what is hidden, more than knowledge of most of you of what is visible. He is concerned with its distant future more than the concern of most of you with the future that is near! Allāh and his messenger (may the praises of Allāh be upon him) surely refuse this for him, as well as noble grandparents, purified laps that have nurtured prestigious births, and fertile unions which have yielded noble offspring. How can the Prophetic rational souls (164A) be like working cattle?! You should, may Allāh have mercy on you, first present your *tawbah* (repentance) and *inābah* (return to Allāh) before you come forward and respond (to our call), for I command you with my own deeds before my words and I deny myself and my family that which I ask you to refrain from. Whoever is equal to me in age I will consider a brother; if older a father; and if younger a son. I am only content in the company of the learned among you and those of *ṭā‘ah* (obedience to God), and I flee from none except those of *ma‘ṣiyah* (disobedience) and *ḍalālah* (misguidance)’.

This *da'wah* is a cause for wonder, since despite the fact that it was of such eloquent language, he prepared it only between the *zuhr* and *'aṣr* prayers.

He (pbuh) settled in the region of Ṣa'dah - may Allāh guard it with its holy tombs, peace be upon their dwellers - and he spread *dā'īs* (propogators) and *wulāh* (governors) in different regions and countries. The laws applied were in accordance with the noble *shar'*, and the Imām's support for the True *Dīn* (*al-Dīn al-ḥanīf*) continuously increased.

The grand prince Shams al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Aḥmad - may Allāh consecrate his soul - was known for his meticulous care and patience in bearing the hardship of travel despite his weakness and old age, so much so that Prince 'Imād al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Ḥamzah - may Allāh perpetuate his kingdom - narrated that he saw his feet had swollen and his weariness and hardship increased from travelling in the regions of 'Uḏhar, al-Ahnūm, and other regions where he went to call people to (support) Amīr al Mu'minīn (the Imām) - pbuh.

The honourable call (for the Imāmate bay'ah) reached the regions of Tihāmah and Mikhlāf banī Sulaymān where the *sayyid* and noble scholar Nizām al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. 'Alī al-Sulaymānī - may Allāh consecrate his soul, took charge of it, and it spread in other regions (*aqṭār*).

After a while, the Imām advanced towards al-Jawf and stayed in Barāqish for a period of time, where people kept coming to him from all areas, of whom [164B] some would turn their backs on him after having pledged their loyalty (*bay'ah*). The noble *shaykh* 'Izzān b. Sa'd - may Allāh be pleased with him - was one of those who came to him, while on his way to the ḥajj (pilgrimage). When he was in his (the Imām's) presence and pledged loyalty (*bay'ah*) to him, he said: 'By Allāh, I have seen the face of the Prophet in a dream - may Allāh's praises be upon him and his *Āl* - and his apparel in the shape of the Imām and his garments'. His dream was one of the incidents of good fortune that made him commit himself to obeying the Imām (pbuh). He (pbuh) instructed him to return to his region and to preach obedience to him and to implement the teachings of the religion. He may Allāh have mercy on him was committed and sincere (to the Imām) despite his high status among his people.

The Imām (pbuh) stayed for a while in al-Jawf before heading towards the Yemen. Whenever he passed through a region he reformed its transgressors, purified its sources of income, and destroyed the houses of evil. When he reached al-Maṣānī‘, a large number of people joined him from every region, including the dignitaries of the wretched *al-Muṭarrafiyyah* sect who came from both remote and near regions. They (*al-Muṭarrafiyyah*) pledged their loyalty and allegiance, and recognised the legitimacy of his Imāmate, but they reneged on their pledge (bay‘ah) and so quickly abandoned their obedience to him.

Some of what he had said (pbuh) on this affair, after praising Allāh and his prophetﷺ peace be upon him and his Ālﷺ was: ‘O Muslims, surely Allāh did not create you for jest, heedlessly neglect you or share your creation with anyone, nor did He create you so that you may indulge in worldly pleasures and solely to live. Rather, He created you to worship Him and He showed you the way to obey Him, made clear the right path, clarified the signs, and gave you control, not hindering or constraining you [165A] from doing what is right. He then sent Muḥammad (may the peace and praises of Allāh be upon him) calling to the true religion and guiding to the straight path, delivering the message, liberating from deviation, giving glad tidings, warning and defending the truth. He (may the praises of Allāh be upon him) guided, showed, detailed, gave glad tidings, warned, cautioned, and acquitted himself of responsibility. Some benefited and were guided, while others chose to go astray. Through him, Allāh humbled the tyrants and they yielded, suppressed the arrogant and they were subdued, repressed the transgressors and they were belittled, exalted the summits of Islam and they were elevated, and broadened the paths of truth and they became spacious. After Allāh guided His servants through him (the Prophet Muḥammad) and completed the religion, He seized (his soul) with acceptance, and was pleased with him. May Allāh bestow praises on him to accompany his soul and illuminate his tomb with light. Then Allāh left the authority (*al-Ḥujjah*) to his clear Book (*Kitābih al-mubīn*) and the ‘Itrah of his trusted Prophet over His servants, as the seal of the Prophets (*khātam al-nabiyyīn*) said: ‘Members of my Family are to you like Noah’s ark: whoever boards it survives, and whoever stays behind drowns and perishes’.

He (may the praises of Allāh be upon him and his *Āl*) said: 'I am leaving with you that which, if you become attached to (it), you will never go astray: Allāh's Book (*Kitāb Allāh*) and my '*Itrah* , members of my family. The Merciful and the Knowing told me that the two will never part till they come to *al-ḥawḍ* (the basin). O people, because Allāh has bestowed upon us great bounties, He will hold us responsible. As a result we are the most knowledgeable of people on what is lawful and what is forbidden, and on Muḥammad's law (pbuh), and we are the most suitable for managing matters and the wisest in dealing with the masses. We therefore have no excuse for negligence (of our duties) in front of Allāh the Most High on earth and in the hereafter. We have risen to call (you) unto Allāh [165B]. We seek that which pleases Him, obey His commands and follow His guidance for He said in His clear Book: {Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity} (S3.104). So we have spared no effort in exhorting people to seek Allāh's pleasure. We guide to the Truth and are guided and, for the sake of *Jihād*, are generous with ourselves and our money. You have heard our call, and our cry has reached your ears, so the pledge of loyalty (*bay'ah*) to us has become obligatory on you. It was narrated that our grandfather - the master of mankind - said: 'Whoever hears our call - *Ahl al-Bayt* - and does not accept it, Allāh will throw him on his face in the hellfire (the Hereafter)'.

Injustice has paraded its trappings for too long, and cast its dark shadow on the moon of justice. The devil has displayed his discordance and taken a pledge from the transgressors. But now Allāh the Most High has permitted truth to ascend and triumph, justice to prevail and spread, falsity to be stamped out, its fire to be extinguished, its beacon to be demolished and its traces to be washed away.

Since obeying us is an obligation upon you, (so) come forth, may Allāh have mercy on you, to a paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth. Grasp the opportunity before the choking (death) and before every story is examined. Consider yourselves now while there is still some time before the end of life and hope, and the beginning of the examination of deeds. Know that we have given those who deny our call (for *bay'ah*) and hated to pledge loyalty to us, the right to demand proof and clear evidence, and to ask us to appear for questioning. So stand on firm ground, so that those who fall do so after full knowledge of

the clear proof, and those who survive do so on real proof. Make your intentions pure, follow the clear path and take the profit in cash (immediately) and do not delay, for this horse and this field are for every distant and close traveller. Do not accept anything in your religion without proof and perform not deeds without clear signs and the truth, {Help ye one another in righteousness and piety} (S5.2) and forbid each other [166A] (from) wrong-doing and indulgence in desires, {Say thou: ‘This is my way; I do invite unto Allāh - with a certain knowledge I (myself) and whoever follows me. Glory to Allāh! And never will I join gods with Allāh!} (S12.108). {I only desire (your) betterment to the best of my power; and my success (in my task) can only come from Allāh. In Him I trust, and unto him I return} (S11.88)

The noble *faqīh* *Shihāb al-Dīn* Abū al-Qāsim b. al-Ḥusayn b. *Shabīb al-Tihāmī* - may Allāh be pleased with him - was in the company of the Imām (pbuh) and other notable scholars - may Allāh be pleased with them. He stood up before the Imām (pbuh) on one of the occasions in the region of al-Maṣānī‘ and said, after praising Allāh and his messenger (peace be upon him and his *Āl*), ‘O ye tribes (*al-qabā’il*), lions (bravest) of the legions, the most eloquent of orators, and ye Muslims in particular, also people in general, I will speak, so listen and understand. Know that the matter which you asked for, the light which you were expecting, and counted days, nights, months and years (for it) to come, has arrived here in your Prophet’s ‘Itrah (peace be upon him and his *Āl*); in them, it does shine and radiate. Their *Qā’im* has gathered virtues, excelled in knowledge, eschewed greed, initiated piety, left luxury and avoided comfort. His check on transgressors is painful, his will is firm, his cloud (of generosity) has poured with rain, and his aspiration is high. He has risen to serve Allāh willingly, fight His enemies, and (in the process) was prepared to sacrifice his own head, when injunctions were changed, Islamic laws were lifted, alcohol was drunk, sins were committed, there was satisfaction to adopt *ḥarām* over *ḥalāl* [166B], corruption in the country became lofty, and transgressors became mighty. (But now) the great noble masters (*al-sādah*) and eminent great men (*al-kubarā’ al-fudalā’*), the people of high dominion, exalted nobility, outstanding knowledge and well-known piety from the *Ahl* of the Prophet Muḥammad (may the peace and praises of Allāh be upon him), have all pledged loyalty to him, and so did others known to be pious friends of Allāh (*awliyā’ Allāh al-muttaqīn*), sincere scholars and people of God-fearingness and certainty (*ahl al-wara’ wal-yaqīn*). After

careful consideration, inquiry and examination, they found him like a huge sea not lessened by bails; a high mountain not reached by climbing; a lion not fearing doom and not challenged by the brave; a sword not affected by shields and not afraid of challenges; a firm will not taken to slumber; and a rock that makes voluminous bodies bleed and from which the people targeted try to protect themselves. So, may Allāh have mercy on you, remove any sign of doubt; cooperate in eliminating the people of falsehood; compete to pledge loyalty to him (*al-bay'ah*), and be obedient to him in order to live happily and to die as martyrs.

For verily, the 'Itrah of the Prophet (may the praises of Allāh be upon him) are the leading lords, the defenders and the protectors, the dignified and accomplished, and the ships of salvation; whoever boards them is saved, and those who fall drown and perish. One wonders, from which source of light will you partake if not from the Imām, and what source of guidance will you seek, if not that of Allāh's Book (the Qur'ān) and his Prophet's Sunnah! Whoever of you is in doubt and hesitation or, due to any cause, is in confusion, then here is the Imām, in place for your criticism, standing and not tiring from giving answers or speeches, knowledgeable of the Sunnah and the Book (the Qur'ān), and worthy of his grandfather's ('Alī b. Abī Ṭālib) saying (pbuh):

“Move diligently like ants, always punctual,
and fight morning and night.

I have been disobeyed for too long;
you said if only you would come, and I have come.

[167A] It is not what you will, nor what I will
but what He, Who takes and gives life, wills”

The *faqīh* then unsheathed his sword and said:

Although I may not be an orator amongst you
I am with my sword, when battle intensifies, an orator.

I would wade (through the fighting) with it, to strike in every battle

and each time I return it is dyed with blood.

The Imām (pbuh) then proceeded towards the fortress of Kawkabān where he stayed for a while and, with Allāh's help, matters ran successfully.

During that time, among the 'Ajam princes who came to pledge obedience and loyalty to him was Prince Jukū b. Muḥammad, where one of the dā'īs of the Imām (pbuh) received his pledge (*bay'ah*), somewhere in the Bakīl Province. Then Jukū reached the Imām with about two hundred 'Ajam horsemen, and they all pledged their loyalty.

The Imām (pbuh) led the prayer of *Yawm al-Naḥr* (sacrifice day), in Shibām of Kawkabān then sacrificed (cattle) and headed towards Ṣan'ā', placing his trust in Allāh the Exalted and Most High, and relying upon Him. When the Imām arrived, the people of Ṣan'ā' opened the gate for him, where there were about seven hundred (enemy) 'Ajam horsemen. He entered (Ṣan'ā') with seven horsemen only; who were his brothers and those close to him, while Jukū and the soldiers with him remained outside the city. He (pbuh) went to the main mosque and the (enemy) 'Ajam horsemen gathered around and surrounded it just as the halo encircles the moon. He (pbuh) remained there (in the mosque) until the time for *maghrib* prayer when the *mu'adhin* called to prayer with the chosen *adhān* of *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them). He completed his prayer and waited for deliverance and victory from Allāh the Most High [167B]. The grand prince 'Imād al-Dīn - may Allāh perpetuate his sovereignty - told me that the Imām instructed him to observe the soldiers from the roof. When he appeared they abused and insulted him - may Allāh's curse be upon them - and he said: 'The Imām himself (pbuh) then ascended to that same position and observed them, but they stood in awe, unable to address even one word to him. In the end, the people of Ṣan'ā', those who were with him, considered that it would be best that he should leave the mosque and so supplied him with their garments in order that he could leave without being identified. They left, with him in their midst, as if he was one of them and they walked through the (enemy) 'Ajams and Allāh the Most High saved him from their plots, as a protection for His religion and His will for the rising of Islam and

the revival of the *'Itrah*'s school of thought (peace be upon them). He then remained, for part of the night, in a house belonging to one of his allies when they decided that perhaps the night would be a good opportunity for him to leave the city. They left the house and headed towards one of the city gates, but found it heavily guarded, as were the other places and gates, and so they returned from where they came. They conferred and the people of Ṣan'ā' feared for the Imām's life (pbuh) out of their deep love for him. They discussed his safety amongst themselves and some suggested that he stay at a mosque which they agreed upon and where none would find him, but the Imām did not accept that. They finally agreed that he should stay in an unknown house. He (pbuh) went there, and his supporters dispersed fearing that they might be caught if they remained that way till the morning. The leading personalities of the *Zaydīs* (sect in the city) spent the night persuading the *'Ajam* soldiers to defect, until they successfully attracted about [168A] three thousand. They were very meticulous in that, in accordance with their true faith and the certain affection they held for *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them). Their desires were fulfilled by morning: the city gates were opened and Jukū and his men entered, heading towards the Imām (pbuh). The *'Ajam* soldiers who were in the city approached him obediently (pbuh) and before him pledged their loyalty (bay'ah). The hands of those in the higher ranks were trembling in fear, placed in their hearts by Allāh, till they were bound by the pledge (bay'ah). The Imām (pbuh) then permitted them to leave the city and they descended towards the 'Yemen' (i.e., the lower central parts of the Yemen, starting at Mount Ṣayd, now known as Sumārah, such as the towns of Jibla, Taiz, etc.)

The Imām al-Manṣūr bi-Allāh (pbuh) and the army that accompanied him settled in the city where the Prophetic laws (al-aḥkām al-nabawiyyah) were carried out in the best manner.

People came to him (pbuh) from everywhere including the two unique *Shaykhs* Izzān b. Sa'd and Mufaddal b. Abī Razāh (may Allāh have mercy on them) in the company of a large number of people from their (the *Shaykhs*') regions, who brought with them great wealth, and similarly other people from different regions.

He (pbuh) also spread guidance to those who sought it, and bestowed generosity on those who did and did not seek it. He (pbuh) said the following poetry in which he mentioned his entry into Şan‘ā’, whose dwellers he praised for their care:

[In the beginning of the poem, the Imām stresses that, contrary to convention, it is not the time to mention (at the start of the poem) one’s feelings towards and description of loved ones and revered places and things such as birds, hills, dwellings, rain, thunder and lightning [168B]. Rather it is the time for mentioning the tools of war such as swords, horses, shields, arrows, and for describing huge armies that are:]

“...Sent to an oppressive and tyrannical people
to seek revenge for ‘Alī and avenge (him).”

[He continues:]

So do not oppose a command sent forth
and do not forget this day and give (your) greetings,

And say without pride and without (the belief of) *jabriyyah*:
may the pious be healed and may the criminal be restrained.

[The Imām then continued his poetry to describe his entry into Şan‘ā’, starting with expressing his pride in himself (*fakhr*):]

Do chaste women give birth to one like me of high status;
if one day he decides to do a great deed, he persists.

I flung myself into a huge (enemy) army
and I became a huge army myself.

Like fierce lions except for their white faces
and for their modesty, whenever I gain booty

They are led by the defender of the truth (Jukū), glorious
and royal, who purifies the land of sovereignty with blood.

When he speaks I would say he is a lion in anger
and when silent, I would think him, in his grand armour, a
serpent.

He became obedient to Allāh without doubt
and does not part his lips to mention that which is shameful

I look around and do I see Arabs here !
nay, I only see '*Ajams* mumbling,

Except a few proud and noble masters
who saw, in sacrificing themselves, an honour.

A frenzied group from Hamdān, in the scene of war
they drag into battle the upright spears.

When we came close, the sky sent forth rain
which bestowed on us many favours,

Like grasshoppers making a perch on the Um Salmā tree
till the wind of Najd softly blew them towards Tihamah.

We returned and performed the religious duties
and I approached them bareheaded (boldly), not hesitating.

Verily, by Allāh, I did not acquaint myself with sacrifice
to gain wealth, but to take revenge;

I am a man who likes the sword blunted (due to heavy fighting)
and the solid spears shattered; [169A]

I dislike the freeman who follows his army,
but like to see him a man of pride, in front of them.

We return to mention the entry (of Ṣan‘ā’) and perhaps
the digression recounts the pearls in an orderly fashion.

The Azāl (people of Ṣan‘ā’) came - may Allāh unite their scatter
and bestow upon them good favours and more -

They opened the gates and met us with pleasure
and said welcome you truly are a gain.

They said, fighting the oppressors is obligatory;
long have we been plundered and shared out.

Wealth and honoured souls will be sacrificed for you
even if the people of *fusq* (perversion) become reproachful.

Then we commended and praised them
for being obedient to our wishes.

We plunged into the lions of the dens’ abode
with patience, suffering from thirst and bitterness.

And it is not my horse’s first acquaintance with battle;
whenever my soldiers become fearful and restrained.

Ask the horses about me in ‘Ajīb and Mashhad
when the light brown horses became black for running:

Did I not face them, when they filled the battlefield
without the army, yet smiling and laughing (?)

And in the heart of (the fortress of) Hīrrān did I not defend bareheaded
and, on this day, dispose of the well-armoured men.

On how many occasions is danger encountered unintentionally
but I face the youthful (enemy) like an intrepid lion.

Then say to the kings of the earth: do not desire it (the Imāmate)
covetously
for it is far from you, at all times.

You have long illegally acquired its (leadership) vanities
and gained misdeeds for that, and sins.

Whoever seeks success should abide by us,
for disobeying us has become forbidden.

He (pbuh) said in Ṣan‘ā’ when a people from Banī Abī al-Futūḥ from the east (of Yemen)
refused to follow him, so Jukū b. Muḥammad inflicted on them a great battle:

Do not blame me for saying the truth
the decision is for the sword, not the pen. [169B]

I spend the night with little sleep, kept awake
by a heart changing from anxiety to ambitions.

He is not (a sound) youth who spends the night in deep sleep
pleasing himself with fresh dreams.

But the noble youth is he who fills his night with ambitions
of the throne of sovereignty, not food and comforts.

I play with a sword, sharp and quick

which defeats the bold and the swift (horsemen) in battle,

Sharp and not bending, a sword accurate in its blows,

that does not become tedious since weakness is in tedium.

(I am) like a sea which, whenever satisfied, fills the earth with excessive favours

and when angry fills its face with blood

Amongst a group who gave up their souls to Allāh;

lords amongst defenders of Arabs and '*Ajams*

I do not and will not forget their stances in Ṣan'ā'

when the army, on the day of battle, like a sea, was raging,

Led by a noble with honourable character

more famous than a flame on a high banner,

Abū al-Muzaffar, the noblest of people,

most experienced in tackling the skilled warriors on the day of battle,

A hidden lineage of generosity and goodness for the Prophet's *Āl*

in past times and former nations.

He came from famous ancestry and a perpetual class

originating from the back(bone) of a strong, noble man into a womb,

Until he appeared and became a clear symbol for (all) time,

white, free from all dull imperfections.

Ask about the day (battle) of Zabār, when spears

were broken in two and the war was raging,

When Yaḥyā al-Futūḥī broke the commitments
and feared not the punishment of the Powerful Avenger,

So Jukū abstained from them, the abstention of one who is able,
and inflicted on them a vengeful punishment.

Say on my behalf to the Sword of Righteousness, should you meet him:
O! ye who defeated the great army of the banner

I say - and the best of speech is the truth
and speech will remain even after corpses decay -

I love you for Allāh, so believe in my love,
by the right of the Lord of al-Ḥil (the area outside al-Ḥaram) and
al-Ḥaram.

Whoever seeks to succeed through us, will do so,
and whoever transgresses (against us) turns back in shame and
regret. [170A]

If he who prays turned back, not remembering us,
his prayer's presence is naught in the books of deeds.

Then he (pbuh) started his journey, intending to go to Dhamār in Rabī' al-Awwal in the year 595, where there were many 'Ajams (Ayyubid soldiers and Arabs supporting them). When he arrived there fighting started, and he (pbuh) suffered immensely and fought hard. He was in front of his organised soldiers and amassed troops, throwing himself upon the multitudes of the 'Ajams. As a result, thirty 'Ajam soldiers were killed, three of which were Arabs and the rest (were) non-Arabs. They were assured of death, so they asked for safety guarding, which he (pbuh) offered them on condition that they

abandon their money, horses, cattle and weapons. His biographer mentioned that the news spread in Ṣan‘ā’ regarding his conquest of Dhamār on that same day. He also said: ‘Similarly, it was narrated by trustworthy inhabitants of Ṣan‘ā’ that the conquest of Ṣan‘ā’ became well-known in Minā on the day of ‘Īd, and people talked about it.

His command settled in Dhamār and the surrounding areas, and he (pbuh) headed for Ṣan‘ā’ because some of the ‘*Ajams* who were in Dhamār had intended going there and had camped nearby. So he (pbuh) departed from Dhamār on Tuesday, the twentieth of Rabi‘ al-Awwal. When the ‘*Ajam* heard of his (pbuh) coming they took refuge in the fortress of Barāsh. The Imām (pbuh) arrived in the city and stayed there for a while. After that, when the Imām (pbuh) was in the district of Khashrān (after he left Ṣan‘ā’), Ismā‘īl came up (towards Ṣan‘ā’) and Jukū b. Muḥammad was killed. The Imām then travelled to Jahrān and ascertained that Jukū was killed, after which he went to the Bakīl region, passing through the region of Muqrā.

Some of what he (pbuh) said [170B] when he was in a place known as Jirn al-Qayl in Sā’ilah Muqrā, after he had ascertained that some of his appointees from the wretched *al-Muṭarrafiyyah* sect had betrayed him, was:

“It has been confirmed that religion has not been preserved and *fiṣq* (deviation) is not prohibited except by (the force of) soldiers, and soldiers need money, which is brought from citizens (*al-ra‘iyyah*) who do not, in their entirety, submit to the truth except with some force. Allāh has bestowed many favours upon us, but despite this, if the citizens are neglected, religion and wealth would disappear, the cover would be removed (and our shortcomings revealed), the situation would become worse and they would even be distracted from futile talk. They (*al-Muṭarrafiyyah*) instead sheltered under the shadow of the truth, but wished calamities on the truth (*al-ḥaq*), and argued, basing their arguments on falsehood (*al-bāṭil*), which as the name suggests, is false. If they are savagely bitten by the canines of falsehood and mowed down by its claws, they would cry like foxes and say ‘our saviour is none but the son of Abī Ṭālib’. How far apart are ‘Umārah al-Wahhāb and ‘Alas, Zar‘ah and Anas! So vast is the distance between the donkey and the horse! They (*al-Muṭarrafiyyah*) have exaggerated in mentioning the virtues (“*al-manāqib*” of their candidates for the Imāmate or leadership who are not Faṭimīs) and used them as

testimony in every aspect. Their leader has tried the possible and the impossible (to support their claim for the Imāmate).

“I have forced them to follow the clear path of guidance, not corrupted myself by hoarding and withholding wealth, nor have I deviated from the right path, and they still remember when a group of them came to me. If it was not for the fear of giving too much detail, I would have reminded them that they offered us (me) half their wealth and insisted that I rise (for the Imāmate) in the middle of that period of hardship and crises. And we gouged out the eye of the *fitnah* after it had become deep-rooted, put out the fire of deviation after it had strengthened, left the abundantly fruitful garden for its light red gazelle and erected the sign of truth on its mountains and hills:”

[The Imām goes on to say that, after he accomplished all this, the *al-Muṭarrafiyyahs* made a claim to what they had no right to claim, the Imāmate and the leadership, causing a great deal of *fitnah* (anguish, hardship) amongst the followers. However, he says, Allāh is the most protective of his religion and *shari‘ah*]

[171A]... “We have been made a promise, and Allāh will fulfil His promise, for how can Allāh abandon his soldiers after promising them victory when He alone defeated the parties (*aḥzāb*) in the battle of Ṣan‘ā’ and thereafter¹³. It is as if you can see the banners of victory flutter, and the seas of success engulf the transgressors. How many people have gained great wealth in this situation, but others (who fall behind) will say: ‘I wish I was with them {so I can gain a great achievement} (S4.73)’”

If the stallion is angered on the day of fighting
do not blame it if it snorts;

I am the son of the one who coached and tamed the cavalry horses
(during bloody fighting) where the blood from them emulates the rain.

Would my right be denied by casting doubts?
and could people withhold the moon’s light!

And if my life is scrupulously and faithfully examined
it will be, by your life, the best of biographies.

Am I not the one who tore up the garments of darkness
with a sharp will, splitting stones and hair

And with decisiveness I inherited from ‘Alī (b. Abī Ṭālib)
and a firmness learned from ‘Umar (b. al-Khaṭṭāb),

My tongue (in eloquence and sonority) is like the faucial bag of the camel
or like the sharp Yemeni sword (in its stinging).

When Ismā‘īl approached Ṣan‘ā’, the Imām (pbuh) headed for (retreated towards)
Shibam, then Thilā’.

The Imām’s biographer said that he (pbuh) composed the following two poems after the
ḥajr prayer until the early part of the forenoon, after sunrise, and before the spreading of
the sunlight. He said in one of them:

[The Imām mentions at the start of the poem that it is not the time to mention loved ones
and their places, or to remember one’s youth [171B]; rather it is time to mention the tools
of war like swords, arrows and armour etc., the battlefields and self-sacrifice. He
continues:]

The fighter is not always victorious:
how many times have victors suffered defeat!

Do not wonder at the victory (of the enemy): in a session of war
the events of time are not a cause for wonder.

I suffered sleeplessness but not for the event
of an army defeated or the fall of a hero,

But because an '*Ummah* has lost its way
and turned away (from me) deliberately,

While it (the '*Ummah*) witnessed my defence of it, in the battle,
and my toil to glorify it,

It called me and I responded to its call
and sprang up like a leaping lion.

I showed a will like those of Ḥaider ('Alī b. Abī Ṭālib)
that belittles the edge of the sharp, bone-cutting sword.

Do you know that every stance I took
was attested to by those of noble birth?

So why shall the generous people forget my friendship
for the dry clouds of a hot day and the shimmering of a mirage?
(i.e., no real reason)

As for me - and I swear by He Whose house Quraysh built
not by the oath of *azlām* (divination by arrows) or *anṣāb*:
(dedication of stones) -

The great calamity does not affect my will
nor does it affect my appearance.

Do people think that I am asleep
or that I stay awake tapping my canines in fear?

The calamity that can not be defeated
is as insignificant to me as the buzz of flies.

If ye, O Ṣan‘ā’, are my greatest ambition
and Dhamār, if mentioned, my greatest aim,

[172A]

Then may my enemies belittle me, for I am
weak in will and of lost booty.

Verily, when those of ignobility are extinguished
you will see me prominent like the sun, without veil.

I will lead (horses), slender with untidy, discoloured manes of their
heads,
roaring and foaming like the sea.

Until the horses ascend the high ground of Egypt
and annex Ghaznah from behind the Bāb region,

And frowning they pass by the Euphrates,
like fast birds beating their wings to return

And make a momentous day break in Bagħdād
expelling the doubts of the doubters.

Until our father’s sons see
that we are proud and most courageous

Inform the ‘Abbasides the quintessence of the Hashemites
and the descendants of the most learned and generous (‘Abdullāh b.
‘Abbās),

Who kept unbroken relations with relatives
and who is respected and obeyed by all:

We have taken what is ours, so contemplate

and leave plunder, for now is not the time.

For a short while you seized it by force
with swords, and rights are not given to usurpers.

And now it has settled in its rightful place,
that is the sons of Ḥaydarah ('Alī b. Abī Ṭālib), the youth who
smites

The Prophet's brother and the best to walk the earth
after the Prophet, the best of the best,

A light which transferred from one state to another
between wombs and loins

Your generous father handed it (the *Khilāfah*) to him
without prolixity and without much preaching.

In the second of the two poems the Imām mentioned his days in al-Jawf and thanked its people:

Be patient and do not haste to blame me,
for the status of the lion is not equal to mine:

Ask the horses in Ṣan'ā', when I approached it
with a loud, huge and powerful army,

Was I not the spearhead of the army when it advanced
and its firm sword when fighting began?

And in the battle of Dhamār where lances interlocked,
did not my deeds precede my words!

[172B]

In how many situations does one forget himself
where I was known for firm will and exaltedness!

I have every day a will like that of 'Alī
which, Allāh permitting, can remove a corner of a mountain.

Arabs and 'Ajam alike will be in fear of it (my strong will);
certainly it renders the infant's hair grey.

I am al-*Qā'im* al-Manṣūr (the elevated and the victorious) of Hāshim,
a slender-tipped sword, not relenting.

My soul is free and honourable, like that of my parents, and well mannered
a soul of 'Isām, elevated with self-made honour.

If I desire a matter, its difficulties will not be unsurmountable
but would make rampant heads bow to my rein.

So do not fear if war takes a turn (against us)
for my control is not in the hands of events, (i.e., events
cannot control me)

I have carried the burden of calamities since I was young;
praise the young lad! The bearer of crises;

My father is the knight of Islam, who is undefeatable
He is 'Alī the Imām of truth, the best Imām,

Known for the strongest heart amongst Quraysh, in battles,
and the most daring one on a day of conflict.

So how can I panic if spears
rise with stars (heads of some of the fighters) in a sky of dust?

O rider, if, tomorrow, you pass Banī Hāshim
my people, then tell them my poetry,

And (tell) all descendants of Qaḥṭān and ‘Adnān
and whoever is born of noble parents, defenders of truth,

And ask them, “what is your excuse to your Lord
if your Creator brings you forward for judgement concerning me?”

And I then say to Him, “My Lord, they supported not guidance
though I defended their *Dīn* with my sword”

Indeed, one may be tempted by this life
blinded from the true path or pretending (to be blinded).

Many are those who extend their hands to pledge loyalty (*bay‘ah*)
as if, in ignorance, they were (merely) shaking hands!

It is the pledge (*bay‘ah*) and covenant, so stand by it firmly,
are you asleep or seemingly asleep!

You congratulate me in days of victory
but you turn away from me when necks are bloody.

Is this fair, what benefit is it to a pregnant woman
if she delivers a premature child!

[173A]

So tell Nihm on my behalf, wherever they are
and the knights of this tribe, tribe of Da‘ām

News reached me just before it became widespread
regarding your actions that were excellent:

You went up to Najrān where courage you showed
as well as nobility, verily the people of treachery are not noble.

You realised vengeance for Muḥammad's *Āl*
and you are safe, in spite of the enemies.

(May you be bestowed) with light rain in the early evening of every night
from heavy rain-bearing and slow-moving clouds.

(You fought in Najran) also in memory of bygone days in Barāqish
with our people, the noble masters, the best of Semites;

Tomorrow we will play with spears, though play is not our way
and play with lances is not forbidden.

Are the tamarisks of the valley, east of Majzar
as we left them, with flourishing and high branches?

I wish I knew! Will I spend a night
on the side of Ma'in with face unveiled?

How are their houses, which I remember
were to the right of Silyām, and left of Ḥām;

Where in them dwelt every 'lazy'* girl (*miksāl*), as if her forehead
is a full moon above the horizon, shining from behind a cloud?

Spears of al-Khaṭ defended them from every raid
with honourable hands, not malicious.

If the horizons are purified from faults

* This is an affectionate term, and means living in ease and luxury

my huge army would come to you soon, and my camps.

Would one like me indulge in deep sleep
when my *Dīn* (religion) is persecuted and enemies confront me?!

Many are those who asked to pledge loyalty (*bay'ah*) to me (but) said
your desire is Najdī while you are Tihāmī**

I responded one for one when I said,
your desire is Yemeni while you are Shāmī***

Would a great desire be too much for one like me
when even the high place of the star is lower than my aim?

There must be a day when the sharp edges (of swords etc.)
expel the brains from the heads of the fools.

[173B] The Imām (pbuh) advanced until he reached Athāfit. He also continued to weaken the corruption of deviousness (*adrān al-fasād*) and to work at reforming the people (their behaviour and practices “*ṣalāh al-‘ibād*”) until all laws were in accordance with the *Dīn* (Religion) and the rebellious spirits were ignominiously belittled. Different matters were well-established by him in the whole region of al-Zāhir after many prevalent perversions were purified by him (pbuh). Affairs settled down (for him) in al-Jawf, Ṣa‘dah and its provinces and Najrān and its surrounding areas as well as western areas. His call (*da‘wah*) reached al-Ḥijāz, where loyalty (*bay'ah*) was pledged to him. Also, Friday prayers were held in Yanbu‘ and Khaybar (in his name) and he continuously received due rights (*al-ḥuqūq al-wājibah*) from all these places. Many of the honourable Ḥasanies (*al-*

** An indication that his aspirations exceed the boundaries of Yemen

shurafā' al-Ḥasaniyyīn) came to him for *Jihād* in the way of Allāh under his command, by which the *Dīn* was honoured and Muslims became stronger. There had been continuous raids on the areas of Tihāmah, until many of its inhabitants fled, and the Imām's soldiers returned with booty time after time.

The Imām's command (pbuh) was established in the area of Madhḥaj where Friday prayers were held (in his name) and wealth was collected and reached him time after time, which was a cause for his strength and the spread of his word. (As a result) he gave his armies the best of organisation and provided for them. He built the fortress of *Zafār* (*hiṣn Zafār*) (may Allāh protect it) in the month of *Shawwāl* in the year 600 which was a cause for the stability of his situation and the soundness of his affairs, and Allāh elevated the word of the *Dīn*. Missions and detachments (*al-bu'ūth wa al-sarāya*) were frequently sent to raid the land of the enemies, confiscating its wealth, enslaving its children, or killing its men. (?!!!)

Then he (pbuh) sent his *dā'īs* (propagators) to the regions of Jailān and Daylamān where all the Zaydīs pledged loyalty to him and his reputation became high. [174A] Speeches were dedicated to him in the mosques (*khutība lahū fī masājidiḥā*) and, in his name, Friday prayers were held and due rights were gathered (as an indication of the Imāmate's influence on these regions). The people there waged *Jihād* on those around them from the Jabriyyah, Mujassimah and Bātiniyyah. They were auspicated by the Imām's call (*da'wah*) and prospered with their compliance to him, so much so that there was a time when their country was afflicted with a period of great drought and they suffered greatly during this crisis, but as soon as the Imām's call (*da'wah*) reached their regions, Allāh changed the barren land into green and productive land, and their crisis quickly disappeared. At the time of the arrival of the *da'wah* in this region, a *mithqāl* (4.24 grams) of gold was worth thirty to fifty *qafīz* (a *qafīz* is approximately 39 kg according to the Ḥanafī school), but later on, it reached to between two hundred and fifty to three hundred *qafīz*.

*** The Imām's immediate response may indicate that anyone could possess this kind of aspiration, including the person addressed

They (the Zaydīs of Jaylān and Daylamān) continued in *Jihād* for the cause of Allāh and they administered *hudūd* (the Islamic legal system of punishment for specific crimes, such as adultery and theft). Prophetic commands (*al-awāmīr al-nabawiyyah*) were observed in that area as they are in these (Yemenī Zaydī-governed) areas. We were told by a reliable source, the noble *faqīh* Ḥamzah b. Maḥmūd al-Jaylānī, that there were many occasions which showed how strict they were in their support of the Imāmate to the point that when one of their scholars appeared to discourage people from pledging loyalty to the Imām (pbuh), an honourable dignitary of the 'Itrah, the prince al-sayyid *Zahīr al-Dīn* Abū Talīb b. Yusuf al-Thā'iry al-Ḥusaynī, may Allāh consecrate his soul, heard of it, and ordered that the scholar be crucified (*amara man ṣalabah*). There was another case similar to this. Also, one of their famous scholars was banished to one country after another because of his indecision concerning the right of the Imām (pbuh) to the Imāmate¹⁴.

(The Imām received continuous support from the people of this region) until all matters were to his satisfaction, and from where *al-amwāl* (wealth and financial dues) used to come to him. No one among our Imāms before him (peace be upon them) was known to have exercised such complete authority over the affairs of Yemen, al-Ḥijāz, Jaylān and Daylamān. [174B] Further, all the Zaydīs of the area of al-Rayy accepted his Imāmate (pbuh) and his reputation became high in all countries.

He (pbuh) wrote a *da'wah* to the King of *Khawārizm*, 'Alā' al-Dīn *Shāhin Shāh*, which was delivered by the learned scholar Majd al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Ismā'īl - who was one of the Zaydī noble masters of the 'Itrah and (was) a man of deep knowledge, known as *Ustādh al-Ṭawā'if al-Mukhālīf wal-Mu'ālīf* (the knowledge master for groups of both opposing and non-opposing views), due to his encyclopaedic knowledge of all sciences and his conversance with the *Fiqh* of every *faqīh* of all the religious schools of the 'Ummah. When the *da'wah* reached him, he delivered it to the above mentioned *Ṣultān* who read it. Majd al-Dīn was a man of deep knowledge in 'adl and *tawhīd* (Mu'tazilite way of thinking), and the people of his country were known for being strict Mu'tazilites and for holding fast to the Mu'tazilite way of thinking, and also believed in the *kuf'r* of al-Jabriyyah al-Qadariyyah and the unprecedented sect of al-Mujbirah al-Ḥashwiyyah, just like we believe. The people of *Khawārizm* have knowledge of the rights of *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) not contested by any group of the 'Ummah after the *shī'ah* of *Ahl*

al-Bayt (peace be upon them) and so the Şultān bestowed a large sum of money on al-Sayyid Majd al-Dīn. If Allāh the Exalted had prolonged the life of the Imām al-Manşūr (pbuh), the affairs of that country would have been under his control, (if Allāh had so willed), but the Imām died a short while afterwards.

The letters of al-Malik al-Zāfir Ghāzī the son of al-Malik al-Nāşir Şalāḥ al-Dīn Yusuf b. Ayyūb arrived from Aleppo in the year 601. They were brought by one of the sons of al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah (pbuh). He arrived in Yemen but the Şultān of *al-‘Ajam* prevented him from reaching the Imām, who responded with poetry starting with the words: *Atahjura mu‘tamidann dāraha* (‘Would you intentionally abandon her dwelling’), until he said:

To Aleppo where kings of high status
show respect and welcome their guests,

The descendent of he who erected Allāh’s *Dīn*
and removed (the Earth’s) sins with the sword.

[175A]

May my Lord have mercy on his soul
in all the evenings and early morns.

Allāh the Exalted has bestowed on him (pbuh) good reputation, widespread fame and most laudatory praise, rarely enjoyed by the earlier Zaydī Imāms (peace be upon them). In spite of the fact that the *Imāmiyyah* were unfair to the Zaydī Imāms and unhesitating in insulting them, they did not speak the same of the Imām (pbuh). In fact, the *Imāmiyyah* were very affectionate towards him (pbuh), despite their belief that the Zaydī claimants (the *Qā’ims*) to the Imāmate after Ḥusayn (pbuh) were generally transgressors. One of their poets, al-Simṭī, said:

Zayd began the practice of *ẓulm* (injustice/transgression) against people

Indeed, *zulm* against the Imām is irremediable (referring to the twelve Imāms of the Imāmi school of thinking)

(and others who followed Zaid in his practice of *zulm* are:)

The sons of the *shaykh* and he who was killed in Fakh,
then Yaḥyā and *Muyattim al-Ashbāl* (he who orphaned the lion-cubs)

The Imām (pbuh) continued to send missions and detachments to lands to the east and to the west (of Yemen), to *shām* (north of Yemen) and to *Yaman* (south of Yemen), and rarely did his troops interrupt their conquests. He conquered Ṣan‘ā’ for the second time in Ṣafar in the year 611, where he stayed for a while (and) then he advanced to *Dhamār*. The ‘*Ajam* soldiers retreated to *Dhāt-Khawlān* but he withstood them himself, (with his soldiers), peace be upon him, until Allāh granted him victory over them, and seized their horses and weapons, and freed their slaves. Mentioning *Dhāt-Khawlān* he (pbuh) said in Ṣan‘ā’, after he came back from *Dhamār*:

You wondered, and did you wonder at tears shed
by a desolate woman standing by remains and traces (of dwellings),

(Did you also wonder at:)

Endless travel like the bracelet and bite marks (of rope at the edge of)
the water basin

and a man with unkempt hair who has lived long without marriage;

The remains of the houses will not avail you
of (girls like) Hind or Juml or Nu‘m;

Amiable girls like shining full-moons; when they appear
their eyes are like the eyes of serpents.

[175B]

They walk proudly as if they are the branches of a Ben tree

bent over a moving hill like the sea,

As if their loads are decorated
with a wrapping densely packed with dates;

Birds constantly snatch at the sides (of the loads)
due to their display of shades of red and black.

Pass over, then, the dwellings and the youthful dreams,
and bring the Prophetic saying of Ghadīr Khum,

That was indeed the most notable event,
but it passed over deaf ears;

The whole world gathered against us
as if we appeared from behind a ruined wall.

We guided all people, ignoring none:
how far apart are he who clarifies and he who makes things
unclear!

But our reward from them was striking:
with the blades of swords amidst hot dust

They (the people) killed Abū Ḥasan, ‘Alī,
and assassinated his son Ḥasan with poison.

They denied Ḥusayn the Uprates (to drink from)
and protected him not from blades (of spearheads, swords etc.) and arrows,

And Zayd whom they brought to the edges of the sharp sword;
so many crimes they committed, one after the other

The sons of the high minded shaykh are from amongst us:

(they are) the ones who guide people away from darkness and injustice.

Never have I seen someone perish like he who was killed at Fakh
you truly are of a simple mind.

(The people inflicted suffering on:)The Imāms of an '*Ummah* which has ignored its guidance,

due to the deception of an apostate and the rebellion of one with vicious speech.

They struck flint at us
but were unsuccessful in creating a fire.*

Many Shī 'ites treat us with enmity
in Ānis or the inhabited regions of Qum,

And a Jabry who contests our guidance without right,
like a fool who reminds me of my name.

Could he mistake our guidance and find guidance elsewhere
as knowledge is annihilated by delusion?

Obey (oh '*Ummah*) your Masters and support them
and if you do so I have no reproach against you.

They ignored the path of our guidance
and so were afflicted with distress after distress.

[176A]

How can the rightly guided through us be harmed
whether he be learned or not (learned)?!

My brother is he who guides me to the right path
not he who is the son of my father and my mother,

And far be it from the followers of the blessed Zayd (to not understand this)

defenders in war, men of valour,

O ye mother of the infant identify him,

for if it is a snake do not embrace it.

For if you see your son three days

after death, you would not want to smell him.

The building of the pyramids are a cause of wonder

(but) there is more wonder in him who elevates a weakened nation,

Whenever you see offence in the mash of wheat

turn ye to eat the mash of dry dates; **

Better than the precious pearls of a necklace

are the pearls (raisins) of grapes.

The followers of our creed have become alike

and we distinguish not the elite from the mob.

People contest with me my *Dīn*

and their concern is verily unlike mine:

I guided them and appeared to them

like the sun in a night dark and dull.

My grandfather is Aḥmad the lord of *al-thqalayn* (humans and jinn)

and Ja‘far the bird of the Kingdom of Heaven is my uncle,

And a day long like the shadow of a lance

* referring to their incompetence and immaturity

which I shortened with my strong will.

Whoever asks about me, I am

to be found in the midst of the most raging part of tomorrow's battle.

Does the *Muṭarrafi* think that by denying my favours

my knowledge and firm will would become his?!

He has denied in the past the righteousness of the pure (Imāms) before me,
but due to his wretchedness he gained naught.

He opposed me with the misguided Mahdī

Oh, I wish the name was never given!

Does he think the name will elevate his status?!

And how many names to bodies are wrongly attributed!

[176B]

You thought you could fight us poetry for poetry

and cursing, may your deed be lost because of cursing me.

If it were not for the coming between you and me

by the Arabs and 'Ajam soldiers of oppression

I would have visited you with a huge army

slow in pace like a high mountain.

Ask Ṣan'ā' in the day of battle about us

and about the lost horses with no riders,

And dhī Khawlān in which refuge was taken

by lions of the jungle from Kalbī and Ghashmī.

** i.e., settle for that which is lower but lawful

They were the fire to which came a tornado
and flew it to a raging sea (thus extinguishing the fire).

Woe unto the *Muṭarrafi* from a long lasting war
and from my call (to challenge, in the battlefield), strikes and
thrusts.

I promised you and fulfilled my threat
and, by the Beneficent, I fulfil my threat and will.

Vast is the difference between your threat which is like the sound of a
lizard
and the sound of a storming knight, which you believed to be
similar!

Say as I say: "The one (the Imām) who makes kings bow down has
come!"
so that those of intelligence and understanding are impressed.

You measured the matter with ignorance
for the men of Hāshim are not like those of Jurm.

If you are one of the men of truth then stand firm
whether you are attacking or being attacked,

And gather all those of false *Dīn*
so we can add your gathering to those of Ṭasm (i.e., those that have
been destroyed).

Matters became settled in Dhamār and its surrounding regions and districts, where
the *aḥkām* (laws of *sharī'ah*) were practised. In the meantime, the Imām tried very hard
to destroy *al-Muṭarrafiyyah* and to bring every misery on them until they were either
killed or exiled. So the Imām implemented on them the *aḥkām* (laws) of execution and
saby (taking as prisoners of war) of their *dhurriyyah* (women and children) in the Ḥimyarī

region and other western areas. He introduced *aḥkam* (laws) which were unknown, renewed others which were effaced (by time) and revived *sunan* (traditions) that were extinct. At the same time, the Imām did not let any ignorant person questioning (his authority) pass by without solving the problem and easing the difficulty [177A]. As a result, some accepted, and others rejected him in ignorance.

When the Imām applied the laws of war on *al-Muṭarrafiyyah*, i.e., executions, *saby* of their women and children and confiscating their wealth, they were greatly distressed, and one of their men known as Ibn al-Nassākh wrote a letter to the Caliph in Baghdad, Aḥmad, who was called al-Nāṣir, urging him to send troops to Yemen, and mentioned in the letter those qualities which were befitting of Imām al-Manṣūr. We decided to include (the letter) in the Imām's biography because the qualities (of the Imām) were mentioned by one of his most bitter enemies, and none is better than the testimony of a foe. In it, Ibn al-Nassākh said:

‘Peace be upon you ye monuments made sacred by the sages; purified from all faults; decorated with the best clothing; selected for the ‘Abbasid Caliphs; sweet of smell and of well-known reputation; the home of the chosen *‘Itrah* and where the Prophetic blessed tree is planted:

‘The pleasant place of *Amīr al-Mu‘minīn* and his home
and in it the pillar of sovereignty is well-settled.

Al-Manṣūr (the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph) chose it as a home and so resided there
and populated it with those of positively good ancestry;

It is the splendid garden and the high ground
which he chose of old, and the best was his choice.

In it is *Amīr al-Mu‘minīn* Muḥammad
and the best among the people's emblems is his.

[177B] It (Baghdad) is the spacious courtyard of honour and fortification, the most secure sanctuary, and the birth place of the rightly-guided Caliphs. It is the high ground of rest and security, furnished with springs:

‘The abode of wit, literary education and the literati,
the stopping place of the wise and the learned.

There may be a beautiful meaning attached to its monument,
which has been kept veiled from unclear thoughts.

It is told that knowledge is the trade of Baghdad
and (that) to Baghdad knowledge associates itself.

‘May peace greet its trees and grounds, and begin with honour and reverence towards its sun and moon:

‘Peace like a necklace adorned with pearls,
pearls emulating the eyes of gazelles.

Peace untroubled by dark times,
pleasing those who see and hear,

Peace whose fragrance is sweet and strong
like the fragrance of the Tubbatina musk.

‘On arrival at the grand gate and on seeing the sacred sanctuary, you kiss the ground (trodden by the Caliph) and cover your cheeks with dust as you fall down in prayer to the worshipped One, who bestowed on you your greatest desires by making you reach the full moon, the king of Islam, the beauty of this world and of religion, the middle pearl in the necklace of Hashemites, Muḥammad al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh, *Amīr al-mu’minīn*.

‘The eyes enjoy looking at all his virtues

and become content when wishes and aspirations are fulfilled.

A Caliph, the best of origin amongst people
who left no opponent to justice;

The light of the horizon spreads further with the light of his justice
leaving the Yemeni crescent in the distance blushing.'

The letter then urges him (the Caliph) to prepare to extinguish a fire that was blazing in Yemen, lit by a *Qā'im* from Banī al-Ḥasan, whom the people of Yemen collaborated to support, [178A] hurrying to his group and Friday prayers (in his name), and raising flags and banners in his name. He has prevailed over us and triumphed, so declare openly what you are commanded (i.e., to send troops to the Yemen in protection against the Imām):

And kiss the ground of the Caliph and prostrate
and utter continuous greetings;

Ask the descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad's cousins
and recite with loud voice and chant:

Did not the *da'wah* (call) of the one who spends the night in prayers reach you
and his warnings night and day!

'He will be asking his noble cousins in the rural and urban areas to lend him a day of their lives to deliver the certain fate (upon the 'Abbasids) and to wage a war of revenge against you (the Caliph and the 'Abbāsids). After capturing the two Holy Mosques and the joining of the descendants of the *badnayn* (the two branches; Ḥasanīs and Ḥusaynīs), he will approach al-Shām and al-'Irāqayn. A warning which cannot be disputed and a spring whose approacher will not be turned away (i.e., an aim that will be definitely realised). Verily it is {one of the mighty (portents)} which {naught doth it permit to endure, and naught doth it leave alone} (S74 V35,28):

He will run to you with quick and slender horses

(saddled by men of) smooth and shiny shields and fine *Sābir*
clothes,

With sharp swords not easily made blunt
and finely worked spears, fast and quick,

And strained bows eliminating the leaders (of the enemy) with their arrows
and a battle whose fire resembles that of hell,

A day that surpasses the battle of *Ṣiffīn*,
a battle over whose grounds vultures fly.

‘Unless you wage continuous war against him, generation after generation and one detachment of horsemen after another, and prepare strong arms and sharp swords for the fight, for perhaps Baghdād (Baghdad) and Kufā (al-Kufah) might be protected and other cities might be captured. This is a truly difficult task, for there is no way of regaining that which is lost.

‘He prepared two buildings for minting the Dinar and Dirham (in his name), and filled every [178B] heart and eye with his awe and sovereignty:

The predestination helped him
till the orbits and stars ran with his orders.

He cried, ‘I am the son of the *Mustafā*’ (the Prophet) and his cousin
‘Alī’s son, I am the equal and companion of highness;

Is not Aḥmad my grandfather and Haydar my father?
Verily, I erect that which is exalted!

His words bring down infallibilities (protection from wrong-doing), which shake the mountains. (Words) sweeter than honey and more effective than the sword and the sharp

weapons. His *da'wah* (call) reached Jaylān, al-Daylam, Daylamān, Tanja and Aṣḥabān, so what, after his *qiyām* has become well-known, are you waiting for? It is, by Allāh, as if his hopes in you are coming true:

‘His horses will neigh on the sides of Tigris
and his tents will be pitched on its banks.

He will conquer Baghdad and kill its people
and acquire the kingdom from whoever acquired it,

And climb the black throne which
our Caliph has ascended for commanding;

This is a true warning which, if you waver, you will see
in your house that which will make you regretful.

A thousand greetings to the king of Islām
when his horses and troops reach us’

Ibn al-Nassākh then followed the preceding lines with the following:

‘To the Creator of creation, King of the Kingdom, is my praise:
the garment of firmness is the best that can be worn.

Due to the success of my endeavours and toil, I dispatched
poetry which collects together my scattered thoughts,

A ray of uniqueness, restoring souls to health
to which happiness attaches with ease.

It appears to Khurāsān and Egypt
and to Baghdadh (Baghdad) and Kufān with intent,

Calling in Damascus with one voice
which every fellah and soldier hears.

The reins (*qawāfiha*) of its rhymes are in my hand
I will send them forth (the rhymes) to fulfil their service.

The sanctuary of the Caliphate (*ḥaram al-Khilāfah*) is their goal,
to cover its land with my praises.

[179A]

To you is sent a letter from a man of friendship and warmth
urging firmness after wisdom.

I will draw forth the rhymes (*al-qawāfi*) from my tongue;
their bright light will radiate in the land of Najd.

They (the rhymes) are sharp and stinging, making grey
the (enemy) heads, near and far.

Sons of ‘Abbās, you are asleep
and this, the garment of your rule, has decayed.

I see you negligent (of the danger), and the Imām
will distance you from it (the rule and *Kilāfah*) with a sharp
(sword), what a sharp (sword)!

The Imām will send an army to Baghdad
which is large, following lightning with thunder (*mutbi‘an baraqan
bi ra‘dī*). (i.e., following warning with action)

He will cry “Vengeance for *Fakh*,
Bā *Khamrā*, and the battle of the Day of Mahdī!”

He will call “Where are Idrīs and Yaḥyā

and where is ‘Abdullāh my father and grandfathers’ son?”

Will I forget that you killed them all ?!

Allāh forbid! Even if I would be left alone!

I hold against you, inside me, a fire of grief,
which provokes my hidden grudge against you.

We must tell you and show
that a man’s will is to struggle:

A Hashemite Imām as well as a Fāṭimī
who will retaliate against you or initiate (the struggle);

Clear is the mark of kingship upon him:
his fame is widespread and he bestows gifts lavishly.

He pointed at the Caliphate and extracted it
but he did not acquire it in a whim.

Fresh and pure are his eloquent words,
with which he breaks through the hardness of every solid.

He will lead the Yemeni tribes
that visit you in coats of mail;

He will be coming with Kindah, the heights of Hamdān
and Madhḥaj, the courageous lions of war, oh what lions!

The tribes of Bakīl and Ḥāshid will be amongst them
and the sons of the firsts of Āl Sa‘d

And Sanḥān, Khawlān, Nihm

Hind, al-Sakūn and the tribe of Nihd

And a people from Banī al-Malṭūm, courageous
their valour like that of ‘Amr b. Ma‘dī,

Tribes which accepted the call of the dā‘ī
and destroyed you, indeed they have come with destruction.

[179B]

His troops are marching towards you
with straight lances and swords.

Thunder reflects the glow of swords
when they swerve to strike perverts’ heads

The light of ‘Alī’s sons shines
and surely will put out your fire:

He will leave you as his servants and slaves
if he leads troops after troops.

He will take his revenge from you
and work it out, tit for tat.

I would think that your home will become
as if it had never seen a mortal.

If you rise not with your unkempt horses
ridden by mighty knights

Of Turks indeed, the true men of the people
led by a noble from Ma‘ad.

If you linger like ‘Fand’
and swerve not towards him with every sword,

You will utter the words ‘I wish (*layt*)’,
which will be useless at that time.

The Caliphate’s inheritance is for you from your father,
because you are the first in wisdom and glory. (!)

The Imām’s victorious soldiers raided towards the areas of Abyan from where they
took booty and killed men, then returned in honour, not touched by harm.

He (pbuh) wrote from Şan‘ā’ to the people of Baghdad: [180A]

‘Oh, inhabitants of Baghdad! Verily Allāh will ask you
of the way of the *Dīn* in which you made changes.

You are the best of all people throughout time
when distress falls, but with some impurities

You have comprised a dark and blind (way of life);
its guider is not guided by the stars of truth.

Verily, the Caliphate is a matter of gravity and loftiness;
difficult are its paths, and difficult are its steps.

If your way of life is fit to be followed
the sick would rise to heal the diseased!

Would he who awaits God’s punishment exact it

on others, or would the stray guide to truth?!

You made the argument of your claim spectacularly beautiful
and exquisite in appearance, totally submissive to you.

Indeed, a Caliph is he who guides by his example,
so that with him is night made bright for night-travellers.

And follows, intentionally, *al-Mukhtār*'s (the Chosen One's) Sunnah
until he joins the remote with that which is close.

And not tending to amusement and play
except with long spears in their course,

Sending the *sharī'ah* (muslim law) on its set course
till the house is inhabited by its builder.

Allāh's Caliph should please Allāh with conduct
and purify the whole earth from corruption.

How much dispute have you already heard about the *Waṣī*
and the *Ṣiddīq*, which was a primary source of conflict between
people.

How can he assume it (the Caliphate) despite your knowledge
of his position against seeking the truth, and this should suffice*!

The people ('Abbāsids) are part of us, but where is Fāṭimah,
her husband, her two sons and her guardian ('Alī)?!

[180B]

And where are our deeds, well-known for purity!
in the name of Allāh, the Preserver of safety, our deeds are guided
and directed.

* i.e., this should suffice for you to choose a different caliph

In our deeds, we follow our grandfather *al-Mukhtār* (the chosen one-
the Prophet)

without deviation in them or doubts cast on their meanings.

We know not wine except to shed it,

nor vile deeds except to eradicate them.

The Caliphate is indeed Allāh's decree, so await

the ruling of the Master Who bestows the Caliphate on whom He
pleases.

Would he alone assume the task of the Caliphate

whose testimony is not accepted for lowliness!

Many assumed it and then were blinded

and others had their ears cut off.

Which of the two Imāms is suited,

Oh people! The first or the second?!

We seek Allāh's refuge from a claim (to the Caliphate)

supported by quarters of shame, whose fraternities are not
enlivened;

If my lineage you inspect (you will see that) I am Aḥmad's son,

who leads (the army) riding on the backs of horses.

Since my youth my desires I did forgo,

intentionally to rise above the luxuries of life.

And in a raid, igniting like the flash of lightning:

we were in (the) front of it not at the rear,

And a destructive charge like sudden thunder
protected by swords of *al-Mukhtār*'s (the chosen one's) sons.

Whosoever sought a variety of sciences with deep knowledge
found our water of knowledge poured upon him,

And a petitioner who came when the horizons were dark
and bleak, gained the matters he hoped for.

Who will rival Fāṭimah's pure descendants,
who will equal her, nay who comes (even) close?!

Allāh's Caliphate is Allāh's *Dīn*, so check out
the occupant of the Caliphate's throne, in order that it is given to
the right person.

O people of Baghdad, fear Allāh, for He
has the Might to eradicate all villages and their inhabitants;

So heed the rights of Allāh's messenger and adhere
to a covenant whose keeper fears not ruin;

Fear Allāh in private and in public
for its *mahdī* (the guided one) is from us as well as its *hādī* (guide).

We are in the depths of doubt, a guiding ship
which saves, but the rejecters will perish under the waves.

[181A]

We defend the boundaries of religion with fast horses of pedigree,
and with the lustrous swords we strike the heads of foes.

And how many young men, from us, meet with a smile
the heroes of the enemy, and smite them, left and right, to death?

Defended by his pure position against fleeing
when the tips of spears pierce the guts,

And a huge enemy attack like a rushing flood of night
was pushed back by the swords (of our men).

Surely, hiding from people is for veiled women,
so do not accept such confusion for yourself lest you ruin your soul
before your eyes.

Indeed, the (right) Imām is he who appears to whoever seeks him,
like the sun which clouds cannot veil:

When the nights of crises fall
he would rise in great courage until all crises are overcome;

Generous and of good reputation, he accepts not
for pride to surpass his religion.*

The situation remained that way until the '*Ajam* troops arrived in Yemen coming from al-Shām. The army stayed for a short while until they put their affairs in order, then left for the administrative districts of Ṣan'ā', where on approaching the districts, he (pbuh) moved (retreated!) from Ṣan'ā' to Kawkabān on Sunday, the eleventh of Rabī' al-Ākhir in the year 612, spending the night in *Bayt An'am* before proceeding to Kawkabān. The '*Ajam* arrived in the area of the districts of Ṣan'ā' in a huge army obscuring the horizon, bound for *Bayt An'am* where they camped on the twelfth of Jumadā al-'Ulā of the same year. The Imām (pbuh) filled *Bayt An'am* with armed men and all the food they required, and waged war against the '*Ajam* for a while*. The '*Ajam* were preoccupied with the Imām until they were handed (captured!) *Bayt An'am* on Tuesday the second of Rajab, then proceeded to the regions of Ḥimyar and encamped in al-Maṣna'ah and 'Izzān on Friday the sixth of Ramaḍān of the above mentioned year. He (pbuh) stayed in al-Ladiyyah on

* This is the version of events as told by the biographer, whereas in reality the Imām was merely defending *Bayt An'am* from the '*Ajam*!

the al-Dīl' mountain for three months and a half as war was continuously being waged against the 'Ajam^{**}. On the first day [181B] that fighting broke out, he (pbuh) left al-Ladiyyah for a mountain called Tham'ūd where the Imām's soldiers descended upon the 'Ajam and fought them fiercely until they advanced very close to their camp. The Imām (pbuh) said about that day (addressing the 'Ajam):

Accept these words from me until (those)
wishes are fulfilled which I hope to gather and organise.

If you give it (the Caliphate) to me in marriage, I am her equal
and a noble, fulfilling her dowry in the morn.

Where will you be when the fire (of war) breaks out
if it engulfs you with its ferocity in the morn!

Heroes cried in the various sections (of the battlefield)
and those who were able were forced to bear it.

So do not weary of the recurrent war and prepare,
for the war of Ḥaydar's son (the Imām) has already flared up.

You thought the stabbing of al-Ṭālibīs (the descendants of 'Alī) in war
was like mature vintage wine of whose taste you would not
weary.

Nay! After it the joy of life is forbidden you,
for a sword has stopped and put it out of your reach.

Before you there were many kings (who perished)
and soon we will drive you to the same destiny.

If all Qaḥṭān rallied to defend me

^{**} Again, the reality was that war was being waged *against* the Imām!

and shook its lances and unsheathed its swords,

And launched upon you a crushing Yemeni attack
making Shām and Iraq fall upon you,

And if every brave man of ‘Adnān was defending,
(by whose courage), if anyone were to see him in the battlefield,
they would be astonished,

You then made the dogs of *al-Bāṭiniyyah* your support
so I inflicted upon you with the sword that which I inflicted
upon them.
Go steady, for war is my desire and trade
and since my hair grew, it wearied me not.

I have been acquainted with the sons of war since (I was) young
and dealt with them young and old;

I am the son of the Messenger of Allāh and the son of his *Waṣī*
(appointed successor),
a gift of glory given by the Lord of the ways of ascent.

Your necks are the property of Muḥammad;
what will be the ruling against you then, if you choose
disobedience?

We have Ṭālibī youth on the day of battle
whom we trained to stab enemies and remove their heads.

[182A]

Of how many prisoners of war have I freed their necks
and how many hardened sinners have I shackled?!

And how many great bounties have I wrapped around the ‘*Ajam*!

but did they (not) break their commitment to me in denial of my good deeds?

And how often did a king desire to take possession of our country,
but it did not reach out for him nor did the king reach the land!

And how many large armies faced us
but were strangled by the A‘wajī horses!

We attacked them in the day of battle with faces
of mounted and charging slender horses;

You were tyrannical when you subdued your
captives, so taste the shame and strife of your deeds.

We set up for you a market in a field of loyalty,
and made our way that of forgiveness and success.

So, despite yourself, endure the shame of your actions;
nay, drink the rancidness of your deeds, the outcome of
ignominy.

The number of those deserting the Imām (pbuh) increased at that camp due to the length of time and the boredom of the people, and the preference of most of them for comfort and stability. He (pbuh) was not bothered with their few numbers nor by their deserting. Even those of religion who followed him could not be seen, except for a few of his supporters who accompanied him alone, fulfilling Allāh ’s rights by responding to his call (pbuh), and championed him. The situation of the people of Yemen as regards the extent of their betrayal and deviation was similar to what happened in the time of al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī (peace be upon them both); thus the Imām (pbuh), (in the face of this), took refuge in patience, hoping for Allāh ’s reward, and he (pbuh) stood firm against Allāh ’s enemies.

He (pbuh) built a large (Imāmate) residence in his camp and people built houses with him. Dār al-Darb (the mint) was established in al-Manṣūr's camp, where his revenue increased greatly, and Allāh (the High and Mighty) bestowed this favour upon him (pbuh), to the point that one of the workers in the mint told me (the author) that they re-minted [182B] twenty five thousand Dirhams of the *Ghuz*, made of silver and other metals, coming from the districts of Madhḥaj and the surrounding areas alone, not including what used to come from all the other districts.

The Imām (pbuh) remained settled that way (in his camp) and most of the battles waged against the *'Ajam* were initiated by his soldiers - so many of them (battles), they were uncountable - and these battles occupied most of his time, spent facing the *'Ajam* soldiers. Despite the small number of supporters in the camp, Allāh (the High and Glorified) bedecked it with great awe, in spite of the hostility of the inhabitants of Maswar, who were supporters of and close to the *'Ajam*. With Allāh's grace and the Imām's blessing (pbuh), there was no news of any disturbances there, from the beginning of his stay at the camp to his departure. He (pbuh) prayed the two *Ṭds* in the camp, Ramaḍān and *al-Naḥr*, because his stay there began on the fourteenth of Ramaḍān and ended in Muḥarram. During this period, he (pbuh) did not weary from reading and studying books, so much so that he read several volumes, unconcerned by the momentous and calamitous events that befell. He (pbuh) continued that way until a peace agreement was concluded on Wednesday the first of Muḥarram in the year 613, and so the *'Ajam* camp lasted for one hundred and seven nights, and the enemy left (after the agreement) after Allāh (the High and Mighty) had condemned their attempts to failure.

The *'Ajam* had spent a great amount of money and had many of their men killed, but did not reach their goal or dream. His biographer said: 'It was recounted that four hundred new graves were found in the *'Ajam* camp, and about one thousand two hundred heads of horses, mules and cattle had perished, as well as seven thousand camels.'

He (pbuh) then moved to Kawkabān, and said about the events: [183A]

'Are the dwellings known on the sides of (the fort of) Dhī-zufur
and in al-Akāri' east of the remains (*al-khuraybāt*),

(And in) Ḥazm Buqlān, Al-Ḥinwayn and the dark mud houses
of Talbus where the *du'ayyāt* trees grow.

So their dwellings extend from *Shihāt* to Ḥaram
to al-Qarāshim along the channel of the Tamarisks (*uthaylāt*) trees.

Dwellings which we have known to be well-fortified
at the mount of al-Khaṭ, rising above *al-a'wajiyāt*.

In them were the girls of Murād, if you have heard of them,
like dark gazelles stretching to eat the freshest branches of the
dense trees.

And the wide-eyed women of Nihm, lean and
slender, accustomed to early sleep.

I stood amidst (the ruins) at the break of day, calling them,
but they answered not and remained utterly silent.

With great difficulty we recognised them (the dwellings) by the tops
of the sand dunes and the accumulated sand that had taken
their place,

And every dwelling like the eroded edges of wells,
affected by the ropes and the heavy rain of many days,

And traces containing such things as debris,
camels of pedigree or sand-grouse.

As for the swings, surging water had removed their traces,
except the trails of venomous snakes and serpents.

I wonder at my people and their aversion to me,

although they are well-acquainted with my affairs.

Did I not rise (to the Imāmate) when many of their lords
were at war, alive but like the dead?!

They and their supporters are amidst a raging
and testing sea of disasters and impairment,

Like Āl-Isrā'īl (the Jews) when Pharaoh afflicted
them by killing their sons and shaming the girls.

The lords of Qaḥṭān and the noble masters of Mudār
were lost, swimming in the sea of darkness,

So I leaped into the depths of certain death, offering
my life, and I did not shelter amidst a battle in a sanctuary.

And how many huge armies did I withstand,
which were like the sea, shaking and rumbling with voices.

And they became like yesterday, invisible without a trace,
though they had been like the towering mountains.

Ask the resident of Ṣan'ā' about his sojourn
there, even if he was (a man) of fasting and humbleness.
[183B]

Did his stance anger Allāh or please Him,
while in *dār ḥarb* (abode of war), beside amusement and taverns!

Say, did I ill-treat you while in my company
or did I sell my religion and engage in vice?!

The land is one of *kufr* and the ruling (concerning abodes of *kufr*) is applicable

in it, according to Ḥadīths (traditions) and Surās (chapters of the Qur'ān).

Was not the ruling of *al-‘utaibāt* (war-captives of Badr) applied to the paternal uncle of Allāh’s Messenger, al-‘Abbās?

He was not saved till he ransomed himself

with money after being enslaved in accordance with (Qur’ānic) verses.

How many (people) did I admonish and warn,
how many did I advise but my advice went unheeded;

Except the noble who migrated and established
glory which will last until Resurrection Day.

They swore (promised) and fulfilled their oath (to support me),
how excellent they are!
they stood firm for me against those of violent tyranny.

You thought war would expel me (away) with its lofty weight
and thus I would avoid it by hiding and taking refuge with
noble men and lords.

(Nay!) I was brought up in war like the raised blade of the sword;
it did not frighten me but was frightened by my striking.

Since I was a teenager I did not unsaddle the horses of war,
and now I have reached the vanguard of the race towards my aims.

I am the son of the lord of (the people of) Ma‘ad in their pride,
and there is no lord but the Lord of the Heavens.

And what honour is there except in the purity and excellence
of our fathers, Muḥammad and ‘Alī, of high esteem.

Ask Qalīb (of Badr) and the knights of al-Shām
and those who were in Yemen like lions of the jungles;

‘*Ajam* and Arabs, did I not brave the desert to face them
when the enemy were in a huge army of thronged groups?

The waiting extended for months without negotiators,
except for the swords of *al-Mashrafiyāt*.

They desire upon us what we desire upon them;
both would try whatever they know and whatever they can do.

Battalions of troops, like the huge Roman mountains,
(but) their plants are (made of) thin and hard *Samharī* spears.

How many places of turmoil in a battlefield did we fill while
the enemy were at
the foot of (mount) Wāqit, belittling descriptions of the (intensity
of the) turmoil.

And a noble whose head was struck by the sword,
from amongst us and them, slain in the fighting.
[184A]

And in Shibam we had an illustrious day
that could surpass the Day of *al-Qusaybāt*.

We were a few horsemen and they were many,
amongst courageous men of war with banners.

They desired the (capture of the) forts but were confronted, against
their desires,

with the striking and stabbing of the hard and unbending
spears of *al-Zā'ibiyāt*,

And (were confronted) with youth whose descent is from 'Alī,
and the descendants of Qaḥṭān where power resides;

Those who strike horizontally the row of helmeted heads,
and those able to meet the charges of the *jināyāt* (here what could
be seen as legal offences);

And those who left the land of the Romans behind in ruin,
and who rise perpetually towards high ambitions;

And those who send to Kisrā, amongst his troops,
bad tidings of death in the battle of the gate of al-Qādisiyyah.

If we wished we would have said that they have none other than
a right, entitling to rule over the citizens.

Indeed, according to the rule of obedience to us, people like them
will not forfeit, from the likes of me, their due recompense.

Perhaps, from nearby, they will reform and consolidate,
thwarting excessive attempts to propagate evil.

He (pbuh) then proceeded from Kawkabān on Friday, possibly two nights remaining of
Rabī' al-Awwal, in the year 613, to (the fort of) Zafār - may Allāh protect it - where he
stayed for a while, until the end of the peace agreement between him and the 'Ajam
approached, whereupon he returned to Kawkabān, possibly four nights remaining of Dhī
al-Ḥijjah of the same year.

The Imām then prepared his son, Prince *al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh 'Iz al-Dīn* Muḥammad, son
of *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (commander of the faithful), with an army of cavalry and footmen,
to (go to) Kanan.

He (pbuh) started to suffer from the illness (from which he died) when he was in his camp in al-Bawn, and when he went up to Kawkabān his condition became worse. While he was in severe death-agony he wrapped his shawl (*ḥabwah*) around himself until he finally passed away in that state. I was told by a person who saw him, that when he went in (to where the Imām was), he saw that one of his knees became loose, while the other remained wrapped by the shawl. Allāh chose that he be transferred [184B] into the abode of His generosity and the permanent place of His mercy on Thursday the twelfth of Muḥarram in the year 614. He (pbuh) (his body) was transferred to Bukar where the body remained for a while, from where it was transferred to the area which has become associated with him, and was buried there.

May Allāh 's peace be upon his soul for he revived Islam with his blessing, elevated it with his praiseworthy care, increased its followers and reduced the number of its enemies, after deviant groups had rumbled and the seas of ignorance had overflowed, but Allāh raised the word of truth with his (the Imām's) rise (to the Imāmate), and so the banners of rightness spread, the flagpole of truth arose, the springs of knowledge flowed forth, the clouds of understanding poured down their rain, the fields of religious knowledge beautified, the characteristics of the Prophet's Sunnah became exalted, the seas of ignorance sunk into the earth and the symbols of misguidance became eradicated. Assuredly, his blessing had resulted in great favours and benefits, including knowledge and its practice, and the extolment of specific and general aspects of the *Dīn*, whose self-evidence leaves no need for clarification and whose necessity substitutes for its proof.

Indeed, the fire of the wretched, *kāfir* and misguided *al-Muṭarrafiyyah* had blazed, their day had broken and they had openly professed *kufr* in *Dār al-Islam* (abode of Islam), attributing (their creed) to the noble '*Itrah*, (a creed) which they taught in their churches (the *Muṭarrafi* mosques) and preached in poetry and prose, until their *madhhab* (school of thought) had prevailed in many areas, deceiving people with their (false) love for the '*Itrah* (peace be upon them). He (pbuh) continued striving to uproot their origins and to destroy their roots, firstly with example and proof, and secondly with force (*bil hindī wa al-sinān*), until Allāh the Mighty and Most High dispersed their gathering and destroyed

their lands (*rubū'ahum*); this (punishment) was implemented through him (may Allāh 's peace be upon him).

It was narrated that the learned judge *Shams al-Dīn* Ja'far b. Aḥmad b. Abī Yaḥyā (may Allāh be pleased with him) saw in a dream that [185A] he wrote: “ the *Muṭarrafiyyah madhhab*” on a tablet and gave it to a *Sharīf* (a descendent of the Prophet) to erase it. It was he (the Imām) (pbuh) who removed their traces, destroyed their homes, and implemented the Prophetic rulings upon them, including execution and *saby* (to take captive) of their *dhurriyyah* (women and children), treating them as a warring enemy (*ḥarbī*), in accordance with the consensus of the *al-Ṣaḥābah al-rashidūn* (rightly guided companions may Allāh be pleased with them all) after the Prophet (peace be upon him and his *Āl*), concerning the killing, taking booty from and *saby* of Banī Ḥanīfah, since they turned to *kufṛ* after Islam and acquired some power, so the ruling upon them became one of warring enemies (*intaqala ḥukmuhum ilā ḥukm al-ḥarbiyyīn*). How far apart are the two cases! Indeed, Banū Ḥanīfah were deemed *kāfir* for (committing) minor offences, while *al-Muṭarrafiyyah* are deemed *kāfir* for reasons which are too numerous to mention in detail, such as: their denial (of the fact) that Allāh the Most High afflicts his creatures with illness and pain, and that he causes the death of young children and other assertions of their *kufṛ*. They also denied that Allāh the Most High intends to afflict Muslims with lightning and hail (storms), claiming that these are coincidences and not by the intention and will of Allāh. He (pbuh) judged them according to the noble Book (*al-Kitāb al-karīm*, The Qur'ān) and the Sunnah which ruled in his favour: that they should be killed and their property taken as booty. He then hacked their heads with swords and pierced their necks with spears, leading against them soldiers after soldiers and amassed against them huge and organised armies, time after time, until he achieved his objective and pleased the Lord of the servants. An uncountable number of people known only to Allāh converted from *kufṛ* to Islam (left *al-Muṭarrafiyyah* sect), due to his blessing. They were large tribes, previously believing in the religion of *al-Muṭarrafiyyah* may Allāh humiliate them but were encompassed by his blessing, so they repented to Allāh and became swords against the wretched *al-Muṭarrafiyyah* (*al-Muṭarrafiyyah al-shaqiyyah*), whose creed became, after former splendour and prosperity amongst people, [185B] faded and weak, whilst previously it had been of exalted reputation. All of this was achieved after Allāh's grace, through the Imām's gracious effort and wise planning (pbuh). The

same applies to *al-Jabriyyah al-Qadariyyah* which he (pbuh) treated as he did against *al-Muṭarrafiyyah*, with regard to killing (their men) and *saby* of their *dhurriyyah* (to take their women and children as captives). This is because of their judgment that the Qur'ān was old (*qadīm*), thereby departing from the *tawḥīd* (Oneness of Allāh), and whoever abandons *tawḥīd* becomes a *kāfir*. They also attributed unbecoming qualities to Allāh, such as lying, oppression and injustice, thus denying Him wisdom†the Exalted, and whoever adjudges that He is unjust and unwise has become without doubt a *kāfir*. Also the same applies to a person who judges that He performs various abominable and scandalous deeds. They also said that Allāh the Most High desires (to perform) heinous acts and all abominations, including oppression, frivolity, and various kinds of *kufr*. This is the way of those who associate partners (*mushrikīn*) with Him, as Allāh the Most High says, {they say, 'if it had been the Will of the Most Gracious, we should not have worshipped such (deities)!'} Of that they have no knowledge! They do nothing but lie!} (S43,V20), and He the Most High also said, {those who give partners (to Allāh) will say: 'if Allāh had wished, we should not have given partners to Him, nor would our fathers; nor should we have had any taboos.' So did their ancestors argue falsely, until they tasted of Our Wrath. Say, 'have ye any (certain) knowledge? If so, produce it before us. Ye follow nothing but conjecture: ye do nothing but lie.'} (S6,V148).

When he (pbuh) was convinced of their *kufr*, he ascertained that it was lawful for them to be killed, taken as captives, and for their wealth to be taken as war booty. He (pbuh) was afflicted with the tribulation of war against the 'Ajam and Arabs of vile creeds as well as other tyrants, so through him, Allāh satisfied the hearts of the believers and increased the number of Muslims.

His virtues (pbuh) are more than can be arranged on the necklace of panegyrical poems; the self-evidence of his state, due to the nearness of his time and his fame, leaves no need for proof.

[186A] He (pbuh) was of the utmost gentleness with the pious and of great closeness to the Muslims, jesting and exchanging witty anecdotes with them, speaking with a broad smile and meeting all of them with a cheerful face. Whenever a matter was raised or an issue mentioned, he would present them to some of those who attended his council. I saw

him (the Imām) one day press the issue of ‘the great obstinacy’ (*al-lajāj al-‘azīm*) upon some minors, to the point that one of the minors became the (sole) speaker, while he (pbuh) remained silent out of graciousness, although he was in every field of knowledge like a surging sea and a heavy cloud. These actions of humbleness were due to his well-known tenderness and customary humility. Our *shaykh Bahā’ al-Dīn* Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan (may Allāh be pleased with him) was presented with certain issues relating to the *sīrah* (Prophet’s biography). The Imām (pbuh) spent the night with the *shaykh* until he rose to depart with the rest of the people, at which point the *shaykh* handed him the paper containing the issues (relating to the *Sīrah*). He (pbuh) wrote the answers without delay and ordered that it be returned to the *shaykh* so that he would not sleep in uncertainty about the matters; behold his vast knowledge and piety! On some occasions he would answer questions at night due to his preoccupation with the affairs of the people (during the day) and other affairs in general, taking the opportunity to answer questions at night if the time was available.

His literary works are many and are unsurpassed in comparison with those of the Zaydī Imāms in Yemen (peace be upon them).

As for the Biographies (*al-siyar*) he wrote, they are unique amongst those (written by) any member of the *‘Itrah* (peace be upon them).

[186B] He excelled in knowledge of the sciences of the Qur’ān (*‘ulūm al-Qur’ān*). He started to write in the *tafsīr* (commentary on the Qur’ān), writing exceptional introductions in it, unknown amongst similar works. As part of his *tafsīr*, he produced one completed volume on *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, without finishing the *Sūrah*, employing wonderful *shawāhid* (textual evidence), language of exceptional meanings and sound arguments supported by Qur’ānic verses, invalidating with clear evidence the creeds of the naturalistic *al-Muṭarrafiyyah* (*al-Muṭarrafiyyah al-ṭaba’iyyah*) and al-Jabriyyah al-Qadariyya, (a work) that is a cause for wonder and proves that he was the leader in this field. He also excelled in the *tafsīr* of individual verses.

His literary works (pbuh) also include: *al-‘Iqd al-ṭhamīn fī tabyīn ahkām al-a’immah al-hādīn* (The Precious Necklace to Clarify the Judgements of the Guiding Imāms), which

deals with the Imāmiyyah (sect) in particular and is composed of one volume; *al-Risālah al-fāriqah bayn al-Zaydiyyah wa al-māriqah* (The Treatise Dividing Between the Zaydīs and the Apostates) which discusses the creed of *al-Muṭarrafiyyah*; *al-Risālah al-ḥākimah bi al-adillah al-‘ālimah fi al-dūr wa al-takfīr wa al-ghanā’im* (The Ruling Treatise with Convincing Evidence, on Property, Charging with *kufr* and War Booty); *al-‘Aqīdah al-nabawiyyah fi al-‘uṣūl al-dīniyyah* (The Prophetic Faith on the Religious Principles); *al-Qāṭi‘ah li al-awrād min lajāj al-muta‘nniṭin* (The Terminator of the Repetitive Arguments of the Obstinate Ones’ Disputatiousness), dealing with *Jihād* and related issues; *al-Risālah al-qāhirah bi al-adillah al-bāhirah* (The Overpowering Treatise with Brilliant Evidence) on *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). It includes issues raised, for the sake of dispute, by someone who had knowledge of the different branches of *Fiqh*. He (pbuh) responded to those issues, of which there were one hundred and twenty, mostly on *Fiqh*, with the best of responses and clearest language; *Tuhfah al-ikhwān* (The Treat for Brothers) and *al-Risālah al-tihāmiyyah* (The Tihamiyya Treatise). There are many other writings of the Imām, and responses to issues, which reached various countries, near and far away, [187A] but due to their great number it is impossible to mention them all.

There were also many *da‘wahs* (calls), some of which were mentioned earlier, and what we have left out is more than that which we have mentioned.

His (pbuh) standing in poetry was acknowledged by men of letters. Most of his poems were impromptu. There is a large collection of his poems (*Diwān*), comprising various types and styles.

We will mention some of the poetry not referred to earlier. Amongst the best of his poetry (pbuh) was what he said in *Barāqish*, in *Jumāda al-‘Ukhrā* in the year 594:

I became joyous, and the likes of me do not become joyous for play,
but for horses which gallop to the battle.

Rapid (horses) mounted by mighty knights,
who stand firm and strong, in battle, when heroes are weakened.

Laughing and smiling in the heat of the battle
when heroes in the battle are frowning.

Brought up by the lions of jungles, they became mighty,
and in the rank of fatherhood he is either a lion or a fox.

And how many youths rise above the wave when it bursts,
but others, at that point, would sink.

And one who would strike with the sword those at the edges of the
(enemy) gathering,
when another would waver between the two armies.

He sees death bound to the arrows and is resolute,
and he blunts the edge of the sword with the slashing.

So do not describe horses to me, unless
they have relatives comprising horses of pedigree and ones of
golden colour

and (unless) they are related to (the horses of) Lāhiq
and A'waj, for horses are like humans in nobility.

Prepare the front of horses, for death is the point of destination
where time drinks the cup of death.

Name me a coward who attained immortality,
every person has a due share in death.

Verily the face of Allāh 's *Dīn* has shone,
so no seeker looking for it will be blind to it.

And (Allāh 's *Dīn*) waved the banner of victory and to it complied

an unwavering spear, accompanied by the support of the Lord of the Throne.

[187B]

For us, in the far east is an east that we desire,
and beyond the land of the west is a west (we also desire).

We wish matters for which the Lord is a guarantor,
to fulfil what, from him, we hope and seek.

So say to the ‘Abbasides this is our era,
and you can flee not except to the truth.

We will reward your misdeeds with goodliness,
for we are the sons of Aḥmad, the favoured prophet.

And you are the (paternal) cousins, but the right is ours,
and we are well-versed with the blades of swords.

If I do not cause Baghdad to be visited (conquered) by twenty battalions,
including the great Hāshid as well as Nihm and Arḥab.

And all of Shākir wherever they are and Madhḥaj,
and Sanḥān, the people of patience when swords are reddened with blood.

And Kindah and the noble heroes of Qudā‘ah,
they are live coal whose heat is unapproachable.

And Khawlān, the lords of honour and Himyar,
indeed they are the favoured troops to the Imām of truth.

And our paternal uncles from the tribes of Bakr and Taghlib,
and he wins who is abidingly obeyed by Bakr and Taghlib.

And from red Mudār, (a red banner was the emblem of Mudār), is every
one of noble parents
with high status, from where the well-mannered Prophet (came).

And as for ‘Akk b. ‘Adnān our first paternal cousins,
their father, if origin is counted, is considered
a father to us.

If not, then may my hand not carry a tried sword,
the tried sword which is subservient to the strength of my will.

Oh, our parental cousins, (entertaining with) musical instruments and
their songs are a shame on you,
and seeking to drink the matured wine even more so.

Would the Beneficent appoint a Caliph, as you said, (from amongst)
cattle*,
whose food and drink are vile and forbidden?!

(A Caliph who) passes the day and night not performing (his)
obligatory duties,
but (instead) plays and entertains himself with
various amusements!

Liars! And by Allāh’s house you will not seize (the *Khilāfah*)
by force, as long as a planet** appears in the sky.

Let us show you spears interlocking (in battle),
and how the shiny dust rises as its whiteness becomes more
pronounced (due to the light reflected by the shiny weapons).

Verily, all except Allāh is false,
and we are his troops and Allāh will triumph.

* referring to those unfit for the Imāmate

** referring to any one of the Imāms

Then say, for me, to the kings of the earth: follow (the Imām) and be guided (to him),

for (your) forts protect not nor (your) armies terrify.

[188A]

If you obey not before a difficult day,

then by Allāh I have a difficult day for you!

Would the will of Allāh be hindered by a mighty fort,

tough Khutāmi fighters and a huge army of different origins?!

We will gather, (for war), horses of dusty manes,

like the mountains of Ḥunayn, obscuring other mountains.

And send them forth successively in rapid units,

like groups of birds meandering in the sky.

Would the likes of me sleep at night when wine is drunk,

would the likes of me enjoy living when musical instruments are played?

Sleep is forbidden for me except for a little,

when the face of sins is apparent, not veiled.

I became angry for my Lord when His *Dīn* was spoiled,

and is there an angry person like myself who becomes angry for the sake of the Lord of the Throne?!

How preferable it would be for eyebrows to be struck with the edges of swords,

while throats are pierced with the blades of spears!

And while I sink the arrows' heads into the enemies,

and red blood rushes from my temples.

And how preferable would be the call of the crier as dawn approaches:
‘Oh, this night is long already, let us mount (for battle)!’

Raid, raid, let not your enemy escape,
smite the riders of the horses and fear not.

(And how preferable would be) my amassing of camels in the dusky
morn,
and my riding in front of the cavalry in the darksome night.

And my saying to my horsemen: fear not their multitudes,
attack them fiercely, killing them and taking booty.

Oh, is there for a matter willed by Allāh a repellent,
or is there an escape for one killed by Allāh ’s will?

He (pbuh) wrote a literary imitation of the *mīmiyyah* poem by Ibn al-Mu‘taz in Jumādā al-
‘Ulā in the year 602 in which he says:

Oh, our paternal cousins, bring back the affection between us,
and follow the right path.

We have an honour and you have an honour,
and whoever favours truth regrets not.

You are his daughter’s sons, not us
and we are the sons of his paternal uncle, the Muslim....etc

So he (pbuh) said [188B]:

Surely, our cousins, the Day of al-Ghadīr

is a witness to the well-known knight.

Our father is ‘Alī, *Waṣī* (successor) of the Prophet,
whom (the Prophet) chose for the grand banner.

You have a sanctity for kinship to him (the Prophet),
but here are we of his flesh and blood.

Although our decedence from Hāshim unites us,
But how far apart are the (camel’s) hump and the sole of its foot.

And even if you are like the stars of the sky,
we are the crescents for the stars.

We are his daughter’s sons, not you,
and we are (also) his paternal uncle’s sons, the Muslim.

Our forefather Abū Ṭālib protected him,
(as well as) becoming a Muslim before others.

His faith he used to hide,
as for loyalty he veiled it not.

Which of the virtues did we not possess
by giving the benefactions and by the striking of
our intrepid (fighter).

We followed Muḥammad in his actions,
but you followed the master of crime*.

He gifted you with the kingship, a gift like a bride,
But instead you rewarded him by shedding (his) blood!

* Referring to Abū Muslim ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Khurasānī.

We inherited the Book (the Qur'ān) and its rulings
and were (chosen) over the eloquent people and '*Ajams*.

So when you rise to your stringed instruments
we rise to the unambiguous verses of the Book (the Qur'ān).

Is drinking wine and committing sin
among the virtues of an honoured group?

You killed the people's pure guiders,
like the deed of the blind and wretched Yazīd.

You chose a kingship that is transient,
falling short of our enduring Kingdom.

Verily Kingship shall have a return
to the follower of the right path.

To the most honourable people of Ahl al-Kisā', **
and whoever seeks the truth does not do wrong.

They spread the light to the corners of the earth
which abandons its dark clothing.

He (pbuh) said, when his soldiers invaded al-Mahjam where they killed and took its
wealth as booty [189A] in Dhī al-Hijjah in the year 604:

Oh knights of Raḥrajān, be forceful and make (your power)
known to others,
following the good performance of my horsemen in al-Mahjam.

** Ahl al-Kisā' : reference to the Prophet, Faṭima, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.

In a battle where none spoke a word,
except the clatter of the swords and the illustrious intrepid fighter
in armour.

The transgressors' soldiers were ranked, and tried
to stop the protection of what needs protecting but (the soldiers) were
quickly dealt with by the sword.

They were impaled by white swords and young men,
related to high and noble honour.

They were violently agitated by the (stabbing of) spears
and by quick cutting swords, each like a flash of lightning
whose appearance resembles an unsheathed sword.

When the sword was swinging they were
(like) trunks of date-palms from the forests of Malham.

If they had resisted they would have perished,
and their abode would have been the depths of Hell.

They (young men and swords) marched to them in ten and several more
days,
through unknown land, void of company or landmark.

They crossed through the middle of every wide and barren land,
and descended by ladders from rocky heights!

They walk on their hamstrings and on their chests
in these places, and glide like the gliding of a snake.

They (the people of Mahjam) were protected by none but
their fleeing, unhesitatingly,
from the shock of the large, thunderous and invincible army.

Two cloaks of dark dust were woven for (the army)
and two covers of black smoke.

(Due to the dust and smoke surrounding the army:) the sun's eye
resembles that of the sore-eyed,
and it is as if the face of the full moon was the edge of
a Dirham (coin).

And as if the ends of the blazing fire
were white swords dyed with blood.

The sons of Ḥasan displayed the courage of a lion,
as was their wont, when deep-red (blood) covers the swords.

And the nobles of Ḥaydar ancestry were resolute,
in the battle, and pushed back the powerful thrust (of the foes).

The defenders of Hamdān and Madhḥaj
were not fearful of the great battle.

They left the faces of the Arabs white and clear,
but dyed the faces of the non-Arabs with blackness.

[189B]

If Aḥmad b. al-Qāsim had not been absent,
the magnanimous king, my enjoyment would have been complete!

But the sweetness of our time has been blended
with bitterness, like honey mixed with colocynth.

How excellent is the Zaydī group,
which surpassed the battles of Āl Muḥallim.

If you wish we will repeat the account,

for perhaps the latter would take away the sweetness of the first.

So listen to me telling where they (the Zaydī group) started,
for they are always accompanied by good fortune.

Whenever they headed west to the Ghawr (lowlands) of Tihāmah
(and the wide expanse of) al-Bawn to them (was as small as)
could be contained in the hand of a leper.

The fast short-haired horses struck them (the enemy soldiers)
and hurled them and they were impaled on the camps' posts.

Doom rose on (the area of) al-Jannāt (due to the amassed fighters there)
as if it was struck by the army of Daylam*.

Smoke covered (al-Jannāt's) hills and plains,
as if the area was amidst the darkness of night.

Leave this and recount to me
of the day they rode (their horses) like long-lasting rain clouds.

Two armies like two mountains between which the flashing (of swords)
is like lightning in heavy, rapid rain.

With them are the horses of A'wajī and Lāḥiq descent,
and mules of Shāḥij like the black-topped
grey-bottomed clouds.

A (large) army where piebalds get lost in its midst,
and its leader repeatedly identifies himself to be known.

* in reference to the huge, famous army of Daylam at the time

They came as if the earth was contained in their palms,
and Allāh knows the secrets of the unknown.

(The army) threw its fragrant elite into its deadly action and loud cries,
while the suffering is apparent in the voices of the
victorious lions.

The great anger led them to fight us,
and war cools the grudge of the aggrieved.

I threw them with nobles from Ya‘rub
of high-mindedness, from the great (mountain of) descent.

From Ḥāshid the people of pride and greatness,
and the heights of Bakīl, the refuge of the seeker.

Then* the enemy soldiers saw an immediate death that cannot be tasted
and so they abstained,
and death is the guaranteed excuse for the anguished shrillness of
the abstainer’s voice.

Death erupted before and behind them,
and death is better than the reproof of the reprover.

[190A]

They endured and left, as the night sheltered their gathering,
to Shuwābah, with a stride as wide as that of the
short-eared ostrich.

They were pursued by a Yemeni group,
which leaves not the aggressor unharmed if it defeated
him not.

So they withdrew from Shuwābah and their wounded (those shot)
also left,

* (because of the Imām’s highly skilled horsemen and their huge number)

except the remains of the slain (food for the roaming
birds of prey).

They desired to undermine our army when they resolved (to fight)
as if they desired (to undermine) the hills of Yalamlam!

It is a (successful) battle in my judgement but not
that which cures the sick heart, unless it weans.

War is raging while we and our foe
are like the gambler; he wins if he does not lose.

What is the excuse of 'Andān and Qaḥtān if
they forsake the Imām of truth, destructor of the criminal.

And the banner of Allāh's Religion waves among them,
and the law of the people of *al-zulm* is practised among them.

Say, 'we disobeyed our Lord and Imām,
so, our Lord, inflict on us a deterrent punishment if you forgive
not.'

Repent, rise for *Jihād* and get to work,
in order to gain reward in the hereafter and booty (in this life).

Verily, death (of the enemy) by the necks is definite and desirable,
what great men, for killing whoever is not defeated!

Death is more beautiful for the young man than a life
in humiliation, instead he will be smitten with arrows (to meet his
death).

The Imām (pbuh) said (the following lines), on the day of his departure (withdrawal) from Ṣan‘ā’, and instructed that the lines be written on the gate of al-Qaṣr in the year 612:

We left the dwellings of *al-zulm* and *al-fisq* empty,
how many young men cry for them and young women!

And we will make the enemy drink a bitter cup,
and we will lead the army against them again.

If the Arabs supported me against them, number for number,
I would fight them openly with the sword.

In war they have no skill,
and their fate in the raging war is none but death.

We are Allāh’s party and He is Victorious,
and they are the party of the followers of the accursed Mu‘āwiyah.

[190B]

When a group from *al-Bāṭiniyyah* opposed the Imām with poetry, containing defamatory lines, and the ‘*Ajam* sent it to him, the Imām (pbuh) said (in response):

Do you calumniate (*taqḍhif/qadhif*) the Prophet’s House and his *Waṣī*,
like the foolish Jews’ saying, ‘Mary is an adulterer’.

But there is no wonder for a group of others have already
said about Allāh
a saying that would make the unshakeable mountains crumble.

And our grandfather Aḥmad *al-Mukhtār* has also been satirised,
may Allāh the *Muḥaymin* (Preserver of Safety) not consecrate the
satirist.

You tried to see through a dark night but were night-blinded
by gleaming rays of divineness and purity.

Oh Muḥammad, the testimony for your purity is enough for us,
so what has been said suffices you (the satirist), may Hell
be your abode.

You placed yourself as guardian but transgressed the limits
to cursing us (the Prophet's House), serving Mu'āwiyah's claim.

As for the dwellings of *al-fisq*, *fisq* is manifest
in the open practice of various forms of sin (*munkar*).

Can it be denied that wine is drunk within their dwelling,
as well as a third sin of which you have known, and a second.

We commanded the taking of *saby* (war captives),
in protection of the *Dīn* of guidance, against every male and female
fault finder.

Indeed, our grandfather Aḥmad, *al-Mukhtār* (the chosen one) has
also implemented the *saby*,
as mentioned in the Book of Allāh (Qur'ān) if you are a reciter
of it.

And our grandfather Ḥaydar, *al-Muṭahhar* (the immaculate), followed
the prophet
by completely taking the lions of the jungle as *saby*.

They worshipped none but Allāh our Lord,
and they have none but the *Muṭahhar* as *dā'iyah* (preacher).

But due to the misdeeds openly committed by the people,
the Fāṭimī warmed his (iron) bars.

I will muzzle the face of *dalāl* (straying),
exposing every male and female sinner among people.

Far be it from (us) to abuse the defenders of the front,
but (we'll support them) with stabbing that leaves the
liver bloody!

We will call the troops of Allāh, Muḥammad's party,
the myrmidonic (followers), then let anyone who wishes to call his
gathering do so!

Whoever promises us war we will strike
on any forehead of his, that appears in the battle.

I was brought up in the war for ten and several more years,
up until today, the noble know my status.

[191A]

How many grand favours did I bestow upon the *'Ajam*,
but these favours were denied by members of your party.

You mention the kings of al-Shām, and to us
they are like the eight doors of Heaven.

The defenders of Muslims' fronts,
whose heights outreach the constellation of *al-Simākayn* *

They were cared for by Him who supported them with kingship
against every oppressor there and every tyrant.

We demanded our inheritance from Muḥammad
our father, with every male and female of high status among
the people.

* arcturus and spica virginus.

How many of us were speedily martyred on horseback,
(and are) now in a pleasing life with the *Muhaymin* (Preserver of
Safety)

How many souls of tyrants did our swords take,
for which the torment of Allāh's fire is prepared.

If we angered you, have patience
for banū al-Naṣb are known everywhere!

Do you think that poetry is impossible for a sayer?
How many languid (poets) have written rhyme!

But the noble among people demand the finest of poetry
and the most eloquent of prose in meaning.

And the cursing of Ibn Ḥarb was established for us by our grandfather,
so would (anyone) after this desire guidance from elsewhere?

The *Waṣī* has declared the curse,
and indeed, from the curse ('Alī) was protected by a protector that
reversed the curse back onto the people ('Alī's enemy).

Oh, Islam is lost indeed if you are its defender;
woe unto you! You have certainly cheapened its richness!

The best honour you arrived at is cursing us,
does the wild dog deny its masters?!

As for high forts on hill-tops,
could those (enemy) soldiers reach the stars?

In defence of the forts are shorthaired horses of pedigree,
and honoured youth, quenching the (thirst of the) Yemeni

swords (with blood).

Determined and generous (youth) from the peoples of Nizār
and Ya‘rub,

laughing while lions are crying!

I am the son of the Prophet and of his *Waṣī*,
and a sleepless eye of Allāh guards me.

You committed a great sin in uttering the curses and the insults
(*al-qadhf*),

and the secrets cannot be hidden from Allāh.

And Hamdān strikes back my strikers,
and Madhḥaj, Sanḥān , al-Amlāk and Kindah will also do so.

[191B]

And *Khawlān*, supporters of the Imāms
they are indeed to us like a mother bowing with love.

And Ḥimyar the lords of kings,
their grandfather to the midst of China sent his governor.

And among the masters of Turks and Kurds are a people
who have great aspirations towards the virtues.

If they become sluggish (in following) me then their pledges
on their necks will turn them quickly back to me.

Woe unto you when they change their minds against you
with a firmness that leaves the jinns in fear.

The Imām (pbuh) said in the battle of Shibām in which Prince ‘Imād al-Dīn fought fiercely in Rajab of the year 600:

You sufficed, though we did not attend, and you remain sufficient,
and you disfavoured the spears since you preferred the
swords.

You were a thorn stuck between the jugular veins
for those who deny the True-*Dīn*.

You were called ‘Imād al-Dīn’ when you supported the *Dīn*,
and placed the anchor of the *Dīn* throughout the regions.

You opposed the critic in fighting the aggressor,
and kept striking (the enemy) with sharp heads and edges
(of swords, spears etc.).

You faced the wave of (enemy) horses with a hurricane wind
that hurled and stunned those on the wave.

The Kurds gathered against you from every side,
but you showed a firmness that would leave lions dazed.

If brave young men of your people were present
they would have encountered stabbing that turns heads grey.

Though without you they fought a battle
against the foe, that was magnificent and unprecedented,
some battle that was!

On the other hand, several of the descendants of Ḥaydar
answered who called for the stabbing of (the) throats.

They assumed such a status that none can detract from its

reputation,

and which (even) the far away have heard of.

The Imām (pbuh) said (the following lines) in al-Manşūr's camp in al-Laṭiyyah and sent it under the name of his *mawlā* 'Mukhlāṣ al-Dīn Jāber b. Muqbil to Şultān 'Alwān b. Bishr b. Ḥāṭim to the camp of *al-ghuz* in al-Maṣānī' in the province of Ḥimyar:

[192A]

Our prayer is for Abū Ḥasan

as he spared no effort to tackle the wretchedness within you!

And your big leader desired what is known,

but then he was less fortunate and very niggardly!

So prepare for doom,

and taste the goblet of pure death.

Would the mercy of the Lord of the servants (of Allāh)

be held back by an ignorant (sinner) who trespassed his limit and committed aggression,

(Or) does he who urinates like a camel

want to prevent the bounty of the Possessor of Glory!

So where are the (men of) patience and those of science

and (those of) intelligence and of guidance?!

You rose to fight the Messenger's descendants (the Imām),

the son of al-Batūl (Fāṭimah) and the poison to enemies.

His father is 'Alī the Messenger's *Waṣī*,

the son of generosity, loftiness and nobility.

The one who was a symbol of war before he developed a
moustache (before his teens),

and by then was a master over his clan.

Where would you flee when the sons of Ya‘rub

approach you full of threatening anger and eager to fight!

Led by the sons of Ḥaydar,

the highly courageous in battle, and the sons of Aḥmad.

Of so many kings did the sons of ‘Alī curtail their aspirations,
despite (the kings) being of high intelligence.

Let the war rage with its youth,

and let the hero follow the hero.

So war would call: “Oh, contending men, join the fight!”

when those of status fall back or flee.

If you do not see them (our fighters) resemble the falcon,

in watching and striking bevy of sand-grouse,

then may we not be carried by the fast horses

that elevate us to the heights and above!

Desist from cursing Aḥmad’s sons,

and do not, through them, anger Aḥmad,

for they are ships which protect the fearful,

and moons that lead to guidance.

He will never curse them who differentiates

between the recitation of the Qur’ān and the chanting of the

caravan leader!

[192B]

And worse than cursing them is to fight them;

is there not an intelligent person who follows the
more intelligent!

So fear Him whose knowledge of the hidden

is like the knowledge of a clever person who knows of what
is clear.

The Imām (pbuh) also made (poetry) to all the descendants of Ḥasan (*Banī al-Ḥasan*) in
al-Ṣafrā' and Yanbu'.

Refrain from (speaking of) the dwelling of Mayyah in 'Alyā'
and al-Sanad,

and what there is there of hardship of life and separation
from loved ones,

and of three permanent stones that are not removable*

on a strong, matted and pressed felt cloth like the fur of
young gazelles!

But say to riders aiming towards the Bayt (Macca) that are arriving:

“O riders, we have kin in this town,

If you reach there, in good fortune and righteousness,

and may not your riding animals be hindered by the
obstacles of the distance;

then announce to all the living, seeking

the requirements of truth for those who are near and far
away.

* the stones that remain of the ruins which were used for cooking

A call aiming, publicly and privately, at the descendants of
Banī Ḥasan,

the most honoured people presented in any gathering
and fraternity.

And say to them, “a *da‘wah* has risen for your Qā’im,
so join immediately and support it hand in hand.”

Obedience includes you O Banī Ḥasan

and whoever accepts (obedience) will be gifted with
everlasting glory.

Would your rights be desired after your Imām?

Nay, it is like a prey desired from the lion’s den!

Long have I waited for you while war rages

with the sword in hand unsheathed.

These pulpits were not inhabited with the mention of your name,
though you were the head in Badr and ‘Uḥud.

They said, “the *Waṣī* is the fourth”, but I said to them:

“He is the second to the Prophet with no (doubt of) lies or
poor judgement.”

I made them sip the cup of their death in Azāl,

and in Dhamār I came into the midst of death.

My deeds did not shame you nor did

my spears leave without quenching their thirst with the
guts and the liver;

until I left your (heroic) reputation apparent on the sticks (spears),
despite the people of oppression and envy.

(So) put the bridles on the camels and mount every fine and
speedy horse

who are like the light fast cloud racing the wind in
open lands

Your inheritance has been taken by people other than you,
though he who seeks his right proceeds without delay.

[193A]

You are the best of Banī al-Zahrā', Fāṭimah,
the most eminent of (Fīhr) and the people of honour
and abundance in numbers.

And someone said to me while the war was raging
and the horses were covered in the blood of the courageous;

and (while) the two armies were roaring and rumbling,
and the striking on the helmets was like heavy falling hail;

and I had unsheathed the sharpened edge (the sword),
aiming for the centre of the legion, not waiting for anyone:

“Be gentle with yourself, for death’s destination
is difficult, but if you desire it then come!”

I then said, when horses were behind me, “I have an appointed
time to live,
when we come to its end there will be no more and no less.

And would a young man, whose origin is from ‘Alī,
approach death as if he was shackled with chains?”

Why do I see the two Ḥasans (*Ḥasanīs and Ḥusaynīs*) camping
away from me, making wealth and children an excuse.

They have swords which are not sheathed,

which can destroy the lofty storming foe.

Proud (as they are), if they are challenged with lineage
they would attribute themselves to the masters of Nadr
and 'Udud.

On them is very strong armour
of the making of Dāwūd, like a robust barrier.

I do not forget Ḥusayn who prayed for it,
how would I forget when it is the first to be struck when the
striking with the sword flares up.

(They are) white faced and courageous, their clothes
(when going) into battles are coats of mail.

They are the descendents of the best who walked
of Aḥmad's Āl, the best who guided and were guided.

Of them is the Imām of guidance, Zayd and his equal,
his brother Bāqir, the 'knowledge of Allāh', the one
of righteousness.

And Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, the trusted one,
whose piety is attested to by all the sects of Islam,
without exception.

And Zayd's grandson who in al-Jurjān was buried;
if we were asked to sacrifice ourselves for him, we would!

They are Imāms whose obedience Allāh commanded,
so whoever deviates from them in their path will perish!

O sons of the Prophet, respond to him who became
to you more gentle than a father to his son;

he who still struggles to retrieve your kingship
and covers the foe with the garment of sadness and distress.

[193B]

Fie on the great honour that leaves the truth crooked,
when your swords can straighten everyone of crookedness!

Fie on the knightly manhood (if) I ask other than you for support
when you are the best that can be hoped for and
depended on!

Fie on the zealousness (*al-ḥamyyah*) (if) I face the army alone
with no helper but the lonely sword!

The Imām (pbuh) composed an elegy for Prince Majd al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad -
may Allāh be pleased with him – when he was martyred in the conquest of Tihāmah in
Ṣafar in the year 607:

The most bitter grief is that which sheds tears
and makes, with its bitterness, the strong (person) bow;

and breaks the haughty with its canine teeth,
and transforms every striker into stricken.

O my friends, time is indeed like a ghoul,
it keeps changing its state until it has become a
terrible creature.

It deceives us and drives our thirsty ones,
with smooth deception, into the gleaming mirage.

And (many) who thirsts for a drink for his *dunyā* (the life of this world)

is given a drink by it which, despite his trust in it, is (the) deadly poison.

Our souls desire the *dunyā* dearly

but surrounds us with the breaking of ties (of blood) and disputation.

We take its gifts of pearls in threes,

and we accept its misfortunes as the fourth.

If you see me impatient now,

then it is long since I have been impatient with its major crises.

Many are the generous and courageous to be admired,

whom its crises transformed into (people of) fear.

The death of al-Ṭāliby, Abū Ḥusayn,

denied our eyelids sleep.

We lost him as a Mushrafi sword,

an abounding sea and fertile rain;

an Imām of Imāms and a torment to the foe,

a cautious lion and a well-defended fort.

We bid farewell to him and hope

that he would return to us quickly amongst his troops,

whenever we desire his forehead to rise!

(However) it is known that the (Day of) Resurrection is a promise.

Death called him and he responded in haste,
and though it is was difficult, he was obedient to it.

[194A]

He went forth as if death is a gain,
intending not to return to earth.

How great you are, oh deceased one!
The calamity of his (death) left us in great sadness and fear.

(He who was) the victim of the blades of those of *fisq*;
what greatness to be killed for the sake of his Creator!

He sold his soul for the sake of Allāh,
so despite the fear, be proud of him and his soul for
this deal.

My sorrow is comforted by the fact that
all his killers were killed;

and because my brother gave his soul for him
as consolation and became a companion for him;

and that my father's sons, the nobles of my people
and friends of honour all waded in the blood (participated
in bloody fighting).

So they returned the swords blunt and red,
and the lances broken and dangling (from their hands).

Around him were dead heroes, (a scene)
that resembled tree stumps.

(Their) defence was of nobles who rejected lowliness,

and feared the saying of those envious of them, “he (Yaḥyā
– the victim) was lost!”

They defeated their enemies and prevailed,
and the sword continued to snatch the self-fortified.

Those remaining of them were protected by darkness,
and the ignorance of Mānī became as apparent as the dawn.

We are for them, throughout time, (like) death,
forcing them to be visited by swords and hard hoofs.

It is upon us to cause them to be visited by men
who see their humblest clothes as armour.

Armies from the nobles of every clan,
the least of them is a courageous hero.

(Armies) that shade the piebald in the yards of these clans,
and to whom the high mountains bow in awe.

The bright, the dust rising (from the march of the armies)
topples the birds,
causing them to fall on the chins (as if) in prayer.

The forests of their spears block out the wind,
forcing it to turn back.

O Yaḥyā, if only your eyes could see us,
humbled due to your loss, not meekness.

In you we lost a generous sea of knowledge,
a courageous lion and a spring dew;

[194B]

a source of wisdom, pursuer and conqueror of the foe,
when commander and minder of (his army's) affairs.

And (how many) riders who struggled through a dark night
did you receive with high morals.

And (how many) events of great calamity which take
the old man back to infancy

did you unveil, solving their complexities,
and you were the striker of its courageous heroes.

And how many dangers did you remove, and (you were) a
contender against evil,
leaving wherever you camped prosperous and fruitful.

And how many striped swords did you sleep with,
while young men were sleeping with
candles (young women).

May you assuredly enjoy your afterlife,
while your foes are living a life of bitter thorn(s).

Brothers had taken revenge for you from them,
so may you be an intercedent for them with Al-Bārī (the
Shaper out of naught).

May Allāh's peace visit you every day,
and his mercy which is gentle, in its falling, upon (His
creatures).

And may the showery clouds still bring rain upon you,
and stimulate the shedding of tears.

You were enlivened with (martyrdom) which we were so
aggrieved of,
and your person neighboured the exalted hosts (of angels).

Angels repeat to you every day
words like pure honey.

So Badr al-Dīn * be patient in anticipation of Allāh's reward,
as what happened was not enjoyable.

Oh Tāj al-Dīn * you have been called by patience,
transmitted by inheritance to your father, so be attentive!

And tell the nobles of their clan to mourn him
and shake the swords and the raised spears.

Your father is the most courageous amongst *al-thaqalayn* (humans
and jinn),
in many a battle did he defeat the multitudes (of enemies).

And you are his descendants,
have you ever heard of offspring that differed from
its origins?!

The Imām (pbuh) has unique aphorisms, which we will mention here:

Concealing secrets is the asset of kings * Insistence in demanding (repayment) from the
insolvent leads to denial * The more (popular) the *bid'ah* (heresy) is, the faster [195A] it
dies out * Lying is an illness that causes suspicion * Modesty generates augustness *
Vulgarity breeds contempt * All of Īmān (faith) is beautiful and the best of it is patience

* Yaḥyā's father

* Yaḥyā's brother

* All of disobedience is ugly and the worst of it is in simple matters * Everything has an illness and the illness of manliness is bad manners * Forts are the (securing) pegs of Kingdoms * Carefulness is the trenches of soldiers * Too much jest brings enmity * Miserliness leads to depravation * Denial (of kindness) leads to disappointment * Giving thanks for beneficence leads to more * The best army is that in which ineffectual soldiers are minimal and whose commanders do not dispute * The best knights are those that return after feigning fleeing and were cautious before the assault * The best woman is she who reveals to you the secret, pleases the eye and gratifies you * The best of brothers (close friends) is he who consoles in crises * The best minister is he whose benefit is extensive and whose arm is far-reaching * Whoever fears fails * Cunning is the deputy of ability * Firmness is suspicion * Companionship of the vulgar leads to lowliness * Warmth for the malicious destroys benevolent virtues * Companionship of the eminent leads to eminence * The best money is that which is beneficial to relatives and harmful to enemies * The best of fathers is he whose son is honoured when he is mentioned and whom the tongues of the majority praise * The worst *bid'ahs* are those which oppose the Sunnah * The worst rulers are those who undervalue the skilful * The best rulers are those who select the finest of ministers * Belittling a favour leads to its vanishing * Thanking (Allāh) is the binder for favours and giving praise (to Allāh) is the favours' holder * Economising eases poverty * Extravagance lessens abundance * Necessity opens ways of inventing * The (ordained) life-spans are the forts of lives * When a life-span expires its possessor dies for the [195B] smallest of reasons * Honesty is one of the most perfect of the right causes of wealth * The brave man's hope is stronger than his despair, while the coward's despair is stronger than his hope * The authority of truth is greater than that of falsehood because its rulings cannot be changed or ransomed * The basis of wisdom is intellect, its head is *wara'* (austere righteousness), its centre is thought, and its sign is the fear of God * Forgiveness is the crown of kingship, vengeance is its sword, resolution its lance and cunning its arrow * Generosity is a tree whose base is modesty, modesty is a tree whose base is intellect while lack of modesty is a tree whose base is ignorance * Whoever inspects his own affairs is less occupied with those of (other) people * Whoever appreciates the greatness of Allāh's favours – Hallowed be He – , his status will become great, but whoever belittles them, his fears will multiply and his anxiety will double * Intellect is a balance and knowledge is (the person) who weighs * Between honesty and treachery, resolution and humiliation is great wealth * The incapable is not he who

abandons what he is unable (to do), but who abandons what he can do * The remedy for regret of the past is to forget, but if it is difficult to forget, then it is pretending to forget * Passing away is the worst calamity, and the most fortunate of people is he who is not tried except by death * The ugliest (form of) rejection is that of relatives or someone who showed (you) goodness; the ugliest cowardice is that shown towards your equal; the ugliest miserliness is that of a noble wealthy man; the ugliest *riyā'* (pretentious righteousness) is that of the scholar; the ugliest hypocrisy is that of an able one; the ugliest lust is that of an old man; the ugliest ignorance is that of a noble * The most beautiful forgiveness is towards him who is beneath you and who has recently insulted you; the best *wara'* (austere righteousness) is to refrain from what is needed most and not considered luxurious * Justice is the basis of religion, because he who has no justice has no (complete) religion, but justice may come from him who has no religion like the *mushrikān* (those who associate partners with God). Justice can therefore stand on its own without religion but religion cannot stand alone [196A] without justice, so look at the place of justice and how high it is, and its foundation and how stable it is * Reflecting on death is difficult, but mentioning what follows, good and bad, makes it easier * Enduring some humiliation is safer for keeping honour in general * Giving preoccupation as an excuse (for not worshipping Allāh) is ignorance of the value of (Allāh's) favours * Death is a great sorrow, eased by remembering that (others) will share in it * What could hide the shortcomings (of others) from those determined to expose them?! * Every predatory (animal or bird) hunts according to its capability * The people (of a state) are the basis of (the) authority * The humiliated governor causes the respect for the powerful sultan to diminish * Firmness is to be cautious of that which the intellect judges will happen were it not for caution, whereas failure is to think possible that which the intellect judges will not happen in most cases * Honouring the generous strengthens the motive towards generosity, but honouring the malicious tempts towards malice * Generosity is the key to subsistence, while stinginess is the key to deprivation, sooner or later * Knowledge is a house whose door is humility, its key is the fear of God, its support is patience, its roof is hope, and its walls are tranquillity * Pride from a (human) creature is a sign of ignorance of the beginning of his creation * Not to meet the (other's) good deeds (towards you) with the same is malice, but not to meet the (other's) misdeeds towards you with the same, when you are able to do so, is generosity * Forgetting the kind deeds (of others towards you) is a form of *kufṛ* (ingratitude) * Disobedience towards the wise and mild-tempered is

imprudence while obedience is prudence * Relying on the able is weakness * Contesting with a superior is failure and disobedience is disappointment * Steadfastness is the key to victory * Aloofness in places of dispute and fighting is simple-mindedness * The height of hardship is to challenge fate * Calamities are the contents of the depths of nights and days * The simple-mindedness of the coward is apparent in his blustering (talk) * Wisdom and mild-temperedness are the binders of honour, while imprudence is the key to meekness * The retainer of wisdom is silence * To be merciful to a tyrant is injustice * [196B] Browbeating the weak person is tyranny * Partiality towards the person who commits misdeeds is an encouragement * To show patience before a matter befalls is failure * Too much talk without precision is incompetence * You can never surpass the beloved companion with anything better than kind deeds * A rancorous person never prevails, the ungrateful is never generous, and an envious person is never content * The best quality of godliness is (the) returning to the truth * Many a transgressor has transgressed upon none but himself, and many a just person has been fair to none but himself * Ignorance is the devil's opportunity * Humility is the basis of Īmān * The belittling of (one's own) charity is the jewel of charity * Arms are a man's decoration, the best of which is the sword * Many a light word (is said) whose speaker paid for its heaviness, and many a laughing (word) might bring long sorrow * The most contented person is the least intelligent * The most niggardly person is he who disregards the obligations * He who respects the old cannot be chastised, nor can he who rebukes the one of *bid'ah* be described as harsh * (Look at him:) Lower minded than (he who) copulates with an animal * (Look at him:) less modest than he who is sodomised * (Look at him:) He has a determination stronger than he who meets the (enemy) army face to face (unarmoured) * (Look at him:) He is less fortunate than Ḥawmal's dog * Quarrelling with a superior is foolishness * Friendly censuring of an inferior is thoughtless, but of an equal it is fair * Whoever is capable of perfection (in something) but falls short is feeble * Whoever is sad for no reason but your sorrow, and is happy for no reason but your happiness is of true friendship * Handicaps bring together the incompetent * The sultan's need for subjects is greater than the subjects' need for a sultan because subjects can be found without a sultan but there can be no sultan without subjects * Well-being is the origin of the goodness of every good * Whoever plants evil harvests will regret (it) * Whoever sleeps on a hazard submits himself to danger * War is the war of the destinies * The root of defeat [197A] is the conflict of desires * Intimidation is the army of the

felicitous * Worse than evil is seeing enemies rejoice (at your misfortune) * The defeated is condemned * The sweetness of well-being is often brought about through bitterness (of hardship) * Falsehood is often concealed with truth * He who pretends to be mad is insane because the sane would not humiliate himself * The courageous is admired even if he is misguided * Weariness is the most important cause of the destruction of states * If Allāh wills that a state should end, He strengthens its opponents' hearts * Wealth does not increase with neglect * Deferring of payments is one of the types of poverty * Squandering is the strongest cause of poverty * Ruin is the fruit of ignorance * He who dallies with the sultan is like he who coquets with a lion * When kind deeds are not appreciated, their like are not encouraged * Belittling a favour is a kind of *kufṛ* (ingratitude) * The old man with his wife is a young man * Education does not change one's nature * The able one's excuse is accepted in all circumstances * The most courageous nations are the people of the advancing countries from every nation * He who dallies with the sultan is like a person who tries the poison on himself * Deviation stands only on the shoulders of the masters of ignorance * He who presents favours to an ungrateful person is like he who plants in a salt marsh * Knowledge is like a bride, it needs privacy * Whoever returns your kindness with mistreatment, his remedy is the sword if allowed by the *sharī'ah* (Islamic law), but whoever returns your mistreatment with mistreatment, his remedy is kindness * If injustice was a picture it would be the ugliest of pictures, and if generosity was a picture it would be the Yusuf (most beautiful) of humans * Deeds are the fruits of thoughts * When favours are plenty, great favours become small * Greed contradicts the sense of honour * A King's need for good policy is more than his need [197B] for power * Sincerity is the root of the righteousness of religion and life * The response is the fruit of the beginning, so if the beginning is evil then so will be the response, but if good, the response will be so (too) * A strong desire with the ability to obtain what is desired is one of the best favours * Every sultan who oppresses his people is ill-advised and unsupported, and his mightiness will be short-lived * Forts are the souls of states * Making a request at the wrong time is part of impossibility * He who does not take care in (dealing with) the lesser enemy will not be capable of (dealing with) the greater * Friendly censuring of the ignorant is like head-butting a mountain * Firmness is more useful than courage * Invention is better than endurance * Benevolence is the prosperity of states * Lack of benevolence is the destruction of states * Supplication (to Allāh) is an undefeatable army: sincerity is its

sustenance, riding horses and weaponry * Having good hope in Allāh shortens long distances at the blink of an eye * The sustenance of the child is the destruction of the father * Peace is the coward's field for his ruthlessness, but war is the field of his silence * Lack of forcefulness will result in defiance * Miserliness is the root of humiliation but generosity is the root of mightiness * Many a safe-keeping leads to loss * Ignorance is a sea whose traveller never survives, whilst knowledge is a safe ship * The liar (verbally) trivialises the difficult, makes near the far, lightens the heavy and makes possible the impossible * Taking a risk in giving generosity is better than taking a risk without it * Desires devour the sultan's wealth * Whoever makes the right judgement and accepts the right one's judgement is right from two perspectives, (but) whoever makes the wrong judgement and does not accept the right one's judgement is wrong from two perspectives * Treachery brings destruction while honesty brings prosperity * He whose intellect is greater than his strength is graced with his strength, otherwise it is a disgrace or (leads to) destruction * He whose intellect is greater than his wealth, his favours will endure in (all) cases (but) whoever's wealth is greater than his intellect will rapidly become poor [198A] * He whose intellect is greater than his courage surpasses his peers and defeats the courageous, but he whose courage is greater than his intellect drinks humility from large cups and becomes the prey of time's events * He whose knowledge is greater than his intellect is scorned by those of intelligence while he whose intellect is greater than his knowledge is one of the inheritors of (the teachings of) the Prophet * The eye of *'aḥāf* (reservedness) is trustworthy, the eye of anger is mad, and the eye of *hawā'* (desire) is treacherous * Making use of the slave is prosperity and neglecting him is destruction * Riding dangers fulfils wishes * By spending money, aspirations are reached * He who deserves leadership is the one who begins from the foundations, and he who does not deserve it is the one who starts from the summit - its foundations are gentleness and generosity and its summit is seizure and killing * Being afraid of possible (dangers) is firmness, but fear of (present) dangers is cowardice * He who disobeys the learned and intelligent will be swept away by the torrential ruin * Greyness is the leprosy of the hair, and were it not for the fact that it encompasses everyone, it would have been considered an illness from which people ran away, and those afflicted would be blamed * The poor's constrained emulation of the rich is a (case of) hardship * Over-scrutinising leads to disobedience * Many a wakeful person is actually asleep, many a resolute person is actually powerless, and many a safekeeping person is actually losing * He whose luck is

awake is never asleep * He will never strike sparks whose flint does not spark * Sincere love will not be given from someone whose love is shared * Whoever goes out of their mind is never right * Sleep on thorns but never on fear * A person of ill repute does not benefit from stoutness * Do not lend your hand to someone who will strike sparks in it * The eager person is assisted * *Ḥayā'* (modesty) is the root of obedience (to Allāh) * Lying is the root of sins * Great calamities are the sign of the downfall of states * He who takes revenge does not inherit shame.

The Imām (pbuh) wrote (the following letter) to his son Prince Al-Nāṣir Li-Dīn Allāh in Dhī al-Ḥijjah of the year 699 [198B]:

‘In the name of Allāh the Beneficent, the Merciful; all praise be to Allāh, and in Him we seek help,

Peace be upon you...

We praise to you Him, other than Whom there is no god, and we ask Him to fulfil our wishes in you and guide you to the path of guidance. To proceed:

The most worthy of virtues is the person for whom prophethood is the root of his tree, the *waṣiyyah** is the seed of his fruit, the Caliphate is the origin of his descent and the content of his kinship, for whom fondness is the pasture of the field of his grandfather’s law, and whose stronghold is (situated) at the top of a towering mountain of glory of which his father is the most high and prestigious. Assuredly Amīr al-Mu’minīn (the Imām) has discerned in you what he hopes to be right, and which has adjudged for him your purity and nobility. So, beware of contradicting his judgement and disappointing his belief (in you). Take refuge in patience, for it is bitter in the beginning but sweet at the outcome. Buckle down to the studying of the sciences for (knowledge) is the life of souls and hearts. (Take care to) select and master the most important (and) then the next most important. So start with becoming (filled with) knowledge of Allāh the Exalted, for this is the head of knowledge, the basis of the *Dīn*, and the magnet of survival. So proceed to understand it (knowing Allāh) with proof, and (proceed to understand) its responsibilities and requirements, what results from it and what is associated with it of His actions and the

rules of His actions, and what is lawful concerning Him and what is not. (Become knowledgeable of) prophecies, Prophetic canons, the Imāmate and their responsibilities and requirements. Follow that with the study of the Arabic tongue, for learning the science of the noble *sharī‘ah* is not valid without it. Then, after that, learn the basis of *shar‘* and its subsidiaries with their evidence, effective cases, causes, conditions, and the Prophetic words and deeds that support and guide them. You should, after that, accept the authority of *ijmā‘* (the consensus of (the scholars) of the ‘*Ummah*) and the ‘*Itrah*.

Let deeds be your vehicle, knowledge [199A] your guide and truth your way but do not rely upon your (own) proficiency. Reflect, when you are still and composed, on obedience to Allāh so that you oblige your heart with obligatory service to your Lord.

Do not weary of study, do not lean towards your own desires, and make the best of your free time otherwise people will soon take (up) your time with their concerns and you will become their means to reach their aspirations either as (their) master or follower – and you will fail (to achieve) the most important of your objectives. Make prompt use of your youth before it comes to an end, for whatever passes from it will not return and has no replacement, and cannot be redeemed. Resort to understanding and humility towards those from whom you received knowledge in particular, and towards the rest of the Muslims in general. Adhere to gentleness and consideration, except in the acquisition of general welfare and the doing of pious deeds, for they are a field of competition, so hurry (in doing) as much as you can. Force yourself to (accept the) bitterness (hardship) of obedience in order to enjoy the sweetness of recompense and reward. And do not forget the favours of Allāh the exalted bestowed upon you, regarding the nobility of the Prophetic origin and the excellence of the ‘*Alawī* pedigree, which the other pedigrees fall short of and to which necks bow down.

Exert yourself in the acquisition of science to become exalted in this life and in the hereafter. Acquire noble manners for they are the sign of *īmān* (faith) and beware of haste for it is the snare of the devil, and save your utterances from slips (indiscretions) of the tongue. Do not laugh too much for it deadens the heart and breeds sadness. Avoid the company of the fools** for it is contrary to *īmān*. Respect those of old age, and maintain

* The Shi‘ite belief that ‘Alī is the *Khalīfah* or Imām appointed by the Prophet.

** In this context this refers to those who do not practise the teachings of Islam.

the rights of those who deserve them and give them their rightful place in your consideration [199B]. Do not commit injustice when able to do so, and help others to rise above their failures, unless you know or think that this will encourage them to become embroiled in excessive wrong-doing. Give thanks for the little (small things) and reward kindness with kindness. Be fair with your adversary before you are forced to refer to a judge who pays no attention to intellect, and feel the fear of the Beneficent secretly and openly.

Know and fulfil your parents' rights, and be considerate towards your relatives (*raḥim*). Be humble towards believers, obedient to your ruler, and politic towards your charges. Do not sleep excessively, for it breeds poverty in this life and in the hereafter. Work earnestly and do not despair from achieving your goal. Relieve, if you can, the distress of the distressed. Thank Allāh in all your circumstances, whether in times of ease or hardship. Do not consider Allāh's favours upon you as evidence of His contentment with you, nor His affliction as evidence of (His) anger, for Allāh may put His *waly*'s (friends of Allāh) to a test while He gradually lures His enemy into a trap. So, in distress, be more hopeful than you would be when in comfort, and remember your Lord in comfort, and He will remember you when you are in hardship. Do not be content with simple pious deeds when demanding exalted status, for highness is not attained by comfort.

May the peace, blessings and mercy of Allāh be upon you.'

The sons of the Imām (pbuh) are: Muḥammad al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh, Aḥmad al-Mutawakkil 'Alā Allāh, 'Alī, Ḥamzah – who died in childhood, Ibrāhīm, Sulaymān, Ḥasan, Mūsā, Yaḥyā, Idrīs (who died in childhood), Qāsim, Faḍl – who died in childhood, Ja'far – who died leaving no children, Īsā' – who also died leaving no children, Dāwūd and Ḥusayn – who died an infant. [200A]

The daughters (of the Imām) are ten: Zaynab, Sayyidah, Fāṭimah, Jumānah, Ramlah, Nafisah, Maryam, Mahdiyyah, Āminah and 'Ātikah.

Muḥammad's mother is Dunyā b. Qāsim – a Ḥamziyyah. The mother of Aḥmad and 'Alī is Fāṭimah b. 'Alī b. Yaḥyā - one of the descendants of al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaq (pbuh). Ja'far's

mother is Nu'm b. Sulaymān b. Mufarij. Idrīs's mother is Man'ah b. al-Faḍl b. 'Alī b. Ḥātim. The rest are of different *'ummahāt awlād**. Assuredly, all their mothers became noble (for giving birth to noble children). The (noble lineage of the Imām's children) is well-known and their status against the enemies well-acclaimed:

When they ride the horses and congregate,
the earth burns (under the hoofs of their horses)
though the day is bitterly cold.

They are certainly most qualified for the following line of al-Mutanabbī, and (as the proverb says) superiority is solely for the victor:

(They are) a people for whom (the sign of) manhood
is the piercing of throats of enemy warriors, not puberty;

if they warn, then death is present,
or speak, then discernment and wisdom is uttered.

When they make an absolute oath and insist upon it,
whatever they say becomes that oath;

or ride the horses without saddles,
their thighs are the belts for the horses.

When they attend the raging war,
they take the souls of the armoured (enemy), whomever
they choose.

Their characters and their faces shine
as if these were their natural disposition.

* The plural of *umm walad* ('mother of son'): a term used to describe a slave girl (*ammah*) who becomes free by virtue of giving birth to a son from her master.

The Imām's appointed governors (*'ummāluh*) and judges:

The Imām (pbuh) was fortunate at the time of his *qiyām* (to be surrounded) with men from the *'Itrah* (pbut) who were earnest in their obedience to Allāh and to him. So he appointed as governor the Grand Prince Shām al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā (may Allāh consecrate his soul) over the regions of northern Khawlān, Banī Jumā'ah, Banī Baḥr and al-Ahnūm. He (may Allāh be pleased with him) [200B] was a man of attentiveness and diligence, (characteristics) suited to a man of his like, to the point that he continuously toured some western regions, despite his old age and frailness, preaching Allāh the Exalted and obedience to the Imām al-Manṣūr bi-Allāh (pbuh) until his feet were swollen. This was narrated by the Grand Prince 'Imād al-Dīn (may Allāh prolong his life).

The Imām appointed the Grand Prince Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā (may Allāh be pleased with him) governor of Najrān and Prince 'Alī b. al-Muḥsin (may Allāh be pleased with him) governor of Ṣa'dah. This was at the beginning of the governorship of these areas, but later Ṣa'dah and its districts, and Najrān and its connected areas were assigned by the Imām to the martyred Prince Majd al-Dīn Yaḥyā, the son of the *dā'ī* (preacher) to Allāh, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā b. al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaq (pbuh) which he governed until he was martyred (may Allāh be pleased with him). They were then governed by his brother Tāj al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā who remained in charge of them until the Imām al-Manṣūr bi-Allāh (pbuh) died.

He (the Imām), later on, also appointed *al-shaykh* Amīn al-Dīn Duḥrūj b. Muqbil over al-Zāhir. 'Ayyān and areas beyond, up to the western areas of Ḥujūr and Qaḥṭān, were assigned by the Imām to Prince Ṣafy al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm (may Allāh be pleased with him) until he died. Prince 'Alam al-Dīn Sulaymān b. Mūsā al-Ḥamzī (may Allāh have mercy on him) was appointed governor of al-Jawf and its districts, which remained in his hands until the Imām (pbuh) died. The Grand Prince 'Imād al-Dīn – *Thū al-Sharafayn* – Abā al-Muẓaffar Yaḥyā b. Ḥamzah b. Sulaymān was appointed governor of some of the areas beyond Zāhir of Banī Ṣuraym to al-Ṭarf, and from connected areas up to the province of Ḥimyar and its surrounding areas to (the fortress of) Bukar and

westwards towards Masāqit Ḥarāz which remained in his hands until the Imām (pbuh) died.

Judge Rukn al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Ja‘far was appointed governor of (the fortress of) Ḥaql and (its castle) Ḥuqāliyā and areas beyond them of Junub and its surrounding areas.

Reigning over Madhḥaj [201A] was *shaykh* ‘Azzān b. Sa‘d and *shaykh* Mufaḍḍal b. Abī Razāḥ (may Allāh have mercy on them). And in Madhḥaj there were scholars, some of whom were appointed, such as the learned scholar Rukn al-Dīn Sulaymān b. Nāṣir (may Allāh be pleased with him) and other scholars.

Revenues were collected by the Imām’s governors from the areas of al-Ḥijāz, and they used to be brought to him (pbuh), collected by his envoys. The Imām’s rule continued to prevail in the areas of Jaylān and Daylamān through his two *dā’īs* (preachers) Muḥammad b. As‘ad and Muḥammad b. Qāsim. Matters were well-organised in these areas and law and punishment (*ḥudūd*) were established.

The position of judge in Ṣa‘dah and its surrounding areas was assigned by the Imām to the honourable Judge Muḥammad b. ‘Abdullāh b. Abī al-Najm (may Allāh have mercy on him) and then to his son Judge ‘Abdullāh b. Muḥammad after him. The honourable Judge ‘Abdullāh b. Mu‘arrif (may Allāh have mercy on him) was appointed in the area of Wādī‘ah, and Judge ‘Amr b. ‘Alī al-‘Ansī (may Allāh have mercy on him) in Ḥūth and its districts. He also appointed Yaḥyā b. Ja‘far who was of great knowledge, reaching the level of *ijtihād*. I was informed by a trustworthy person that the Imām al-Manṣūr Bi Allāh (pbuh) was asked whether he was a *mujtahid* and he said: ‘He is one of the greatest *mujtahids*.’

However, there were in Yemen a group of followers of Judge Shams al-Dīn Ja‘far b. Aḥmad (may Allāh consecrate his soul), and other (scholars) including the learned scholar Sulaymān b. Nāṣir (may Allāh have mercy on him) who was of deep knowledge, reaching the level of *ijtihād*, and the honourable Judge Aḥmad b. Mas‘ud al-Ray‘ānī (may Allāh have mercy on him). They also included Judge Qā‘id b. Muqbil (may Allāh have mercy on him) and other scholars. In the area of Ḥijāz there was *al-Sayyid* Yusuf b. ‘Alī Ḥusaynī, the martyr (may Allāh have mercy on him), an honourable scholar in charge of Yanbu‘ and al-Safrā’, and long imprisoned (and martyred) on the instructions of *ṣāḥib*

Baghdad ('Caliph of Baghdad'), known as al-Nāṣir Aḥmad. And among these scholars is the honourable Judge 'Arfaṭah b. al-Mubārak, in charge of (the valley of) Sāyah, and the country of Banī Sulaym up to Mecca - where he, too, was killed on the instructions of al-Nāṣir. There was also Judge Maṣṣūr b. 'Alī al-Biṣḥārī, the *faqīh* Dāwūd b. 'Ubayd al-Khaybarī and others whose mentioning would take too long [201B]. We only mention a few as tracing them all will lead us away into over-lengthiness. The ones we mention are the most notable of the skilled, the judges and the Imām's advocates (pbuh).

The best of the elegies on the Imām al-Manṣūr Bi-Allah (pbuh) is the poetry said by his son Prince al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh Abī al-Qāsim Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh:

May muteness strike those (enemies) who rejoice (in the death of the Imām),
for it is far from me to be disconcerted by my father's calamity or my strength demolished by its greatness.

Whereas his departure (on the other hand) caused the war-ready horses to suffer an incurable illness
and the teeth of courageous lions to shatter.

Surely if women have cried, then Pleiades
has cried for him amongst her bright stars.

And if one day enemies rejoice (at his death),
I am assuredly, with the calamities of time, unaffected like the shining star.

He is not dead who leaves for those left behind
two heavy stacks: one of generosity, the other of abundant giving.

If it was not for my patience at his loss,
my heart would have risen above the neck*

A matter of grave loss that inflicted itself upon us,

and a loss which covered the shining sun and full moon
with a black fog.

And if such calamities had not afflicted our compeers before us,
those of sound mind would have no patience!

But they are the days that cause new (events) to become old;
then such events pass, and each day passes following a
certain order.

And those (other events) that appear to us with an ugly face,
while showing themselves in their green clothes!

Never, a single day, have they (the events) come up upon us with a
beautiful appearance,
so they could have been snatched from the sharpness of
canine tooth or claw!

But instead they appear with ugly grinning teeth and shrunk lips,
and with the (disturbing) sidelong glance of an ill man!

So who is for the lofty matters, the top halves of spears and
generosity,
and who is for the swiftest horses or the dark spears?!

Who after B. Ḥamzah is for the handling of the foe,
in a huge army (of) seemingly similar units?!

Who is for the horses of pedigree,
when bent and broken spears are continuously in action
amongst them?!

Who is for the orphans when you left them in their despair,

* A metaphor for death

like the eggs of the *kudri* sand-grouse left in the waste-
land?!

[202A]

May the enemies not enjoy their master's (Imām's) death,
nor rise from every brutal calamity!

O mourner, may muteness strike you; I wish you did not
mourn to us

that which to us is not unfamiliar!

(As) none amongst the nobles of Luway b. Ghālīb (b. Fīhr) are
left alive,

so the heavy loss (including the Imām's death) is supposed
to be (felt) only amongst the Fīhris;

I (also) observed that death did not leave Muḥammad
in his state and not (even) Abū Bakr;

and it (death) finally caught the best after Muḥammad:
he who was killed by al-Tajūbī*, who came from Egypt;

and of the Arab Bedouins it afflicted Qays b. 'Āṣim
and 'Amr b. Kalthūm, and many others of inherited
generosity;

and it caught up with Bīṣṭām b. Qays b. Khālīd,
and he of the crown in Ḥijr.

The misfortunes tired upon me,
so I left no route to knowledge without taking it, as if
I have no knowledge.

I know that they (the misfortunes) will surely end,
even those (that are) difficult to tackle.

There is no eye but the one with lofty aspirations,
and no heart but the one that turns on a fiery stone!

For a calamity that afflicted the Muslims
until they became like the drunken.

I was afflicted with the tragic loss of him (the Imām)
who had no equal at all, and was of pure noble qualities.

Oh praise be to you, surely on your departure (death) you were
not foresaken,
nor of displeasing or bad reputation!

(So much so) it is as if you did not ride a horse,
nor endured days that were famous and of prestige;

nor conquered, with horses whose eagles are apparent
upon the head of a righteous one, assisted by victory;

nor defended with a stabbing of the exhausted (fighter)
as if you were a lion from the den of dhū-Ajr;

nor did the debilitated and dishevelled wait long for you, due to
their affliction,
as dry years await the rain!

(Many) night guests you did invite to be hosted
quietly, after they had ridden through the night;

and (much) hidden knowledge you revealed, (many) a knight
you have stabbed, and sufferer freed from captivity.

And you married the daughter of a noble (armour) whom none

* Ibn. Maǧjam, Imām Alī's assassinator

would seek but the dark lances;

[202B]

and (many) barren lands you traversed (exposed) to the foe,
with lean horses of pedigree, running in their bridles.

All this (said), I used to pick
the bitter tasting fruit of a tree about to be felled.

Destiny carried them away from us and left behind
(that of) loftiness and red illumination.

By Allah, I will forget not the pledge you made to me,
unless I am hidden in my grave;

nor will I abandon a pledge I committed myself to,
for I am not tired and feeble, nor am I inexperienced.

Notes

¹ There is mention here of five persons qualified for the Imāmate in the same era. This is one of the issues which the Yemeni and the Caspian Zaydīs had different opinions on; the Caspian Zaydīs supported the idea of having more than one Imām in the same era, while the old Yemeni Zaydīs refused the idea. For the principles of choosing between the Imāms, please refer to section 1.2.1. “The Post of Imāmate” pages 47-48.

² The *Karāmahs* of an Imām are one of the issues that the Zaydī authors concentrated on when writing the biographies of their Imāms. *Karāmah* is not a required quality of an Imām, but some Zaydīs saw it as a supporting one, as a sign of the Imām’s grace. The author, al-Muḥallī, offered a great deal of material in this regard when he spoke of Imām Ibn Ḥamzah (p.125). Please refer to section 1.2.2. “The Zaydīs and the Divine Right Theory” page 52.

³ For a clarification of the Imām’s infallibility in Zaydī thinking, the view of Imām Ibn Ḥamzah on this idea since he supported the claim of Imām ‘Alī’s infallibility, and whether Imām Ibn Ḥamzah claimed infallibility for himself, refer to the Introduction (Section 1.2. “The Zaydiyyah”; section 1.2.1. “The Post of Imāmate”, pages 47-48; section 1.2.2. “The Zaydīs and the Divine Right Theory”, pages 50-51). Also see page 122, in reference to the Imām’s religious knowledge.

⁴ This paragraph refers to the Prophet Muḥammad’s conquest of Khaybar (7th year Hijri), however the language Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah uses to describe Imām ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib’s stature is one of exaggeration, as the actual historical account is different and is as follows:

The conquest of Khaybar was under the Prophet Muḥammad’s command, while ‘Alī was only one of a number of important figures. The conquest and the military engagements lasted several days until many fortresses in the Khaybar area were finally under Muslim control. None of the Muslims were known to have retreated or deserted during the conquest. ‘Alī was not the only person to have fought hard in battle, Muḥammad b. Maslamah is another example (see Section B pp.79-80, footnote 4).

⁵ The Fāṭimī ‘Alawī descendants, or the *’Itrah* as the Imām insists on referring to them, are here exaggerated in their definition; a reflection of the great influence the Divine Right Theory had upon the Imām. In his verse on the following page, Imām Ibn Ḥamzah repeats the same idea of the absolute right for only the “Prophet’s progeny” to take the Post of Imāmate. Refer to section 1.2.2. “The Zaydīs and the Divine Right Theory”.

⁶ See footnote 5.

⁷ *Dhuriyyah* (Prophet’s descendants/progeny), or as the Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah referred to elsewhere as *’Itrah* or *Ahl al-Bayt*, were terms used by the Imām to highlight his philosophy of Divine Right; a religious duty for him and his ‘Alawī family to be the masters in all aspects of life. This theory is discussed throughout the introduction; also see section 1.2. page 46 and section 1.2.2. page 50.

⁸ Religious knowledge is paramount as a quality of the Imām in Zaydī beliefs. However under the influence of “The Divine Right Theory”, some Zaydīs understood it a particular way alongside the claim of the Imām’s infallibility (p.109). Refer to section 1.2.2. “The Zaydīs and the Divine Right Theory”, pages 50-52.

⁹ The author, al-Muḥallī, in the next few paragraphs mentions some of the Imām Ibn Ḥamzah’s qualities, such as possessing scholarship, piety and being recognised as a soldier. Such qualities were part of the required qualifications for the Zaydī Imām. Refer to section 1.2.1. “The Post of Imāmate” for a full list of these qualities.

¹⁰ Please refer to footnote 2.

¹¹ *Prophetic Dreams*: The term *manāmāt* (dreams) in the Arabic text is described as *ṣādiqah*, which literally translates as “truthful”, and thus gives the meaning that these dreams come true in reality or are what we might call visions. The phrase also refers to the guiding dreams which help individuals make certain decisions. The word “prophetic”, although limited in that the text refers only to virtuous people and not prophets, is the

closest English word to encompass the vision and guidance meanings of the Arabic terms. In Islamic tradition it is known that the dream of a virtuous person is a part of prophecy.

¹² Mention is made here of The *Bay'ah* or pledge to the Imām, which is expressed in religious terms, such as *jihād* and *amr bi al-ma'rūf*. The influence of the Mu'tazilite school, but with a Zaydī identity, is obvious here. Refer to section 1.2.6. "The Zaydiyyah and the Mu'tazilah" page 56.

¹³ The language which Imām 'Abdullah b. Ḥamzah uses here can be understood for propaganda purposes more than for historical account, as without the support of the rebelled Ayyubid leaders and their soldiers, the Imām would not have been able to gain control of Ṣan'ā' and other places (Muḥammad b. Ḥātim al-Yāmī, *Al-Ṣimṭ al-Ghālī al-Thaman*, pp. 45-66).

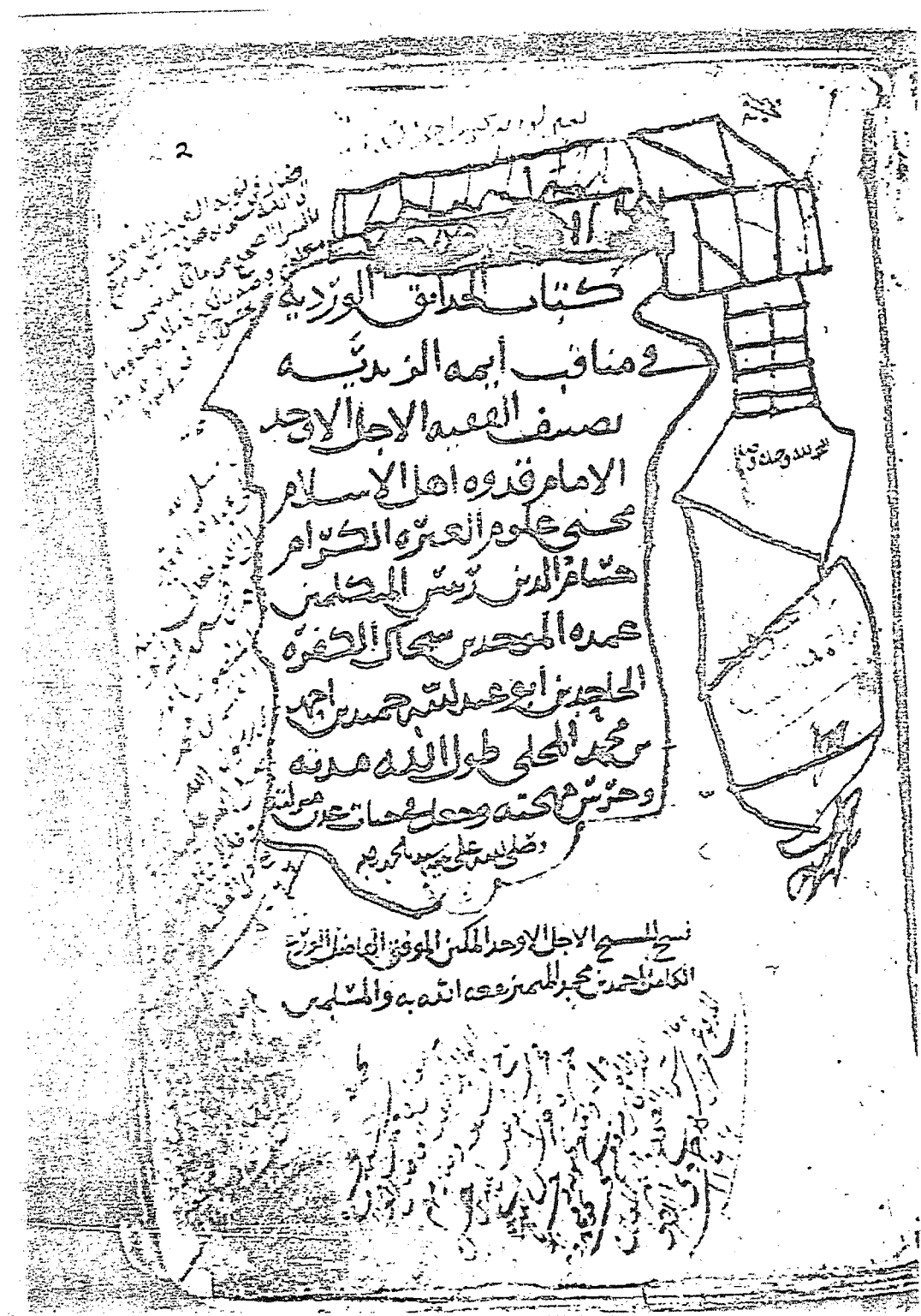
¹⁴ It is a matter of wonder that *'Ālims* (Scholars) were unable to exercise their right to express their views in a peaceful way without having to face such hardship and violence. Refer to section 1.2.2. page 51.

Conclusion

- The main object of al-Muḥallī in his work *al-Ḥadā'iq*, is to represent the virtues of Amīr al-Mu'minīn and to insist on the superiority of his descendents from his marriage to Fāṭimah, the Prophet's daughter. Al-Muḥallī delivered this message through the biographies he wrote for the different 'Alawī Imāms, including that of Imām 'Abdullah b. Ḥamzah. *Al-Ḥadā'iq* was in this matter not only a book of history, but also a material of propaganda for the 'Alawī descendants in their claim for leadership in Muslim society.
- Regarding the *Sīrah* of Imām Ibn Ḥamzah, al-Muḥallī managed to fill the gap for us to an extent, which was caused by the loss of the greater part of the main biography of the Imām, *al-Sīrah al-Manṣūriyyah*, written by Abū Firās Du'thum.
- The author manages to represent Imām Ibn Ḥamzah as an example to be looked upon in numerous fields; the pious individual, philosopher, scholar, man of literature, poet, fighter, statesman, leader, as well as the man who cared for his family and his people.
- Al-Muḥallī succeeds in painting a positive picture of the Imām in his relations with those around him, particularly in his conflict with the Ayyūbids and Muṭarrafis and his reputation and influence outside Yemen.
- Although al-Muḥallī always referred to the Imām with the title *al-Manṣūr*, (the victorious) he also illustrated the Imām's suffering due to his increasing loss of support, among the Yemeni people.
- Al-Muḥallī revolved all events around the Imām, often ignoring major historical events of the time. For example there is no mention of The Crusades, which were a real threat for the whole region. Even local events

were sometimes ignored, for instance the important roles played by others in support of the Imām, like the Ḥātimī Sultāns and those Ayyūbīd leaders who switched their allegiance to him.

- The way the author describes the Imām in certain places in the biography is substantially exaggerated, to the point of turning the text about the Imām from a historical document, to one that is nearer a myth or legend.
- Al-Muḥallī fails to give an account of the differing opinions within the Zaydī circles in Yemen towards the Muṭarrafi -Zaydī sect. He represents only one opinion, which is that of Imām ‘Abdullah b. Ḥamzah, who was extremely against them, inflicting “kufr” upon them. The author only concentrates on justifying the Imām’s measure of bloody repression against the Muṭarrafis.
- As it was clear that the reasons behind the different conflicts in Yemen were not necessarily religious, the author fails to mention any other possible social, economical or political motives.
- Finally, al-Muḥallī as a man of literature, really succeeded in presenting the biography as a work of art, particularly by quoting those long verses from the Imām’s poetry.



The title page of the Vienna manuscript (ف) copy of *al-Hadā'iq*.

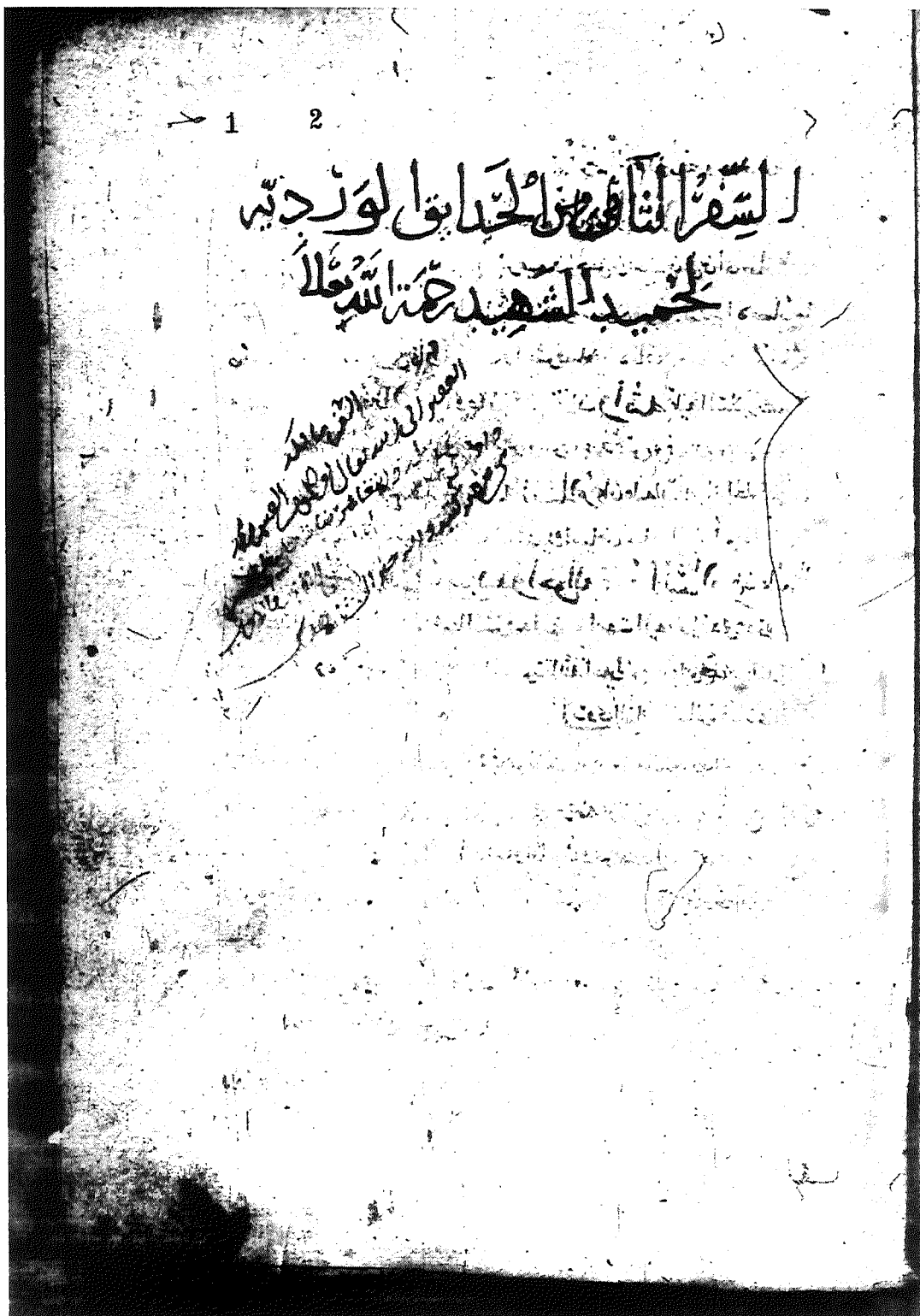
السرور والحمد لله

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا
السرور والحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا
هو ابو محمد العترة من ائمه من اسمعيل بن ابراهيم بن الحسن
بن الحسن بن علي بن ابي طالب عليه السلام فرج وجه شمس
في ارض الخيرات ونور شجرة ريقه فتوقد لذوي الابصار
ما في اياه عليه السلام الامن فاق وراق واشهر فضله عليه
السلام في الافاق وقد تعدد ذكر اياه عليه السلام
وهو غير المتناهي وضوءه اهل الاعراف وامه
عليه السلام هند بنت عبد الملك بن سنان بن مسلم بن عبد الرحمن
بن حمزة بن سهل بن عمرو بن عبد شمس بن عبد ود بن
صخر بن مالك بن جش بن عادي بن ابي جهم صفته
عليه السلام كان عليه السلام تام الخلق اسفل اللوز كثر
الحبة وكانت لحته كالقطنه الشديدة الباض ككاه النسيج
ابو طاهر عليه السلام ذكر طرف من مآقبه واحواله عليه السلام
كان عليه السلام من اعمار العزة الرضية ويوافتها الشرفه
المضيه انتهى اليه الرئاسة في عصره وتتميز الفضل على
اناد قريته وقد احبوا الامام المنصور بالله امير المؤمنين
ابو محمد عبد الله بن حمزة بن سليمان بن ابي طالب عليه وعلى اياه
الاكرم من قال في القاضي العالم ابن عمار: قال احتري
فقيهنا ان سوا الله صلى الله عليه واله في عصر الحسين

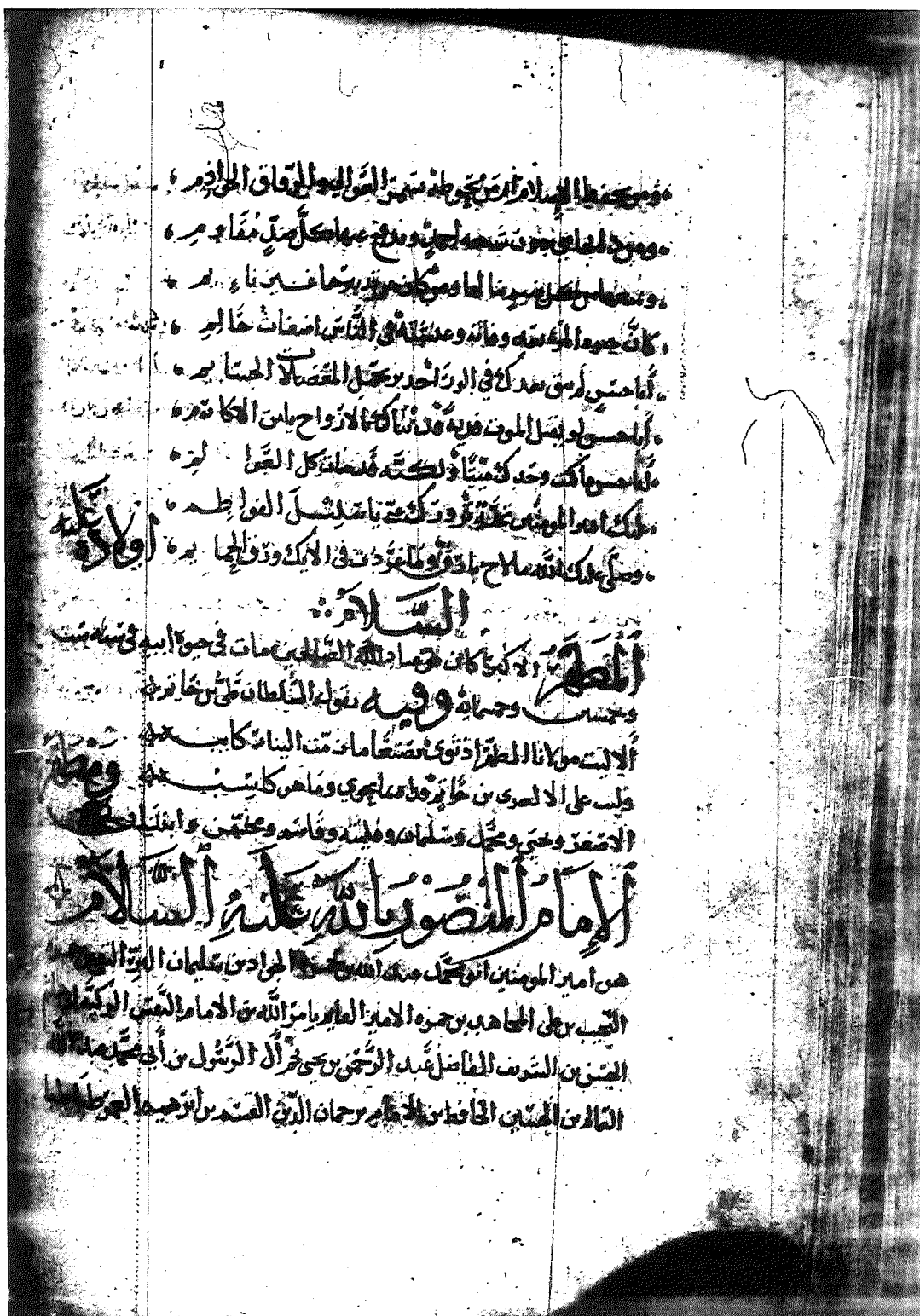
The first biography in the Vienna manuscript.

ومن خلا الحجاب برأ وتبجبه وحسن مقل في الانام وصاير
 ومن انبلا في الاف في حومه الوغا ويكسب قهاملت ضار
 ومن لم كان مفعلا بشر ما يصغر عن ادراكها كالحج والعمرة
 ومن حفظ الاسلام اثم من غوطه بت سمر العوالي والزقاف والحق ادم
 ومن فاعامى دون سبعة لعبد ودفعتها كل ضيق مت ادم
 ومن عوامن كل ضمير ناله او من كان عن يد مراع غير نايبر
 كان حياه المرو بعد وفاته وعشنته الناس اصفاف جالبر
 المحسن لم يقعد في الورى جدي رحل العسلات المسايبر
 المحسن لو قبل الخوف فيه فذناك الارواح باين الاكارم
 المحسن ما كنت وحرك ميتا لكنه قد مات كل العوالم
 عليك امير المؤمنين خبه زوركي عنى ليل الفواطر
 وصلى عليك الله ما لاح بارق ومعدت في الاكر وزوال الجاير
 اولاد عليه السلام الطير الاكر كان من عباد الله الطالين
 مات في حيوة ابيه خبه ست وخمين وخمين
 // وفيه قول السلطان على حاتر
 الايت مولانا الطير اذ توى صنعا ما زمت السار كايه
 ولت على الاغري حاتر فراه ما جوى وما هو كايه
 ومظهر الامير وخي ومحمد و سلمن و طيته وقاير
 ومحسن و امتان في الامام المصطفى الله
 عليه السلام وامر الى من ابو محمد عبد الله من حرة الجواد

الامام عليه
 السلام



The title page of the Chester Beatty manuscript (ش)



The page starting with Imām Ibn Ḥamzah's biography in the Chester Beatty manuscript.

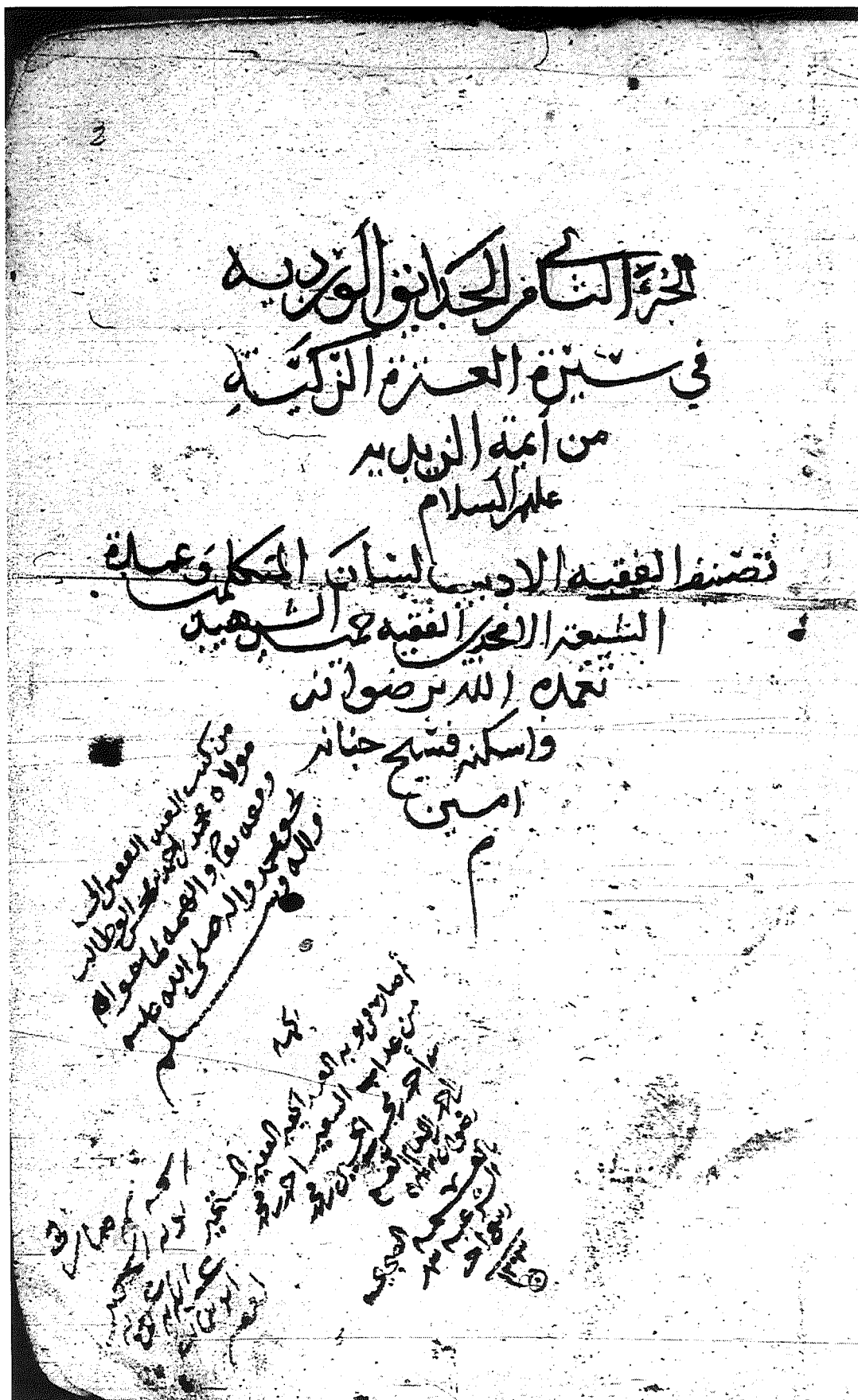
امن من الخوف وامن بالفتن من المائف نسال الله سبحانه وتعالى
 . ينجينا في كآفه الاحوال وسددنا على ما سن الحلال
 . وتايدنا ودنا عن كل تل الضلال وعلما مستنيرة
 . به اذا جئت بنا حير ظلم الحقال ومحمد يعلى
 . على حبل النوان وتنا كبر الصلواة
 . على محمد والخير وال

وحننا الله وبع الوكيل
 . وبع المولى وبع
 . المصطفى

لم الكتاب بحمد الله ومنه ولطفه وكرمه صفا يوم السبت اظهره خامس عشر من رمضان
 اكتم الذي هو من شهر سنة ١٢٧٠ والعشرة من شهر ربيع الثاني عليه وعلى
 وسلم ولا حول ولا قوة الا بالله العلى العظيم

على
 ١٢٧٠
 ربيع الثاني

The last page of the Şan‘ā’ Great Mosque manuscript.



The title page of the British Library manuscript (ل) No. Or.3786.

الحمد لله رب العالمين و بركاته و صلوات الله على سيدنا محمد و آله
 الامام القاسم بن ابراهيم عليه السلام هو ابو عبد الله القاسم
 بن ابراهيم بن اسمعيل بن ابراهيم بن الحسن بن الحسن بن علي بن ابي طالب
 كرم الله وجهه و عليه السلام هـ فرغ دوحه شقت في ارض الخمار و نور شجر
 زيتونه متوقد كدوى الانوار ما ابايه عليهم السلام الا من فاقه و ارفق
 و انتشر فضله في الافاق و قد تقدم ذكر ابايه عليهم السلام و هم عيسى
 البشارة و وصف اهل الاعراق و اما عليه السلام فابن
 عبد الملك بن سهل بن مسلم بن عبد الرحمن بن عمرو بن سهل بن عمرو
 بن عبد شمس بن عبد ودد بن مالك بن حنبل بن عامر بن لؤي صفق
 عليه السلام كان عليم تام الخلق ابيض اللون كث اللحية و كانت لحيته
 كالقطعة لشده بياضا حكاها السيد عليم ذكر مناقبه عليه السلام كان عليم
 سراجا راعته المرضيه و بواقيتها المشرقة المضيئة انتهت اليه
 الرياسة في عصره و تميز بالفصل عن ابناء دهره احبنا الامام حسن
 عليه السلام قال روي القاصم العامر عمار قال اخبرني فقيه الرسول
 في عصر الحسن بن علي قال اخبرني ابي القاسم الزكيه و الشبيه المرضيه
 حمزة بن ابي هاشم الامام الرضي بن فقهه عزابيه الى شيخ من سيوخ الحسن
 كان يدرسه عليه في بيان آل الحسن و كانوا اذا جاءوا قاموا في وجوههم
 و تعظمهم فاقسموا عليه لا يفعل و كان القاسم عليم من شباب
 ذلك العصر و كان اذا اتي قام في وجهه و عظمه فقالوا ايها السيد
 اما قد عدنا ناك و هذا القبيح لك اعذرنا فقال لو تعلمون من حق

هذا الغلام

The page before last of the British Library manuscript (J) No. Or.3786.

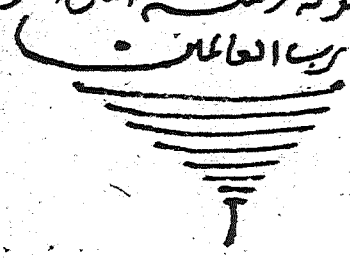
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم وبه استعان والافتقار
المسلم بن ابراهيم عليه السلام

هو ابو محمد المسمى بن ابراهيم بن اسمعيل بن ابراهيم
بن الحسن بن الحسن بن علي بن ابي طالب عليه السلام
مرغ به وجهه شفت في ارض الفخار ونور سحره رسته
منوقه لذوي المناظر ما في ابايه عليهم السلام
الامن فاق وراق واشرف فضله في المفاق وقد
تقدم ذكر ابايه عليهم وهم غير المشتاق وصفه
اهل العراق وامه عليهم هذا انه عبد الملك بن سهل
بن مسلم بن عبد الرحمن بن عمرو بن سهل بن عمرو بن عبد
شمس بن عبد ورج بن نصر بن مالك بن حنبل بن عامر بن لؤي
صفتهم عليهم كان عليهم تامر الخلق اسفل اللوت
كث اللحية وكانت تحتها كالعظمة الشديدة البيضاء
حكاها السبد ابو طالب عليهم ذكر كثر طرف من
واحواله عليهم كان عليهم من اثار العترة الرضية
وتوافيقها المسرقة المضيئة اهدت اليه الرئاسة في عصره
وعزز بالمصل على اناج هزمه وقد احزننا الامام المصطفى
بالله امر المؤمنين ابو محمد عبد الله بن حمزة بن سليمان سلام

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اجمعين وهو المجلع على نور جلتك وسراير سر وعلا فيك وظهر سر لا
 تخفى عليه خافية ولا تغيب عنه غايبة قال تعالى ما يكون من محوى
 ثلاثة الا هو رابعهم ولا غيب الا هو سادسهم ولا ادى من دكر ولا اكر
 الا هو محرم ايها كانوا امراد تعالى انه عالم باحوالهم علا التفصيل
 كجلبس القوم في علمه باحوالهم الظاهرة وله تعالى الغزبية العظيمة
 في العلم باحوالهم الباطنة مع الظاهرة على التفصيل فكيف لا تراقب
 ايها العبد مولاه وهو الذي اعطاك وخوذك واغناك ومهلكك
 واقناك افتقبل على هو اكر وتشتغل بدنياك وتعرض عن اخرالك
 واليهما عودك ومنتهاك جزاءك بدلتك وشيئك ولا تكن لوارثك
 فتموت قبل انتمها الى ما جاهد الحكيم في الترتيل خلا اذا بلغت التراقي
 وقيل من راق وظن انه الفراق والتفت للساق بالساق الى ركبته
 يوصيك المساق كم من نادى لم يغن عنه نداه وحادي في النار
 ركبته قد صدمه ومو من مكره الى اجته كالبرق الحياض تداين
 من الحياض وايقن بالفوز من المتالف نسال الله توفيقا يهتدي
 في كافة الاحوال وقد بدأ احدونا على محاسن الاخلاق وتاييدنا
 يدودنا عن مراتع الضلال وعلى استغفارنا اذ اذ جنت
 دياجير الجحيم ونحمده تعالى علا جود التوار ونسال الصلاة على
 سيدنا محمد وال خير الرحمة الله ونعم الوكيل ثم محمد ام و

عونه ومنه امين
 رب العالمين



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