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Author(s): Binyamin Abrahamov

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AL-ḲĀSIM IBN IBRĀHĪM'S THEORY OF THE IMAMATE*

BY

BINYAMIN ABRAHAMOV

AL-ḲĀSIM ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ismā'īl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī was born in 169/785. The biographical sources provide no information about his youth, but he probably grew up in al-Madīna. Al-Ḳāsim came to Egypt before 199/815 and stayed there till 211/826. The reason for his coming to Egypt is uncertain. One source indicates that he was sent to Egypt by his brother Muḥammad to gain recruits who would swear allegiance to the latter, but other sources make no mention of any such recruiting mission in Egypt. Also, al-Ḳāsim was not likely to have prepared a rebellion in Egypt, as is related by later Zaydite sources, in addition to his religious activity (see below). After leaving Egypt al-Ḳāsim settled in al-Rass near al-Madīna where he died in 246/860. Al-Ḳāsim appears in his writings as a teacher and preacher of the true religion, and its defender against internal enemies (oppressors, sinners, anthropomorphists) and external enemies as well (philosophers, Christians, Manicheans). He was influenced to a large extent by Mu'tazilism and his writings paved the way for the acceptance of Mu'tazilite doctrines by the later Zaydites of Yemen. Al-Ḳāsim's main theological subjects are as follows: the arguments for the existence of God and the creation of the world, God's unity and qualities, theodicy, belief and unbelief, the imamate¹.

I

The aim of this article is to examine al-Ḳāsim's theory of the imamate, comprising three main themes: a. The obligation to appoint an imam b.

* The present article is a revised version of a chapter of my Ph.D. thesis, originally written in Hebrew, on the theological epistles of al-Ḳāsim ibn Ibrāhīm. The work was carried out under the supervision of Prof. M. Schwarz.

¹ See W. Madelung, *Der Imam al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen*, Berlin 1965, pp. 86-96. B. Abrahamov, *The Theological Epistles of al-Ḳāsim Ibn Ibrāhīm*, unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Tel Aviv University, 1981, vol. I.

The signs attesting to the legitimate imam and c. A refutation of the Rāfidite doctrines concerning the imamate.

At the beginning of his discussion of the imamate question in al-*Kāsim* Madelung asserts: «Al-*Kāsim* does not mention the imamate question in his five principles². It is indirectly interwoven in the fifth principle, and in most of the rest of his works he does not deal with it at all. Evidently it was not his special concern. Certainly he was a Zaidite to such an extent that he considered the wrong decision concerning the succession to the Prophet the source of all evils in Islam. Yet the consequences of this fault seemed to him much graver than the fault itself. Al-*Kāsim*'s adherents were clearly much more interested in the imamate question than al-*Kāsim* himself. Quite a few questions that were directed to him dealt with the imamate. In response to a question about the necessity of the imamate and the sign indicating the legitimate imam al-*Kāsim* composed his *Kitāb tathbīt al-imāma* (see below)³».

However, the fact that al-*Kāsim* does not mention the imamate question in his five principles of Islam does not prove that «it was not his special concern». Furthermore, the question of emigration from the abode of unjust people does not figure as a principle, although al-*Kāsim* deems it very important and devotes a long epistle entitled *Kitāb al-hidjra* to it. In contradistinction to this, the third principle, the promise and the threat, occupies little space in his writings. As a rule, the relative importance of al-*Kāsim*'s notions need not be evaluated according to the criterion of his five principles, since the latter do not sum up all his views, but, as Madelung notes, do contain a summary of most of his arguments⁴. Most of al-*Kāsim*'s theological epistles deal with the first two principles, God's unity and God's justice.

The imamate question, not in its political aspect⁵, occupies an important position in al-*Kāsim*, and he devoted several works to it:

² The five principles of Islam according to al-*Kāsim* are as follows: a. God is one b. God is just c. God both promises and threatens d. The *Qur'ān* is a homogeneous book without contradictions, and the *Sunna* is what is mentioned in the *Qur'ān* and what the *Qur'ān* intends e. It is forbidden, where oppressors rule, to use property and to engage in commerce and profits making. See al-*Kāsim*, *Min kalāmihi*, MS. Berlin (W. Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften der Königl. Bibliothek zu Berlin*, Berlin 1887-1899, BD 4, S. 290, nu. 4876, Glaser 101), fol. 132a-132b. The text of the five principles was edited by E. Griffini in *RSO* 7 (1917), pp. 605 f, and also by M. 'Imāra in *Rasā'il al-'adl wa'l-tawhīd*, Cairo 1971, vol. I, p. 142. (Cf. Madelung, *Der Imam*, pp. 104-105).

³ See Madelung, *Der Imam*, p. 141.

⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 104.

⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 150.

Kitāb tathbit al-imāma and *Kitāb al-imāma*⁶, which deal with the necessity of an imam and his signs, *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rāfiḍa* and *Kitāb*

⁶ In MS. Ambrosiana C186 (see E. Griffini, *RSO* 8 (1919-1920), pp. 293-297, no. 442 (C186) the epistle is entitled *al-iḥtidjād fi'l-imāma*. Parts of it were published in R. Strothmann's *Das Staatsrecht der Zaiditen*, Strassburg 1912, ch. 2. Madelung (*Der Imam*, pp. 99-100) doubts the authenticity of this work for some reasons: a. The language of the epistle is poor and sometimes incorrect. The difference between it and the likely authentic *Kitāb tathbit al-imāma*, both of which treat the same subject, is very striking. b. The Zaydiyya's opponents, according to *Kitāb al-imāma*, namely al-Murdjī'a, al-Ḳadariyya, the enemies of the Prophet's family, or Alī's enemies (al-Nawāṣib) and al-Khawāridj are not mentioned in al-Ḳāsim's other epistles. The adversaries he always mentions are the Ḥashwiyya, who are missing here. Yet this list of adversaries exactly fits the list of enemies mentioned several times in the juridical work attributed to Zayd ibn 'Alī (See Madelung, *Der Imam*, p. 55). Possibly the expression Ḳadariyya still indicates the opponents of predestination. Madelung, then, concludes that the author was certainly a Zaydite of the old Kūfīc school. But it is evident that already at an early stage the work passed into al-Ḳāsim's collection of epistles, since Ibn Nadīm (*Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed G. Flügel, Leipzig 1871, p. 193) and Abu Ṭālib al-Nāṭiq (*Kitāb al-īfāda fi ta'rīkh al-a'imma al-sāda*, MS. Berlin, Glaser 37, fol. 25b) include it in al-Ḳāsim's writings.

Madelung's conclusion does not seem sufficiently well-founded. While the style is rather inferior, al-Ḳāsim's style is not homogeneous, even in epistles Madelung considers to be genuine. His style in *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-zindīk* and *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-naṣārā* — a forced and crude rhymed prose (*sadj'*) — is different from the style in *Kitāb al-dalīl al-kabir*, which is also written in rhymed prose, but is neither forced nor crude. And his style in the latter is different from that in *Kitāb al-mustarshid* (See my *The Theological Epistles*, vol. II, pp. 108-142. MS. Berlin, fols. 71b-81a), in which, as in other works, he does not write sometimes in rhymed prose. In his *Kitāb al-masā'il* (MS. Brit. Mu. Or. 3977) he does not use rhymed prose at all. Al-Ḳāsim seems to have initially written in rhymed prose, but in the course of time he gradually gave it up, so that his late epistles (e.g. *Kitāb al-dalīl al-saghīr*) eschew this style.

Contrary to Nyberg's doubts as to the authenticity of *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-zindīk* (See *OLZ*, 32(1929), pp. 432 ff), Bergsträsser concludes that both this work and *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-naṣārā* were written by al-Ḳāsim, but the latter was written somewhat later than the former (See *Islamica* 4 (1929-31), pp. 295 ff. Madelung, *Der Imam*, p. 90 f.) The style of *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-naṣārā* is noticeably less crude than that of *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-zindīk*. Moreover, the key word *ma'dīn* (source, occurring in al-Ḳāsim's *Kitāb al-masā'il*, fol. 57b. Cf. Madelung, *Der Imam*, p. 143), which refers to the Prophet's family as a source in which the imam can be found, appears several times in the same sense in *Kitāb al-imāma* (See e.g. MS. Berlin, fol 57a, l. 16, 57b, ll. 12-13). There is a possibility that one of al-Ḳāsim's disciples wrote what he had heard from his master, and this might explain the mistakes occurring from time to time in the text.

The Murdjī'a are mentioned in al-Ḳāsim's writings both by name and by their doctrines (See *Kitāb al-masā'il*, fol. 47b. *Kitāb al-dalīl al-kabir* in my *The Theological Epistles* vol. II, p. 41 (MS. Berlin, fol. 17a.) *Kitāb al-'adl wa'l-tawhīd*, in *Rasā'il al-'adl wa'l-tawhīd*, ed. M. 'Imāra, Cairo 1971, pp. 121-122. The last epistle is considered by Madelung to be spurious). As to the Ḳadariyya, when in *Kitāb al-imāma* the author includes them among his adversaries, he means the proponents of predestination, not its opponents. The former are explicitly mentioned in al-Ḳāsim. In response to a question posed by his son Muḥammad as to what is meant by the designation Ḳadariyya he says: «the Ḳadariyya are those who uphold compulsion» (al-*mudj'bira*. See *Kitāb al-masā'il*, fol. 47a). Also there is nothing surprising in including the enemies of the Prophet's family among the adversaries of one

*al-radd 'alā al-rawāfiḍ min aṣḥāb al-ghuluww*⁷ which deal with the refutation of the Rāfiḍite doctrines concerning the imamate.

who holds that an imam should be of this family. As to the Khawāridj, they were of the opinion that an imam should be elected, (See EI², vol. IV, p. 1076), and this may be the reason why al-Kāsim, who opposes this view, counts them as his adversaries.

Madelung's conclusion that the author of *Kitāb al-imāma* was a Zaydite of the early Kūfic school is untenable. The Batriyya, who formed the doctrines of the early Zaydite school of Kūfa, held that an imam should be appointed by a council of electors (*shūrā*), and some of them held that accession to the imamate was the privilege of every descendant of Ali who took to the sword in support of his claim (See Madelung, *Der Imam*, p. 50). But al-Kāsim, who, in my opinion, is either the author of *Kitāb al-imāma* or the author's first source, disagrees that an imam should be appointed by a council. In *Kitāb al-imāma* al-Kāsim asks: «How God's messenger, may God bless him and give him peace, imposed (*farāḍa*) the imāma upon Abū Bakr, did he name him for you (*sammāhu lakum bi-smihi wa-'aynihi*), or indicate him by his quality (*dalla 'alayhi bi-sifatihī*), or leave it to a council (*tarakahā shūrā*), or keep silent (*sakata*)?» (See *ibid.* MS. Berlin, fol. 55a, ll. 4-6.)

Al-Kāsim rejects all these four ways of appointing an imam by the usual Kalam dialectical method of arguing (See *ibid.*, fol. 55a-57a). Finally he draws the conclusion that Muḥammad named his successor according to a message from God (Abu Bakr is mentioned by name), but after him the legitimate imam should be appointed on the basis of his relationship (*qarāba*) to the Prophet, his being the most obedient, pious and wisest of people (See *ibid.*, fol. 57a-fol. 58). The imamate, according to al-Kāsim, is to be found in a known place (i.e. in a single specific person): '*inna al-imāma lā takūnu 'illā fi mawḍi' ma'rūf*' (See *ibid.*, fol. 57a, l. 12). Nowhere does al-Kāsim indicate rebellion as a sign characteristic of the imam.

It may be assumed that the author was a Djārūdite. The Djārūdites did not approve of the imamate of Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān, but declared that the Prophet had appointed 'Alī — his legatee (*waṣī*) — to be the legitimate imam. They represented the view that the community had made a mistake and transgressed God's precepts when it swore allegiance to the first three caliphs and not to 'Alī (See Madelung, *Der Imam*, pp. 44-46, al-Nāshi', *Kitāb 'uṣūl al-niḥāl*, p. 42, in J. van Ess, *Frühe Mu'tazilitische Häresiographie*, Beirut 1971). (About the authorship of *Kitāb 'uṣūl al-niḥāl*, which is attributed by J. van Ess to al-Nāshi' al-Akbar, see W. Madelung, «Frühe mu'tazilitische Häresiographie: das Kitāb al-Uṣūl des Ġa'far b. Harb?» *Der Islam*, 57(1980), part 2, pp. 220-236). Whereas according to *kitāb al-imāma* it is evident that al-Kāsim approved of the imamate of Abū Bakr and 'Umar, whom he mentions without rejecting them. The Djārūdites held that every descendant of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn could be an imam by rising in rebellion (*khurūḍ*). See Madelung, *Der Imam*, p. 47. And as we have seen, al-Kāsim was not of the opinion that rising in rebellion was a sign characteristic of the imam. We shall see below that notions expressed in *Kitāb tathbīt al-imāma* appear also in *Kitāb al-imāma*.

⁷ Madelung also doubts the authenticity of this epistle. See *Der Imam*, pp. 98-99. He argues that the names of al-Kāsim and four of his brothers appear in the epistle (See MS. Berlin, fol. 147) and that its style is different from that in *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rāfiḍa*. But finally, since there is a connection between the two epistles with regard to the contents, Madelung draws the conclusion that *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rawāfiḍ* was composed in accordance with al-Kāsim's conception, by a disciple, probably one of his sons, who all figured in al-Kāsim's life time as well versed in his writings.

It is not clear why Madelung draws a different conclusion concerning *Kitāb al-imāma*, although he has the same data as in *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rawāfiḍ*, i.e., the works display a difference in style, but a similarity in contents, and biographers and bibliographers do not doubt the authenticity of either.

II

Most of the sects in Islam held that the obligation to appoint an imam was absolute. Only the Nadjdites, a sub-sect of the Khāridjites, Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm and Hishām al-Fuwaṭī, opposed this principle, maintaining that if all the people are righteous and just, all of them are equal to one another, and there is therefore no reason to obey one of them⁸. The controversy has been over the proof that the appointment of an imam is obligatory — whether it is based upon reason (*bi'l-'aql*) or upon tradition (*bi'l-sam'*), i.e. the Qur'ān and the Sunna. The proof from reason for the appointment of an imam is expressed in the assertion that if a society did not have an imam, it would be destroyed, since every person would aspire to attain his goals without taking into consideration others' needs and feelings, and this would lead to robbery and killing⁹. Most of the Mu'tazilites held that the appointment of an imam was incumbent upon the community first according to reason and secondly according to tradition, whereas the 'Ash'arites rated tradition in the first place and reason in the second¹⁰. In this matter the Twelver Shi'ites

The sole work of those attributed to al-Kāsim, whose authenticity can be totally denied is *Kitāb al-kāmil al-munir*, a refutation of the Khawāridj. The Zaydite imams do not mention it, it does not occur in the MSS. in which all al-Kāsim's works are included, its style is very different from al-Kāsim's, and the answers to the Khawāridj suggest that the author is a Shi'ite Imāmi. Cf. Madelung, *Der Imam*, pp. 102-103.

⁸ See al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb nihāyat al-akdām fi 'ilm al-kalām*, ed. A. Guillaume, Oxford 1931, pp. 481 f. idem., *Kitāb al-milal wa'l-nihāl*, rep. of W. Cureton's ed. (London 1846) Leipzig 1923, p. 92. Al-'Ash'arī, *Kitāb makālāt al-islāmiyyin wa-'ikhtilāf al-muṣallin*, ed. H. Ritter, Wiesbaden 1963, p. 125, ll. 11-12, p. 460, ll. 9-11. Al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb 'uṣūl al-dīn*, Istanbul 1928, pp. 271 f. According to the Mu'tazilite theologian al-Nāshī' (See J. van Ess, *Frühe Mu'tazilitische*, pp. 49 f. arts. 82-83 of the Arabic text) the Mu'tazila were divided into two groups in regard to the obligation to appoint an imam. One maintained that this obligation was absolute, the other that the Muslims had the right to appoint an imam or not. Al-Aṣamm is not mentioned by al-Nāshī' (See *ibid*) among those who denied the obligation to appoint an imam. According to al-Nāshī' he asserts that in disorderly times, when one imam cannot rule, there may in fact be several imams. Thus al-'Ash'arī's report about al-Aṣamm would seem to be based on an implication rather than on a clear statement. Cf. W. M. Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, Edinburgh 1973, pp. 226-227. J. van Ess, «Al-Aṣamm», EI², Supplement, pp. 88-90.

⁹ Cf. Ibn Khaldūn, *Mukaddima*, ed. Bülāk, pp. 43-44, 187. trans. by F. Rosenthal, London 1958, pp. 91-93, 380-381.

¹⁰ See H. A. R. Gibb, «Al-Māwardī's Theory of the Khilāfah», *Islamic Culture* 2(1937), p. 25. Al-Baghdādī, *op. cit.* But some Mu'tazilites, Abū 'Alī al-Djubbā'ī, Abū Ḥāshim al-Djubbā'ī and 'Abd al-Djabbār, held that the obligation to appoint an imam was based on tradition only. See Madelung, *Der Imam*, p. 143. 'Abd al-Djabbār, *al-Mughni fi abwāb al-tawhīd wa'l-'adl*, vol. XX, part I, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Sulaymān Dunyā, pp. 17-40. Cf. Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī, *Ghāyat al-marām fi 'ilm al-kalām*, ed. Ḥasan Maḥmūd 'Abd al-Laṭīf, Cairo 1971, pp. 364 ff.

followed the Mu'tazilites¹¹, while the later Zaidites decided in favor of tradition¹². Al-Kāsim based himself upon both reason and tradition.

According to al-Kāsim the obligation to appoint an imam is derived from the necessity of defending the community from its external enemies, the weak persons from the strong ones and the holy places. The imam is the one who watches people to induce and guide them to obey God's precepts. If there were no imam, people would be lost¹³. «After the Prophet people cannot dispense with an imam. If they do, they will shed blood and violate prohibitions. The strong person will overwhelm the weak one and the rules and the punishments (*al-aḥkām wa'l-ḥudūd*) will be nullified¹⁴».

Al-Kāsim states that the obligation to appoint an imam is connected with the wisdom (*ḥikma*) observed in Creation. God created the universe, since he wished (*arāda*) and chose (*ikhtāra*) to create it¹⁵. It is inadmissible to assume God, the Wise, creating things then wishing to destroy them; He created things in such a manner that they can exist. He created, for example, various kinds of food by which man can be nourished. Also the division of the year into seasons, months, days and nights for the benefit of man, and the animals that man can enslave, demonstrate that God created things for man's existence¹⁶.

The existence of human beings from infancy to maturity is dependent upon parents (*'ābā'*) who take care of their children and maintain them. The parents-sons chain reaches back to the first father, who was taught by God how to exist, i.e., to know the damage and the benefit in everything and to know how to punish the evil-doer and reward the righteous person¹⁷.

Al-Kāsim divides man's life into three periods (*ṭabaḳāt*). In the first period, the period of upbringing (*ṭabaḳat al-tarbiya*), people are dependent upon their parents. In the second period, the period of working to acquire food (*ṭabaḳat 'i'timāl al-'aghdhiya*), they are independent of their parents. In the third period of doing good and evil (*'iktisāb*¹⁸ *al-ḥasana*

¹¹ See Aḥmad Maḥmūd Ṣubḥī, *Nazariyyat al-'imāma ladā al-shī'a al-'ithnā 'ashariyya*, Cairo 1969, pp. 69-77. Madelung, *ibid*.

¹² See Madelung, *ibid*.

¹³ See *Kitāb tathbūt al-'imāma* in *The Theological Epistles*, vol. II, p. 206, l. 10-p. 207, l. 10 (MS. Berlin, fol. 82a-82b). *Kitāb al-'imāma*, MS. Berlin, fol. 57a.

¹⁴ See *ibid.*, l. 10.

¹⁵ Al-Kāsim identifies God's will with His choice. Cf. al-Baghdādī, *'Uṣūl al-dīn*, p. 102.

¹⁶ See *Kitāb tathbūt al-'imāma*, pp. 207-209 (MS. Berlin, fols. 82b-83b).

¹⁷ See *ibid.*, pp. 209 f (MS. Berlin fol. 83a f.).

¹⁸ The verbs *kasaba* and *'iktasaba* are used in kalam prior to al-Ghazālī in the sense of performing actions for which one is responsible. See M. Schwarz, «Acquisition (*kasb*) in

wa'l-sayyi'a), they need a guide and an instructor, who can punish them. In this period, the desire for sex and food is implanted in men, and if there were not someone to limit and curb it, people would fight against each other to satisfy their desires and consequently the world would be destroyed¹⁹. God established marriage to limit and curb the sexual desire and other known restrictions to limit people in their other activities. Whoever transgresses these restrictions is punished. People need a guide to teach them these restrictions, and this guide is the imam. Also, the imam punishes people if they disobey him, and rewards them if they obey him. In this manner people are kept safe²⁰.

Al-Ḳāsim infers the obligation to appoint an imam also from two precepts, prayer and almsgiving. Since the prayer on Friday is directed by an imam, and the imam is mentioned in the Friday sermon²¹, there must be an imam to direct the prayer, and since the prayer is an obligation imposed upon Muslims, there is an obligation to appoint an imam. The precept of almsgiving too cannot be fulfilled without an imam who takes money from people and distributes it afterwards to the poor²².

The notion that an imam should be appointed since the precepts are fulfilled by people because of his presence and activities is generally expressed in *Kitāb al-'imāma*: «Know that the most obligatory precept is the precept of the imamate (i.e., appointing an imam) (*afraḍ al-farā'id wa-awkaduhā farḍ al-'imāma*), since all precepts do not exist except through it (*li-'anna djamī' al-farā'id lā takūnu 'illā bihā*). It is forbidden to change this precept in any way (*wa-lā yadjūzu tabdīl farīḍat al-'imāma*), since its change (lit. since in it) entails (lit. there is) damage which is not entailed by the change of another precept (lit. which is not in another precept) (*li-'anna fihā al-fasād mā laysa fī ḡhayrihā*)²³».

Early *kalām*», in *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition*, eds. S. M. Stern, A. H. Hourani and V. Brown, Oxford 1972, pp. 355-387.

¹⁹ See *Kitāb tathbit al-'imāma*, pp. 210 f. (MS. Berlin 83b, f.). The distinction al-Ḳāsim makes between the second and third periods is not justified, since according to al-Ḳāsim himself work for acquiring food must also be limited (See *ibid.*). Thus, there is no difference between the second and third periods.

²⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 211 f. (MS. Berlin 83b, f.).

²¹ The mention of the imam in the Friday sermon is not explicitly stated by al-Ḳāsim but implied in the following: *wa-man kānat tu'kadu lahu fa-mutakaddim kabla taḳad-dumihā*. «He for whom the prayer is established precedes the prayer». *ibid.* p. 222 (MS. Berlin, fol. 87a).

²² See *ibid.*

²³ See *Kitāb al-'imāma*, MS. Berlin, fol. 56b, ll. 22-23. In *Kitāb al-mas'āl* (fol. 58) Muḥammad, al-Ḳāsim's son, says that many of God's precepts can be fulfilled only through an imam. Cf. Madelung, *Der Imam*, p. 144.

The obligation to appoint an imam also evidently figures in the Ḳurʿān. First al-Ḳāsim shows that God chooses some of His creatures and prefers them to others. He refers, for example, to the following verse: «He it is who has made you vice-gerents of the earth and has raised some of you above others in rank...» (sūra 6, v. 165)²⁴. Then he quotes verses (sūra 2, v. 124, sūra 32, vv. 23-24) stating that God appointed Ibrāhīm an imam and also the other imams among the children of Israel. According to al-Ḳāsim's interpretation of sūra 3, v. 68 and sūra 2, v. 129, Muḥammad is the heir of Ibrāhīm. «'Verily, the people who are nearest to Ibrāhīm are those who followed him and this prophet and those who have believed. God is the defender of the believers'. (sūra 3, v. 68). Muḥammad, then, inherited the prophethood from Ibrāhīm and Ismāʿīl, and the call of Ibrāhīm and Ismāʿīl came to him since they said: 'O, our Lord, raise up among them a messenger, one of themselves...' (sūra 2, v. 129)»²⁵.

But «the most obvious proof and the most illuminating revelation concerning the obligation of the imamate and (the fact) that it is obligatory on the community (*wa-'abyan dalil. wa-'anwar tanzil. fī wudjūb al-imāma. wa-mā yadjibu minhā 'alā'l-umma*) is God's saying: 'O you who have believed, obey God and the messenger and the men of power (*'ūlū al-'amr*) amongst you. If you quarrel about anything, refer it to God and the messenger, if you have come to believe in God and the Last Day, that is the best interpretation' (lit. that is better and fairer in interpretation). (sūra 4, v. 59). God, may He be blessed and exalted, ordered to obey the men of power with His ordering to obey Him and the messenger. God, may He be blessed and exalted, orders only a known thing (*wa-lā ya'muru tabāraka wa-ta'āla 'illā bi-ma'lūm ghayr madjhūl*)»²⁶. According to al-Ḳāsim, the men of power are the imams. The last quoted verse appears as proof of the obligation of the imamate also in *Kitāb al-imāma* and after quoting it there al-Ḳāsim adds, «God ordered to obey that which is known (*fa-'amara bi-tā'at ma'lūm ghayr madjhūl*)»²⁷.

The only tradition figuring in al-Ḳāsim as proof of the obligation of the imamate is: «Whoever dies without having an imam, dies like an idolater (lit. dies an idolatrous death. *man māta lā imām lahu māta mīta*

²⁴ See also sūra 28, v. 68, sūra 17, v. 21, sūra 43, v. 32, sūra 17, v. 70. *Kitāb tathbūt al-imāma*, p. 204 (MS. Berlin. fol. 81b).

²⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. 205 f (MS. Berlin 82a), p. 223 (MS. Berlin fol. 87a.f).

²⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 206, ll. 3-7 (MS. Berlin fol. 82a).

²⁷ See *Kitāb al-imāma*, MS. Berlin, fol. 57a, ll. 7-9.

djāhiliyya)²⁸. An allusion to this tradition figures in *Kitāb al-'imāma* where al-Ḳāsim says that if there were no imam, the religion would again become idolatrous (lit. the religion would return to be idolatry. *wa-radja'a al-dīn djāhiliyya*)²⁹.

III

After proving the necessity of the imamate and inferring its obligation from reason as well as from the Kur'an and the tradition, there is a need to know who is the imam. According to al-Ḳāsim, the imam's identity must be evident and the signs attesting to him must be unequivocal, so that no unrightful pretender to the imamate can attribute it to himself. Only an undoubted imam can deter transgressors by inflicting punishment and bestowing reward to the obedient³⁰.

The imams³¹ are divided into three kinds: a. the messengers and the prophets (*rusul*, *'anbiyā'*) b. the legatees (*'awṣiyā'*)³² of the messengers and c. the successors of the prophets (*khulafā' al-'anbiyā'*), who are also called imams (*'a'emma*). The distinction between the messengers, the legatees and the imams is evident through the signs by which they can be identified. Al-Ḳāsim recognizes the prophets, who are of the highest rank among the imams, through miracles (*'āyāt*) that have occurred to them. He mentions the miracles of Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad³³.

The legatees are distinguished from the imams through three signs: a. God singled them out by naming them. b. The messengers knew their (special) rank, and c. The messengers distinguished them from others by

²⁸ See *Kitāb tathbīt al-'imāma*, p. 206, ll. 8-9 (MS. Berlin, fol. 82a) Cf. Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, vol. IV, p. 96. The Twelver Shi'ites use this tradition to prove that the imamate is one of the principles of religion. See Šubḥī, *Naẓariyyat al-imāma*, p. 64. Cf. Madelung, *Der Imam*, p. 95.

²⁹ See *Kitāb al-imāma*, MS. Berlin, fol. 57a, ll. 10-11.

³⁰ See *Kitāb tathbīt al-'imāma*, p. 213 (MS. Berlin, fol. 84b).

³¹ The word imam in al-Ḳāsim has a double meaning: a. It is a general name for all kinds of people who guide and lead the community and b. It indicates one kind of leader whose identity is known through special signs. See below.

³² According to the Twelver Shi'ite doctrine *waṣī* (pl. *'awṣiyā'*) is a legatee of a prophet, i.e., the legitimate successor of a prophet as a leader of the community who transmits his legacy (*waṣīyya*, which consists of esoteric knowledge and some concrete objects). Or he is a person who delivers a *waṣīyya* of a prophet from a *waṣī* to another or to a prophet. The Twelver Shi'ites posit the existence of an uninterrupted chain of prophets and legatees from Adam onward. 'Alī is Muḥammad's *waṣī*. According to some Twelver Shi'ite traditions 'Alī is regarded as superior to all other legatees, and some traditions even make him equal in rank to the prophets. See U. Rubin, «Prophets and Progenitors in the Early Shi'a Tradition», *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 1(1979), pp. 41-51.

³³ See *Kitāb tathbīt al-imāma*, pp. 213 f. (MS. Berlin 84b).

statements of preference³⁴. 'Alī is brought by al-Kāsim as an example of *wayī*. 'Alī's high rank is expressed in the following: He knew future events (this knowledge was transmitted to him by the Prophet); also he had a profound and wide knowledge of all sciences and of the various religions, and he knew the secrets of the Qur'ān³⁵; he was courageous in battle; he was among the first to believe in God; and he was eloquent³⁶.

The signs attesting to the imams are as follows: a. near relationship to the Prophet (*qarāba*). b. perfection of wisdom (*kamāl al-hikma*)³⁷ and c. piety (*taqwā*)³⁸. These signs of the imam are mentioned by al-Kāsim also in *Kitāb al-imāma* (see above note 6) and *Kitāb al-masā'il*³⁹.

Al-Kāsim infers the near relationship to the Prophet from Qur'ān verses (e.g. sūra 57, v. 26, sūra 29, v. 27) which say that prophethood was given to the descendants of the prophets⁴⁰. Apparently he did not find a Qur'ān verse which could support his statement that an imam must have a near relationship to the prophets. Sometimes he even bases himself upon Qur'ān verses which deal only with the family of a particular prophet and does not point out that prophethood passes to descendants⁴¹. As proof that wisdom is a sign of an imam he cites the example of David⁴².

Al-Kāsim opposes the right of the community to choose (*'ikhtiyār*) an imam. Only the most excellent man (or the best man, *fāḍil* or *afḍal*) is the legitimate imam. There is no imamate of one-who-is-known-to-be-excelled-by-others (*maḥḍūl*)⁴³. Responding to a question concerning the

³⁴ See *ibid*: *wa-bānat al-'awṣiyā' min al-'a'imma. bi-mā khaṣṣahā Allah bihi min al-tasmiya. wa-bi-mā kāna yu'rafu lahā 'inda rusulihā min al-manzila. wa-mā kānat al-rusul tubayyinuhā bihi min akwāl al-tafḍila.*

³⁵ Knowledge of the secrets of the Qur'ān is also characteristic of the imam.

³⁶ See *op. cit.* pp. 214 f. (MS. Berlin 84b. f) Cf. MS. Berlin folio 131b. On 'Alī's personality and qualities see D. M. Donaldson, *The Shi'ite Religion*, London 1933, ch. 4; U. Rubin, «Prophets and Progenitors», pp. 45 f.

³⁷ See *Kitāb tathbīt al-imāma*, p. 215, ll. 11-16. (MS. Berlin, fol. 85a). Here al-Kāsim mentions only two signs, whereas in other places (see below note 38) he adds a third sign, namely, piety (*taqwā*). Possibly al-Kāsim does not mention the third sign where he mentions the first two because the latter are in his opinion signs created by God, whereas asserting that piety is created by God would contradict al-Kāsim's doctrine of free will.

³⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 205, ll. 11-14 (MS. Berlin 82a), p. 223, ll. 3-7 (MS. Berlin, fol. 87b).

³⁹ See fols. 57b, 60b.

⁴⁰ See *Kitāb tathbīt al-imāma* pp. 216-218 (MS. Berlin fols. 85a-86a).

⁴¹ See *ibid.*

⁴² See *ibid.*, p. 219, ll. 1-4 (MS. Berlin 86a). Note that in Muslim tradition David appears both as an imam and a prophet, but greater stress is placed on the second function. See R. Paret, «DĀWŪD» EI², vol. II, p. 182.

⁴³ On the rendering of *maḥḍūl* cf. W. M. Watt, *The Formative Period*, p. 163.

The Mu'tazilites were divided on the question of whether an imam must be *afḍal* or can

proof of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib's imamate, al-Ḳāsim says: «It is incumbent upon people to obey 'Alī (*tā'at 'Alī*) and give him priority (over others) (*taqḍimuhu*), because of his excellence in the religion of God (*li-faḍl 'Alī fi dīn allah*) ...Whoever gives another priority over him (*man ḳaddama ḡhayrahu 'alayhi*), gives the one who is known to be excelled by others (*mafdūl*) priority over the most excellent man (*afḍal*)...»⁴⁴ Al-Hādī cites his grandfather, al-Ḳāsim ibn Ibrāhīm, as proof of the assertion that the imamate is valid without the consent (*riḍā*) of the community and the prior oath of allegiance (*bay'a*) of two or more Muslims⁴⁵.

Rational reasons listed by al-Ḳāsim point at his preference for seeking the imam according to the latter's wisdom and relationship to the Prophet and oppose the view that the imam is to be chosen by the people.

Seeking the imam according to his relationship to the Prophet is easier in a period in which tyranny rules; if the imam were known by name, he would be subject to injury by the tyrant⁴⁶. Finding the imam according to the choice and opinion of people lengthens the period of seeking him. Consequently this causes many laws for whose fulfillment the imam is responsible to be nullified, and hence people are neglected and harmed. God wants to make things easy for people rather than difficult, and has therefore shown them a way by which they can easily find the imam⁴⁷.

Al-Ḳāsim proffers two more arguments against the principle of the community's choosing the imam. The first argument is based upon the Ḳur'ān; It is God who chooses the imam not people. God does not enable people to choose things bestowed upon them by Him; they certainly do not have the choice concerning the greatest religious matter⁴⁸.

be *mafdūl*. See 'Abdallah ibn Muḥammad al-Nāshī', *Kitāb 'uṣūl al-niḥāl*, in J. van Ess, *Frühe Mu'tazilitische*, pp. 50-61 of the Arabic text.

⁴⁴ See MS. Berlin, fol. 131b. The imamate belongs to the best man among the people on earth (*khayr ahl al-'arḍ*), whose excellence (*faḍluhu*), abstinence (*zuhduhu*) and knowledge (*'ilmuhu*) become evident to people. See *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rawāfiḍ*. MS. Berlin, fol. 106b, ll. 5, 19-21. Cf. S. Pines, «Shī'ite Terms and Conceptions in Judah Halevi's Kuzari», *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2(1980), pp. 169-170. In response to the question of the possibility of the existence of two imams in one generation, al-Ḳāsim, pointing at sūra 12, v. 76, says that there is always one who surpasses others in his knowledge. See *Kitāb al-masā'il*, fol. 57b.

⁴⁵ See Madelung, *Der Imam*, p. 142, n. 248.

⁴⁶ See *Kitāb tathbīt al-'imāma*, p. 219 (MS. Berlin, fol. 86a). Is it not possible that the man most closely related to the Prophet's family should also be known by name? Al-Ḳāsim seems to undermine his own reason.

⁴⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 219 f. (MS. Berlin fol. 86a.f.).

⁴⁸ See *ibid.*, pp. 204, 220 (MS. Berlin, fols. 81b., 86b.).

The second argument is expressed through the method of arguing called *'ilzām*⁴⁹. The question is who chooses the imam, the common people (*al-'awāmm*) or the elite (*al-khawāṣṣ*)? If the word *'awāmm* means the community in its entirety, then the choosing is unachievable, since members of the community are scattered all over the world and their number is not fixed, because of births and deaths. And it is inadmissible that God should impose on man a task beyond his ability⁵⁰. If the choice is in the hands of the elite, then one must ask who are the elite and how one can recognize them? If they are recognized through their knowledge and excellence, who will assert that concerning them? If the common people are entitled to assert that concerning them, they will be more entitled to know who the imam is, since he surpasses the excellent people among them. Thereafter al-Ḳāsim continues the course of *'ilzām* to prove that there is no possibility of establishing any group of persons who should choose the imam, and consequently there is no possibility of choosing him⁵¹.

In *Kitāb al-'imāma*, too, al-Ḳāsim opposes the principle of choosing the imam, arguing as follows: On the one hand «If the *'imāma* springs from the most exalted and nearest place to the messenger (*'idhā kharadjat min 'arfa' al-mawāḍi' wa-aḳrabiḥā 'ilā al-rasūl*), every sect (*firqa*) of the community will claim the imamate and a controversy (*'ikhtilāf*) will take place, and a controversy means abrogation of religion (*'ibṭāl al-dīn*)»⁵². On the other hand, if the imamate is not established according to the relationship to the Prophet but according to different sources (*ma'ādin mukhtalifa*), then there will be a need for *shūrā* (council of electors). Now the members of the *shūrā* must come from different and distant places. Their aims will be different, even though it is possible to gather them,

⁴⁹ *Ilzām* means literally «to force». It is a common kalām method of arguing by which one «draws» from his adversary's opinions conclusions («forces» his adversary to conclude) which either contradict the latter doctrine or lead to absurdity or unbelief. See J. van Ess, *Die Erkenntnislehre des 'Aḳudaddīn al-Īcī*, Wiesbaden 1966, pp. 396 f. idem, «The Logical Structure of Islamic Theology», in *Logic in Classical Islamic Culture*, ed. G. E. von Grunebaum, Wiesbaden 1970, pp. 25 f.

⁵⁰ Here al-Ḳāsim uses the Mu'tazilite notion of *taklif mā lā yuṭāqu*, which constitutes a part of the Mu'tazilite principle of God's justice (*'adl*). According to this notion, it is inconceivable that God should order man to do what he is incapable of doing. God would have to be considered unjust if He punished man for doing what he cannot avoid doing, or for not doing what he is unable to do. See R. Brunschvig, «Devoir et pouvoir. Histoire d'un problème de théologie musulmane» *Studia Islamica* 20(1964), pp. 10 ff.

⁵¹ See *Kitāb tathbit al-'imāma*, pp. 220 f (MS. Berlin, fol. 86b) Cf. Ibn Hazm, *Kitāb al-fiṣal fī'l-mīlāl wa'l-ahwā' wa'l-nihāl*, Cairo 1321 H., vol. IV, p. 168.

⁵² See *Kitāb al-'imāma*, MS. Berlin, fol. 57a, ll. 17-19.

since every group of the council will claim the imamate. Their controversy will bring about war, and war will lead to perdition. Since God wants to bring benefit to his servants (*'islāḥ 'ibādihī*)⁵³, it is inadmissible that He should order them to maintain a precept in such a manner that would cause their perdition⁵⁴.

It is impossible to assert that al-Ḳāsim belonged to either the Djārūdite or the Batrite wing of the Zaydiyya. Madelung asserts that «in his theory of the imamate al-Ḳāsim clearly rejects the point of view of the Batriyya. 'Alī was from the beginning the only legitimate successor of the Prophet as the Djārūdites taught»⁵⁵. But nowhere in his writings does al-Ḳāsim explicitly say that the Prophet appointed 'Alī to be his successor. Answering the question of whether 'Alī was appointed by the Prophet to be an imam by a testament (*waṣīyya*) which said «you are the imam after me», al-Ḳāsim says diffidently: «It was a sufficient and defined allusion»⁵⁶. The passage asserting that 'Alī must be given priority over others (See above p. 89) does not prove that al-Ḳāsim illegitimizes the imamate of Abū Bakr and 'Umar, but it comes to assert that 'Alī was the most excellent among the first caliphs⁵⁷. The notion that 'Alī is the most excellent, but that Abū Bakr and 'Umar are nevertheless legitimate caliphs is a Batrite notion according to the report of the Mu'tazilite heresiographer al-Nāshi': «'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib was the most excellent person (*'afḍal al-nās*) after the messenger of God, may God bless him and give him peace, and the best-suited person for the imamate (*wa-awlāhum bi'l-'imāma*). They (the Batrites) claimed that the oath of allegiance (*bay'a*) that was given to Abū Bakr and 'Umar, may God be pleased with both of them, was not a fault (*khata'*), since 'Alī gave both of them an oath of allegiance, and approved of their imamate...»⁵⁸. This notion was also accepted by the Mu'tazilites of Baghdad who are described by some

⁵³ According to the general doctrine of the Mu'tazila God performs no evil act, but does the best possible (*aṣḥaḥ*) for people. Cf. R. Brunschvig, «Mu'tazilisme et Optimum (al-aṣḥaḥ)», *«Studia Islamica»* 39(1974), pp. 5-23. J. R. T. M. Peters, *God's Created Speech*, Leiden 1976, pp. 269-271.

⁵⁴ See *Kitāb al-'imāma*, MS. Berlin, fol. 57b, ll. 12-22.

⁵⁵ See Madelung, *Der Imam*, p. 144.

⁵⁶ See *Kitāb al-masā'il*, fol. 23b. Madelung, *Der Imam*, p. 143. According to the Twelver Shī'ite principle of *naṣṣ* (i.e. the delegation of the imamate through clear appointment) the Prophet, before his death, clearly appointed 'Alī to be his successor. See U. Rubin, «Prophets and Progenitors», pp. 48 f. n. 32. This is the view of the Djārūdites. See al-Nāshi', *Kitāb 'uṣūl al-niḥal*, p. 42, art. 66 in J. van Ess, *Frühe Mu'tazilitische*.

⁵⁷ Al-Ḳāsim also asserts that loyalty to 'Alī (*walāya* or *muwālāt*) is among the most important precepts incumbent upon every Muslim. See *Kitāb al-masā'il*, fol. 23a.

⁵⁸ See al-Nāshi', op. cit., p. 43, art. 68. Madelung, *Der Imam*, pp. 50, 76.

of the sources as a Zaydite sect⁵⁹. Also Sulaymān ibn Djarīr, an early Zaydite theologian about whom little is known, regarded the appointment of Abū Bakr as a fault (*khata*), but not as a sin (*fisk*), since the imamate of the *maḥḍūl* is valid if he is wise and has good qualities⁶⁰. Like al-Ḳāsim, Sulaymān ibn Djarīr holds that the Prophet alluded to the imamate of 'Alī, but did not designate him explicitly to be an imam (*wa-'ashāra 'ilayhā 'alā ghayr sabīl al-naṣṣ*)⁶¹.

When al-Ḳāsim takes a stand against the caliph 'Umar, it is not a stand on the political question of the imamate⁶². According to Madelung he criticizes 'Umar's knowledge, not his having been a ruler⁶³. And Madelung adds: «Basically al-Ḳāsim's polemics is less directed to the second caliph than to the tradition of the school which is connected with him ('Umar) and his son 'Abdallah. Against the proponents of this school al-Ḳāsim exalts Ibn al-'Abbās who accepted a tradition of another school in al-Madīna which 'Umar and his son appreciated only slightly»⁶⁴.

We have seen (n. 6 above) that al-Ḳāsim does not illegitimize the imamate of Abū Bakr and 'Umar, so that in this matter he agrees with the Batrites. But his view concerning the signs attesting to the legitimate imam differs from those of both the Djārūdites and the Batrites: He does not consider taking to the sword a sign of the imam, and he holds that the imam must not be chosen by the community. In addition to the relationship to the Prophet, a sign attesting to the legitimate imam accepted by both the Djārūdites and the Batrites, al-Ḳāsim regards knowledge and wisdom as a sign. This sign figures in the later Zaydite doctrine of the imamate from the time of al-Ḳāsim's grandson, al-Hādī (d. 911), alongside taking to the sword⁶⁵.

Finally, al-Ḳāsim does not point out a clear way to identify the imam. He does not assert exactly what he means by near relationship to the Prophet, and his vague assertion can result in controversy, of which he warns his adversaries, who favor the choosing of the imam. Also he does not answer the question of how a large group of people can agree on one person. Furthermore, what makes the finding of the imam more difficult is al-Ḳāsim's assertion that the imam must not declare, «I am the

⁵⁹ See Madelung, *ibid.*, p. 42 f.

⁶⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 63. Watt, *The Formative Period*, p. 165.

⁶¹ See al-Nāshī', *op. cit.*, p. 44, art. 69.

⁶² See Madelung, *Der Imam*, pp. 149 f.

⁶³ See *ibid.*, p. 150, l. -8.

⁶⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 150, l. -3, p. 151, l. 2, p. 132.

⁶⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 144.

imam»⁶⁶. Indeed, in *Kitāb al-'imāma*⁶⁷ al-Ḳāsim says that whoever proves that he is the wisest man, is the imam, but here too the approval of his imamate should come from the community. Al-Ḳāsim seems to hold that the imam's personality is so superior to the other's, that there will be no dispute concerning his identity.

Al-Ḳāsim did not openly claim the imamate for himself, though he possibly considered himself suitable for it, and he alludes to that suitability from time to time. If he considered himself suitable for the imamate, he did not act according to the Zaydite doctrine asserting that the real imam of the Prophet's family cannot be one who willingly leaves the rule over the Muslims in the hands of those who usurped it⁶⁸. The later Zaydites maintained that al-Ḳāsim took to the sword and was even an imam, but all this seems to be rewriting of history, for Zaydite purposes. However, as a result of the Zaydite contention, al-Ḳāsim's doctrine preserved authority which other Zaydite scholars could not oppose. Throughout al-Ḳāsim's writings there is no propaganda for rebellion and there are not even external and reliable pieces of evidence proving that he rebelled or was recognized as an imam⁶⁹.

IV

Al-Ḳāsim sharply polemicizes against the Rāfiḍa⁷⁰, attacking their

⁶⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 143. *Kitāb al-masā'il*, fol. 60b.

⁶⁷ See fol. 58a.

⁶⁸ See Madelung, *Der Imam*, p. 145.

⁶⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 91-96.

⁷⁰ The word Rāfiḍa derives from the verb *rafaḍa* which means «to desert», and hence can be rendered «deserters». This is an abusive term used by the Zaydites for those who deserted Zayd ibn 'Alī, the Shī'ite rebel, and refused to help him. See Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhādij al-sunna al-nabawiyya fi naḳḳ kalām al-shī'a al-ḳadariyya*, ed. Muḥammad Rashād Sālim, Beirut n.d., vol. I, p. 21.

According to Ibn Taymiyya, since Zayd ibn 'Alī's rebellion, the Shī'a have been divided into Rāfiḍa and Zaydiyya, so that the term Rāfiḍa has become known only from 120 or 122 H. Cf. I. Friedlaender, «The Heterodoxies of the Shiites», *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 29(1909), pp. 138-141.

Watt argues that it is inconceivable that the first meaning of the term Rāfiḍa applies, since one of the few cases in which the epithet Imāmiyya (applied to Shī'ites who believed in the twelve imams) figures in *Maḳālāt* is when al-'Ash'arī quotes from a Zaydite source (p. 64, l. 5), and al-Khayyāt speaks in *Kitāb al-'intiṣār* (Nyberg's ed. with A. N. Nader's tran. into French, Beirut 1957, p. 14, l. 7 f., p. 15, l. 13 of the Arabic text) of the Rāfiḍa whereas the work he criticizes deals with the Shī'a. Accordingly, al-'Ash'arī seems to be right in stating (see op. cit., p. 16, ll. 11-17) that those who deserted Abū Bakr and 'Umar were called Rāfiḍa, i.e., those who held that Abū Bakr and Umar were usurpers elected to the caliphate through a mistake of the Companions (*ṣahāba*). See W. M. Watt, «The Rāfiḍites: A preliminary Study», *Oriens* 16(1963). Cf. idem, *The Formative Period*, pp. 157-160.

doctrines and acts as follows: a. their doctrine of the *waṣiyya*⁷¹ b. their holding *tashbih*⁷² c. their equalization of the imams with the prophets d. their doctrine of *taḳiyya*⁷³ e. the behaviour of their imams.

Possibly the combination of the two meanings of this term, as Friedlaender proposed, helps answer the question of who the Rāfiḏites were. According to Friedlaender what characterized the Rāfiḏites, those who deserted Zayd ibn Alī and whom Zayd called the «deserters», was their negative attitude towards Abū Bakr and 'Umar and to a lesser extent towards 'Uthmān and other Companions. See *op. cit.*, p. 142 and mainly note 6.

Rāfiḏa was sometimes used to indicate extreme Shī'ites, in contrast to the Shī'a which was used to indicate the moderate Shī'ites. See Friedlaender, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-148. But since the crystallization of the Imāmite Shī'ite doctrine, the Zaydites and frequently the Sunnites described the Shī'a Imāmiyya as Rāfiḏa. See *ibid.*, pp. 148-150. This is further supported by the report of al-Malaṭī (d. 377/987). Indeed, al-Malaṭī applies the terms Imāmiyya and Rāfiḏa to all the sects of the Shī'a, both extreme and moderate — the Zaydites and the Ismā'īlites are also called Imāmiyya (see *Kitāb al-tanbih wa'l-radd 'alā 'ahl al-ahwā' wa'l-bida'*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī, Baghdad and Beirut 1968, pp. 18-35, and cf. Friedlaender *op. cit.*, pp. 154-159) — but Rāfiḏa with its special meaning according to al-Malaṭī is mentioned only with regard to the Hishāmiyya, the adherents of Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam. «The twelfth group of the Imāmiyya are the followers of Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam and are known by the name Hishāmiyya. Those are the Rāfiḏa about whom it was related by God's messenger, may God bless him and give him peace, that they deserted the religion (*yarfuḍūn al-dīn*)». See *ibid.*, p. 24. This meaning of *rafāḏa* seems to reflect al-Malaṭī's hostility to the Shī'a, which already in his time had clear and definitive doctrines. For Rāfiḏa as an honorific see E. Kohlberg, *JAOS* 99 (1979), pp. 677-679.

Al-Kāsim deals with the refutation of the Rāfiḏa in the two epistles: 1. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rāfiḏa* and 2. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rawāfiḏ*. In the first epistle he does not mention the application of the appellation Rāfiḏa, but criticizes the doctrines of both Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam and Hishām ibn Sālim (see the *Theological Epistles*, pp. 313-314. MS. Berlin, fol. 112a), whom he mentions by name. They were later recognized by the heresiographers as the first exponents of the Imāmiyya. In the second epistle he applies Rāfiḏa as an abusive term to all the Shī'ite sects except the Zaydites. *'iftaraḳa man 'idda'ā al-tashayyu' 'alā thalāthata 'ashara ṣiḥfan minhum 'ithnā 'ashara fi'l-nār wa-hum al-rawāfiḏ*. «Those who claimed to be Shī'ites were split into thirteen sects of which twelve are in Hell, and those are the rawāfiḏ.» See MS. Berlin, fol. 104a, ll. 1-2. Pines is of the opinion that in the enumeration of the various sects of the Rawāfiḏ given after the sentence quoted above al-Kāsim seems to apply the name to the Shī'ite groups, from the fourth group on, which recognized the imamate of Dja'far al-Šādiḳ and his successors. Thus the comprehensiveness of the first application is restricted. According to Pines this application is based upon the fact that after mentioning those who consider that the *waṣiyya* was transmitted to Dja'far ibn Muḥammad and believe it finally came to him (the fourth group), it is said: «They (the latter) are the Rawāfiḏ». The names of the sects which disputed Dja'far's succession come afterwards. See S. Pines, «Shī'ite terms», pp. 167-168. But Pines himself admits the difficulty of attributing to al-Kāsim the restriction of the appellation, since according to the second meaning of Rāfiḏa the first three groups should not be designated Rāfiḏa. See *ibid.*, n. 19. It is inconceivable that a writer like al-Kāsim should confuse two different definitions of Rāfiḏa in one place. Thus al-Kāsim appears to hold that the term Rāfiḏa is applied to those who claimed to be Shī'ites, and those who recognized the imamate of Dja'far and his successors are included in this broad definition.

This explanation is further supported by the fact that those who recognized the imamate of Dja'far appear as the fourth of the twelve groups, and a group that is listed under one category cannot probably figure in another.

⁷¹ See n. 32 above. Here *waṣiyya* means appointment as the legitimate successor to the imamate. Cf. S. Pines, «Shī'ite Terms», p. 168, n. 24.

a. The Rāfīdites maintain that there has been no period without a legatee (*waṣī*. See n. 32 above) who has received the legacy from a prophet or from another legatee. According to them, a legatee is proof of God (*ḥudjdjat Allāh*) which obliges people to believe in Him. A legatee knows all the precepts of God and hence people must obey him. Only he who knows a *waṣī*, whom no one in his time equals in qualities, can find the way to God⁷⁴.

Al-Ḳāsim refutes the Rāfīdite doctrine of the *waṣiyya* on the basis of intervals of time (*fatarār*)⁷⁵ separating two prophets or two successive messengers, during which the nations are not guided. If in these intervals of time there had been imams or legatees who knew all the precepts and prohibitions, there would have been no need to send prophets after Adam, since the imams would have guided the nations. The fact that God has sent prophets and messengers to the nations proves that there is no uninterrupted chain of legatees, or that whoever believes in this uninterrupted chain, disbelieves God's book that speaks of prophets and messengers that God has sent to the nations⁷⁶. Al-Ḳāsim ascribes the notion that no prophet or messenger was sent to mankind after Adam to the *barhamiyya*, a heretic Indian sect. They maintain that Adam bequeathed (*'awṣā*) his prophethood to Shīth, and Shīth bequeathed it to a legatee of his sons, and then they trace the legacy by a chain of legatees

⁷² *Tashbih* means the likening of God to something of creation in general and specifically the likening of God to man (anthropomorphism), that is, attributing to God man's condition, form and actions. The view opposing *tashbih* maintains that God is not like anything in creation, and hence He is not like man. Cf. my forthcoming article «The Ṭabaristānis' Question, Edition and annotated translation of one of al-Ḳāsim ibn Ibrāhīm's Epistles» in *JSAI*, n. 7.

⁷³ *Taḳiyya* means precautionary dissimulation. The Imāmite Shī'ite must be careful to hide his identity; He must dissemble his real belief, and in a place where his opponents rule he must also behave like them, in order to avert the danger of persecution of his coreligionists. See I. Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, Heidelberg 1910, pp. 214-215. E. Kohlberg convincingly proves that by the side of Imāmite Shī'ites who regarded *taḳiyya* as a principle of religion, there were also some Imāmite Shī'ites who accepted *taḳiyya* with some reservations, as well as some others who did not act according to *taḳiyya* and preferred to fight for their belief. See «Some Imāmi Shī'i Views on Taḳiyya», *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 95(1975), pp. 395-402.

⁷⁴ *za'amat al-rāfīda 'annahu lam yakun ḡarn min al-ḡurūn khalā. wa-lā 'umma min al-'umam al-'ūlā. 'illā wa-fihā waṣī nabī. 'aw waṣī min waṣī. ḥudjdjat allāh kā'ima 'alayhim. wa-'ālim bi-'ahḡāmihi kullihā fihim. mafrūda 'alayhim tā'atuhu wa-ma'rifatuhu. laysa li-'ahad mimman ma'ahu fī dahrihi ḡaluhu wa-lā ṣifatuhu. lā yahtadi 'ilā allāh 'abadan man ḡallahu. wa-lā ya'rifu allāh subḡānahu man dḡālahu. See Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rāfīda, in *The Theological Epistles*, vol. II, p. 310, ll. 1-4 (MS. Berlin, fol. 111a).*

⁷⁵ On this term see Ch. Pellat, «Fatra», *EI*², vol. II, p. 865.

⁷⁶ See *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rāfīda*, pp. 310 ff. (MS. Berlin, fol. 111a f).

to themselves. According to them, whoever after Adam claimed prophethood and mission, submitted a lying and erroneous claim⁷⁷. The

⁷⁷ *wa-mā ḳālat bihi al-rāfiḍa fi'l-'awṣiya' min hādhihi al-maḳāla. fa-huwa ḳawl firḳa ḳāfira min 'ahl al-hind yuḳālu lahum al-barhamiyya. taz'umu 'annahā bi-'imāmat 'ādam min kull rasūl wa-hudan muktafiya. wa-'anna man 'idda'ā ba'dahu nubuwwa 'aw risāla. fa-ḳad 'idda'ā da'wā ḳādhība dālla. wa-'annahū 'awṣā bi-nubuwwatihi 'ilā shīth wa-'anna shīth 'awṣā 'ilā waṣi min wuldihi thumma yaḳūdūna waṣiyyatahu bi'l-'awṣiyā' 'ilayhim. See ibid., p. 315 (MS. Berlin, fol. 112b). This notion is expressed in slightly different wording in al-Ḳāsim's *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rawāfiḍ*. See MS. Berlin, fol. 110a. It reads as follows:*

*wa-awwal man dja'za' al-waṣiyya wa-'idda'ā 'ilm 'ādam ḳawm yuḳālu lahum al-'ibrāhimiyya. wa-dja'alū² al-waṣiyya wirātha 'an 'ab fa-'ab³ wa-hum min al-hind yuḳālu lahum al-'ibrāhimiyya wa-hum sādāt al-bilād. wa-za'amū 'anna 'ādam 'awṣā 'ilā shīth wa-shīth 'awṣā 'ilā 'ibnihi wa-ḳādū al-waṣiyya 'ilā 'anfusihi. wa-za'amū 'anna al-waṣiyya fihim al-yawm. wa-za'amū 'anna kull nabi 'idda'ā al-nubuwwa min ba'd shīth mudda'in ḳādhīb lā yuḳhbirunā bi-'ilm⁴ 'ādam. wa-ḳālū 'anna 'allāh 'allama 'ādam al-'asmā'⁵ wa'l-'ilm kullahu fa-dafa'a kull radjul 'ilā waṣiyyihi al-'ilm ḳāmilan. thumma 'idda'aw bi-'anna al-'ilm alladhī nazala min al-samā' fihim ḳāmil⁶ wa-abṭalū kull nabi ba'athahu allāh min wuld 'ādam. Three MSS. of the Ambrosiana library (C 186 (See RSO 8(1919-1920), pp. 293-297), C 131 (See RSO 7(1917), pp. 603-607) and F 61 (See ibid, p. 604)) have variant readings: 1. C 186 (fol. 29a) — *ḳāda* and in the margins *ḥāza*, C 131 (fol. 83b) — *ḥāra* and above it *ḳāda*. F 61 (fol. 182a) — *ḥāza* 2. C 186 — *dja'alū*. C 131 — *wa-dja'ala* 3. C 186, C 131, F 61 — *min 'ab 'an 'ab* 4. C 186 — *ḳadhīb lā annuhu lam yuḳhbirnā* and in the margins *ḳādhīb lā yuḳhbirunā* 5. C 131 — *al-'asmā'* *al-husnā*(!) 6. C 186 — *ḳāmilan*. Pines rendered this passage (See «Shī'ite terms». p. 220-221) according to MS. Berlin. I would like to quote his rendering and to offer in some places corrections in the light of the readings of the other MSS. My corrections and notes are given in square brackets. «The first who appropriated for themselves (*ḥāza*? — the MS. has *jāza*) the *waṣiyya* [It is preferable to read *ḳāda*, i.e., «the first who traced the *waṣiyya*» not only because two MSS support this reading, but also because when giving another example of a claim to *waṣiyya* al-Ḳāsim uses the same word: *thumma ḳāda al-waṣiyya ḳawm min al-yahūd wa-za'amū 'anna al-waṣiyya 'intahat 'ilā wuld dā'ūd*. This claim is that the *waṣiyya* of David (Dā'ūd) was bequeathed to the *Resh gelūtha*. See S. Pines, *Revue des Etudes Juives* 100(1936), pp. 71-73.] and laid a claim (*idda'ā*) to the knowledge (possessed by) Adam are people called *al-Ibrāhimiyya*. They considered that the *waṣiyya* was a legacy from one ancestor to another (?) [The question mark is redundant. See MSS.] They are Indian (*hum min al-Hind*), who are called *al-Ibrāhimiyya* and they are the lords of (that) country. They believe (*za'amū*) that Adam bequeathed (*'awṣā*) the *waṣiyya* to Shīth, and Shīth (in his turn) to his son. In this way they trace the *waṣiyya* to themselves. [They believe that the *waṣiyya* is in them today». This sentence does not figure in Pines' translation.] And they believe that every prophet that after Shīth has laid a claim (*idda'ā*) to prophethood was a lying impostor (*mudda'in ḳādhīb*), who had no knowledge (?) of that which Adam knew [«who did not inform us of Adam's knowledge.» and according to MS. C 186 «because he did not inform us of Adam's knowledge». Here Pines misread the MS.] They say that God taught Adam the names and knowledge in its entirety, and that every man was made (?) (to bequeath) the *waṣiyya* of perfect knowledge. [«and that every man (very probably every *waṣi*) delivered (*dafa'a*) the knowledge perfectly to his *waṣi*.] And they claim that the knowledge which came down (*nazala*) from heaven is in their (possession and is) perfect. They deny the claim (*baṭṭalū*) [All the MSS. have '*abṭalū*' of every prophet that God has sent (a word could not be made out; a possible meaning might be: to?) the children (or the child?) of Adam. [«They deny (the possibility) of God sending another prophet of the children of Adam». The word Pines could not identify is *min* which here means «of»,]*

Barāhima's view contradicts completely the teaching of the Qur'ān which shows that God sent messengers to mislead people in order to

The notion that Adam is the sole authority concerning religious matters is also found in Sa'adia's *Kitāb al-amānāt wa'l-'itīkādāt* (See ed. S. Landauer, Leiden 1880, p. 139, ed. J. Kafah, Jerusalem 1970, p. 143 tran. by S. Pines, «Shī'ite Terms,» p. 221). The name used by Saadia is *barāhima* which is close to al-Ḳāsim's usage in *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rāfiḍa*, namely *al-barhamiyya*. The Arabic theological and polemical literature contains a tradition concerning the Barāhima that is different from the one mentioned above. Ibn al-Rāwandī the famous free thinker (according to P. Kraus, «Beiträge zur Islamischen Ketzergeschichte,» *RSO* 14(1934), p. 375, he died around 300/912, whereas H. Nyberg gives an earlier date, 250/864. See al-Khayāt, *Kitāb al-'intiṣār*, pp. XXX-XXXIV) — in his *Kitāb al-zumurrud* — put into the mouth of the Barāhima the denial, in the name of reason, of the authority of all the prophets. Ibn al-Rāwandī uses the Barāhima undoubtedly as a disguise, since it would have been too hazardous to express such an opinion in his own name. Later authors cite this opinion as Barāhimite, and Kraus states that their source is Ibn al-Rāwandī. See Kraus, *ibid.*, pp. 123-129, 341-358. Kraus is quite right concerning the authors he mentions except for Saadia who brings, as has been said, another opinion of the Barāhima. Kraus recognizes the difficulty in considering Ibn al-Rāwandī the direct source of the Barāhima's opinion as reported in Saadia, and seems to suppose that Saadia cites the Barāhima's opinion as elaborated by later authors. Cf. Pines, «Shī'ite Terms,» p. 220. Pines has a different hypothesis. First he says that the Ibrāhimiyya figuring in al-Ḳāsim are none other than al-Barāhima. This is also proven by the fact (not mentioned by Pines) that al-Ḳāsim's *Kitāb al-radd 'alā rāfiḍa*, in which the appellation *al-barhamiyya* appears, expresses the same notion concerning the prophethood of Adam and Shīth that figures in *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rawāfiḍ*. Al-Ḳāsim's source of the Barāhima's opinion cannot possibly be Ibn al-Rāwandī. The contrary seems to be more reasonable. «Al-Ḳāsim's and Sa'adia's Barāhima (or Ibrāhimiyya) apparently considered that Adam, the first man and the first prophet, had promulgated a Law, whose authority was not and would not be superseded by any subsequent legislation. If we turn to India, we find that, according to the religious tradition, Manu the First Man is the author of a code of law, the Manusmṛiti, which is supposed still to be in force. The similarity between this doctrine and that of al-Ḳāsim's and Sa'adia's Barāhima (or Ibrāhimiyya) is unmistakable. There is thus some reason to suppose that the accounts given of the latter were in the last analysis based on a correct piece of information concerning Indian beliefs. Given this fact, there is a possibility — it is no more than that — that it is because Ibn al-Rāwandī had knowledge of accounts of the Barāhima referred to by al-Ḳāsim and Sa'adia, and was thus aware that they considered that mankind, throughout its history, has and will have only one valid and unchanging code of law, that he decided to use the name of this Indian group in order to express his own views concerning the function of reason, by whose commands — and not those of Islam — man should be ruled.» See Pines, *ibid.*, p. 222-223.

In the course of the exposition of his hypothesis Pines states that no connection is suggested between the appellation Ibrāhimiyya and Ibrāhīm (Abraham). Yet al-Bākillānī's report of the Barāhima, which is not mentioned by Pines, suggests such a connection. «The Barāhima were split according to two opinions. Some of them denied the messengers (*djahadū al-rusul*) and maintained (*za'amū*) that it is inconceivable (*la yadjūzu*) on the basis of the Creator's wisdom and quality (*fī hikmat al-bārī wa-sifatihi*) that He should send a messenger to His creatures, and that there is no way by which the acceptance of the mission (by a messenger) from the Creator is possible. The other group said: 'God did not send a messenger to His creatures except Adam.' And they accused every impostor (*mudda'in*) to prophethood except him of lying (*kadhhabū*). Some of this group said: No, God did not send (anyone) except Ibrāhīm alone.' They denied the prophethood of anyone except him». See *Kitāb al-tamihā*, ed. R. J. McCarthy, Beirut, 1957, p. 104, art. 184. Thus is it possible to

warn and guide them. The *Qurʾān* does not mention the Rāfiḍite notion of *waṣīyya*. Also it points out that all people have been misled, whereas the Rāfiḍites maintain that there have been legatees among them, i.e., those who are not misled and whose way is the right one⁷⁸.

Another argument against the doctrine of the *waṣīyya* refers to Muḥammad's prophethood. If Muḥammad accepted a legacy from a *waṣī*, who was this *waṣī*? He could not possibly have been an Arab, since every Arab was then *ʿummi*⁷⁹, and he could likewise not possibly have been non-Arab, since the *Qurʾān* informs us that the master of the Prophet was not a person of the nations and that God taught him in clear Arabic⁸⁰. From the Rāfiḍite statements one can infer that the Prophet accepted a legacy and accordingly was necessarily guided to the right way, whereas the *Qurʾān* teaches us that Muḥammad at first went astray, then God guided him, contrary to the Rāfiḍite view claiming that some of their imams knew the right way while still children⁸¹.

suppose that the original name of the sect was Ibrāhimiyya which was afterwards garbled and changed into Barāhima? Or, on the contrary, one can suppose that the combination of the two traditions concerning the Barāhima made by such a later source as al-Bākillānī (d. 1013) is due to his drawing on both Ibn al-Rāwandī's writings and those of Saʿadia and al-Kāsim. (The name Ibrāhīm might have been taken from Ibrāhimiyya). Pines' supposition that Ibn al-Rāwandī decided to use the name Barāhima to express his own views concerning the superiority of reason because the latter believed in one valid and unchanging code of law ruling mankind seems to be questionable. Taking for granted that Ibn al-Rāwandī used the Barāhima as a disguise and that the Barāhima were known in the middle of the ninth century (through al-Kāsim or others) as believing in Adam's prophethood alone, it does not seem conceivable that Ibn al-Rāwandī should have used the name Barāhima, since this usage would have disclosed that he expressed his own views not those of the Barāhima. One can falsely refer a view to others only when the latter's views are not known. It seems more plausible that Ibn al-Rāwandī had a different knowledge of the Barāhima than that of al-Kāsim and Saʿadia.

In an article entitled «Ibn al-Rēwandī, or the Making of an Image» (*Al-Abḥaṭh* 27(1978-79), pp. 5-26) J. van Ess tries to prove that Ibn al-Rāwandī knew heretical views but did not identify himself with them. According to van Ess, Ibn al-Rāwandī's views concerning prophethood and messengers published in Kraus' article (see above) are not his views, but views of his opponents mentioned by Ibn al-Rāwandī with the purpose of refuting them. See *ibid.*, p. 15. Van Ess does not deal with the question of the source of the Barāhima's views in his article.

⁷⁸ See *Kitāb al-radd alā al-rāfiḍa*, pp. 311-312, 315-317 (MS. Berlin, fols. 111b, 112b-113a).

⁷⁹ I.e. he who does not know the Holy Scriptures. See *sūra* 2, v. 78. R. Paret, «ʿUmmī», *EI*¹, vol. IV, p. 1016. Cf. I. Goldfeld, «The Illiterate Prophet (Nabī Ummī)», *Der Islam* 57(1980), pp. 58-67.

⁸⁰ See *Kitāb al-radd alā al-rāfiḍa*, pp. 317-318 (MS. Berlin, fols. 113a-113b).

⁸¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 318-319 (MS. Berlin, fol. 113b). In *Kitāb al-radd alā al-rawāfiḍ* al-Kāsim explains that Muḥammad's going astray was not because he attributed a copartner to God (*shirk*) and not like the going astray of Quraysh, the Jews and the Christians: Muḥammad went astray, since he did not know the precepts. See MS. Berlin, fol. 104b, ll. 8-10.

In *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rāfiḍa* al-Ḳāsim sharply criticizes the Rāfiḍites who appointed children to be imams. Muslims are forbidden to appoint a child to be an imam, because according to the Sunna it is prohibited to follow a child in prayer, to eat from his slaughtering, to accept his testimony, to engage with him in buying and selling, to marry him, and it is impossible to trust him with regard to his property. A person who cannot be trusted with regard to these matters, cannot be trusted with regard to religious matters⁸². It is inadmissible that a child should serve as God's decisive proof (*ḥudjdja bāligha* according to sūra 6, v. 149), and indeed God sent Muḥammad only when he was an adult⁸³.

Muḥammad says that he is the first Muslim (*wa-'anā 'awwal al-muslimin*. sūra 6, v. 163), whereas the Rāfiḍites maintain that Muḥammad was preceded by a *waṣī*, hence the *waṣī's* belief and certain knowledge (*yaqīn*) preceded Muḥammad's belief and certain knowledge, and this totally contradicts the teaching of the Ḳur'ān. The same applies to their notion concerning Abraham. Al-Ḳāsim draws from the Rāfiḍite view the absurd conclusion that the Rāfiḍites know the legatees that Abraham and Muḥammad did not know. If this is inconceivable with respect to Abraham and Muḥammad, it is also inconceivable with respect to many messengers of God⁸⁴. So by using the method of *'ilzām* (see above n. 49) al-Ḳāsim refutes the Rāfiḍite doctrine of the *waṣiyya*. He also argues that the Rāfiḍite doctrine that the imamate is hereditary is in contradiction to the fact that the imam al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī was succeeded not by his son but by his brother al-Ḥusayn⁸⁵.

Madelung asserts that al-Ḳāsim's refutation of the *waṣiyya* doctrine contradicts his proof of the obligation to appoint an imam. «Certainly al-Ḳāsim undermines thereby his own proof of the imamate. He himself based the necessity of the imamate upon the statement that the Creator in His wisdom cannot leave the people without a teacher who is provided with the knowledge of God's precepts. Here the incompleteness of al-Ḳāsim's theory of the imamate appears»⁸⁶. Madelung's assertion is questionable, for so far as I know nowhere in his writings does al-Ḳāsim express the notion that «the Creator in His wisdom cannot leave the people without a teacher who is provided with the knowledge of God's precepts», but he explicitly states that society is built in such a way that

⁸² See *ibid.*, fol. 105b, ll. 19-26.

⁸³ See *ibid.*, fol. 108b, ll. 12-17.

⁸⁴ See *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rāfiḍa*, pp. 320-321 (MS. Berlin, fols. 113b-114a).

⁸⁵ See *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rawāfiḍ*, MS. Berlin, fols. 105a ff.

⁸⁶ Madelung, *Der Imam*, p. 146.

there is a need for an instructor whom people can identify according to special signs. As has been said, al-Ḳāsim divides the imams into three types, prophets, legatees and imams. There have been intervals of time in which society has existed without the right guidance for people by instructors (prophets, legatees or imams). Speaking of these intervals of time, al-Ḳāsim does not deny the existence of leaders who have protected their society from total destruction. Al-Ḳāsim's emphasis is on the type of instructor that knows God's precepts. Thus, after God gave the precepts in the Ḳur'ān, people were obliged to find an imam who would guide them to fulfill the precepts. Al-Ḳāsim's statement with regard to the obligation to appoint an imam refers, then, to the time after Muḥammad. At that time there was always someone whom people could identify according to his signs. Al-Ḳāsim also argues against the principle of a hereditary imamate from father to son as held by the Rāfiḍites⁸⁷. This principle is contrary to the signs he establishes for the prophet and imam, namely perfection of wisdom and piety. «Had the imamate and prophethood been transmitted by inheritance (*wirātha*), they both would not have left Yemen for other countries, since Hūd was a prophet who would have transmitted the prophethood (lit. the thing *al-'amr*) to his descendants, and the prophethood (*al-'amr*) would not have left him to others»⁸⁸. It may be assumed that since in *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rawāfiḍ* al-Ḳāsim refers to the imamate generally, not specifically to the imamate after Muḥammad, he does not mention the sign of relationship to Muḥammad.

b. Al-Ḳāsim blames the Rāfiḍa for holding *tashbih*. The adherents of Hishām ibn Sālīm al-Djawālīkī⁸⁹ likened God to man's image, (*ṣūra*) i.e., God is in man's image, but He is not flesh and blood, namely He is not a body⁹⁰. Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam⁹¹ held that God is light (*nūr*)⁹², and He

⁸⁷ See *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rawāfiḍ*, MS. Berlin, fol. 105a, l. 27 f.

⁸⁸ See *ibid.*, fol. 106b, ll. 6-8.

⁸⁹ A Shī'ite Mutakallim contemporary of Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam (see below).

⁹⁰ See *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rāfiḍa*, p. 313 (MS. Berlin, fol. 112a) Cf. al-'Ash'arī, *Maḳālāt*, p. 34, ll. 7-11, p. 209, ll. 13-16. Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayna al-firak*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamid, Cairo n.d., p. 69, ll. 1-2. On the other hand some theologians contend that God is a body, but deny that He is in man's image. See al-'Ash'arī, *ibid.*, p. 210, ll. 1-2.

⁹¹ A Shī'ite Mutakallim (d. 179/795-796), the most outstanding exponent of Imāmi Kalam at the time of the imams Dja'far al-Šādiq and Mūsā al-Kāẓim. See on him W. Madelung, EI², vol. III, pp. 496-498.

⁹² Cf. al-'Ash'arī, *Maḳālāt*, p. 7, ll. 1-3, p. 31, l. 10-p. 32, l. 1, p. 34 ll. 9-14, p. 207, l. 8, p. 209, l. 14, p. 211, l. 6. al-Shahrastānī, *al-milal*, p. 141, ll. 2-3, l. 1-142, l. 3. The likeners generally based their view upon the verse: «God is the light of the heavens and earth» (*sūra*

is a hexagonal body, (*djuththa musaddasat al-miḡdār*)⁹³, and He knows by movements (*ya'lamu bi'l-ḥarakāt*)⁹⁴, and He is in a place (*tahuffu bihi al-amākin*), and He moves from one place to another (*yatanakḡḡahu*)⁹⁵, and He changes His decisions (*tabdū lahu al-badawāt*)⁹⁶ and that the heavens are empty of Him (*takhlū minhu al-samāwāt*), since He is on the throne (*'alā al-'arsh*) and not in another place⁹⁷. The Rāfiḏites are also accused of holding the opinion that God knows a thing only when He is near to it, since He sees a thing only when there is no screen between Him and the thing (*wa-'annahu lā yubṣiru mā ḥadjabathu 'anhu al-ḥudjub wa-lā yarāhu*)⁹⁸. Al-Ḳāsim refutes this opinion by quoting some Ḳur'ānic verses (sūra 58, v. 6, sūra 22, v. 17, sūra 50, v. 16, sūra 6, v. 3) in which God's absolute knowledge is explicitly proved. Two other verses (sūra 42, v. 11, sūra 112, v. 4) demonstrate that God is unlike anything else. If God were light or a body, there would be others like him, since He would be equal to others in corporeality (*djismiyya*) and the quality of light (*nūriyya*). Furthermore, if He were light, darkness (*ḡulma*) would be his opposite (*ḡidd*). But God is far from being equal to something or having

24, v. 35). Al-Ḳāsim devotes a chapter in his *Kitāb al-mustarshid* to a refutation of those who maintain that God is light (*al-radd 'alā man za'ama 'anna Allah nūr ka'l-anwār al-makhlūḡa*). See *The Theological Epistles*, pp. 113-117 (MS. Berlin, fols. 73a-74a). Al-Ḳāsim's main argument is that light is created, therefore God, the Creator, cannot be light.

⁹³ Cf. al-'Ash'arī, *Maḡālāt*, p. 31, ll. 11-12.

⁹⁴ This is the opinion of Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam and Abū Dja'far al-Aḡwal (called Shayṭān al-Tāḡ by opponents), a Shī'ite Mutakallim contemporary of Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam, on divine knowledge. According to Abū Dja'far al-Aḡwal God knows a thing only if He wills it; if He does not will a thing, He does not know it. «He wills a thing» means that He moves and this movement is His will. Thus if He moves, He knows. See al-'Ash'arī, *Maḡālāt*, p. 220, ll. 1-4. Al-Baḡhdādī, *al-Farḡ*, p. 71, ll. 6-7.

⁹⁵ Cf. al-'Ash'arī, *ibid.*, p. 32, ll. 8-9, p. 207, ll. 12-13.

⁹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 221, ll. 1-2. W. Madelung, «The Shī'ite and Khārījite Contribution to Pre-Ash'arite Kalām», *Islamic Philosophical Theology*, ed. P. Morewedge, New York 1979; pp. 123-124.

⁹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 210, ll. 15-16, p. 33, ll. 12-13. Those who maintained that God's place is the throne support their view with verses stating that God sits upon the throne or mounts the throne (*'istawā 'alā al-'arsh*). See sūra 7, v. 54, sūra 10, v. 3, sūra 13, v. 2, sūra 20, v. 5, sūra 25, v. 59, sūra 32, v. 4. Cf. Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-fiṣal*, vol. II, p. 123). Al-Ḳāsim devotes an entire epistle (*Ṣifat al-'arsh wa'l-kursī wa-tafsīruhumā*, *The Theological Epistles* pp. 240-263, MS. Berlin, fols. 94b-100b) to the discussion of these verses. Following the Mu'tazila he interprets them metaphorically e.g. *'istawā* is interpreted to mean «dominate».

⁹⁸ The question is whether God sees and knows things that are hidden from Him by other things. According to Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam, God neither sees nor knows a thing hidden behind another thing, unless He sends a continuous ray of light which touches the hidden things. See al-'Ash'arī, *Maḡālāt*, p. 33, ll. 1-4, p. 221, ll. 11-14. Al-Baḡhdādī, *al-Farḡ*, p. 66, l. 6-p. 67, l. 1.

an opposite. Hence, whoever holds *tashbih*, attributes a copartner to God (*ashraka*), even if he does not intend to do so⁹⁹.

The Rāfiḍites are also accused of *tashbih* in the opposite direction; not only of likening God to man, but of likening a man, the imam, to God as well. The Rāfiḍites who profess the imamate of Dja'far maintain that an imam is endowed with knowledge from his creation, and that knowledge is his nature. He knows the hidden things and what is within the bounds of the earth and heavens, and for him there is no difference between day and night. He also knows the actions of men and what is in their hearts. Al-Ḳāsim refutes this doctrine saying that the knowledge attributed by the Rāfiḍites to their imam can rightly be attributed to God alone. Al-Ḳāsim further asks how the Rāfiḍites can state that the imam knows by nature, whereas God's messenger, Muḥammad, was not endowed with knowledge from birth and knowledge was not his nature. The Prophet knew only after he had learnt. This is proved by the verse «Did He not find you going astray and then guided you» (sūra 93, v. 7) and also by the testimony of the Prophet himself stating that he was not originally a prophet, then became a prophet and so with regard to his mission and knowledge¹⁰⁰. Lack of knowledge must be attributed to all people to avoid likening anyone to God, since God has not ceased to know (*lam yazal 'āliman*), but His creatures know only after ignorance¹⁰¹. Had the prophets and imams described by the Rāfiḍites known the hidden things, they would not have died as a result of the poison they had eaten¹⁰². Al-Ḳāsim quotes some Qur'ānic verses (sūra 46, v. 9, sūra 9, v. 101, sūra 31, v. 34, sūra 16, v. 78) proving that the Prophet and the people do not know the events that will take place in the future¹⁰³.

c. Al-Ḳāsim rejects the Rāfiḍite doctrine of equalizing the imams to the prophets. The Rāfiḍites claim that their imam knows what the prophet Muḥammad knew, and enjoins the people to believe what Muḥammad enjoined them for. According to them there is no difference

⁹⁹ See *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rāfiḍa*, pp. 313, 315 (MS. Berlin, fols. 112a-112b). The principle of denying the likening of God to creation (*tashbih*) is so important in al-Ḳāsim's eyes that the believer must know the heretical views concerning *tashbih* in order not to adhere unknowingly to them and hence to attribute a copartner to God. See al-Ḳāsim *Kitāb al-ḳaṭl wa'l-ḳitāl*, in *The Theological Epistles*, p. 288, ll. 4-5 (MS. Berlin, fol. 101a). *ibid.*, *Ṣifat al-'arsh wa'l-kursī*, p. 251, ll. 14-15 (MS. Berlin, fol. 97b). Cf. note 4 in my forthcoming article «The Ṭabaristānis' Question. Edition and annotated translation of one of al-Ḳāsim ibn Ibrāhīm's Epistles» in *JSAI*.

¹⁰⁰ See *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rawāfiḍ*, MS. Berlin, fol. 104b.

¹⁰¹ See *ibid.*, ll. 12-18.

¹⁰² See *ibid.*, fol. 104b, l. 25-fol. 105a, l. 3.

¹⁰³ See *ibid.*, fol. 105a, ll. 4-8.

between the imam and the Prophet except the fact that the Prophet was sent to the people¹⁰⁴. Al-Ḳāsim's refutation of this doctrine is expressed in his opposition to the principle of *taḳiyya* and to the immoral behaviour of the imams.

d. According to al-Ḳāsim, the principle of *taḳiyya* contradicts the Rāfiḍite claim that an imam is like the Prophet in his qualities and actions, since Muḥammad did not take precautionary measures to dissimulate his belief nor was he hidden from his enemies, but openly preached his belief and refuted his adversaries¹⁰⁵. In *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rawāfiḍ* al-Ḳāsim's arguments against the Rāfiḍites are sharpened and given in detail. They can be summarized as follows: 1. Some of the imams, for example 'Alī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, did not behave according to the rules of *taḳiyya*. 2. God calls people not to associate with God's enemies and not to fear the evil-doers. 3. God requires people not to conceal the right way and the signs He has revealed. 4. An imam cannot serve as a guide for people while being hidden. 5. Muḥammad openly acted for the benefit of his community¹⁰⁶.

e. Finally al-Ḳāsim rejects the immoral behaviour of the Rāfiḍite imams, accusing them of being attached to earthly desires such as loving money and living in luxury, and this cannot be the description of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī, al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī, 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (Zayn al-Ābidīn) and Muḥammad ibn 'Alī (al-Bāḳir)¹⁰⁷. The imams are accused of collecting the fifth part from merchants, craftsmen, farmers and porters¹⁰⁸.

The Imāmīte Shī'ites have tended to claim for their imam a fifth of any profit and income, to which according to sūra 8, v. 41 the Prophet is entitled of the spoils. The Zaydites have rejected this conception. Answering a question concerning the fifth, to which the Prophet is

¹⁰⁴ See *Kitāb al-radd'alā al-rāfiḍa*, p. 321 (MS. Berlin, fol. 114a).

¹⁰⁵ See *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ See *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rawāfiḍ*, MS. Berlin, fols. 107a-108a, 109a.

¹⁰⁷ The list of imams prepared by al-Hādī, al-Ḳāsim's grandson, does not mention 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (Zayn al-Ābidīn) and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn (Al-Bāḳir).

¹⁰⁸ See *Kitāb al-radd 'alā al-rawāfiḍ*, MS. Berlin, fol. 106b, ll. 22-28, fol. 107a, ll. 2-4. The collection of a fifth of many different commodities has been accepted (Cf. «Maks», *Shorter Enc. of Isl.*), although Muslim Law seems to permit the collection of a fifth only of spoils and natural resources See «Fay'», EI², vol. II, p. 869. *ibid.*, «Bayt al-Māl», vol. I, p. 1142.

Al-Ḳāsim sharply criticizes his contemporary leader of the Rāfiḍites, 'Alī ibn al-Hādī, saying: «Has he helped someone of you or changed his state? We have seen actions of his which are appropriate neither to a prophet nor to a believer. We are ashamed to describe them in our book». See *Kitāb al-radd' alā al-rawāfiḍ*. MS. Berlin, fol. 108b, ll. 11-12.

entitled of men's property acquired in conquests, but was not paid, al-Ḳāsim says (*Kitāb al-masā'il*, fol. 59a), that no one is obliged to pay of his property (except land), more than the alms the Law provides. But the paying of the alms too must be done only when there is a rightful imam, who will put the alms at the disposal of those who are justly entitled to them. The Prophet's family is entitled to a fifth. On the one hand al-Ḳāsim wishes to oppose the Imāmite claim to widen the concept of spoils, thus calming the Muslims as to their property, and on the other hand he wishes to strengthen the claim of the Prophet's family to a fifth of spoils contrary to the Sunnite teaching¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁹ See Madelung, *Der Imam*, pp. 147-148. I am indebted to Prof. Etan Kohlberg for his reading of this article and making valuable remarks.