

# Early Shī'ī Thought

*The Teachings of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir*

ARZINA R. LALANI

I.B.Tauris

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## CHAPTER FOUR

## Al-Bāqir's Views on the Imamate

This chapter looks at al-Bāqir's interpretation of the imamate. In his view, imamate, like prophethood, is divinely ordained and based on the Qur'ān. He further elucidates his views by emphasising the prophetic traditions that demonstrate the affinity between the Prophet and 'Alī. This is subsequently reflected in his theology of the imamate in which he describes the attributes that an imam possesses. The imam is to be followed because of his inherent qualities, including *'ilm* (knowledge) and *'isma* (impeccability). Al-Bāqir's views on the imamate had a profound impact on a number of people who as a result became attached to his circle of adherents despite the divergent notions of authority that existed at the time.

## The Qur'ānic Basis of the Imamate

In the discussion of the nature and basis of the imamate, Shī'ī sources suggest that al-Bāqir laid great emphasis on the Qur'ānic verse 5:55.<sup>1</sup> This verse can be translated as:

Indeed your [real] Protector [or Guardian] is only God, His Messenger and those believers who perform prayer and give the *zakāt* while prostrating.

or as:

Indeed your [real] Protector [or Guardian] is only God, His Messenger and those believers who perform prayer and give the *zakāt*, and they are the ones who prostrate.<sup>2</sup>

The difference between these two translations depends on one single letter, i.e. the *wāw* which, besides being a conjunction (*wāw al-'atf*), can also be grammatically used in this position to introduce the state a person was in when performing the action in the previous clause (*wāw al-ḥāl*). The first translation of the verse takes the *ḥāl* into account, while the second ignores it. Both these translations have significant implications. If the *ḥāl* is rejected, it would mean that all believers are fit to be the *walī* (guardian), whereas if the *ḥāl* is accepted then, besides God and His Messenger, the *walāya* is restricted to those believers who give *zakāt* while still prostrating in prayer.

Muslim exegetes<sup>3</sup> have, over the years, entertained contradictory views on this verse. Some believe that it refers to 'Alī who, while kneeling in prayer, once threw his ring<sup>4</sup> to a beggar who stood asking for alms. Others maintain that the verse really refers merely to believers. They maintain that it was revealed when 'Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit freed himself from the patronage and alliance of the Banū Qaynuqā' and went over to the Messenger and the believers.<sup>5</sup> Still others, like Ibn al-Kalbī, think it was revealed regarding 'Abd Allāh b. Salām and his companions when they became Muslims and the Jews broke off their contract of clientage (*muwālāt*).<sup>6</sup>

Commenting on the verse, al-Bāqir categorically maintains that it was revealed at the time when the Messenger was with a group of Jews, amongst whom 'Abd Allāh b. al-Salām was present.<sup>7</sup> As soon as the verse was revealed, the Messenger got up and walked towards the mosque where he met a beggar. Inquiring if anyone had given him anything, the beggar pointed to a man who was still praying. The man was 'Alī.

However, what we read of al-Bāqir's view according to two of his traditions mentioned by al-Ṭabarī is quite different from the accounts given in al-Qummī, al-Ṭūsī and al-Ṭibrīsī. In al-Ṭabarī's account,<sup>8</sup> when al-Bāqir is asked with reference to the

verse in question, 'who are those who believe?' his reply is '*al-ladhīna āmanū*', 'those who believe'. When the group cornered him, saying they had heard the verse was revealed in reference to 'Alī, al-Bāqir gave an equivocal reply: 'Alī is among those who believe.' Al-Ṭabarī's selection of reports on this verse is both fascinating and revealing. He puts forward the varying reports alongside each other without assessing them, sometimes using the same authority to narrate contrary views. It is interesting to find al-Ṭabarī using al-Bāqir's traditions twice to deny the Shī'ī position, which would suggest that there had been some early arguments about al-Bāqir's position. Moreover, the two traditions used by al-Ṭabarī have a common origin in the *isnād*<sup>9</sup> which is itself regarded as problematic by some critics.<sup>10</sup>

There seems to be, therefore, strong evidence that the verse was regarded by some as referring to 'Alī; for even al-Ṭabarī, despite his use of traditions to the contrary ascribed to Abū Ja'far (i.e. al-Bāqir), found it necessary to include a number of traditions indicating that the verse referred to 'Alī. But the question remains how it can refer to a single person when the form used in the verse is in the plural: *alladhīna yuqīmūna al-ṣalāt*. The arguments al-Ṭūsī uses to address this problem are taken directly from the Qur'ān where not only God refers to Himself in the plural<sup>11</sup> but where there are a number of other verses in which the plural is used when in reality only a single person is meant. For instance, verse 168 of *sūra Āl 'Imrān* says:

Those who say about their brethren [who were slain] while they themselves sat [at ease]: If only they had obeyed us they would not have been killed.

Although it uses the plural, the exegetes believe that this verse was revealed in connection with 'Abd Allāh b. Ubayy b. Salūl. There is, therefore, no reason why the plural form in verse 5:55 could not have been meant for a single person, namely 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. Moreover, since God used the word *walī* and not *awliyā*' in the first place, it suggests that only a single person was actually meant.

However, what emerges from the Shī'ī sources is the fact that, in al-Bāqir's view, the Messenger had been reluctant to explain this *walāya* of 'Alī to the believers. It is reported that a man approached al-Bāqir saying to him that al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d.c. 110/728–9) had told him that the Messenger had received a certain message, and when he hesitated to deliver it to the people, God threatened him with punishment if he did not do so. Then al-Bāqir asked the questioner whether al-Ḥasan had told him what the message was. He answered in the negative, whereupon al-Bāqir told him: 'By God, he certainly knows what the message was, but has deliberately concealed it.'<sup>12</sup> The questioner then asked al-Bāqir to clarify the message.

Explaining this message, al-Bāqir said that, just as the Messenger had elucidated the details regarding the verses on prayer, alms giving, fasting and pilgrimage, so too he was expected to expound on the *walāya* that was revealed in the aforementioned verse 5:55. But when asked to do this in practice, the Messenger felt extremely uneasy, fearing that people would apostatise. As his reluctance continued, God repeated the command in verse 5:67.

O Messenger, deliver [to the people] what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not do so then you have not delivered His message; and Allāh will protect you from the people. Indeed Allāh does not guide the disbelieving people.

Al-Bāqir continues that the Messenger, upon receiving this verse, carried out God's command and endorsed the *walāya*<sup>13</sup> or imamate of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib at Ghadīr Khumm.<sup>14</sup> The Sunni commentators obviously do not interpret the verse to mean that God's Message is only truly conveyed by the appointment of an imam. By 'that which has been revealed' they understand the whole Book, namely that the Prophet should not omit any verse out of fear or caution.<sup>15</sup>

Al-Ṭabarī begins his account by giving his interpretation, namely that the revelation concerns those stories which God communicated about the Jews and the Christians. Since these

passages recorded their shortcomings and their faults as well as their tampering with the scripture, the Messenger, in al-Ṭabarī's view, was apprehensive about revealing the message in full. He believes this to be the reason for the revelation of this verse. Nevertheless, he includes varying reports of the Prophet having concealed something. At the same time, he also quotes traditions from 'Ā'isha to say that whoever reports that the Prophet had concealed something from the revelation is a liar. Al-Ṭabarī then goes on to add that the commentators are divided over the reason for this revelation. Some say that it was because a bedouin wanted to kill the Messenger and therefore God said He would protect him, while others believe that he was afraid of the Quraysh.<sup>16</sup>

However, according to al-Bāqir it was only after the endorsement of *walāya* that God revealed verse 5:3: 'This day I have perfected your faith for you and completed my favours upon you and have chosen for you Islam as a faith/religion.' Al-Bāqir's position regarding the verse '*al-yawm akmalu lakum ...*', reported in various Shī'ī sources,<sup>17</sup> is very clear. It was, he says, revealed on the occasion of 'Alī's appointment as the imam at Ghadīr Khumm. Sunnī commentators like al-Bayḍāwī do not believe the verse was revealed at that time, nor do they interpret 'the perfection of religion and completion of God's favour or blessings' as a reference to the appointment of an imam after the Prophet. In al-Bayḍāwī's view, 'today I have perfected your religion for you' means either that God perfected his religion with victory and distinction over all other religions, or that this perfection consists in defining the foundations of the doctrine and introducing the principles of the laws and the rules of legal judgment to the believers. 'I have completed my blessings upon you' means that God brought to fruition His blessings by means of guidance and victory, or with the perfection of religion, or with the conquest of Mecca and the destruction of the order of *jāhiliyya*.<sup>18</sup>

Al-Ṭabarī not only excludes reports in favour of the Shī'ī position, but goes on to include certain traditions to deny their position. It is also noteworthy that all these traditions are on

the authority of Ibn 'Abbās.<sup>19</sup> Commenting on the different reports, al-Ṭabarī maintains that the correct reports are those which say that God informed His Prophet, and thereby the faithful, that He had perfected their faith on the day this verse was revealed by making the holy land exclusive for them and debarring the idolators so that the believers might make the pilgrimage without having to mix with them. It is clear that al-Ṭabarī is at pains not only to deny the Shī'ī position but also, contrary to his normal practice, to add his own views about what he considers to be correct.

Another Qur'ānic verse used by al-Bāqir<sup>20</sup> to emphasise the *walāya* of the imams is 4:59 translated as:

O ye who believe! Obey God and obey the Messenger and those who hold authority [from] amongst you ...

This verse is even more controversial than those already mentioned, the obvious problem being the identity of the *ulī al-amr*. Numerous reports have come down to us giving varied suggestions, some maintaining that the *ulī al-amr* are 'the rulers' and others that they are the scholars.<sup>21</sup> Al-Bāqir's<sup>22</sup> commentary on this verse is that the *ulī al-amr* are the imams from the 'family of Muḥammad', although a tradition from his son al-Ṣādiq, found in al-Ṭabarī, says that they are the scholars. Al-Ṭabarī in his commentary also includes reports which maintain that the *ulī al-amr* were Abū Bakr and 'Umar.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, he excludes traditions in favour of 'Alī and his family.

However, the matter does not end here, for the words that follow the reference to the *ulī al-amr* have been used against the Shī'ī position. The verse continues as follows:

If you differ about anything, then refer it to God and His Messenger if you are [truly] believers in God and the Hereafter. That is better and more seemly in the end.

In reply to this, al-Bāqir uses another Qur'ānic verse 4:83:

If they had only referred it to the Messenger and those who had authority among them, then those among them who can derive knowledge would have known it.

Using this verse to reassert the position of the imams, al-Bāqir maintains that obedience to them is incumbent as God made them 'the people of knowledge' and enabled them to extract that knowledge.<sup>24</sup> It is interesting to note that even al-Ṭabarī has a tradition from one of the earliest exegetes, Mujāhid (d.c. 100/718),<sup>25</sup> to strengthen the position of the *ūlī al-amr*. According to Shī'ī sources,<sup>26</sup> when al-Bāqir was asked about the verse 'Obey God, obey the Messenger and those who hold authority amongst you [*ūlī al-amr*]' he responded by giving a long survey of Qur'ānic allusions to the imams saying (4:51):

Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the Book believing in sorcery and evil [saying] to the unbelievers that they are better guided than those who believe.

Explaining this verse, he says that such people claim that the leaders who err and those who urge people to hell fire are better guided than the family of Muḥammad. Using another verse he says, 'they are those whom God has cursed and those whom God will curse, you will find [that they] have no helper' (4:52). Referring to the verse 'We have already given the family of Ibrāhīm (Abraham) the Book and Wisdom and conferred upon them a great kingdom' (i.e. We made from them messengers, prophets and imams), al-Bāqir inquires whether they had a share in the kingdom (*mulk*), meaning the imamate and the caliphate.

Commenting on the verse, 'Behold! they give not even a speck on the date-stone to the people,' (4:53) al-Bāqir says that they were 'the people' whom God meant in the above verse.<sup>27</sup> Relating another Qur'ānic verse (4:54) – 'Or do they envy the people for what God has bestowed upon them of His bounty?' – he says that they were those who were envied by the people because of the favour of the imamate which God bestowed upon

them, excluding other creatures. Referring to another verse (4:58) – 'Lo, Allāh has commanded you that you restore deposits to their owners ...' – al-Bāqir says that it was the imams who were meant and it was they who have to hand over to their successors 'the special books', 'the special knowledge' (*ilm*) and 'the weapons of the Prophet'. They are the truthful ones referred to in the Qur'ān (9:119) as well as 'the believers' (9:105). God has made the imams, according to al-Bāqir's interpretation of verse 2:143, an *umma wasaṭ* so that they might be God's witnesses to His creatures. His definition of 'a great kingdom conferred upon the family of Ibrāhīm' (4:54) is that God made from among them leaders whose obedience was equal to the obedience of God and whose disobedience was equal to the disobedience of God. How, argues al-Bāqir, could people accept this position for the family of Ibrāhīm and deny it to the family of Muḥammad?

The imams, he adds, are the chosen ones and are named as 'those who submitted' not only in the Qur'ān but also in the earlier scriptures.<sup>28</sup> Since they have been endowed with knowledge from God, the imams, says al-Bāqir,<sup>29</sup> have the clear signs of God in their hearts, and since they are the *ahl al-dhikr*, namely the people of the Message,<sup>30</sup> it is they who should be questioned about its interpretation. The Prophet, continues al-Bāqir, was a warner to his people while in every age there is an imam to guide his people about what the Prophet brought.<sup>31</sup> The first of these guides after the Prophet was 'Alī and then his *awṣiyā*', his heirs, after him. Al-Bāqir then adds yet another Qur'ānic verse (3:5) – 'And no one knows its interpretation except God and those firmly rooted in *ilm* [knowledge].'

Commenting on this verse,<sup>32</sup> al-Bāqir says that the Messenger was the best of those firmly rooted in knowledge. God taught him regarding all that was revealed to him and how to interpret it. Thereafter, it is the imams who know all the interpretations of the Qur'ān. The imams are, according to his interpretation of verse 35:32, the chosen servants of God who have been given the Qur'ān as an inheritance:

Then We gave the scripture as an inheritance to those whom We chose among our worshippers. But among them are some who wrong themselves and some who follow the mid-road while some outstrip [others] through good deeds by Allāh's leave. That is the great favour.

The people who outstrip others in performing good deeds are the imams, those who follow the middle course are the people who acknowledge the right of the imam, and those who wrong themselves are the people who do not accept the imams. Concluding his long survey of Qur'ānic allusions to the imams, al-Bāqir points out to the questioner that the non-Shī'a claim the above verse to have been revealed for them.<sup>33</sup> He then argues that if it had in fact been revealed with reference to them all, then they would all be the chosen ones and all would go to paradise (which is hardly the case). Al-Bāqir continues that the non-Shī'a made a similar claim on the interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the earlier verse (of ... *ūlī al-amr*).

Al-Bāqir maintains that not only is obedience to the imam incumbent upon the believers, but that love for them is a duty enjoined upon the worshippers according to verse 42:22:

Say, I do not ask for any reward except love for the relations ...<sup>34</sup>

However, he adds that the community differs over the interpretation of this verse. There are four different groups, each upholding disparate views. One group believes that this verse was in fact revealed for the *ahl al-bayt* of the Messenger of Allāh. The second group insists that this was abrogated by another verse 34:47:

Say, whatever I ask you with regard to my reward, it is [actually] for you. I rely for my reward on no one except God and He is witness to everything.

Refuting their position, al-Bāqir argues that this verse could only have been revealed either before the first or after it.<sup>35</sup> If it

was revealed before, then obviously it cannot cancel or abrogate the verse that has been revealed after it. On the other hand, if it was revealed after the verse 'love for relations' then this later verse makes the first verse all the more emphatic since the love for relations, which the Prophet had asked of the believers, benefits not the Prophet but the believers. Hence the verse reads 'Say whatever I ask you in way of return, is meant for you ...'

According to al-Bāqir, the third group believes that this verse was meant for all the Arabs, since the Prophet had a relation in every Arab house. They said that the Prophet had asked them to love him through them. Al-Bāqir argues that if those whom the Prophet asked were believers, then they would love him for their faith in him and their belief in him. Why would God reward them for this? On the other hand, if those whom He is addressing are unbelievers, then how can He reward them for something in which they do not believe? Moreover, al-Bāqir says that restricting 'the believers' to the Arabs alone is ignorance on their part as well as clearly presumptuous; it is a misconstrual of the Book of God and a distortion of His words, for the verse is addressed to all the believers, Arabs as well as non-Arabs, and all those who believe in God and the Prophet – all have been enjoined to love the relations of His Prophet.

The fourth group, basing itself on a report from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, holds that this verse meant gaining proximity to God through obedience to Him. Al-Bāqir rails against this, calling al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī a 'misconstruer of God's words' (*al-muḥarrif li kalām Allāh*) and referring to his interpretation as far from the truth. He argues that if indeed this were the interpretation, the words 'love' and 'reward' would be meaningless in the verse. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān suggests that the 'misconstruer of God's words' concocted this false interpretation deliberately as he knew full well and had, in fact, once reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās that the Prophet himself considered his relations to be "Alī, Fāṭima and their two sons".<sup>36</sup>

Al-Bāqir says that the imams are the light of God (*nūr Allāh*) mentioned in various verses of the Qur'ān such as 64:8:

And believe in Allāh and His Messenger and the Light that We have sent down.

Another such verse is 57:28:

O ye who believe! Fear God and believe in His Apostle and He will bestow upon you a double portion of His mercy; He will provide for you a light by which ye shall walk ...<sup>37</sup>

The imams, says al-Bāqir, are the light which guides men along the path of righteousness. They illuminate the hearts of the believers in whom the imam's light is brighter than the resplendent sunlight shining during the day. Interpreting another verse of the Qur'ān 6:122 – 'Is he who was dead and We raised him unto life and set for him a light whereby he walks among the people, similar to him who is in utter darkness from which there is no way out ...'<sup>38</sup> – al-Bāqir says that 'the dead' means those who did not know anything; 'the light whereby one walks among people' means the imam who guides and 'those in darkness from which there is no way out' means those who do not know the imam. According to al-Ṭabarī, this verse was revealed in connection with two men, a believer and a non-believer. In his view, the exegetes differ over the identity of the believer: some say he was 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, while others believe he was 'Ammār b. Yāsir.<sup>39</sup> The non-believer is said to have been Abū Jahl b. Hishām. Continuing his commentary, al-Ṭabarī gives other traditions to say that some believe 'the dead' meant those who had gone astray, 'We raised them to life' meant 'We guided them', and 'the light' was right guidance. He then gives varied reports that 'the light in the midst of men' was the Qur'ān, or the right guidance, or Islam. He does not, however, report any tradition in favour of the imam's position as given in Shī'ī sources.<sup>40</sup>

Emphasising the hereditary character of the imamate, al-Bāqir says that it remained in the progeny of the imams. Here he is interpreting Sūra 33:6 – 'Those related by blood are nearer to one another in the book of God.'<sup>41</sup> He further explains that

this verse was revealed especially with regard to the children of al-Ḥusayn. Another such verse describing the imam's succession is 43:28 – 'And He made it a word to continue in his posterity that they may return.'<sup>42</sup>

Al-Bāqir also puts forward the concept of *'isma*<sup>43</sup> (infallibility) of the imam, his divine protection from sin and error. He bases this on his interpretation of the Qur'ānic verse 33:33:

And God only wishes to remove uncleanness from you, O People of the House (*ahl al-bayt*) and to purify you thoroughly.<sup>44</sup>

Some Sunni scholars also accept that this verse was revealed for 'Alī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.<sup>45</sup>

Closely related to the concept of *'isma* is the notion of *shafā'a* or intercession, which is inherent in the theory of the imamate propounded by al-Bāqir. Many of these Qur'ānic verses interpreted by al-Bāqir imply the intercessional powers of the imam. One of them is 17:71: 'on the day when we shall call all men with their imam ...' Commenting on this verse, al-Bāqir says that, when it was revealed, the Muslims asked the Messenger whether he was not the imam for all the people. The Prophet replied that he was the Messenger of Allāh for all people, but after him there would be the imams from his family who would be oppressed rather than accepted. However, those who loved the imams, followed them and believed in them, were indeed from him (the Prophet) and would meet him (in Paradise), while those who oppressed them and called them liars were not from him and would be disowned by him.<sup>46</sup>

Basing himself on the Qur'ān, al-Bāqir undoubtedly views the imamate as one of the duties imposed by God upon the believer. In fact, *walāya* or *imāma* is the most important duty. He considers it to be the major pillar of Islam and the pivot around which all other pillars revolve. The imams are, in al-Bāqir's view, the protectors or guardians of the believers and obedience to them is an obligatory duty. They are the people of the Message, to whom the Book, that is the Qur'ān, is given as an inheritance. Thus they are the interpreters of that

Message, and since they are the ones firmly rooted in knowledge it is they who should be asked about its interpretation. People envy the imams because they are the recipients of God's favour and because of the light and wisdom that has been bestowed upon them. Being God's witnesses over His creatures, they are therefore the ones who should guide others.

The imams are pure and protected from sin and error and they are the light of God by which people may walk and be guided aright, so love for them was made incumbent upon the believers. On the day of Resurrection, all people would be called by their imams. Thus it is evident that al-Bāqir, in propounding his theory of the imamate, not only maintained its hereditary and divine character, but also its necessity in this world for the sake of providing true knowledge and guidance.

### The *Ḥadīth* Basis of the Imamate

Al-Bāqir's views on the divine ordination of the imamate were primarily based on the Qur'ānic revelation. He adduces further proof from the traditions of the Prophet. Al-Bāqir quotes many traditions, but here an attempt will be made to lay stress on those accepted by all Muslims, Shī'ī as well as non-Shī'ī. This does not mean that the non-Shī'ī scholars necessarily agree with al-Bāqir's interpretation of these traditions. For them, as is known, the question of the imamate is not a fundamental issue as it is for the Shī'a; 'it is neither a part of rational sciences nor of *fiqh*,' says al-Ghazālī.<sup>47</sup>

The *ḥadīth* of Ghadīr Khumm is, in al-Bāqir's view,<sup>48</sup> one of the most important traditions in proving the Prophet's declaration of 'Alī as imam. It has been related with slightly different versions by various Shī'ī scholars.<sup>49</sup> The gist of the *ḥadīth* is that, on his return from the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet stopped at Ghadīr Khumm to make an announcement to the pilgrims who were then to separate and go their own way.<sup>50</sup> He called for a congregational prayer and had a special pulpit erected. After the prayer, the Prophet asked the people '*man awlā bikum*', who has the greatest claim over you? The people

replied that God and His Messenger knew better. The Prophet then said: 'Do I not have a greater claim upon you than you have upon yourselves according to what God, the Exalted has said, "The Prophet has a greater claim (*awlā*) upon the believers than their own selves"?' (33:6). They replied, 'Yes, O Messenger of God'. After repeating this three times and making God a witness to their agreement, the Prophet took the hand of 'Alī, lifted it with his own hand and said, '*man kuntu mawlāhu fa 'Alī mawlāhu*' (He whose *mawlā* I am, 'Alī is his *mawlā*). He then declared, 'O God, help whoever helps him, oppose whoever opposes him, support whoever supports him, forsake whoever forsakes him and turn the light to whatever direction he turns.' Hearing this, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb said, 'Congratulations to you, O 'Alī! You have become the *mawlā* of every believer, man and woman.'<sup>51</sup>

The Sunnis also confirm this tradition,<sup>52</sup> which has been mentioned by a great number of Sunnī traditionists.<sup>53</sup> However, this does not mean that the Sunnī scholars admit that the Prophet invoked God to install 'Alī as imam by pronouncing the invocation of imamate upon him. Al-Bāqillānī, for instance, argues that the Qur'ānic phrase *awlā bi al-mu'minin min anfusihim*, which he interprets as 'in charge of the believers more than their own selves,' does not necessarily imply that 'Alī is also in charge of them, even though he immediately added 'he whose *mawlā* I am, 'Alī is his *mawlā*'. In his view, the two words *awlā* and *mawlā* are by no means synonymous. Another argument is that the word *mawlā* does not necessarily mean master and therefore does not necessarily signify an imam obedience to whom is incumbent upon the believers.<sup>54</sup>

The word *mawlā* is derived from the verb *waliya* (to be near). Grammatically, it belongs to a class of nouns called noun of place and thus signifies either the place where the action of the verb is committed, or the subject in which the state of being expressed by that verb has its existence. The word *mawlā* therefore signifies the place in which, or the person in whom, proximity exists. It can therefore mean master, patron, beloved, supporter, freed slave, companion, client, neighbour,



confederate or relation. It is easy to see that the idea of proximity or nearness pervades these various meanings, either in a physical or a moral sense. When a word can denote so many meanings, the context in which it is used is crucial. As the word *mawlā* was used by the Prophet soon after the phrase in which he used *awlā* (*man awlā bikum*) it is quite likely that he meant the implications were synonymous.

Some try to explain the circumstances which led the Prophet to his pronouncement.<sup>55</sup> In their view, the problem was that a number of people were grumbling about 'Alī because of the way he dealt with the distribution of the spoils in the al-Yaman expedition. This expedition had just been successfully executed under 'Alī's leadership and he and others who had taken part in it had gone directly to Mecca to join the Prophet in the pilgrimage. The Prophet was, they argue, merely trying to dispel these ill-feelings against 'Alī.

The normal ways in which the word *mawlā* and its plural *mawālī* appear in the Qur'ān are as follows:

<i>mawālī</i>	4:33	heirs
	19:5	kinsfolk
<i>mawālīkum</i>	33:5	your clients
<i>al-mawlā</i>	22:13	Patron (Allāh)
	44:41	Friend
<i>mawlākum</i>	3:150	Your protector (Allāh)
	8:40	Your Befriender – a Transcendent Patron (Allāh)
	22:78	Your Protecting Friend (Allāh)
	57:15	Your Patron (Fire)
<i>mawlānā</i>	66:2	Your Protector (Allāh)
	2:286	Our Protector (Allāh)
	9:51	Our Protecting Friend (Allāh)
<i>mawlāhu</i>	16:76	His owner
	66:4	His Protecting Friend (Allāh)
<i>mawlāhum</i>	10:30	their Lord (Allāh)

It is quite obvious that the word was used in pre-Islamic and early Islamic practice. It was used for both *mawlā* as a master, patron, friend as well as for the relationship between the *mawlā* and the *mawālī* (clients). It is also used in the Constitution of Medina as the next of kin having the power of succession. In Islamic *fiqh*, the *walī* is the person who gives away a woman in marriage as well as the person who demands blood wit.

More important than the ways in which the word *mawlā* was used, before and after the coming of Islam, is the context in which the word was used by the Prophet in his sermon. As mentioned earlier, he had used the word *mawlā* soon after quoting the words of the Qur'ān, *awlā bi al-mu'minīn min anfusihim* (has a greater claim on the believers than their own selves). Therefore it seems most likely that the word was used in the same context despite contrary observations. To the Shī'a, according to al-Bāqir,<sup>56</sup> this pronouncement was not only indicative of the Prophet's inclination towards 'Alī, but was a clear and specific appointment which the people deliberately misconstrued.

Another tradition which is taken by al-Bāqir as evidence for the imamate is the Prophet's statement to 'Alī: 'You are to me what Aaron was to Moses except that there is no Prophet after me.'<sup>57</sup> This *ḥadīth* is recognised by the Sunnīs<sup>58</sup> as one of the sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) traditions. However, although admitting its authenticity, the Sunnīs do not consider this to be an indication of 'Alī's appointment to the imamate. They maintain that the Prophet only pronounced this *ḥadīth* on one, special occasion – when he set out on his expedition to Tabuk and left 'Alī in charge in Medina. Some have insinuated that the Prophet left 'Alī behind because he disapproved of him, and when 'Alī objected the Prophet replied, 'Are you not satisfied that you are to me what Aaron was to Moses, except that there is no Prophet after me?'

To the Sunnī scholars,<sup>59</sup> this meant that the Prophet made 'Alī his deputy over Medina as Moses had made Aaron his deputy over the Israelites when he went to Mount Sinai. According to the Sunnīs, Aaron had three positions in relation to

Moses.<sup>60</sup> In the first place he was his brother. Secondly, he was a Prophet like Moses. Thirdly, he was his deputy when Moses left the Israelites to go to Mount Sinai. The Sunnīs argue that since Aaron died before Moses, he could not be his successor. As 'Alī was neither the Prophet's brother, nor a Prophet like Muḥammad, he could, they argued, only be like Aaron by being Muḥammad's deputy when he left for the military expedition to Tabuk, as was Aaron when Moses left for Mount Sinai.

The Ismaili author, Abū al-Fawāris,<sup>61</sup> argues along the same lines in favour of 'Alī being Muḥammad's successor. Agreeing with the Sunnīs that the relationship of brotherhood and prophethood could not be applied to 'Alī's relationship with Muḥammad, he argues that the only conceivable matter remaining was for 'Alī to be his successor.<sup>62</sup> Whereas the Sunnīs believed that Muḥammad appointed 'Alī as his deputy over Medina only during Muḥammad's expedition to Tabuk, Abū al-Fawāris says that there is no evidence that 'Alī was deposed on the Prophet's return. Moreover, they argue that if Muḥammad's statement merely meant that his appointment of 'Alī as his deputy was only for the time of his absence from Medina, then there was no reason for him to add, 'yet after me there is no Prophet'. This addition clearly indicates that the Prophet meant more than mere deputyship on a particular occasion.

One of the basic traditions used by al-Bāqir in proving the necessity of a testament is 'it is compulsory for every Muslim not to spend a single night without having a written testament on him [lit. his head].'<sup>63</sup> This is further strengthened by the Qur'ānic verse 2:180–181:

It is prescribed for you, when death approaches one of you, if he leaves behind some wealth, that he make a testament to his parents and near of kin honourably – an obligation on the pious. And whoever changes it after hearing it – the sin rests on those who change it. Truly, God is All-hearing, All-knowing.<sup>64</sup>

This tradition on the necessity of a written testament is also mentioned and accepted by the Sunnīs, though with slight variations, and is considered to be sound, having been related by both al-Bukhārī and Muslim as well as other traditionists.<sup>65</sup>

Al-Bāqir stresses the necessity of the imamate by another tradition: 'He who dies without an imam shall die a death of ignorance.'<sup>66</sup> This tradition is recognised and considered extremely reliable, with different versions by both Sunnīs and Shī'īs. Ibn Ḥanbal relates it as follows: 'He who dies without an imam shall die in ignorance.'<sup>67</sup> Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj's version is: 'He who forsakes obedience [to the imam] shall meet God on the Day of Resurrection without any allegiance, and he who dies without having had allegiance [to an imam] shall die in ignorance.'<sup>68</sup> It is interesting here to note the Ismaili version of this tradition mentioned by al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān<sup>69</sup> and Abū al-Fawāris<sup>70</sup> where the term 'the Imam of the Time' (*Imām al-dahr*, *Imām al-ʿaṣr* or *Imām al-zamān*) is present. This implies that either the Ismaili authors introduced this term into the *ḥadīth* on account of their belief in the 'ever living guide', or that the term was omitted or suppressed by others.

Emphasising the necessity of the presence of an imam, al-Bāqir adds that no effort can avail anyone without guidance from the 'Imam of the Time'. In his view, such a person is like a lost sheep who searches in vain for its shepherd and flock until eventually it is devoured by the wolf who takes advantage of its confusion. Al-Bāqir is reported to have told one of his followers that if in this world people need a guide to travel even a few miles to a strange place, then what of the path to heaven of which they are far more ignorant?<sup>71</sup>

The fact that the Sunnī traditionists relate some of these traditions and consider them to be genuine does not mean that they accept the Shī'ī concept of the imamate, whether Ithnā'asharī or Ismaili. In the Sunnī view, the imam's function is pre-eminently political. Although he may perform religious functions, these do not necessarily lend him sanctity. He is merely a protector and executor of the *Sharī'a* who does not need to be divinely appointed, but is instead installed by *ijmā'*

(consensus).<sup>72</sup>

According to the Shi'a on the other hand, the choice of an imam is not within the domain of the community; it is not its concern to decide who the imam should be. This follows from al-Bāqir's view that the *walāya* or the imamate is one of the pillars of Islam, indeed the most important pillar. 'Islam,' according to al-Bāqir:

... is built on seven pillars: *walāya* (love for and allegiance to the imam), *ṭahāra* (purification), *ṣalāt* (prayer), *zakāt* (almsgiving), *ṣawm* (fasting), *hajj* (pilgrimage) and *jihād* (striving in God's way). *Walāya* is the best among them, because through it and through the one to whom allegiance should be paid, the knowledge of the other pillars is reached.<sup>73</sup>

Being a matter of fundamental belief, consensus (*ijmā'*) cannot be applied to *walāya*, just as it cannot be applied in matters concerning monotheism, or the prophethood of Muḥammad, or his status as God's Messenger.<sup>74</sup>

The choice of an imam, according to al-Bāqir, was decided when God granted Ibrāhīm this favour and conferred the imamate on him and upon those of his progeny who did not go astray.<sup>75</sup> In fact, this favour was given to Ibrāhīm after God had originally accepted him, first as a worshipper, second as a prophet, third as a messenger, fourth as a friend and finally as an imam over the people. When this distinction was given to Ibrāhīm, he could not help asking God whether this favour would remain in his progeny, whereupon God answered that those who go astray would not receive it. Thus the choice of an imam comes from above and is a favour that God grants; it cannot be acquired.

### The Theology of the Imamate

In enunciating the theory or the principle of the imamate, al-Bāqir postulated certain prerequisites for it, including *naṣṣ*, 'ilm, *nūr*, and 'isma. Al-Bāqir, as noted, categorically maintained

that, contrary to the belief of some groups, the imam had to be divinely appointed and that his appointment had to be clear and precise, i.e. by *naṣṣ al-jalī* (explicit designation). He had to be quite specific about his theory in case there were loopholes in it which might be exploited by those who were already claiming the imamate during his time, as well as by those who might claim it in future.

In order that his theory would have sufficient credence, al-Bāqir had to begin with the appointment of 'Alī, who had been designated expressly by the Prophet Muḥammad. This, in his view, was done on several occasions culminating in the event of Ghadīr Khumm.<sup>76</sup> Al-Bāqir is reported to have said to Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī that the Prophet, before his death, was commanded by God to bequeath to 'Alī his knowledge, his faith and the Great Name (*al-ism al-a'zam*) that he had, as well as the legacy of knowledge and prophethood, so that the transmission of the divine heritage would be continued through the Prophet's progeny. This implies that this *naṣṣ*, which consisted of special knowledge, was meant exclusively for the offspring of the Prophet and thus was hereditary.

The hereditary character of the *naṣṣ* was the crucial point in the principle of the imamate that al-Bāqir advanced. He was trying to bring some order to the muddled, confused and chaotic ideas of the imamate rampant at the time and the idea of hereditary *naṣṣ* was a kind of restriction for all those who thought they could claim the *naṣṣ* and thus acquire a licence for leadership. It was in this manner – by *naṣṣ al-jalī* – that al-Bāqir appointed his son, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. On a number of occasions, al-Bāqir let his followers know that Ja'far was the best of mankind and that he was the *Qā'im Āl Muḥammad* (one in charge of the Prophet's family).<sup>77</sup> When his days were drawing to a close, he asked for witnesses to be brought to him. Four people from the Quraysh were assembled, among whom was Nāfi', 'the freed man of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar (d.c. 117/735)'.<sup>78</sup> Al-Bāqir is then reported to have asked them to write down what the Prophet Ya'qūb had entrusted to his son, and thus made a *naṣṣ* in respect of his own son Ja'far al-Ṣādiq.<sup>79</sup>

If the above report is authentic, then the summoning of witnesses from outside was a new development, for al-Bāqir's own appointment, according to traditions reported in al-Kulaynī, was made in the presence of his brothers when he was entrusted with the casket containing secret religious scrolls and the weapons of the Prophet. Apparently, both al-Bāqir, and later his son al-Šādiq, insisted upon the importance of these weapons which, they proclaimed, had the same significance for the Muslims as the *Tābūt* (Ark of Covenant) had for the Israelites.<sup>80</sup> Again, according to traditions found in al-Kulaynī, al-Bāqir maintained that his father Zayn al-'Ābidīn was designated by al-Ḥusayn,<sup>81</sup> who in turn was appointed by al-Ḥasan<sup>82</sup> whom 'Alī had designated.<sup>83</sup>

Besides the hereditary character of the *naṣṣ*, another unique feature of al-Bāqir's theory was that *naṣṣ* embodied in itself exclusive authoritative knowledge ('*ilm*) for its recipient. This '*ilm* had likewise to be traced back to 'Alī, of whom the Prophet had said 'I am the city of knowledge and 'Alī its gate'.<sup>84</sup> The Sunnis also acknowledge this tradition, although they do not necessarily agree with the Shī'ī interpretation of it.<sup>85</sup> According to al-Bāqir's traditions in al-Kulaynī,<sup>86</sup> God appointed 'Alī as a flag or signpost between Himself and His creation and thus whoever acknowledges 'Alī is a believer, while whoever rejects him is an unbeliever. Again he adds that "'Alī is a door that God has opened; he who enters it is a believer and he who leaves it is an unbeliever.'

Al-Bāqir maintains that knowledge, which was granted to Adam, is never taken away; rather it is always inherited, passed on from generation to generation. "'Alī was the learned one of this community and a learned one from among us never perishes before leaving behind him someone from his family who inherits this knowledge from him or what God wills.' The imams, according to al-Bāqir, are the treasurers (*khuzẓān*) of Allāh in the heavens and on the earth; they do not guard gold and silver, but divine knowledge. 'Alī had inherited the knowledge of all the *awṣiyā'* of the prophets just as the Prophet, who had been endowed with the sum of knowledge available to all

the preceding prophets, had imparted it to 'Alī, who, in turn, bequeathed it to his descendants. Every imam before death passes it on to his successor. This includes both the *ẓāhir* (exoteric) and the *bāṭin* (esoteric) sides of the Qur'ān and indeed, in al-Bāqir's view, none but the *awṣiyā'* can claim to possess the whole Qur'ān. Describing some aspects of the knowledge that is given to them and that is unfolded to them, al-Bāqir says that it includes the interpretation of the Qur'ān and its legal judgments, as well as the knowledge of changing times and adversities.<sup>87</sup>

The imams, too, according to al-Bāqir, know the Greatest Name of God (*ism Allāh al-a'ẓam*) which has seventy-three versions (*ḥarfān* – literally, letters). Al-Bāqir added that Āṣif (Aṣaph), who had known only one version, was able to reach the throne of Bīlqīs by pronouncing it,<sup>88</sup> while the imams knew seventy-two versions, the seventy-third being with Allāh Himself. This refers exclusively to hidden knowledge.

Thus the doctrine of the imamate put forward by al-Bāqir was based primarily on knowledge, not on political rule, although the imams were also entitled to the latter. If the imams wished to know anything, they would know it. However, in order to avoid confusion, al-Bāqir did make a distinction between the offices of a *rasūl* (messenger), a *nabī* (prophet) and a *muḥaddath* (one who is spoken to, i.e., the imam), and the way they acquired their knowledge. Thus, according to al-Bāqir, a messenger (*rasūl*) is one who is inspired externally by the mediation of the archangel Jibrā'il. He may see the archangel and hear his words either in a dream or when awake. A prophet (*nabī*) either has visions of archangels without hearing them speak, or hears voices without seeing a figure. A *muḥaddath* does not see supernatural beings, either in dreams or in a wakeful state, but hears voices. The imams, says al-Bāqir, are the *muḥaddathūn* mentioned in the Qur'ān.<sup>89</sup>

Besides the bestowal of '*ilm*, the clear or manifest delegation of authority also appears to involve the transmission of *nūr*, light, for, as we noted earlier, the imams are, according to al-Bāqir, the light of God (*nūr Allāh*). When asked to comment

on the Qur'ānic verse 44:8 – 'And believe in Allāh and His Messenger and the *nūr* (light) that We have brought down' – al-Bāqir replied that 'the *nūr* (light) is indeed the *nūr* of the imams from the Prophet's family; they, [i.e. the imams], were the light that God has brought down and they [in fact] are the light of God (*nūr Allāh*) in the heavens and on earth.'<sup>90</sup> This spiritual light, which passes from generation to generation, is the symbol of that eternal knowledge (*'ilm*)<sup>91</sup> which forms part of the Prophet Muḥammad's testament (*waṣīyya*) to 'Alī and thereafter to the imams who followed him. According to this doctrine, 'Alī inherited the light only at the last moment of the Prophet's life.<sup>92</sup>

However, another tradition of al-Bāqir alludes to the concept of *nūr Muḥammad* which 'Alī inherits on birth. He is reported to have said to Jābir al-Ju'fī: 'O Jābir, the first beings that God created were Muḥammad and his family, the rightly guided ones and the guides; they were the phantoms of light before God.' Jābir asked, 'And what were the phantoms?' Al-Bāqir replied,

Shadows of light, luminous bodies without spirits; they were strengthened by the Holy Spirit (*rūḥ al-quds*), through which Muḥammad and his family worshipped God. For that reason He created them forbearing, learned, endowed with filial piety, and pure; they worship God through prayer, fasting, prostrating themselves, enumerating His names, and pronouncing 'God is Great'.<sup>93</sup>

According to this concept, 'Alī's share of light was transferred on his birth. Traditions maintain that Muḥammad and 'Alī were created from the same (prophetic) light which passed through the loins of their common ancestors till it was split in the loins of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the common grandfather of both Muḥammad and 'Alī. After that it was divided into two parts, Muḥammad's light being placed in the loins of his father 'Abd Allāh, and 'Alī's in those of Abū Ṭālib.<sup>94</sup> From 'Alī this light was transmitted to the imams who followed him. This hereditary

doctrine of *nūr Muḥammad* which, as part of the ancestral sperm, had come to him not from Muḥammad but from his father Abū Ṭālib, is different from *nūr Allāh* (Divine Light) which is regarded as a part of the divine spirit which passed from Muḥammad to 'Alī at the former's death. This light, too, in Uri Rubin's view, is transmitted through a universal line of carriers and is said to have reached Muḥammad from Adam through the Judaeo-Christian prophets, who apparently had no relation to Muḥammad. The light is said to have reached Muḥammad from Ismā'il (Ishmael) not through his Arab progenitors – the posterity of Ishmael – but through the Judaeo-Christian prophets of Banū Isrā'īl to whom the light was transferred from Ishmael via his brother, Isaac. According to Rubin, this view is parallel to the Ismaili doctrine of the cyclical manifestation of 'aql through the *nāṭiqs*.<sup>95</sup>

Rajkowski believes that this tradition on light, and other similar traditions, may indicate that Manichaean ideas were being introduced in the Shī'ī doctrine by extremists and semi-extremists, among whom he includes Jābir al-Ju'fī.<sup>96</sup> There is, perhaps, an element of truth in Rajkowski's view, but one must not forget that the doctrine of light in embryonic form is contained in the Qur'ān itself.<sup>97</sup> Muḥammad himself is described in the Qur'ān as *Sirāj Munīr* (an 'illuminating lamp'). It thus appears that the doctrine of *nūr Allāh*, according to which the Prophet and the imams possess a divine heritage and a sanctified light which they have inherited from the preceding prophets, is different from the doctrine of *nūr Muḥammad* which regards the prophetic light of the Prophet and the imams as coming from the Prophet's Arab ancestors.

It is possible that the imam is a recipient of not only *nūr Allāh* which, as an independent spiritual entity, is entrusted to the next imam by *naṣṣ* only at the last moment of the previous imam's life, but also of *nūr Muḥammad*, which, as part of the ancestral sperm, is confined to the genealogical line of the imam's progenitors. The *nūr Muḥammad* makes the imam, who is *ṣāmī* (silent) until such time as he receives the *nūr Allāh* when he becomes *nāṭiq* (speaking). In other words, *nūr*

*Muḥammad* gives the recipient the potential to become an imam, but the actuality appears only when he receives *nūr Allāh* by means of *naṣṣ* from the previous imam.

What we have here are two symbols. The first is the symbol of prophecy (*nūr Allāh*) which is shared by both prophets and imams. The second is the symbol of succession (*nūr Muḥammad*), which is also related to the divine and which is an integral aspect of the substance connecting Adam to Muḥammad and Muḥammad to the imams. This, of course, is a light that may be latent, which did not, for example, shine in the person of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib or Hāshim, but yet distinguished both from the people around them. Whether or not they were aware of it, they were from a special family. The fact that the two images of light are used here does not mean that they are in opposition to each other; on the contrary, they are in harmony, a harmony such as that evoked by the famous words of the 'verse of light' in the Qur'ān: 'Light upon Light.' (24:35) In other words *nūr Allāh* embraces all men chosen by God, but *nūr Muḥammad* is limited to the direct line of Adam through Muḥammad down to the line of the *ahl al-bayt*.

The *nūr* and *ilm* which the imam is meant to possess by virtue of *naṣṣ* renders him *ma'ṣūm*, or protected from error and sin. As noted earlier, al-Bāqir based this concept on his interpretation of the Qur'ānic verse 33:33. The question to be asked here is whether the concept of infallibility or impeccability (*isma*) applies only to religious matters, or whether it also covers actions flowing from human nature? Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān does not specify whether the imam's impeccability extends to the religious realm only or includes human actions as well. Al-Kirmānī does not offer an express view either, but implies a wider scope of infallibility when he says, 'the souls of prophets and legatees and the imams are not similar to the souls of these lesser *hudūd* (grades), who being inferior to them are not impeccable and are amenable (*tastahīl*) to good and evil.'<sup>98</sup> However, the author of *al-Majālis al-mustaṣhiriyya* claims that the imam is *ma'ṣūm*, but that the *isma* applies only to divine and religious matters, not to those of the human realm.<sup>99</sup>

The legal and political implications of this doctrine are clear. The imam has absolute power over the community and, since he is appointed by God and is infallible, the community who are not infallible can neither appoint him nor elect him.<sup>100</sup> Thus there is no room for the principle of *ijmā'* (consensus) in al-Bāqir's theory of the imamate.

Another aspect of the imamate which has come down to us from al-Bāqir's traditions is the concept of *ḥujja* (guarantor).<sup>101</sup> In his view, from the time of Adam's death there has always been an imam to guide mankind towards Allāh who is His guarantor (*ḥujja*) over His worshippers. The world, al-Bāqir maintains, cannot exist even for a moment without the imam who is the *ḥujja* of God. If the imam were to be taken away from the earth even for an hour, the earth would swallow up its inhabitants just as the sea swallows its people. 'We [the imams] are,' al-Bāqir says, 'the *ḥujja* (guarantor) of God and His Gate. We are the tongue as well as the face of God; we are the eyes of God [guarding] His creation and we are the responsible guardians (*wulāt al-amr*) of God on earth.'<sup>102</sup> Al-Bāqir adds that God is worshipped through the imams and it is through them that God is known and declared as One.

These qualities of the imam make him *afḍal al-nās*, or the best among mankind. It was in this manner that al-Bāqir tried to establish his position as the imam, declaring himself to be the representative of God upon earth and the divinely-inspired interpreter of His words. His success in this respect can be measured from two angles – firstly from the number of followers he was able to attract, and secondly from the success of his own son and successor al-Ṣādiq who assimilated and elaborated his views.

## Chapter Four

1. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im al-Islām*, vol. 1, pp. 17 ff. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 289; al-Ṭibrisī, al-Shaykh Abū 'Alī al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan, *Majma' al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 3 (Tehran, 1395/1975), pp. 209 ff. Ismaili sources such as Abū al-Fawāris, *al-Risāla fī al-imāma*, ed. and tr. S. N. Makarem (Beirut, 1977), p. 13, and the *al-Maṣābiḥ fī iḥbāt al-imāma* of another *dā'ī* of al-Ḥākim's time, Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d.c. 411/1021), ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib (Beirut, 1969), p. 111, both mention this Qur'ānic verse (without mentioning al-Bāqir's name) as one of the proofs for the validity of 'Alī's divine appointment. This verse is also given in 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *al-Tafsīr*, vol. 1, p. 170, and al-Ṭūsī, *Tafsīr al-tibyān* (Najaf, 1957), vol. 3, pp. 549 ff., where the interpretation is on al-Bāqir's authority.
2. 'Abd Allāh Yūsuf 'Alī in his translation of the Qur'ān has adopted this alternative. See Chapter 5, verse 58.
3. See the varying reports given in al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, ed. Muḥammad al-Zuhri al-Ghamrāwī (Cairo, 1321/1903), vols 5–6, pp. 285 ff., and in al-Ṭūsī, *Tafsīr al-tibyān*, vol. 3, pp. 549 ff.
4. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 289, says that 'Alī threw a garment (*ḥulla*) rather than a ring to the beggar. This garment had been given to him by the Prophet who had received it as a gift from the King of Abyssinia. Its value, says al-Kulaynī, was 1,000 dinars. Al-Kulaynī appears to be an exception in holding this view for all other scholars, including Twelvers like al-Ṭibrisī, *Majma' al-bayān*, vol. 3, pp. 209 ff., say it was a ring. See also al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vols 5–6, pp. 285 ff.; al-Bayḍawī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa asrār al-ta'wīl*, ed. H. O. Fleischer, (Leipzig, 1846–1848), vol. 1, pp. 263.
5. Ḥannād b. al-Sarī reporting from 'Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit himself and Abū Kurayb reporting again from 'Ubāda himself. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vols 5–6, pp. 285 ff.
6. Al-Ṭūsī, *Tafsīr al-tibyān*, p. 549. Note that the word *muwālāt* can have different meanings in different contexts.
7. *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 1, p. 170. Al-Qummī was a younger contemporary of al-Ṭabarī. See also al-Ṭūsī, *Tafsīr al-tibyān*, vol. 3, pp. 549 ff; al-Ṭibrisī, *Majma' al-bayān*, vol. 3, pp. 209 ff.
8. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vols 5–6, p. 286.
9. The common person in the *isnād* is 'Abd al-Malik. Among al-Bāqir's companions in al-Barqī's *Kitāb al-rijāl* (Tehran, 1342/1923), there are two persons mentioned under this name: 'Abd al-Malik b.

Atā' and 'Abd al-Malik b. A'yān, *mawlā* of Banū Shaybān.

10. For more details on this, see Joseph Schacht's *Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 163 ff.
11. 'We have indeed sent down the Message and We shall certainly be its Guardian (Sūra 15:9)'. 'If We had willed, We could certainly have brought every soul its true guidance.' (Sūra 12:172)
12. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, p. 17.
13. Other Shī'ī sources on the exegesis of this verse tally with the views expressed by al-Bāqir in al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's *Kitāb al-walāya*. See *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 1, pp. 171 ff., and al-Ṭūsī's *Tafsīr al-tibyān*, vol. 1, pp. 574 ff. Al-Ṭūsī begins by giving different versions and ends with reports on the authority of al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq that this verse was revealed to the Messenger as an encouragement to deliver what had already been revealed to him before.
14. For more details see L. Veccia Vaglieri 'Ghadīr Khumm', EI2, vol. 2, pp. 993–4.
15. See al-Bayḍawī, *Anwār*, vol. 1, p. 367.
16. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 10, pp. 465 ff.
17. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, pp. 17–18; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 289, see also *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 1, p. 162; *Tafsīr al-tibyān* of al-Ṭūsī, vol. 3, pp. 435 ff., and *Majma' al-bayān* of al-Ṭibrisī, vols 2–3, pp. 159 ff. See also Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-zīna*, in al-Sāmarrā'ī's edition, pp. 256 ff., where this is reported from his son, al-Ṣādiq.
18. See al-Bayḍawī, *Anwār*, vol. 1, p. 247.
19. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 9, pp. 518 and 521.
20. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, p. 31.
21. See Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 5 pp. 146 ff. and al-Ṭūsī, *Tafsīr al-tibyān*, vol. 3, pp. 235 ff. According to Abū al-Fawāris, the author of *al-Risāla fī al-imāma*, the phrase *ulī al-amr* (those in authority) refers only to 'Alī b. Ṭālib because the Prophet appointed him to be in authority even during his lifetime when he left for his Tabuk expedition. He says that obedience to 'Alī is a requirement because in the Arabic language the letter *alif* and *lām* (*al*) are used for specification.
22. Al-Ṭūsī, *Tafsīr al-tibyān*, vol. 3, pp. 235 ff., al-Ṭibrisī, *Majma'* vols 2–3, p. 64. In *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 1, the tradition is from al-Bāqir's son, al-Ṣādiq.
23. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 5, pp. 146 ff.
24. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, p. 31 and al-Ṭūsī, *Tafsīr al-tibyān*, vol. 1, p. 236.

25. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 8, pp. 504–5.
26. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, pp. 25–30; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 205–6.
27. See al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, pp. 17 ff.; al-Kulaynī *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 205.
28. Al-Bāqir referring to verses 22:77–78 in al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, pp. 17 ff. See also al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 205–6.
29. Quoting verse 29:49 'Nay, here are Signs self-evident in the hearts of those endowed with knowledge.'
30. Referring to verse 43:44 in al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, pp. 17 ff.; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 210–11.
31. According to his interpretation of verse 13:7, 'You are [only] a warner and for every people there is a guide'. See al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, p. 28; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, 191–2.
32. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, p. 28.
33. Ibid., pp. 29 ff.
34. Ibid., pp. 84 ff., See also his *Kitāb al-himma fī ādāb atbā' al-a'imma* ed. M. Ghālib (Beirut, 1979), p. 25 where al-Bāqir adds: 'He who loves us, Allāh will raise him with us on the Day of Resurrection.' He went on to ask: 'Is religion anything but love?' See also al-Tibrīsī, *Majma' al-bayān*, vols 9–10, pp. 27–8; al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār*, vol. 2, p. 230, says that this was revealed regarding 'Alī, Fāṭima and their two sons. However, he ends by saying that this verse is also said to have been revealed in reference to Abū Bakr.
35. See Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, pp. 84. See also for the same point of view, Muscati and Moulvi, *Life and Lectures of al-Mu'ayyad* (Karachi 1950), pp. 135–6 where some of the *dā'ir*, al-Mu'ayyad al-Shirāzī's *Majālis* are summarised in English.
36. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, pp. 84 ff.
37. See al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 194.
38. See al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, p. 214, and al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 185.
39. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 12, p. 90.
40. See al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, p. 214 and al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 185. It is interesting to note that al-Tibrīsī, *Majma' al-bayān*, vol. 3–4, pp. 358–60 does not say that the light was the imam's but gives different traditions to say it was either knowledge and wisdom or the Qur'ān or faith. Another common Qur'ānic verse interpreted to mean that the imams are the light of God is verse 35 of the *Sūra al-Nūr* namely, 'God is the Light of the heavens and the

- earth ....' See Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, *Kitāb al-kashf*, ed. R. Strothmann (London, 1952), pp. 16–17 and *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 2, pp. 102 ff.
41. See al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 268 for the details of the tradition reported on al-Bāqir's authority.
  42. See *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 2, p. 274 where the tradition is narrated on the authority of al-Bāqir's son, al-Ṣādiq who, interpreting this verse, says that it means the imamate.
  43. Literally the words '*iṣma* and *ma'ṣum* are derived from the verb '*aṣama* which, according to Lane, means prevented, hindered, protected, defended, preserved, withheld etc. So '*iṣma* is prevention, hindrance, defence, protection; the Shī'a explain it as protection from sin and is a specific quality of the imams. See *Majma' al-bahrayn*, an Arabic (Shī'ī) lexicon, by Fakhr al-Dīn b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Najafī (Tehran, 1321/1903) under '*aṣama*. Also see EI2 art. '*Iṣma*'. Dwight M. Donaldson in his *The Shi'ite Religion* (London, 1933), gives a detailed account of '*iṣma*, see pp. 320–38.
  44. *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 2, p. 193. The report includes other details such as whether the *ahl al-bayt* included the Prophet's wives or not.
  45. Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-a'ẓim* (Cairo, 1971). There are, of course, others who, hold that it refers to the wives of the Prophet.
  46. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 215.
  47. Al-Ghazālī, *al-Iqtisād fī al-i'tiqād*, (Ankara, 1962).
  48. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, pp. 17 ff.; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 288–9.
  49. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 294–5; al-Majlisī's *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 37, pp. 108 ff.; al-Kirmānī, *Maṣābiḥ*, pp. 112–13; Abū al-Fawāris, *al-Risāla fī al-imāma*, pp. 28–9.
  50. For details and sources see Vecchia Vaglieri 'Ghadir Khumm'.
  51. Abū al-Fawāris, *al-Risāla fī al-imāma*, p. 28.
  52. Al-Khaṭīb al-Tabrizī, *Mishkāt al-maṣābiḥ*, ed. M. N. al-Albānī (Beirut, 1961), vol. 3, p. 342; al-Dhahabī in fact says that the first part of the *ḥadīth* i.e. 'He whose *mawlā* I am, 'Alī is his *mawlā*' is of the *mutawātir* type (that which has been reported by numerous authorities) while the second part has a strong chain of transmitters. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya*, (Cairo, 1347–8/1929–30), vol. 5, p. 24.
  53. Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, ed. A. M. Shākir (Cairo, 1949), vol. 4, pp. 281, 370, 372; vol. 5, pp. 347, 358; al-Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, p.



633; Ibn Māja, *al-Sunan*, ed. M. F. 'Abd al-Bāqī (Cairo, 1952-3) vol. 1, p. 43; Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Nasā'ī, *Khaṣā'is Amīr al-Mu'minin 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib* (Cairo, n.d.) p. 26; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, vol. 5, pp. 208-14.

54. Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, pp. 169 ff.

55. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, vol. 5, pp. 208-14. See also Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 5, p. 347 as well as al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-irshād ila qawāti' al-adilla fi uṣūl al-i'tiqādāt*, ed. M. Y. Mūsā and 'Alī A. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo, 1950), pp. 421-2, who asserts that the *ḥadīth* 'Man kuntu mawlāhu ...' is of the *āḥād* type. Refer also al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, pp. 169 ff.

56. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, pp. 17 ff. Al-Bāqir does not give the details of the event but only says that the Prophet endorsed the *walāya* at Ghadīr Khumm. This implies that the event was quite well known by then. The Qāḍī relates the details of the event without mentioning the name of the authority, saying it is well-known and well attested by authorities. The oldest evidence for this event is the poetry of Ḥassān b. Thābit who composed and recited the verses spontaneously when people began congratulating 'Alī. (See al-Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 2, p. 32). However, Horowitz and Goldziher (see 'Kumayt' in EI) think that these verses are spurious; in their view, the earliest evidence of this tradition are Kumayt's verses (d. 126/743).

57. In his *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, pp. 21, 25, al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān does not say from whom this tradition is related but only that it is well-known and well-attested (on p. 25 he says it has been related from the Prophet, but again does not say by whom). It is interesting to note that in his version the Prophet said this at Ghadīr Khumm. See also al-Kirmānī, *Maṣābiḥ*, pp. 115-16.

58. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, pp. 24; vol. 6, p. 3; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 7, p. 20. See also Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 3:1, pp. 14-15; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* 1:182; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, vol. 1, p. 43; al-Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, pp. 638-41; al-Nasā'ī, *Khaṣā'is*, p. 4. Also see Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat*, vol. 4, p. 163 and Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *Iqd al-farīd*, vol. 4, p. 311.

59. Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, pp. 173-5, 228; al-Juwaynī, *Irshād*, p. 422. See for other arguments given by the Sunnis, S. N. Makarem's translation of Abū al-Fawāris, *al-Risāla fi al-imāma* (New York, 1977), pp. 73-5.

60. Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, pp. 174-5.

61. See Makarem's edition of Abū al-Fawāris, *al-Risāla fi al-imāma*, pp. 28-33.

62. In this case Abū al-Fawāris appears to be ignoring the *Ukhūwwa* between Muḥammad and 'Alī.

63. *Da'ā'im*, vol. 2, p. 343, where a version of it is mentioned by the Qāḍī. Another tradition says: 'He who does not write his testament has a defect in his religion and in his reason.' See *Da'ā'im*, vol. 2, p. 344. Also see Abū al-Fawāris, *al-Risāla* in S. N. Makarem's edition, pp. 32-3.

64. According to some Sunnī commentators these verses are totally abrogated by the so called 'Verses of Inheritance' (Sūra 4:10-14). See Muṣṭafā Zayd, *al-Naskh fi al-Qur'an al-karīm* (Cairo, 1963), vol. 2, pp. 385-93 (cited by S. N. Makarem), while others believe they are not abrogated. Still others believe that the verses are abrogated only in relation to 'the parents and kinsmen' who are supposed to inherit the property of the deceased. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 3, pp. 384 ff. (Cairo edition) for details. There are still others, among them al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who believe that these verses are not abrogated but are rather elaborated specifically by the 'verses of Inheritance'. Since kinsmen are too remotely connected to be treated as natural heirs, a testament is therefore necessary to allocate each one's share. Each of the natural heirs' share is then specified in the 'Verse of Inheritance.' See Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Bulūgh al-marām min adillāt al-aḥkām*, p. 273, (Cairo, 1933), cited by S. N. Makarem, p. 77 of his translation.

65. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, p. 2; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, p. 70; See also Mālik b. Anas, *al-Muwatta'*, ed. 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Abd al-Laṭīf, 2nd ed. (Cairo, 1967), p. 539; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 4, p. 108; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 2, p. 10; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, vol. 2, p. 901; al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, vol. 6, p. 239; al-Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 3, p. 295 and vol. 4, p. 432 and al-Khaṭīb al-Tabrīzī in his *Mishkāt al-maṣābiḥ*, vol. 2, p. 155.

66. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 397.

67. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 4, p. 96.

68. See al-Khaṭīb al-Tabrīzī, *Mishkāt*, vol. 2, p. 319.

69. *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, p. 31. See p. 34, 'He who dies without having known the imam of his time (*dahr*) while alive (*ḥayyan*) dies in ignorance.'

70. 'He who dies without knowing the imam of the time dies in ignorance', *al-Risāla fi al-imāma* in S. N. Makarem's edition p. 3 (Arabic text) and p. 22 for translation. Also see note 18 for details.

71. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, pp. 183-4.

72. See al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, pp. 185–6; al-Ghazālī, *Faḍā'ih*, pp. 143–4.

73. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, p. 2; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 290, has a tradition from al-Bāqir which says God made five things incumbent upon those who worship Him: they adopted four – *ṣalāt*, *zakāt*, *ḥajj* and *ṣawm* – and left aside one, namely the *walāya*.

74. See Abū al-Fawāris, *Risāla*, p. 27 where he refutes the notion that the imam should be chosen and installed by the consensus of the community.

75. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 175.

76. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, p. 18 and al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 289. See for more details the earlier section on the 'Qur'ānic basis of the Imāmate' and al-Mufid, *Irshād*, tr. Howard, pp. 29 ff.

77. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 306 ff.

78. This gives us another insight to the date of al-Bāqir's death. According to Mufid's *Irshād*, Nāfi' died in 119/737.

79. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 305 ff.

80. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 238 ff. It is believed that when Zayn al-'Ābidīn died, al-Bāqir's brothers demanded their share of the contents of the casket. But Zayn al-'Ābidīn refused, saying that it was given to him as his exclusive inheritance. The Ḥasanids claimed to have the weapons, but Ja'far al-Ṣādiq emphatically denied that 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī and his son Nafs al-Zakiyya had, as they asserted, the famous sword of the Prophet, *Dhū al-Fiqr*. See Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, p. 188; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, vol. 3, p. 247. Other versions in al-Ṭabarī state that they came into the possession of the 'Abbāsids as well.

81. There are conflicting reports from al-Bāqir as to when the *naṣṣ* was bestowed on Imam Zayn al-'Ābidīn, on the battlefield or before setting forth for Karbala. See al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 303.

82. Ibid., pp. 300 ff.

83. Ibid., pp. 298–9. However, later Ismaili sources suggest that after 'Alī, the imam was al-Ḥusayn not al-Ḥasan as the Twelvers and other Shī'is believe. To the Nizārī Ismailis, al-Ḥasan was a trustee (*mustawda'*) imam. See Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Firās, *al-Shāfiya* (The Healer) ed. and tr. by S. N. Makarem (Beirut, 1966), pp. 146–7. See also 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walid, *Risālat al-idāh wa al-tabyin fi kayfiyyāt tasalsul wilādatay al-jism wa al-dīn*, ed. with an intro. by R. Strothmann in *Gnosis-Texte der Ismailiten*. (Göttingen, 1943), p. 139; Hātim b.

Imrān Ibn Zahra, *Risālat al-uṣūl wa'l aḥkām*, ed. 'Ārif Tāmir in *Khams rasā'il Ismā'īliyya* (Salamiyya, 1956), p. 120; al-Khaṭṭāb b. Ḥasan, *Ghāyat al-mawālīd*. Excerpts in Wladimir Ivanow, *Ismaili Tradition Concerning the Rise of the Fatimids* (London, 1942), cited by S. N. Makarem's tr. of *ash-Shāfiya*.

84. See al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Ta'wil al-da'ā'im* ed. Muḥammad Ḥasan al-A'zamī (Cairo, 1967–72), p. 86. Also see *Kitāb al-kashf* attributed to Ja'far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib (Beirut, 1984), p. 118.

85. Al-Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, p. 301; al-Khaṭṭāb al-Tabrizī, *Mishkāt*, vol. 3, p. 244. Al-Tirmidhī considers this tradition as *gharīb munkar* i.e. resting on only one authority who is unreliable, while al-Bukhārī rejects its authenticity completely. However, Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī considers it authentic (see al-Khaṭṭāb al-Tabrizī, *Mishkāt*, vol. 3, p. 315) cited in S. N. Makarem's trans. of *al-Risāla fi al-imāma*, p. 76 note 62.

86. *Al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 437.

87. Ibid. pp. 192–3, 222, 224, 228–9, 263.

88. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 230. Āṣif (Aṣaph) said that the earth between him and the throne of Bilqis sank, so that he could reach it with his hand, then the earth returned to its previous state, quicker than an eye could blink. Āṣif was the companion of Solomon.

89. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 257, 176, 270–1; On this see the article of E. Kohlberg, 'The Term 'Muḥaddath' in Twelver Shī'ism', in *Studia Orientalia memoriae D. H. Baneth dedicata*, (Jerusalem, 1979), pp. 39–47. This point is based on the Shī'ī understanding of the Qur'ānic verse 22:52.

90. See al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 194.

91. See Uri Rubin, 'Prophets and Progenitors in Early Shī'a Tradition', *JSAI*, I, (1979), p. 44.

92. See al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 274, where traditions from al-Bāqir's son, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq reveal that the succeeding imam became aware of the totality of the previous imam's knowledge only at the last moment of the latter's life. See also p. 239, where a tradition relates that before his death, the Prophet called for 'Alī and communicated to him a thousand chapters of knowledge, each one opening into a thousand more.

93. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 442. See also al-Mas'ūdī, *Ithbāt al-waṣīyya* (Najaf, 1945), pp. 90 ff.

94. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 442.

95. Rubin adds, however, that the examination of the exact relationship between the two views is beyond the scope of his paper. For details see Rubin, 'Prophets and Progenitors', pp. 41–65. See also his 'Pre-existence and Light', IOS, 5 (1975), pp. 62 ff.

96. See Rajkowski, 'Early Shī'ism in 'Iraq'.

97. Qur'ān, 7:157; 4:174; 4:45; 57:28; 24:35; 44:89; 76:26; and 61:8. See also al-Kumayt, *Hāshimīyyāt* (Leiden, 1904), p. 84, poem 3, verse 39–40.

98. Al-Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-'aql*, ed. M. Ghālib (Beirut, 1967), p. 217, discusses the 'isma of the imam in his analyses of *al-arkān al-arba'a* (the four elements) where the soul is the 'learner' and the *bāb*, *ḥujja* and *dā'ī* are 'teachers'. The imam is above all these, see *ibid.* pp. 201–18, 250 cited in P. J. Vatikiotis, who has described this in his book, *The Fatimid Theory of State* (Lahore, 1957), pp. 43 ff.

99. P. 110 using Sūra 2: 33, 35–38. Until recently there was a controversy regarding the authorship of this collection of thirty-five discourses in *al-Mustanṣiriyya*, for the book states it is written by 'al-Dā'ī Thiḡat al-Imām 'Alam al-Islām'. This situation appears to have arisen as a result of a continuous change of *dā'īs* between the years 451/1059–454/1062. Moreover, the position of Imam al-Mustanṣir billāh was becoming precarious as the minister, Badr al-Jamālī, was fast gaining strength. When (in his despair) he assigned the offices of *wazīr*, *qāḍī al-quḍāt* and *dā'ī al-du'āt* to one person, the titles of 'Thiḡat al-Imām' and 'Alam al-Islām' became common addresses of these officials. Hence the difficulty of knowing which 'Thiḡat al-Imām' or 'Alam al-Islām' is which. Ivanow thinks the work belongs to al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn, but Vatikiotis is unsure. See for more details, *Fatimid Theory of State*, pp. 201 ff. S. M. Stern, however, has demonstrated that the author is Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Hakīm b. Wahb b. 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Mālījī, chief *qāḍī* from 7 Dhū'l-Qa'da 450–11 Rajab 452; *Studies in Early Ismā'īlism*, pp. 239–40.

100. 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Walīd, *Tāj al-'aḳā'id wa ma'dan al-fawā'id*, ed. 'Arif Tāmīr (Beirut, 1967), p. 76.

101. *Hujja* in my view is best translated as guarantor. See Madelung, 'Imāma', who has translated it as both 'proof' and 'guarantor' and from whom I have adopted the word. The word 'proof' has been in use for a long time and can still be used but it does not sufficiently indicate or connote the task which the *ḥujja* has to undertake. On the other hand the word 'guarantor' gives the meaning of someone who has undertaken responsibility for others.

102. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 145, 179. See also al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, pp. 20–1.

## Chapter Five

1. The *fitna* or the dissension in the community resulting from the caliph 'Uthmān's murder.

2. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 26.

3. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, pp. 16–17.

4. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, pp. 26–7.

5. *Ibid.* p. 26.

6. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, pp. 15–17, where some of the traditions are from 'Alī. One tradition says *islām* is *iqrār* (confession) and *imān* is *iqrār* and *ma'rifa* (knowledge consisting of acknowledgement of God, the Prophet and the imams).

7. See al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 26 where the word *fi'l* is used instead of 'amal.

8. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, p. 1. His tradition in *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 70 says that 'Alī reported from the Prophet, saying that there can be no 'words' except by 'works' and no 'words or works' except by 'intention' and no 'intention' except by adhering to the *sunna* correctly (*iṣāba al-sunna*).

9. Here it is not possible to go into the details of what status the Khārījīyya and Mu'tazila accord to the 'grave sinner', see the article on 'Imān', by L. Gardet, EI2, vol. 3, pp. 1170–4.

10. A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 38, 45. See also al-Ṣādiq's views on the Murjī'a in the *Da'ā'im*, vol. 1, p. 1.

11. Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī, *Kutāb al-zīna* in al-Sāmarrā'i, p. 262.

12. W. Madelung, 'The Early Murjī'a in Khurasan and Transoxania and the Spread of Ḥanīfism', *Der Islam*, 59, 1982, pp. 32–9.

13. Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 202.

14. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, pp. 45, 47.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 93.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 35, 41.

19. The word *taḡiyya* is derived from the verb *waḡā* which means to keep from, or guard, someone or something against someone or something else. See R. Strothmann, 'Taḡiya', EI, vol. 4, pp. 628–9 for