

MESSAGE OF THAQALAYN

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**In the Name of God,
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful**

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The *Message of Thaqalayn* feels responsible to present the teachings of Islam in general and the School of the Ahlul Bayt (a) in particular with complete honesty and accuracy and at the same time to emphasise the common ground that binds all Muslims together. Strengthening ties of brotherhood amongst all Muslims, whatever school of Islam they may adhere to, and establishing genuine, enduring and intimate friendship between all those who believe in God are two of the main aims and tasks of the *Message of Thaqalayn* and indeed, any responsible media.

Editor-in-Chief

Understanding God's Mercy

Part IV

Mohammad Ali Shomali¹

ABSTRACT: In the previous parts, we discussed the various names and attributes used for God in the Qur'an which refer directly to His mercy. Out of His mercy, which contains various characteristics, God created the world and in particular human beings. We also studied the role of God's mercy in providing arrangements for our survival and convenience on Earth as well as its role in guiding mankind. In this part, we will continue studying the role of God's mercy in guiding mankind which includes sending books of guidance. God's mercy also provides humankind with different kinds of support in their spiritual life, such as protection from Satan, misguidance, and from the tempting soul.

Divine guidance

There are two types of divine guidance: general and specific. General Guidance (*al-hidāyah al-'āmmah*) is the guidance given to all creatures, as everything created in this world receives some type of guidance. When Pharaoh asked Moses and Aaron who their Lord was, his reply was:

قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى

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He said, 'Our Lord is He who gave everything its creation and then guided it.' (20:50)

Everything in this world knows its role for its continuity in this world. Animals, insects, and plants know how to survive and continue their species. Even electrons know how to move and function because it is God who has guided them:

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى

Celebrate the Name of your Lord, the Most Exalted, who created and proportioned, who determined and guided. (87:3)

This is very similar to the answer of Moses to Pharaoh. God is the one who has created everything, who has given all appropriate measures and design, and has also guided them.

The Specific Guidance (*al-hidāyah al-khāṣṣah*) pertains to human beings (and *jinn*s) who have free will and are therefore able to make moral decisions. The Specific Guidance by itself is divided into two: a) the generative (*al-takwiniyyah*), which is through human conscience and intellect, and b) the legislative (*al-tashri'iyyah*) which is through revelation and divine messages communicated to mankind by the Prophets. As we will see later, those who benefit from the guidance available to everyone will receive additional guidance from God.

In the previous part, we talked about the Prophet Muhammad and the Prophet Jesus, both appointed by God to be a messenger of mercy. In what follows, we will study the Qur'an's offering of divine messages sent through the prophets as a mercy.

Books of guidance and mercy

The Qur'an

According to our survey, there are sixteen verses in the Qur'an referring to the Qur'an as sent because of His mercy. For example, God says:

وَلَقَدْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِكِتَابٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

Certainly We have brought them a Book, which We have elaborated with knowledge, as a guidance and mercy for a people who have faith. (7:52)

The Qur'an is not an ambiguous book, nor does it merely give people some general headlines. The Qur'an is an elaborated book and gives all the necessary details we need to know for our happiness. This is because God wanted to give us "guidance and mercy"; thus, the Qur'an is a source of this guidance and a source of mercy for humankind. Elsewhere, God says:

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

We send down in the Qur'an that which is a cure and mercy for the faithful; and it increases the wrongdoers only in loss. (17:82)

According to this verse, the Qur'an is a healing and mercy for those who follow its instructions and act upon it. It is a book that can heal our illnesses. Of course, the main source of our illnesses is forgetting God, and the Qur'an as a reminder (*dhikr*) is able to heal that. In the *Supplication of Kumayl*, we pray to God by saying:

يا من اسمه دواء و ذكره شفاء

Oh the one whose name is medicine and His remembrance is healing.¹

Thus, because forgetting God is an illness, His remembrance is a healing. In any case, the Qur'an is a healing and mercy for all to strive to benefit from. Unfortunately, there are many who deprive themselves from this abundance of mercy and healing. The Qur'an is like a table set by God and everyone is invited to approach and benefit from it; however, those who actually benefit are much less than all human beings who are invited. It should be noted that whenever God gives us a blessing such as the Qur'an, the Prophet (s), the Ahlul Bayt (a), a good teacher, a friend, a good spouse, or good children, we are held responsible, and if we do not appreciate them and benefit from them, we will end up in a worse situation compared to those who have not been given those blessings. This is why the pagans in Mecca before the advent of Islam are less responsible than those who remained pagan after the Prophet was sent to guide them. It is certain that on the Day of Judgment, God will not treat them the same. Another example can be found in the story of the disciples of Jesus (a). They asked Jesus to request his Lord to send down a table with lots of food and Jesus (a) prayed:

قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ تَكُونُ لَنَا عِيداً لِأَوْلِيَانَا
وَآخِرِنَا وَآيَةً مِنْكَ وَارْزُقْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

Said Jesus son of Mary, 'O God! Our Lord! Send down to us a table from the sky, to be a festival for us for the first ones and the last ones among us and as a sign from You, and provide for us; for You are the best of providers.' (5:114)

¹ Qummi, Sheikh Abbas, *Maḥātib al-Jinān*.

They wanted the table not only to enjoy the food, but to witness a sign of God's love and support for them, and this in turn is expected to increase their confidence. In response to Jesus' prayer, God the Almighty said:

قَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مُنَزَّلُهَا عَلَيْكُمْ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بَعْدُ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنِّي أُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا لَا أُعَذِّبُهُ
أَحَدًا مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ

God said, 'I will indeed send it down to you. But should any of you disbelieve after this, I will indeed punish him with a punishment such as I do not punish anyone in all creation.' (5:115)

Thus, when God gives you a blessing, He expects more of you, and this is very rational. Therefore, those who are given the gift of the Qur'an and do not listen to it or practice it, the Qur'an "increases the wrongdoers only in loss" (17:82). Their situation becomes worse not because the Qur'an is harmful; rather, it is because they have disobeyed.

Another verse that confirms the Qur'an being originated from God's mercy reads as follows:

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَ جِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَى
هَؤُلَاءِ وَ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَ هُدًى وَ رَحْمَةً وَ بُشْرَى
لِّلْمُسْلِمِينَ

The day We raise in every nation a witness against them from among themselves, We shall bring you as a witness against these. We have sent down the Book to you as a clarification of all things and as a guidance and mercy and good news for the Muslims. (16:89)

This verse refers to a Qur'anic principle which implies that on the Day of Judgment, God will call from every nation and generation a witness from them that will bear witness about their belief and conduct. The verses then refer to the revelation of the Qur'an as an explanation for everything that human beings need to know for their happiness, as a guidance, mercy, and glad tidings for those who submit themselves to God's will.

Another verse regarding merciful nature of the Qur'an is the following:

وَ إِنَّهُ لَهْدًى وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

...and it is indeed a guidance and mercy for the faithful.

(27:77)

So far we have mentioned only four verses in this regard and there are twelve more which portray the Qur'an as a book of mercy.¹

Thus, it is established that the Qur'an is a mercy from God for us. Therefore, if there are moments in which you want to receive God's mercy and there is no one to show it, you can hold the Qur'an and embrace it. What can be better than holding a mercy from God in your hand? God says:

وَ اعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا

Hold fast, all together, to God's cord (3:103)

This "cord" certainly includes the Qur'an, as seen in some versions of the *Hadith of Thaqalayn*, where the Prophet Muhammad (s) introduced the Qur'an as rope extended between the heaven and the earth.¹

¹ The other 12 are as follows: 6:157; 7:63 & 203; 10:57 & 58; 12:111; 16:64; 28:86; 29:51; 31:3; 44:6; 45:20.

The Torah

According to the Qur'an, five verses point to the Torah as a source that was also sent as a mercy from God, one of which states:

ثُمَّ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ تَمَامًا عَلَى الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ وَ تَفْصِيلًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَ هُدًى
وَ رَحْمَةً لِّعَلَّهُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ

Then We gave Moses the Book, completing [Our blessing] on him who is virtuous, and as an elaboration of all things, and as a guidance and mercy, so that they may believe in the encounter with their Lord. (6:154)

Elsewhere, the Qur'an says:

¹ For example, one may refer to the following hadiths:

- a) *Sunan* of Tirmidhi, vol. 5, p. 329:

قال النبي (ص): «إني تارك فيكم ما إن تمسكتم به لن تضلوا بعدي: أحدهما أعظم من الآخر؛ كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، ولن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا كيف تخلفوني فيهما».

“I leave among you two precious things, which if you hold on to you will not go astray after me and one of them is greater than the other: the Book of God which is like a rope extended between the heaven and the earth, and my household. These two things will not separate from each other until they reach me near the fountain on the Day of Judgement. Look and be careful how you treat them after me.”

- b) *Musnad* of Ahmad, *Musnad al-Ansār*, vol. 5, p. 182:

قال (ص): «إني تارك فيكم خليفين؛ كتاب الله حبل ممدود ما بين السماء والأرض (أو ما بين السماء إلى الأرض) وعترتي أهل بيتي وإتتهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض».

“I leave two successors: first the Book of God which is like a rope extended between heaven and the earth and second my household. They will not separate from each other until they come to me near the fountain [of *Kawthar*].”

وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَنْ مُوسَى الْغَضَبَ أَخَذَ الْأَلْوَابِحَ وَ فِي نُسْخَتِهَا هُدًى وَ رَحْمَةٌ
لِّلَّذِينَ هُمْ لِرَبِّهِمْ يَرْتَهِبُونَ

And when Moses' indignation abated, he picked up the tablets whose inscriptions contained guidance and mercy for those who are in awe of their Lord. (7:154)

When Moses received the tablets and returned to his people only to find them worshipping the idol, he was infuriated and dropped the tablets. After he calmed himself, he gathered the tablets. In those tablets, there was guidance and mercy for the God-fearing.

In yet another verse, the Qur'an regards the Book of Moses as a mercy:

وَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ كِتَابُ مُوسَى إِمَامًا وَ رَحْمَةً وَ هَذَا كِتَابٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّسَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّيُنذِرَ
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَ بُشْرَى لِّلْمُحْسِنِينَ

Yet before it the Book of Moses was a guide and a mercy, and this is a Book which confirms it, in the Arabic language, to warn those who do wrong, and is a [bearer of] good news for the virtuous. (46:12)

Thus, according to the above three verses of the Qur'an, the Torah was also book of guidance and mercy.¹

The message of Noah

It can be understood from the Qur'an that the message given to the Prophet Noah (a) also involved mercy from God:

¹ The other two verses are as follows: 11:17; 28:43.

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَآتَانِي رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ فَعَمَّيْتُ
عَلَيْكُمْ أَن نُّزَلِمُكُمْ مَّا وَانْتُمْ لَهَا كَارِهُونَ

He said, 'O my people! Tell me, should I stand on a manifest proof from my Lord, and He has granted me His own mercy though it should be invisible to you shall we force it upon you while you are averse to it. (11:28)

Thus, the signs which were given to Noah (a), including the miracles he performed and the revelation he received, embodied divine mercy.

The message of Sālih

The Qur'an refers to a similar point made by the Prophet Sālih (a) whereby he said:

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَآتَانِي مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً فَمَنْ يَنْصُرُنِي
مِنَ اللَّهِ إِن عَصَيْتُهُ فَمَا تَزِيدُونَنِي غَيْرَ تَخْسِيرٍ

He said, 'O my people! Tell me, should I stand on a manifest proof from my Lord, and He has granted me His own mercy, who will protect me from God should I disobey Him? For then you will increase me in nothing but loss. (11:63)

Thus, this mercy refers to divine miracles which were given to Sālih (a) or to the divine message he had received.

God legislates out of His mercy

The Qur'anic account of divine mercy offers the details of religion i.e. the rulings of the Shari'ah, which originate from divine mercy:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَنْ
تَرَاضٍ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا

O you who have faith! Do not eat up your wealth among yourselves unrightfully, but it should be trade by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves. Indeed God is most merciful to you. (4:29)

As indicated in this verse, the reason committing suicide is a prohibited act is because God is merciful and kind to you. A mother who sees that her child hurting or injuring himself reprimands him against doing so because she loves him. Similarly, God says to the person who is committing suicide and no longer loves to exist that He still loves him and wants him to be there.

Another example is the ruling of *li'ān*, or the testimony of “those who accuse their wives, but have no witnesses except themselves” (24:6). The ruling is made in such a way that no innocent person would be punished. Then God adds:

وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ حَكِيمٌ

Were it not for God's grace and His mercy upon you, and that God is All-clement, all-Wise... (24:10)

God helps and supports us out of His mercy

Another aspect of divine mercy is that it supports us. In what follows, we will refer to some of the ways in which this support is provided as a protection from Satan, misguidance, and the tempting soul.

Protection from Satan

Satan can be considered as an enemy of God, although he cannot do any real harm to God; he simply puts much effort into misguiding human beings. Indeed, in the beginning, he was a fervent worshipper of God. His condemnation to everlasting punishment began with God's ordering him to prostrate before Adam:

He said, 'O Iblis! What kept you from being among those who have prostrated?' Said he, 'I will not prostrate before a human whom You have created out of a dry clay [drawn] from an aging mud.' He said, 'Begone hence, for you are indeed an outcast, and indeed the curse shall lie on you until the Day of Retribution.' He said, 'My Lord! Respite me till the day they will be resurrected.' Said He, 'You are indeed among the reprieved until the day of the known time.' He said, 'My Lord! As You have consigned me to perversity, I will surely glamorize [evil] for them on the earth, and I will surely pervert them, except Your exclusive servants among them.' (15:32-40)

Satan refused to prostrate as a result of his arrogance; thus, the Qur'an introduces him as our manifest enemy:

'Did I not exhort you, O children of Adam, saying, "Do not worship Satan. He is indeed your manifest enemy. Worship Me. That is a straight path"? Certainly he has led astray many of your generations. Did you not use to apply reason? (36:60-62)

So our covenant with God is not to serve our manifest enemy who does his utmost to harm us; rather, it is to serve Him who only asks us to do

what serves our real interests. Any rational person would certainly agree with observing such a covenant.

Satan has various skills, means, and tools to deceive us. He is an enemy who does not surrender and is not easily defeated. Of course, Satan has no authority or power to force people to follow him. His main tactic is to create confusion and whisper evil temptations. Those who trust God and follow their God-given reason and religious instructions would find that Satan's plans are not that powerful: "*Indeed the stratagems of Satan are always flimsy*" (4:76). If we find it hard to resist against Satan, it is mainly because we help him against ourselves by forgetting our Lord and heeding to Satan's suggestions and temptations. If we decide to steer clear of Satan and his powers, his efforts are futile. But when we help him against ourselves, then he becomes powerful, as expected from any enemy.

Thus God, out of His mercy, helps us against Satan rather than leaving us without help:

وَ إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوْ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ وَ لَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَ إِلَى
أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ وَ لَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ
رَحْمَتُهُ لَاتَّبَعْتُمُ الشَّيْطَانَ إِلَّا قَلِيلاً

When a report of safety or alarm comes to them, they immediately broadcast it; but had they referred it to the Apostle or to those vested with authority among them, those of them who investigate would have ascertained it. And were it not for God's grace upon you and His mercy, you would have surely followed Satan, [all] except a few. (4:83)

This verse indicates that when you face an obstacle you are unaware of, is it best to leave it to the Prophet or those vested by God with authority

to decide. And were it not because of the grace of God and His mercy, you would have followed Satan except a few. Thus, God assists us in saving us from our enemy when He could have chosen not to. This is similar to parents who advise their child not to trust strangers who could be dangerous, although there are children who persist in following strangers. In the case of God (swt), as far as He is concerned, His love for us is so deep that He wants to hold us back from Satan, to keep us safe from our enemy.

Protection from misguidance

Another function of divine mercy is to protect believers from those who want to misguide them:

وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَهَمَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُضِلُّوكَ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ
إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَصْرِفُونَكَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُنْ تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا

Were it not for God's grace and His mercy on you, a group of them were bent on leading you astray; but they do not mislead anyone except themselves, and they cannot do you any harm. God has sent down to you the Book and wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know, and great is God's grace upon you. (4:113)

Were it not for God's grace and mercy, a group of mischief-makers would have done their best to misguide the believers. Sometimes God protects them against the enemies' plots by causing them to forget the believers or by changing their minds.

Protection from the tempting soul

God's mercy also protects us from the temptation of our lower self (*al-nafs al-ammārah*). We read in the story of Prophet Joseph (a) that Zulaykhā or Joseph (a) said:

وَمَا أُبْرِئُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Yet I do not absolve my [own carnal] soul, for the [carnal] soul indeed prompts [men] to evil, except inasmuch as my Lord has mercy. Indeed my Lord is all-forgiving, all-merciful.' (12:53)

Whether this was said by Joseph (a) or Zulaykhā, it means that I do not say that I am a pure person and do not do anything wrong.¹ Why? Because the human soul commands one to commit corrupt actions; thus, as a human being, there is such a tendency in me towards lower desires, towards ignoble actions. If I am left to myself, I would not be able to guarantee that I do not commit immoral actions. Of course, this does not mean that everyone is doomed to being bad or sinful. Those who receive God's mercy can be safe from those temptations and remain pure.

Note: If someone is left without God's mercy, one can expect every immoral action to be enacted by him. Such people may commit actions animals do not commit. This is the condition of being cursed (*mal'ūn*) which is referred to in the Qur'an as those who are far from divine mercy. For example, the Qur'an says that the People of Saturday (*ashāb al-Sabt*) who had disregarded the divine ban on economic activities on Saturday were cursed (4:47) and were eventually transformed into apes as a result:

¹ According to *Tafsir-e Nemūneh*, vol. 9, pp. 434 & 435, this was said by Zulaykhā. According to *Al-Mizān fī Tafsir al-Qur'an*, Vol. 11, p. 199, this was said by Joseph (a).

Say, 'Shall I inform you concerning something worse than that as a requital from God? Those whom God has cursed and with whom He is wrathful, and turned some of whom into apes and swine, and worshippers of the Rebel! Such are in a worse situation, and more astray from the right way. (5:60)¹

The Qur'an points to additional results of being far from God's mercy, such as becoming deaf, blind, and hard-hearted:

They are the ones whom God has cursed, so He made them deaf, and blinded their sight. (47:23)

Then, because of their breaking their covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hard: they pervert words from their meanings, and have forgotten a part of what they were reminded. You will not cease to learn of some of their treachery, excepting a few of them. Yet excuse them and forbear. Indeed God loves the virtuous. (5:13)

Unlike the People of Saturday, such people still remain in the form and shape of human beings, but because they are cursed and their hearts are made hard as a result, in addition to being made blind and deaf, they may act like animals and commit brutal actions. This explains the barbaric acts committed by the enemies of Imam Husayn (a) on the Day of Ashura and this continued even after their victory.²

¹ See also 2:65; 7:166.

² The most striking and tragic event throughout the history of Islam was the event of *Karbala* which occurred on the Day of Ashura (that is, the 10th of the month of Muharram) in 61 AH. In that day Imam Husayn, the only remaining grandson of the Prophet, and tens (at least 72) of his relatives and companions were brutally martyred, and Imam Ali b. Husayn and the ladies and children of the Prophet's family were taken as captives. The main reason for this tragic event was that Imam Husayn

It is God's mercy that can prevent us from going astray, as pointed out earlier. (12:53) Without His mercy we are indeed weak, which means His mercy is a source of strength against temptations. We are encouraged to continuously supplicate to God to assist us in keeping our souls pure, as taught by Imam Sajjad (a) in *Al-Sahifah al-Sajjādiyyah*:

فان نفسى هالكه او تعصمها

My soul is going to be destroyed unless you save it.¹

God's mercy purifies the soul

One of the functions of God's mercy is that it aids us in our spiritual struggle and purification of the soul:

O you who have faith! Do not follow in Satan's steps. Whoever follows in Satan's steps [should know that] he indeed prompts [you to commit] indecent acts and wrong. Were it not for God's grace and His mercy upon you, not one of you would ever be pure. But God purifies whomever He wishes, and God is all-hearing, all-knowing. (24:21)

Were it not because of His grace and mercy no one would be able to become pure. Therefore, if anyone in this world has been able to become pure like the Prophets as well as the pious and holy people, it is

refused to pay allegiance to Yazid, the self-proclaimed Caliph. A very well-known Sunni Historian, Mohammad b. Jarir Tabari in his *Taarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk*, Tabari narrates from Imam Husayn, "O people, whoever witnesses an unjust ruler permitting those acts prohibited by God breaking Divine covenants, acts against the Sunnah of the Prophet and treats people sinfully and with enmity so does not protest against him with his words or acts God will certainly treat him in the same way as he has treated that oppressor." (vol. 3, p. 307)

¹ Supplication of Makārim al-Akhlaq.

not merely because of their efforts; their efforts brought them God's mercy and then God's mercy completed the job. We are to strive although we are not the ones who complete the job. Our own existence and guidance depend on God, and added to that, when we move towards Him, He approaches and supports us.

God's mercy prevents people from despair

People naturally face external or internal problems during their lives. For a believer, his main challenges start from within. A believer is never pleased with himself and constantly finds it difficult to be pleased with his performance as he desires to commit as many good deeds as possible and refrain from any type of wrongdoing. When he looks carefully, he realizes that there actually exists no external obstacle; the problem was due to his own weaknesses and lack of determination. As a result, it is possible for a believer to be very disappointed in himself and lose heart. He thinks that he has committed many flaws and there is nothing in his performance that can give him hope, so this feeling of despair may occur. In an address to the Prophet Muhammad (s), God says:

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ
الدُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

Say [that God declares,] 'O My servants who have committed excesses against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of God. Indeed God will forgive all sins. Indeed He is the All-forgiving, the All-merciful. (39:53)

God asks the Prophet (s) to tell His servants that they should not despair of His mercy even if they have not been just with themselves and have harmed themselves by committing sinful deeds. Then God

says that truly He forgives all (and not just some of) the sins. If one thinks that there is no chance for restoration and one has broken all the ties with God, this verse informs us that there is always a chance for those who return to Him sincerely.

One of the major sins is to despair of the mercy of God (*al-ya's-u min rawhillah*). To say 'God will never forgive me' is by itself a great sin and according to many hadiths it is worse than many other great sins. Those who think that God will never forgive them become a prey for Satan. Satan can easily deceive those who are hopeless and misguide them for the rest of their lives, but those who have hope for forgiveness and improvement will escape from Satan and try to return to His Lord. The best way to remain hopeful is to remember and reflect on God's infinite mercy.

In his book *Tadhkirat al-Muttaqin*, Ayatollah Bahāri Hamedāni, a great mystic, refers to Satan's twofold policy whereby Satan, by emphasizing on God's mercy, encourages people to commit sins and after they have committed them, Satan attempts to halt people from repenting by whispering that it is too late and you will never be forgiven, so at least enjoy your worldly life. Ayatollah Bahāri advises that we adopt a counter policy. Before committing any sin, one should review the verses of the Qur'an on the painful punishment for the sinful in the Hereafter and believe that one may not be able to repent, but if for any reason one happens to commit sins, one should review the verses of the Qur'an on God's mercy and forgiveness and rest assured that God will forgive those who sincerely repent.

Conclusion

God's mercy in guiding mankind includes sending the Torah and the Qur'an, books which provide the necessary details for our happiness, as well as giving messages of guidance from Prophets Noah and Salih. In this account of divine mercy, God provides rulings that stem from His

mercy, such as reprimanding people from committing suicide as God loves His creatures to live on happily without despairing from His mercy. God's mercy also provides humankind with different kinds of support in their spiritual life, such as protection from misguidance, the tempting soul, and Satan. Along with this support, He prevents people from despair, as His mercy is greater than people's sins. In the upcoming articles, we will explore the different types and levels of divine forgiveness and understand how God may even transform one's corrupt deeds into good ones.

Moral Governance of the Prophet Muhammad (s)

Part I

Mohammad Nasr Isfahani¹

Translated by Hannaneh Fathollahi

ABSTRACT: The prophets' aims in spreading the message were to teach monotheism, ethics, and religious law. Since ethics is a means for achieving monotheism, Prophet Muhammad placed significant emphasis on morality and character building. This paper studies the meaning of morality and the various facets of the Prophet's socio-political life from a moral perspective. To understand the moral nature of this governance, this series offers a description of the method of forming an Islamic nation and achieving power, form, structure, as well as the limits of power, the fundamental rights of citizens, the control of the public, and enforcement of the law. We will also study how the Prophet brought ethical features to the initial building blocks of the Islamic community as well as the ethical structure of political power. He appointed ethics as the basis of social solidarity and as the boundaries and responsibilities of a leader and its people. Moreover, we will observe how the Prophet's economic, military, judicial, political, cultural, educational, and social management were founded on ethics.

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Introduction

The most important goals of all prophets, including that of Prophet Muhammad, are to propagate monotheism (*tawḥīd*), ethics (*akhlāq*), and religious law (*sharī'a*). These goals work towards a common aim and may overlap in some aspects. The third goal, the spread of religious law, is a means for achieving the first two, which are the spread of monotheism and ethics. Out of these two, ethics is a means for achieving monotheism. Thus, the process of the holy Prophet's propagation was carried out in this manner. He taught monotheism and ethics in Mecca and religious laws in Medina. The focus of this paper is on the second goal of the Prophet, that of establishing and spreading ethics, a goal he unceasingly strove to achieve even during his political life.

After clarifying the meaning of morality and our present method of research, the different aspects of the socio-political life of Prophet Muhammad in Medina will be discussed from a moral aspect.

In the Holy Qur'an, Prophet Muhammad has been introduced as a person of great moral character. Indeed, he introduced himself as having been sent to refine morality.¹ Two questions arise at this point: first, regarding the meaning of ethics, and second, regarding whether his mission is only specific to personal behaviour or if it can also be extended to the realm of politics and society.

The definition of ethics

Ethics refers to all free and conscious behaviours which are either admired or disapproved of by all human beings.

Methods of research

¹ Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 1. pp. 192-193. The Arabic text is as follows:
"انما بعث لاتيتم مكارم الخلاق، صالح الاخلاق، حسن الاخلاق."

Since ethical goals of the Prophet were not restricted to personal behaviour, the political and social activities of the Prophet must also be included in his goals. Thus, the government he was to establish had to be moral in both its goals and its style.

Two methods will be used to analyse the success of this goal, namely, the theological method and the scientific method.

The theological method: it is accepted as an undeniable premise that the Prophet possessed a moral character, and these moral principles were accomplished in the political sphere. In an effort to explain and justify this premise, this method then uses historical events in order to portray the moral aspect of the Prophet's governance. Moreover, if one encounters an event that appears questionable, the theological method is used to justify it.

The scientific method: the moral aspect of the Prophet's governance is taken into account as a mere hypothesis. In this method, history is studied to judge this hypothesis' accuracy. If so, the extent to which ethics was established under the Prophet's governance is questioned. Using this method, evidence of any slight immoral behaviour will prove the hypothesis wrong.

The scientific method might seem difficult to accept for a Muslim because there is the possibility of concluding that the hypothesis cannot be proven, or the opposite of it being confirmed. However, due to being confident about the truth, Islam calls people to reflect and show loyalty to their reason. Thus, based on the recommendation of religion and intellect, the scientific method is chosen.

A moral nation

The Prophet's call towards God began with the following phrase:

قولوا لا اله الا الله تفلحوا

Say there is no god but God [and by doing so] you will prosper.¹

The Prophet asked people to refrain from idolatry and instead to worship the One God, the moral being, who is Merciful, Forgiving, Kind, Bountiful, Just, Gracious, and who is the Creator, the Provider, and the Lord of Majesty and Generosity. In addition to this, He opposes any unethical behaviour. He dislikes lying and sin (96:16), the chiding of orphans, the refusal to feed beggars, and ignoring the requests of needy people (93:9 & 10; 90:12-16; 107:2-7; 90:12-16). He forbids fault-finding, maligning others, amassing wealth (104:1 & 2), and disapproves of slavery (90: 12-16),² of using short measures and extortion and mocking others (83: 1, 2, 3, 29-32), considers disbelief, crime, and pride as enemies (82:6), and questions man about his wealth (102: 1, 2 & 8).

The chapters of the Qur'an, which were revealed in Mecca, emphasise that beliefs and ethical values must be the main concern of a unified community (6:151). The unity of a community is a unity that goes beyond personal, group, or tribal interests. In such a community, members will not cross boundaries for the sake of their personal interests. According to Qur'anic teachings, the Age of Ignorance (*Jāhiliyyah*) that Islam aims to eradicate is the non-intellectual and unethical way of life (7:33). Islam rejects not merely the non-intellectual and unethical culture during a particular period of time (in Arabia); rather, it is the unethical cultures at all times and in all places

¹ *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 18, p. 22.

⁵ On the one hand, the Holy Qur'an considers the freeing of slaves as an uphill task for people and says that it is equal with removing the need of the needy and on the other hand, it has allocated a portion of the one-fifth (khums) tax and of zakat for this purpose. This indicates that Islam condemns the practice of slavery and has planned various ways of freeing them.

that are disapproved of, since an eternal religion must have eternal principles. In an ignorant society, intellect is replaced by carnal desires and ethics by immorality.

Gaining power through moral means and tactics

Regarding issues related to taking power and establishing governance, the Prophet continuously acted upon moral principles. By no means did he attempt to use deception or violence, the two common means employed by dictatorial oppressors. Honest, friendly, and logical discussions were the Prophet's methods in spreading his ideas.

After ten years of tireless propagation in Mecca and only two months after being released from Abū Ṭālib's valley, Prophet Muḥammad lost his uncle, Abū Ṭālib, and his wife, Lady Khadījah, two of his staunchest political and emotional supporters. The pagans took advantage of the loss and increased their mistreatment towards him. One of these types of pressures was plotting his death on many occasions. Another was leaving him without support in the tribal power structure, although he firmly stood his ground, insisting that he achieve his goal in spreading the message. He tell the people, "I do not want to force anything on you; my only request is that you protect me from being killed so that I can convey the message of my God."¹ However, things only worsened to the point where he was eventually exiled from Mecca.²

Near the end of the tenth year of his mission, the Prophet went to the city of Taif, attempting to gain the support of its inhabitants. After ten days, disappointed by their reaction, he returned to Mecca. Once

¹ Aḥmad ibn abī Ya'qūb, *Tārīkh-e Ya'qūbī*, vol. 1, p. 394. The Arabic text is as follows:

"لا اكراه منكم، انما اريد ان تمنعوني مما يراد بي من القتل، حتى ابلي رسالات ربي."

² *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 1, p. 212. The Arabic text is as follows:

فقال زيد بن حارثة كيف تدخل عليهم و هم اخرجوك؟"

outside Mecca, he sent messages to some people asking for permission to enter the city under their protection, but he was denied entry. Finally, Mut'im ibn 'Adi, one of the powerful pagans, accepted that the Prophet enter Mecca under his protection. Whilst in Mecca, the Prophet continued to spread the message to the people and tribes in Mecca.

In the year 11th of his mission, he met a group of six people from the Khazraj tribe whilst he was preaching amongst the Arab tribes during the Hajj pilgrimage. As was his custom, he approached them politely and asked, "Would you sit down so that I can speak with you?" Their answer was positive. Then the Prophet explained the goals of Islam and read them some Qur'anic verses. He then asked them to accept Islam and to help him achieve his goals. They remembered the words of Medina's Jews who were giving good news about the arrival of a prophet who would soon come and with his help, the Jews would destroy the Arabs. They consulted with each other and realised that it would be better for them to be on the Prophet's side when facing the Jews. In this way, with the help of the Prophet, they thought that they could bring an end to all the battles and slaughter and achieve unity under his leadership:

عسى ان يجمعهم الله بك¹

May be God with you brings them together.

Therefore, they converted to Islam and volunteered to invite their companions to Islam. They used to tell the Prophet, "Nowadays no nation is more unfortunate than us, but if the people of Medina accept you, then no one will be dearer than you amongst them."² The Prophet asked them to allow him to accompany them to Medina. They replied, "Only a short time has passed from the battle of Bu'āth and if you come

¹ Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah*, vol. 2, p. 42.

² *Tārīkh-e Ya'qūbī*, vol. 1, p. 397.

to Yathrib it would not be of any use. Let us return and let peace be established amongst us, then we will come to you during the Hajj pilgrimage next year."¹

The following year, twelve people came from Medina and paid allegiance to the Prophet based on some mutually accepted principles. The contents of the oath of allegiance were not related to political or military issues; rather, it was solely based on ethical issues. In the Qur'an, verse 12 of Chapter *Mumtaḥanah* (*She that is to be Examined*), known as 'Bay'at al-Nisā' (the allegiance of women), contains the contents of that oath of allegiance and lays out the social ethics of the Prophet as a basis for community life in the future. In this verse, addressing the Prophet, God states:

O Prophet! If faithful women come to you, to take the oath of allegiance to you, (pledging) that they shall not ascribe any partners to God, that they shall not steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill their children, nor utter any slander that they may have intentionally fabricated, nor disobey you in what is right, then accept their allegiance, and plead for them to God for forgiveness. Indeed God is All-forgiving, All-merciful. (60:12)

They then returned to Medina and invited people towards these ethical goals.

Ethical form and structure of power

The power structure that the Prophet formed was based on public participation. There was no gap between the people and the leader. He encouraged people according to their individual talents and capacities

¹ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 1, p. 219.

to have strong participation in solving problems and forming a life system. The Prophet would never impose anything on anyone.

In the month of Dhul Hijjah of the year 13th of his mission, a group of people from Medina went to Mecca for the Hajj pilgrimage. Seventy-five people met the Prophet in a place called Aqabah. They were not familiar with the Prophet before this; however, they were familiar with Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, because he often travelled to Medina for trading. In the beginning, Abbas started the conversation and said:

It is not as if the Prophet does not have any supporter in Mecca. Reflect carefully. Consult with each other and make a firm decision on which you all agree. If you find yourselves incapable of maintaining your loyalty to him and defending him against the Arabs' enmity, leave him right now.

Since they had eagerly accepted the Prophet's invitation, they asked him to continue his work in Medina and voluntarily undertook the responsibility of supporting him with their lives. Therefore, the Holy Prophet asked them to defend him against opposition to enable in fulfilling his Divine mission. Then, he stated, "I pay allegiance to you to defend me in the way you defend your women and children." They replied, "We will defend you just as we defend our women and children. We have inherited the art of fighting from our ancestors, generation after generation." One person amongst them asked, "After we become separated from the Jews and have fought against your enemy and you have become victorious, will you abandon us and return to your people?" The Holy Prophet smiled and said:

My blood is your blood and my respect is your respect. I am from you and you are from me. I will fight with

anyone who fights with you and will be at peace with anyone who is at peace with you.¹

At this moment, they shouted happily and said, "We accept your allegiance and are ready to sacrifice our wealth, elders, and the nobles of our community for this."

After the treaty of Aqabah, the Prophet told the Anṣars to choose twelve people from amongst themselves, the same in one in number as the Leaders of the tribes of Banī Isrā'īl, to mediate between the Prophet and themselves. They introduced nine people amongst the Khazraj and three from amongst the Aws to the Prophet as their agents, and he accepted them.²

Ethical unity of a nation

Gender, age, race, tribe, homeland, and common beliefs may be considered as the basis for unity in a society. However, in Islam, the foundation of social unity is belief and ethics. The Prophet's first action in Medina was to destroy the idols located there. People were told to do away with idols wherever they were found so that there would be no signs of idolatry remaining and all people would unite under One God.

The second measure he took was to build *masjids*, places used by Muslims to gather five times a day and worship God to purify themselves from the manifestations of idolatry and polytheism. They were also bases for their religious leaders and as areas for congregation. Muslims would consult together about various issues and made life decisions. The masjid was also a place where judgments were made by the Prophet regarding the conflicts between Muslims.

¹ *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah*, vol. 2, p. 55. The Arabic text is as follows:

"بَلِ الدِّمِ الدَّمِ، وَ الِهْدَمِ الِهْدَمِ، اَنَا مِنْكُمْ وَ اَنْتُمْ مِنْى، اِحَارِبْ مِنْ حَارِبِكُمْ، وَ اسَالِمْ مِنْ سَالِمَتُمْ."

² *Ibid.* p. 56.

The Prophet bought himself a piece of land for this purpose.¹ Compassion and sincerity, which had been established under the protection of Islam, could be clearly seen in the teamwork practised by the community whilst working alongside each other to build a masjid. Furthermore, there was no difference between any of the members of the community, be they the Prophet himself, the nobles of the Quraysh, the freed Muslim slaves, or the Ansār. God declared the affection between believers in this manner:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَيَّدَكَ بِنَصْرِهِ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ أَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
جَمِيعاً مَا أَلَّفْتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَ لَكِنَّ اللَّهَ أَلَّفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

It is He who strengthened you with His help and with the means of the faithful, and united their hearts. Had you spent all that is in the earth, you could not have united their hearts, but God united them together. Indeed He is All-mighty, All-wise. (8:63)

This sincerity spread to such an extent that it brought the Ansār and Muhajirin close to one another and created a bond of brotherhood amongst them, as if they were a single family. Their pre-Islamic social position, tribal prejudices, and differences between them completely vanished.²

¹ Tārīkh-e Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 929; *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah*, vol. 2, p. 110.

² The Qur'an says:

وَ اعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعاً وَ لَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ
بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَاناً وَ كُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ .

Hold fast, all together, to Allah's cord, and do not be divided [into sects]. And remember Allah's blessing upon you when you were enemies, then He brought your hearts together, so you became brothers with His blessing. And you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, whereat He saved you from it. Thus does Allah clarify His signs for you so that you may be guided. (3:103)

As Ibn Khaldun said:

Infatuation with this world, rivalry, competitiveness, and conflict were natural for the hungry people living in the deserts. However, if these people were to unite on the truth which they had found themselves, nobody could stop them. By doing so, rivalry, conflict, and differences would vanish and competitiveness would be replaced with cooperation. Religion was the only means that could create union between those scattered families who had many tribal and racial prejudices and which could also destroy rivalry and envy and attract their attention toward monotheism and ethics.

Ibn Khaldūn believes that no power can resist people who are united under a common religion, and who have strong belief in and deep insight into their own work. This is because they share a common sense of purpose. For them their goal is so significant that they are ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of it.¹

The treaty of brotherhood replaced unity based on tribal affiliation with a new social unity based on faith and monotheism.

Rights and boundaries of ethical responsibilities

The rule of inheriting from one's brother in faith continued up until the battle of Badr when the economic conditions of the Emigrants became better and thus this rule was abolished by revelation of the following verse after the battle of Badr:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ وَ هَاجَرُوا وَ جَاهَدُوا مَعَكُمْ فَأُولَئِكَ مِنْكُمْ وَ أُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ
أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

And those who believed afterwards and migrated, and waged jihad along with you, they belong to you; but the blood relatives are more entitled to inherit from one another in the Book of Allah. Indeed Allah has knowledge of all things. (8:75)

For further study, please see Muḥammad Bāqir, *Sha'n-e Nuzul-e Ayāt* (Statue of Revelation of Verses), 1981, Intishārāt-e Islami, p. 300.

¹ Aba ar-Raḥmān ibn Khuldūn, Introduction of ibn Khuldūn, Muḥammad Parwān Gunābādī, vol.1, p. 302.

The next measure taken by the Prophet in Medina was to create a comprehensive system of fundamental laws. The duties of each person were made clear within this framework, and this subject is important in terms of political ethics. This treaty clarified the boundaries of power and the responsibilities of all positions in the community. The role of the Prophet in the social structure was defined. Social groups, both Muslim and non-Muslim, became aware of their responsibilities, both inside and outside the Islamic community. Furthermore, this system made it possible for people to form ideas about how to make decisions regarding future events.

Some of the fundamental principles in this system are as follows:

1. Muslims form an independent and unified nation.
2. Neighbours of Muslims have the same rights as Muslims themselves.
3. The believers are guardians of one another and have mutual responsibilities towards each other.
4. The believers will not neglect the poor and will feel responsible towards them.
5. No Muslim is allowed to harm others.
6. Anyone who is loyal to this treaty will be respected.
7. Those who accept this treaty will not support murderers or oppressors.
8. Righteous people will unite against any oppressor, criminal, or corrupt Muslim.

9. Retribution will be carried out against anyone who murders an innocent believer unless the relatives of the murdered person give consent for it to be waived.

10. Making judgements between Muslims is decided by God and the Prophet.

11. The city of Yathrib is a place of sanctuary for anyone who signs this treaty.

12. Those who attack Yathrib must be fought unless they propose a peace treaty.

13. Peace and war are of equal importance to believers and none is allowed to sign an unjust treaty without consulting others.

14. Accepting a peace treaty is the people's choice apart from when the enemy is attacking God's religion.

15. The Immigrants (*Muhajirin*) should divide the captives' ransom and blood-money justly amongst themselves and according to the custom of the Quraysh or their own particular tribe's custom.

16. Even if the weakest member of the Islamic community gives shelter to a person, everyone else has to accept this.

17. No protection will be given to members of the Quraysh or those who help them. Furthermore, the pagans living in the region must not protect members of the Quraysh or their property. They should also not prevent believers' access to them.

18. The Jews will follow their own religion and the Muslims their own.

19. Both Muslims and Jews will fight together against common enemies. The cost of these wars is on both parties. The Jews will be financially supported as long as they fight alongside the Muslims.

20. The Jews who have signed a treaty with Muslims will benefit from their support. They are united with the Muslims and should they break the treaty, they will only harm themselves and their families.¹

Thus, it can be seen that according to these guidelines, the foundation of the ethical political system of the Prophet is carefully observed. This system is not based on tribe, gender, race or social class. All believers have equal rights. They undertake divine caliphate on the basis of pure devotion to God, brotherhood, mutual responsibility, and kindness towards each other. In this system, the administrator of religious, political, and social duties is the community or nation.² Furthermore, in all cases where there is no clear religious text or divine ruling, people make social and political decisions for themselves. In such a system, the government is managed by the Prophet and based on public opinion, ideas, intellect, and will.³ Moreover, in this system, due to the

¹ *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah*, vol.2, p.115-118.

² The Qur'an says:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضُهُمْ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيَطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ .

But the faithful, men and women, are comrades of one another: they bid what is right and forbid what is wrong and maintain the prayer, give the zakat, and obey Allah and His Apostle. It is they to whom Allah will soon grant His mercy. Indeed Allah is All-mighty, All-wise. (9:71)

³ The Qur'an says:

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ .

promise they have made with God and the Prophet under his leadership, people make an effort to implement divine rulings. They continually assist each other in promoting social welfare, public ethics, and strengthening their relationship with God both as a community and as an individual.¹ In addition, all foreign relations will be peaceful and friendly. However, those who approach them with evil intentions and enmity will be confronted decisively and firmly. Minority rights are respected, and as long as they do not officially fight against Muslims, no one is able to disturb them.

Conclusion

The Prophet Muhammad was sent to refine people's character as well as establish a community based on moral principles. He asked people to refrain from idolatry and any unethical behaviour and instead worship the One God, the Forgiving, the Loving, the Just. Indeed, the holy verses of the Qur'an emphasize on morality as the main concern of a unified community. Not in the slightest way did the Prophet deceptively or violently gain power.

Those who answer their Lord, maintain the prayer, and their affairs are by counsel among themselves, and they spend out of what We have provided them with; (42:38)

فِيمَا رَحْمَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَ لَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَ
اسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَ شَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ.

It is by Allah's mercy that you are gentle to them; and had you been harsh and hardhearted, surely they would have scattered from around you. So excuse them, and plead for forgiveness for them, and consult them in the affairs, and once you are resolved, put your trust in Allah. Indeed Allah loves those who trust in Him. (3:159)

¹ The Qur'an says:

وَ اتَّكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُونَ

There has to be a nation among you summoning to the good, bidding what is right, and forbidding what is wrong. It is they who are the felicitous. (3:104)

In the power structure he formed, he encouraged public participation and in doing so, positioned people based on their capabilities. Additionally, since the basis for unity in Islam is founded upon belief and ethics, the Prophet first eradicated idol worship in Mecca, and then sought to construct places of worship for Muslims to gather for prayer and consultation. The establishment of congregations and brotherhood treatises created an intimate bond among the Muslims, so much so that the pre-Islamic tribal prejudice vanished and was replaced with social unity based on monotheism. The Prophet also created a comprehensive system of fundamental laws in which the duties of each person was considered to form an independent and unified nation. The believers were told to be guardians of one another, to be responsible for the needy, to refrain from harming one another, and so forth. According to these guidelines, the Prophet succeeded in creating a system grounded on perfect principles in which all believers have equal rights rather than abiding by rules based on tribe, gender, race, or social class.

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History of the Shi‘a in the Time of Imam Sajjad (a)¹

Part II

Sayyid Ahmad Reza Khizri et al.²

Translated by Hannaneh Fathollahi

ABSTRACT: Part I of this series offered a biography of Imam Sajjad (a), a brief history of the events after ‘Ashura, and his endeavours in reviving the Muslim community through teaching Islamic principles, emphasizing on the concept of Imamate, resisting moral corruption, and caring for the needy. In this part, Imam Sajjad’s devotional and political activities are examined in terms of his efforts to enjoin good and forbid evil, divulge the Umayyad’s crimes, and resist against oppressive rulers to bring about social and cultural changes. His interactions with rulers such as Yazid, Mu’awiyah II, and Marwan ibn Hakam as well as the notable uprisings that occurred during that period have been studied. The social disorder and intense fear instilled in the people by the Umayyads prevented the Imam from revolting. His accomplishments of political change were instead achieved through social change.

1. Devotional activities

The Hajj: The hajj was considered with utmost importance by Imam Sajjad (a) during his 34 years of Imamate. Imam Sajjad (a)’s presence

¹ This paper is a translation of Chapter Seven of *The History of Shi‘ism*, vol. 1: The Period of Shi‘a - Imam’s Presence, Qum: 2005, Hawzah wa Dāneshgāh and Samt Publishers.

² M. Heidari Aqae, Q. Khanjani, H. Fallah Zadeh and R. Mohammadi under the supervision of Dr. Sayyid Ahmad Reza Khizri.

among the pilgrims was a crucial in delivering the message of Islam and defending the Shi'a position in spite of opposition.

These pilgrims included the elite, such as the officials, jurists, narrators, the religious, political and socially distinguished men, sometimes the caliph himself, as well as the general public. Imam Sajjad (a) directed the people's attention to the spiritual depth of Hajj through prayer, talks, etc. The report of a meeting of Hishām ibn Abd al-Malik with Imam Sajjad (a) and the epic poem of Farzdaq in praising the Imam are famous and the Imam's inattention toward the Umayyads is considered as an example of declaration of guiltlessness.

Friday Prayers: Imam Sajjad (a) also took part in Friday prayers in which he recited in the form of congregation prayer. Although this act allegedly meant he was a supporter of the current ruler, and refraining from it meant not officially recognizing the government, the Imam would participate in it because the danger of being absent would result in giving an excuse to the enemy. In Mu'āwiyah's era, anyone who was opposed to the ruling party was rejected or punished. Friday prayer plays a significant role in the political sphere. The withdrawal of the Imam from this political-devotional gathering would have labelled him a corrupt mischief-maker. These labels and accusations were harmful to the Shi'a and the Imam. Thus, by participating in the Friday prayer, he would not give the opponents an excuse to label him, but after Friday prayer he would re-do his prayer on his own, since Friday leader was not religiously qualified.

Reciting the salawāt: The recitation, "Oh God, bless Muhammad and his household (*Allāhumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad wa āl-i Muḥammad*)" was a prayer encouraged by the Imam because the Umayyads insisted upon the assassination of the Ahlul Bayt and to erase them from the people's minds. To struggle with the enemy's policy, Imam Sajjad (a) continued to revive the name of the holy Prophet and his descendants

by reciting the salawāt. Hence, all or most of the prayers of *Al-Şahīfah al-Sajjādiyyah* (*The Psalms of Islam*) contains reciting the salawāt.

2. Political activities

Imam Sajjad was involved in many political activities during the period of his Imamate. The objectives of his activities are as follows:

To explain the status of Imamate and the authority and political role of Shi'a Imams

Examples of this subject are especially found in *Al-Şahīfah al-Sajjādiyyah*. Key and crucial points in clearly defining the Shi'ite political teachings include:

- The position of Imamate being a divinely appointed position
- Infallibility of the Imams and their immunity from sin and error
- To introduce the Imams as religion guards
- To define Ahlul Bayt (a) as the descendants of Lady Faṭīma (a) and establishing their significant role
- To introduce the Imams as the vicegerent of God on the earth.¹

¹ For example, Imam mentions the collection of these topics in his prayer of Ārafah:

رَبِّ صَلِّ عَلَى أَطَائِبِ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ الَّذِينَ اخْتَرْتَهُمْ لِأَمْرِكَ وَجَعَلْتَهُمْ خَزَنَةَ عِلْمِكَ وَحَفَظَةَ دِينِكَ وَخُلَفَائِكَ فِي أَرْضِكَ وَحُجَجَكَ عَلَى عِبَادِكَ وَطَهَّرْتَهُمْ مِنَ الرَّجْسِ وَالذَّنَسِ
نُظْهِرَا بِإِرَادَتِكَ وَجَعَلْتَهُمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ إِلَيْكَ وَالْمُسْلِكَ إِلَى جَنَّتِكَ...

My Lord, bless the best of his Household, those whom Thou hast chosen for Thy command, appointed the treasurers of Thy knowledge, the guardians of Thy religion, Thy vicegerents in Thy earth, and Thy arguments against Thy servants, purified from uncleanness and defilement through a purification by Thy desire, and made the mediation to Thee and the road to Thy Garden.

To revive Ashura

Through various justifications and interpretations, the Umayyads wanted to distort and remove the event of Ashura from history, while Imam Sajjad (a) strove to revive it. In spite of such tense circumstances, the victory of Imam Sajjad (a) was remarkable.

The Imam's expressive conduct: continuous weeping of Imam Sajjad (a) during his Imamate for his father, Imam Husayn, the Lord of Martyrs (*Sayyid ash-Shuhadā*), demonstrated the oppressed state of the Ahlul Bayt. By mourning for Imam Ḥusayn, Imam Sajjad (a) evoked the people's feelings to recognize the truth and continued to revive the event of Karbala, which included Imam Ḥusayn's courage, suffering, and oppression on the day of Ashura. He also encouraged the people to visitat of Imam Ḥusayn's holy shrine. Imam Sajjad (a) was the first one who prostrated himself on Imam Ḥusayn's soil and encouraged Shi'a to do so as well.

Political conduct: After the event of Ashura, Imam Sajjad demonstrated his bravery throughout his captivity and during the aftermath. In Kufa and Damascus and in the presence of Yazid and 'Ubadullāh ibn Ziyād, he stirred the conscience of the people with his unequivocal speech and replies, revealing the Umayyad's contemptible;

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ أَيَّدْتَ دِينَكَ فِي كُلِّ أَوَانٍ بِإِمَامٍ أَقَمْتَهُ عِلْمًا لِعِبَادِكَ وَ مَنَارًا فِي بِلَادِكَ بَعْدَ أَنْ
وَصَلَّتْ حَبْلُهُ بِحَبْلِكَ وَ جَعَلْتَهُ الدَّرْبَةَ إِلَى رِضْوَانِكَ وَ افْتَرَضْتَ طَاعَتَهُ وَ حَذَرْتَ مَعْصِيَتَهُ
وَ أَمَرْتَ بِامْتِنَالِ أَوَامِرِهِ وَ بِالْإِنْتِهَاءِ عِنْدَ نَهْيِهِ وَ الْإِتْقَانِ مُنْقَدِّمًا، وَ لَا يُتَأَخَّرُ عَنْهُ مُتَأَخِّرًا.

O God, surely Thou hast confirmed Thy religion in all times with an Imam whom Thou hast set up as a guidepost to Thy servants and a lighthouse in Thy lands, after his cord has been joined to Thy cord. Thou hast appointed him the means to Thy good pleasure, made obeying him obligatory, cautioned against disobeying him, and commanded following his commands, abandoning his prohibitions, and that no forward-goer go ahead of him or back-keeper keep back from him.

furthermore, he revered the Infallibles, and narrated the legitimacy of Imam Ḥusayn's path which led and guided the misled and deceived society.

Imam Husayn was martyred with the wish that the message of Karbala was never to be forgotten. Imam Sajjad (a) – along with Lady Zaynab – carried this message and reminded the people of the Yazid's crimes in Karbalā; moreover, they spoke of the altruism and courage of Karbalā's martyrs.

Effort to enjoin good and forbid evil

As mentioned in hadiths, all religious duties are performed through enjoining good and forbidding evil. Imam Sajjad (a) said, "Anyone who refrains from enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is like a man who disregards the Book of God unless he lives in the condition of *taqiyyah* (dissimulation and that is when one is threatened by an oppressive ruler and is forced to hide his beliefs)."¹

Divulgence of the Umayyads' crimes

History witnesses that Imam Sajjad (a) fearlessly revealed the crimes of the Umayyads and reproached them for their corrupt acts. For example, when Nāfi' ibn Jubayr, a well-known jurist in Medina, praised Mu'āwīyah for his "silent patience" and "intellectual communication," Imam Sajjad (a) countered, "Nāfi' is lying. Mu'āwīyah was a person whose power and monopolism silenced and drunkenness and pleasure triggered his speech."²

In a conversation with Minhāl ibn 'Amr, a companion of Imam Sajjad (a) from Kufa, Imam Sajjad (a) described the crimes committed against the Ahlul Bayt (a):

¹ *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol. 2, p. 299; *Tadhkirah al-Khawāṣ*, p. 294.

² *Ibid.*, p.304.

They treated us, the family of the holy Prophet, like the Children of Israel under Pharaoh's rule; they killed our men while keeping the women alive. Although Arabs feel superior to non-Arabs because Prophet Muhammad (s) was an Arab and Quraysh feel superior to other tribes because Prophet Muhammad (s) belonged to them, we the family of Prophet Muhammad (s) are treated with aggression and injustice, our blood is shed and we are forced to leave our homeland. "*Indeed we belong to God, and to Him do we indeed return (2:156).*"²¹

Resisting against the unjust rulers

Imam Sajjad (a) considered obeying a tyrant as a transgression:

Anyone who says "There is no god but Allāh" (*Lā ilāha illa-Allāh*), his confession will not reach to Kingdom of the Heavens unless he completes his speech with good deeds. Furthermore, the one who submits to a tyrant is impious.³

Encouraging struggle and martyrdom

Imam Sajjad (a) described the true Shi'a as "...someone who strives for our aims and resists against the oppressor and their oppressions till God takes [our] rights from oppressors."⁴ The Imam has narrated from the holy Prophet's description of struggle (*jihād*) and martyrdom:

There are two actions liked by God more than anything else. One is the step taken to join a row formed in the name of God (for *jihad* or *salāt*);

¹ Shūshtarī, Qādī Nūrullah, *Iḥqāq al-Ḥaq*, vol.12, p.121.

² This Qur'anic phrase is normally said after reference is made to a great tragedy or calamity.

³ Mufīd, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Nu'mān, *Amālī al-Mufīd*, p. 109, *Baḥār al-Anwār*, vol.78, p. 152.

⁴ Qandūzī Ḥanafī, Sulaymān ibn Ibrāhīm, *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah laḥil-Qurbā*, p. 276.

the second is the one taken to extend a hand of friendship towards kith and kin who want to break relations... And no drop is more favoured by God than these two: one is a droplet of blood shed for God's sake and the teardrop shed for fear of God in the darkness of night.¹

Political tactics

In his political struggles to protect the Shi'a from the enemies, the Imam adopted and employed various methods:

Advising patience and confidence: These two subjects were considered as the two fundamental principles in the struggle, especially given that the Shi'a were vulnerable in these areas. Their impatience was due to the political, economic, and social problems caused by the rulers, and they often spoke of their grievances to Imam Sajjad (a), to which he responded: "I swear by God, I would give my flesh, hands, and arms so as to eliminate the two features *impatience* and *uncertainty* among the Shi'a."²

From the above statement, it is apparent that the Shi'a committed mistakes that caused the Imam to express his worry and reproach them.

Hidden struggle against the oppressors: One of the essential principles in all struggles is the principle of hiding. Imam Sajjad (a) states about this principle: "One of the rights of Imams on the people is that they follow him secretly and publicly. They must also obey him and take their sayings seriously, but the right of caliph on the people is that they do not publicly oppose his order."³

¹ *Amālī al-Mufīd*, p. 5; *Bahār al-Anwār*, vol. 75, p. 152.

² Kulaynī, Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb, *Al-Kāfī*, vol.3, p.314.

³ *Iḥqāq al-Ḥaq*, vol. 12, p. 117.

In fact, the guidance of Imam describes a tactic and not a strategy.¹ At that time, the Shi'a did not have open and armed struggle. The Imams ordered them to live in dissimulation and the order of apparent obedience to the caliph did not mean to stop struggle for the sake of God (*jihād*). History witnesses that in the honourable history of the Imams (a), struggle has been never stopped.

3. Imam Sajjad (a) and interactions with rulers

Imam Sajjad's period is divided into two phases: the first phase included the Umayyad rule, the collapse of the Sufyanis, and the ascending power of the Marwanis. The second stage includes the rule of the Marwanis. Imam Sajjad (a)'s Imamate was simultaneous with the governorship of Yazid ibn Mu'āwiyah (60-64 AH), 'Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr in Hijāz (61-73 AH), Mu'āwiyah II (64 AH, 2-3month), Marwān ibn Ḥakam (65 AH, 2-3 months), 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān (65-86 AH), and Walīd ibn 'Abd al-Malik (86-96 AH). All with the exception of 'Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr were among the Umayyad's rulers. Thus, a fundamental question is posed: what was the position of Imam Sajjad (a) vis-a-vis the rulers and how did he confront their governmental system?

Imam Sajjad (a) and Yazid

Imam Sajjad (a)'s Imamate began six months after the commencement of Yazid's caliphate. Yazid's rule lasted three years before he died in 64 AH. Along with the captives of Karbala, the Imam had been taken to Yazid's palace in Damascus. Although the symptoms of disease and fatigue triggered by the tragedy of Karbalā were evident on the Imam's face, he delivered a sermon in the Umayyad mosque which shook the pillars of Yazid's government. This resulted in placing Yazid in a defeated position which forced him to apologize and compensate for

¹ *Imam Sajjād Jamāl Nīyāyishgarān*, p. 146.

the loss. Considering circumstances of time and place, while everything was in favour of the Umayyads and against Ahlul Bayt and their followers, Imam Sajjad (a) followed the message of Karbalā and awakened the conscience of the people by proving the legitimacy of Ahlul Bayt. Yazid, who had praised God for killing Imam Ḥusayn blamed ‘Ubaydullāh ibn Zīyād for the event and said, “May the curse be upon the son of Marjānah who killed Ḥusayn! I did not order such an act.”¹

Imam Sajjad (a) was not involved in the Ḥirrah uprising in Medina for reasons described later in the article. Despite the order of Yazid, Muslim ibn ‘Uqbah did not rise against the Imam. However, he compelled the people of Medina to pledge allegiance to Yazid, and ordered against pledge of allegiance to Imam Sajjad (a).

Imam Sajjad (a) and Mu‘āwiyah II

After Yazid, his son Mu‘āwiyah II took the throne for no more than 40 years when he resigned and died soon afterwards. There is no report about Imam Sajjad (a)’s allegiance to Mu‘āwiyah II or of a position taken against him. Moreover, during that time, no significant events occurred, nor are there records of his attempts to support the Ahlul Bayt. Although Mu‘āwiyah II criticized his father’s and grandfather’s beliefs and actions, no order was issued in favour of the Shi‘a and Alawids. The cause of his death is unknown.²

Imam Sajjad (a) and ‘Abdullāh ibn Zubayr

‘Abdullāh ibn Zubayr declared independence in Mecca and asked for the people loyalty to himself to increase his realm from Ḥijāz to

¹ Ṭabarsī, Aḥmad ibn Alī, *Al-Iḥtijāj alā Ahl al-Lijāj*, p. 310-311; *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 7, p. 378.

² cf. *Murūj adh-Dhahab*..., vol. 3, p. 73; *Al-Kāmil Fi al-Tārīkh*, vol.4, p.133; *Tārīkh-e Ya‘qūbī*, vol.2, p.254; *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol.4, p.386.

Yemen, Iraq, and parts of Iran. No rejection or approval was announced regarding his uprising, declaration of independence, and claim of being caliph although the Imam did not show any support. Ibn Zubayr benefitted from the event of Karbalā, which included the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn and captivity of Ahlul Bayt to direct attention of people and provoke their feelings to achieve his goals. Imam Sajjad (a) condemned Ibn Zubayr's acts of removing the recitation of the blessings (salawāt) upon Muḥammad and his family from the Friday sermons, knowing too well that the Imam strongly encouraged it in his teachings and prayers. 'Abdullāh ibn Zubayr was killed in 73 AH.

Imam Sajjad (a) and Marwān ibn Ḥakam

Marwān ibn Ḥakam ruled for a short period in 64 and 65 AH After the 'Abd God ibn Zubayr's murder in 73 AH, the clan of Marwān ruled and took advantage of chieftains such as Hajjāj ibn Yusuf. Thus, the change of government from the Sufyānis to the Marwānis took place during the second phase of Imam Sajjad's period.¹ Marwan's participation in the battles of Jamal and Siffin against Imam Ali, his insistence on Walīd to murder Imam Ḥusayn during the beginning of Yazid's caliphate, and his and his father's exile from Medina up until the time of 'Uthmān earned him disgraceful reputation. The rule of this powerful enemy was the beginning of the distressing era for the Shi'a. He continued the anti-Shi'a policy implemented by Mu'āwiyah and Yazid. Marwān's rise to power was a sign of religious and political decline in that period. In order to stabilize his government and caliphate, especially against a rival such as Ibn Zubayr, Marwan faced many obstacles and he himself did not have the chance to heed Imam Sajjad (a) and the Shi'a.

¹ The time of his caliphate has been mentioned two months, Dīnwarī, *Abd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah, Al-Ma'ārif*, p. 353; *Al-Kāmil Fi al-Tārikh*, vol. 4,p.74; Ibn Athīr, *Asad al-Ghābah fi Ma'rifah al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 4, p. 384.

Imam Sajjad (a) and ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān

‘Abd al-Malik ruled from 65 to 86 AH. During his caliphate, he faced enormous problems including the sedition of Ibn Zubayr, the uprising of The Repentant (*Tawwābin*), and the revolution of Mukhtār. However, he was able to stop several riots with the assistance of his loyal commander, Ḥajjāj Thaqaḫī. The policy of ‘Abd al-Malik was dictatorial and ruthless. He described himself as follows:

I am not a humble and downtrodden caliph like ‘Uthmān, nor am I lenient like Mu‘āwiyah and unprincipled and foolish like Yazid. I will cure the people’s pains only by sword so that they bow to me...

The period of ‘Abd al-Malik was a very difficult period for the progeny of the holy Prophet (s). He not only hurt the prominent members of Ahlul Bayt such as Imam Sajjad (a), but also deprived them from physical and financial security. Imam Sajjad (a) was under the strict control of the caliph’s spies who were aware of the Imam’s political activities as they felt threatened by the Imam’s power and popularity. Ḥajjāj Thaqaḫī’s suggestion to ‘Abd al-Malik to murder Imam Sajjad (a) indicated this fear, but ‘Abd al-Malik disregarded his opinion in order to avoid future seditions. ‘Abd al-Malik had witnessed how the former caliphs who engaged with the descendants of Ali had been destroyed. He wrote to Ḥajjāj:

Keep me away from shedding the blood of Ḥāshimīs and do not shed their blood because I have realised that the rule of the family of Abu Sufyan did not last long after shedding their blood.¹

¹ Mas‘ūdī, Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, *Ithbāt al-Waṣīyyah*, p.146; *Kashf al-Ghummah...*, vol.2, p. 311; Ibn Ṣabbāgh, Alī ibn Muḥammad, *Al-Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah fī Ma‘rifah al-A‘immah al-Athnā ashār*, p. 240.

The conversations held between Imam Sajjad (a) and 'Abd al-Malik:

1. While Abd al-Malik was circumambulating the Ka'bah, Imam Sajjad was in front of him without heeding to Abd al-Malik. After circumambulation, Imam Sajjad (a) was presented by Abd al-Malik's order. Abd al-Malik said, "I am not your father's murderer. Why do you not establish a relationship with us?" The Imam replied, "The one who killed my father destroyed my father's worldly life, but my father destroyed his killer's hereafter life; if you want, you can try the same."¹

2. Abd al-Malik attempted to take the Prophet's sword - which was one of the deposits of Imamate - from Imam Sajjad (a) to keep for himself. Having this sword had spiritual merits for caliph, as it would confirm the legitimacy of his caliphate and succession to the Prophet. Abd al-Malik requested the sword in a letter to Imam Sajjad (a), and the Imam replied in the negative. He wrote the second letter and threatened that the name of Imam would be deleted from the treasury. In reply, the Imam Sajjad (a) wrote:

O' Abd al-Malik! Be aware God has given a guarantee for His servants to release them from difficulties and provide their daily bread in ways they would not expect, but be aware that God also states in the holy Qur'an:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ خَوَّانٍ كَفُورٍ

Indeed God does not like any head strong disloyal.

Now think about who this verse refers to, me or you?"²

3. One day Abd al-Malik wrote an open letter to the Imam Sajjad (a) criticizing the Imam's marriage with his maid, saying that marriage

¹ *Ithbāt al-Hudāh*, vol.5, p. 234-235; *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 46, pp. 120 & 121.

² *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 7, p. 140.

with a maid was not worthy of him. In response, Imam Sajjad (a) considered this marriage to follow the Prophetic way of life (*sunnah*), as the holy Prophet also had this type of marriage. The Imam intended to carry on a forgotten custom and knew this act, supposedly the cause of people's disgrace, to actually be an act of honour and magnificence. Thus, he condemned ʿAbd al-Malik for his false and ignorant beliefs.¹

ʿAbd al-Malik and his agents, especially Ḥajjāj, displayed inappropriate conduct toward the Shiʿa, behaviour in which they did not direct even toward the unbelievers. They exerted all types of punishments, torments, and assassinations toward the Shiʿa. In that difficult time, those among People of the Book had more security than a Shiʿa. Of course, the knowledge and wise leadership of Imam Sajjad (a) protected many of the Shiʿa from ʿAbd al-Malik's assault and reduced their danger as much as possible.

During the period of ʿAbd al-Malik, the Shiʿa were severely repressed in Iraq, Iran, and Ḥijāz.

Imam Sajjad (a) and Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik

After ʿAbd al-Malik's death, his son Walīd became the ruler and continued the anti-Shiʿa policy of his father. Hishām ibn Ismāʿīl was the agent of caliph in Medina (82-86 AH) and during his rule, he oppressed the people of Medina, especially Imam Sajjad (a). When Walīd became the caliph, the complaints and protests were brought against Hishām to Walīd. He deposed Hishām after five months and appointed Amr ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz instead and announced to those who had a complaint against Hishām to speak out. Hishām feared Imam Sajjad (a) since he had oppressed the Imam more than others, but the Imam generously forgave him and advised the Hāshimids to not complain about him.

¹ Ibn Sa'd, Muḥammad ibn Sa'd Hāshimī Baṣrī, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 5, p. 158; Ibn ʿAbdarabbah, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, *Al-Aqd al-Farīd*, vol.7, p. 140.

There have not been reports about the special contact between Imam Sajjad (a) and Walīd ibn Abd al-Malik except that the Imam was martyred by his order.¹

4. Imam Sajjad (a) and uprisings

During the time of Imam Sajjad (a), a number of uprisings took place and the Imam treated them in different ways. In this section, we address the following issues:

- Criterion for determining the identity of uprisings;
- Determining the political, social, and religious identity of uprisings;
- Examination of the causes, goals, and qualities of uprisings;
- The position of Imam regarding uprisings;
- Why the Imam did not rebel;
- Why the Imam did not support the uprisings.

The above questions are important in assessing the uprisings and revolts during the advent of Islam and identifying their religious tendency. This feature helps researchers carefully analyse the political and social currents and factional-popular movements.

Criterion for determining the identity of uprisings

The following are some criteria to determine the Shi'i and non-Shi'i underpinning of the uprisings:

a. The central axis of uprisings in the Shi'i school of Islam is Imamate and the Imam himself. Any uprising led by an infallible Imam or his

¹ *Al-Ithāf Biḥub al-Ashrāf*, p. 143.

representative, or one who leads an uprising with the blessing of the Imam, is considered a Shi'ite uprising.

b. If the leaders, governors, or participants of an uprising have aims and use slogans that encompass a Shi'ite underpinning, it is considered a Shi'ite uprising even if it is not led by infallible Imam or his representative.

With the exception of above-mentioned cases, other uprisings and rebellions are non-Shi'ite and considered as illegitimate uprisings.¹ Therefore, upheavals can be divided into two types:

1) Uprisings which are motivated by satanic aims such as gaining power, although they were apparently claiming to be the adherents of Ahlul Bayt, such as the 'Abbāsids' uprising. This type is condemned.

2) Uprisings which are motivated by divine aims and struggles against oppression and tyrants. Participants are aware of human rights and its owners, and they strive to return the right to its real owners, such as the uprising of Zayd ibn Ali. This type is confirmed.

The first uprisings began at the time of the first Islamic caliphs; that is, rebellion of the people of Medina against its governor, rebellion against 'Uthmān, and Hujr ibn-'Uday' uprising against Mu'āwiyah.² The turning point of the most important uprisings was the Ashura movement, which became a pattern for Islamic revolutions.

Uprisings during the period of Imam Sajjad (a)

a) The uprising of Medina (Ḥirrah event)

¹ It is possible that legitimacy in political custom means consent, protection, and cooperation of the people which is not related to our discussion.

² Rebellions of Khārijīs are among these uprising and hence they are not considered legitimate uprisings. (F: please check if this is the intended message.)

The uprising of Ḥirrah occurred on the 27th of Thil-Ḥajjah, 63 AH.¹ A delegation along with Abd Allāh ibn Ḥanzalah was sent from Medina to Damascus, and upon their return to Medina, they presented a report of Yazid's corruption to the people. They declared that they concealed themselves from him and refused to obey him. Moreover, they called the people to struggle and people paid allegiance to them.² Abd Allāh ibn Ḥanzalah, the leader of Emigrants (Meccan Muslims who emigrated from Mecca to Medina), and Abd Allāh ibn Muṭṭī, the leader of Helpers (citizens of Medina city who helped and gave refuge to the Emigrants), and Ma'qal, the leader of various sects of non-Quraish, took charge of the leadership of Medina's forces against the army of Damascus.³

The most significant factors in the uprising of Medina's people against the Umayyads in 63 AH included a) the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn, b) the murder of the Ahlul Bayt, c) the report of delegation of Medina from the court and government of Yazid, d) the people's awareness of the corruption of the ruling government, and e) announcing Yazid's incapability of leadership. In the beginning of uprising, they expelled 'Uthmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Abū Sufyān, the ruler of Medina, and all the Umayyads governors from the city and by joining to Zubayrids independent government in Mecca, they hoisted the banner of struggle. Their slogan was calling to consent and consultation.⁴ Soon after, Muslim ibn 'Uqbah, the commander of the Umayyad army, surrounded Medina and repressed the uprising by terrible massacre in the region of Ḥirrah in Medina. When they emerged victorious, they plundered the property and chastity of the people of Medina for three days and left the same at the disposal of the soldiers of Damascus. After the end of killing and plunder, they obtained the allegiance of captive men and

¹ *Tārīkh Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt*, p.155.

² *Ibid.*, p. 181.

³ *Ibid.*, Ibn Ḥazm Andulusī, Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Sa'īd, *Jamharah Ansāb al-Ārab*, p.158

⁴ *Ibid.*

companions as slaves for Yazid and the captives were marked on their neck, as slaves were marked.

In this event, Imam Sajjad (a) seemingly did not play any role in the struggle of the people of Medina because the main reason for uprising was to support the rule of Abdullah ibn Zubayr in Mecca and to pay allegiance to him. Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr was known for his and his father's vengeance against the Ahlul Bayt. Imam Sajjad (a) did not pay allegiance to Ibn Zubayr because he knew his caliphate illegitimate.

After attacking Medina, the army of Yazid did not harm Imam Sajjad (a) because of Ima's careful behaviour in refusing to pledge allegiance to Ibn Zubayr and in giving shelter to the family of Marwān ibn Ḥakam, the expelled ruler of Medina, in preventing the Ḥāshimids to take part in the sedition. This was why Yazid ordered his people to act diplomatically with Imam Sajjad (a).

b) The uprising of the Repentant (tawwābūn).

From 61 AH, the people of Kūfah deeply regretted their failure in supporting Imam Husayn (a) in the event of Karbalā and many prominent figures of Kūfah repented as a result of their disloyalty. They made hidden movements and prepared themselves for an uprising until they heard the news of Yazid's death. The *Tawwābūn* gathered around the holy grave of Lord of the Martyrs, Imam Ḥusayn, and while weeping, they made a treaty to revolt against the Umayyads until they suffered martyrdom in the hope that this would wipe off their sin of not assisting the Imam. From there, they proceeded toward Damascus and waged war with the army of 'Ubadullāh ibn Zīyād in 'Īn al-Wardah. The *Tawwābūn* was led by Sulaymān ibn Ṣurad along with five thousand Kufan Shi'as and opponents of the Umayyads. Among the *Tawwābūn*, who were one thousand, under the leadership of Rufā'ah ibn Shaddād, were able to escape and return to Kūfah. The star of the uprising of the *Tawwābūn* set out in 'Īn al-Wardah and rest of them

joined with Mukhtār. The *Tawwābūn* considered the Umayyads and the traitors of Kūfah as the criminals in the event of Karbalā. The uprising of the *Tawwābūn* was a social-political movement and can also be considered a Shi'a uprising, because its leaders were among Shi'a, the movement was inspired by the event of Karbalā, and their objectives had a Shī'i underpinning.

The leaders of the *Tawwābūn* had no relationship with Imam Sajjad (a). They did not call the Imam, nor did they pay allegiance to him. Also, there is no record of Imam Sajjad's approval of them or warning against them. This could be that after the event of Karbalā and martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn, the people of Kūfah felt embarrassed to contact Imam Sajjad (a), since they had breached their treaty. Moreover, the *Tawwābūn* saw themselves closer to martyrdom to atone for their sins as opposed to being victorious. Therefore, it was natural for them not to want to endanger the life of Imam Sajjad (a) by involving him in their movement.

The slogan "O helpers of Ḥusayn!" ("*Ya lathārāt al-Ḥusayn!*") and words that indicated revenge were a strong and effective motive among the people. The event of Karbalā influenced the uprising of the *Tawwābūn* more so than other uprisings. Some factors influenced the people of Kūfah, such as the closeness of time and place to Karbalā and Ashura, reminding and speaking about afflictions and tragic scenes of the event of Karbalā, the intense feelings of shame, sin, and fault in the tragedy Karbala, and the presence of criminals and murderers among the people. More than 4000 people were martyred in this uprising.

As every movement or revolution produce some effects, the uprising of the *Tawwābūn* influenced the uprising of Mukhtār. Those who remained alive in 'Īn al-Wardah and those who had made treaty with the *Tawwābūn*, but did not participate in the uprising and those who were angered with the killing of *Tawwābūn*, all joined with Mukhtār.

c. The uprisings of Mukhtār

Mukhtār was a pious and brilliant man known for his politico-religious awareness. He was also known for his intense love for Ahlul Bayt. He was in prison while the Battle of Karbala took place; therefore, his aim was to defeat the murderers of the Prophet's family and his companions during the event of Karbala, and he gathered the Shi'a to revolt against opposition. Before the beginning the Tawwābūn uprising, Mukhtār, a rival of both the Tawwabun and Sulayman ibn Surad, called the people and the Shi'a toward himself in Kūfah, as Kūfah was considered the centre of rebellion and revolution. Two opposing groups were formed: one led by Sulaymān and the other by Mukhtār. Mukhtār threatened Sulaymān's followers of being defeated and murdered. He also accused the chiefs of the Tawwābūn of lacking political perception and military experience and introduced himself as being more capable.¹ Because of the presence of several powerful rivals like Sulaymān, Mukhtār could not attain a special status; however, after the defeat of the Tawwābūn, he became an unrivalled contender in Kūfah. He sped up his movement after attracting Ibrāhīm ibn Mālik Ashtar and seized Kūfah.

Who was Mukhtār? Mukhtār was born in Ṭā'if, near Mecca in Saudi Arabia in 1/622, the year of the Prophet's migration to Medina.² He went to Medina with his father, Abū 'Ubayd Thaqaḫī, during Umar's caliphate. Umar had appointed Mukhtār's father as head of the army when Mukhtār was thirteen years old³ and grew up under the guidance of his uncle, Sa'd ibn Mas'ūd, who was one of the Companions of the

¹ According to some sources, Mukhtār was supported by Imam Ali's son Muḥammad ibn Ḥanafīyyah and introduced himself as his representative. According to *Britannica*, Muhammad ibn Hanafīyyah was the fourth son of Imam Ali (a). He was retiring and inclined to avoid partisan strife; he acted with much caution despite the support of various factions that would have made him caliph. [editor's note]

² *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 2, p.402.

³ Bilādharī, Aḥmad, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, vol.6, p.376.

Prophet Muhammad (s).¹ He and his sons, Wahab, Mālik, and Jibr were martyred in the battle of Qas al-Nāṭif.²

He was not present in the battles of Jamal, Siffin, and Nahrawan, and when his uncle went to pursue the Khārijīs, Mukhtār became his successor in Madā'in. There is no accurate report on his activity about the peace treaty of Imam Ḥasan (a) which was concluded in Madā'in. Regarding the uprising of Imam Ḥusayn, Mukhtār collaborated with Muslim ibn Aqīl in Kūfah. But because of this collaboration, he was imprisoned by 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād and was freed after the movement of Ashura through the mediation of 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar, his sister's husband. Afterwards, he left Iraq and set for Hījāz.³ He was well-known primarily because he gave shelter to Muslim ibn Aqīl in his house and because 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād, when informed of his influence, detained him during that difficult period.⁴ There are no sayings from historians about the role of Mukhtār in political currents and the main battles during the time of Imam Alī and Imam Ḥasan up until the uprising of Karbalā, although he spent a short time in Iraq and in Madā'in with his uncle, Sa'd ibn Mas'ūd. Few historical records are available regarding his life, thoughts, beliefs, and political tendencies during these years.

In 61 AH, Ibn Zubayr opposed Yazid through referring to the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn, Umayyads' crimes, Yazid's corruption, and by declaring his political incompetence. Ibn Zubayr's companions

¹ *Al-Istī'āb fī Ma'rīfah al-Ashāb*, vol. 2, p. 602.

² *Al-Futūḥ*, vol.1, p. 163-170.

³ *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5, p. 570. Ibn 'Umar supported Mukhtār because Mukhtār's sister was the wife of 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar and also Mukhtār's daughter, Ummah Salamah, was the wife of 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar, the son of 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar. *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol.8, p. 345; *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 10, p. 459.

⁴ *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, vol. 1.6, p. 377. Mukhtār ibn Abī 'Ubayd Thaqafī along with an armed group went to assist Imam Ḥusayn, but in that time 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād apprehended and imprisoned him and hit him with wood, such that his eye was split. *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī*, vol. 2, p. 201.

pledged allegiance to him in secret. Mukhtār arrived at Hijāz and remained there until he waged war along with Ibn Zubayr against the Umayyads. Consequently, he became renowned for his capability and competence in politics and military. After Yazid's death and breaking the siege of Mecca, Mukhtār remained there for five months,¹ but because he and the Zubayrids held opposing beliefs, Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr did not heed to him and assigned him a duty. It was their common enemy, the Umayyads, that united them. Soon afterwards, Mukhtār parted with them and went to Kūfah to benefit from its suitable space. His entrance to Kūfah was concurrent with the political activities of the Tawwābūn.

Six months after the death of Yazid, Mukhtār entered Kūfah on Friday, the 15th of Ramadhān in 64 AH.² The movement of the Tawwābūn had created extreme excitement in Kūfah, although Mukhtār did not support them, claiming that their leaders lacked political insight and army experience.³ After the defeat of the Tawwābūn, he introduced himself as the representative of Muḥammad ibn Ḥanafīyyah by gathering defeated penitents under the banner of seeking to revenge the Lord of Martyrs, Imam Ḥusayn and fought against the murderers of the martyrs of Karbalā. He became the leader of the Shi'a of Iraq and the leading figures, and Ibrāhīm ibn Malik al-Ashtar, as courageous as his father, joined with him. Soon after, Mukhtār seized Kūfah⁴ by expelling Abd Allāh ibn Muṭī',⁵ the governor of Kūfah. After he entered the

¹ *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5, p. 577.

² *Ibid.*, p. 560.

³ *Ibid.*, vol.4, p.212.

⁴ *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, vol.6, p. 394; *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 6, p. 6.

⁵ He was the leader of Qurishī Emigrants [Mecca's Muslims who emigrated from Mecca to Medina] in the event of Ḥirrah. When he was faced with army under critical conditions, he escaped from Medina to Mecca and was appointed as the ruler of Kūfah by Ibn Zubayr. The presence of him in the centre and leadership of the Ḥirrah uprising is one of reasons for considering Ḥirrah uprising as a non-Shi'a uprising. Mukhtār saw Ibn-Muṭī' as an obstacle in the way of his own uprising and expelled him from Medina.

governor's palace, each person paid allegiance to him. He dominated the entire city in 66 AH.¹ Using the slogan of implementing fundamental reforms, Mukhtār was able to gather non-Arabs, slaves, and the oppressed around him. He would equally divide booty between slaves and the nobles and this caused disappointment among the nobles of Kūfah who were secretly interested in Ibn Zubayr and were irritated with the political and social positions Mukhtār had granted to slaves:

Mukhtār rules over us without our satisfaction. He has made slaves close to and seated them on the mounts, granted our share of booty to them, and fed them by our booty; now the slaves refuse to obey us.²

The nobles felt danger and sent a delegation to Muḥammad ibn Ḥanafīyyah in order to investigate validity of Mukhtār's association to him.

Among the measures taken by Mukhtār was the revenge of the murderers of Karbalā's martyrs and others who participated in the event. Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ashtar, along with an army, fought with 'Ubaydullāh and eventually killed him. Mukhtār sent his head to Imam Sajjad (a) in Medina, and through this act, he consoled the heart of the Ḥāshimids. He also sent an army to Mecca and freed Muḥammad ibn Ḥanafīyyah from the prison of Ibn Zubayr.³ Ibn Zubayr dispatched his brother, Muṣ'ab, in order to repress Mukhtār in Iraq. Thus, the star of Mukhtār's life set and the famous scroll of one of the Thaqafids closed who had engaged with himself the people of Iraq and Umayyads for

¹ *Tārīkh Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt*, p.164.

²

لقد تامل هذا الرجل علينا بغير رضی منا، و لقد ادنى موالينا فحملهم على الدواب و اعطاهم و اطعمهم فيتنا، و لقد عصتنا عبيدنا.

³ *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī*, vol. 2, p. 261.

about 3 years. The time of his death is either in 67, 68, or 69 AH¹ in Kūfah.²

The uprising of Mukhtār had a Shī'i underpinning and his relationship with the Ahlul Bayt has a long record. During the time of Mu'āwiyah, although the Thaqafids were among the nearest persons to the court of Umayyads, the Umayyads treated Mukhtār unjustly as he did not hold any position or office. Factors such as the Shī'i's long record of Mukhtār, his intense interest in Ahlul Bayt and his goal of seeking revenge for the murderers of Imam Husayn (a) made him closer to the Ahlul Bayt.

The relationship of Imam Sajjad (a) with the uprising of Mukhtār

In that difficult condition, it is unreasonable to expect an open relationship between Imam Sajjad (a) and Mukhtār. The Imam refused to accept the leadership of the uprising in person, but gave the guardianship to his uncle, Muḥammad ibn Ḥanafīyyah, to assume the spiritual leadership and protection of the uprising. Mukhtār called people to pay allegiance to Muḥammad ibn Ḥanafīyyah. This measure secured the Imam from danger and kept the enemies and their spies preoccupied, thus diverting their attention from harming the Imam.

The Imam encouraged the people to collaborate with Mukhtār:

يَاعِمَّ، لُوْعِبِدَا رَزَجِيَا تَعَصَّبَ لَنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ لَوْجَبَ عَلَيَّ النَّاسِ مُوَارِزَتَهُ وَ قَدْ
وَلَيْتَكَ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ فَاصْنَعْ مَا شِئْتُ، فَخَرَجُوا وَقَدْ سَمِعُوا كَلَامَهُ وَ هُمْ يَقُولُونَ أَدِنَ
لَنَا زَيْنَ الْعَابِدِينَ وَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْحَنَفِيَّةِ¹

¹ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol.5, p. 79; ;*Ansāb al-Ashraf*, vol.7, pp.8, 86; *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol.6, p.93; *Tārīkh Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt*, p.164-165.

² For more information about Mukhtār, see cf. Dhahabī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Uthmān, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa wafiyāt al-Mashāhīr wa al-A'lām*, vol. 4, p. 21-67, 226-329; *Al-Ma'ārif*, p. 400; *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī*, vol.2, p.258-267;

O my uncle, if a black slave rises for us, Ahlul Bayt, it is obligatory upon the people to assist him. I appointed you for this affair. Do what you want.” They went out after hearing the Imam’s speech saying: Zayn al-‘Ābidīn and Muḥammad ibn Ḥanafīyah permitted us.

In fact, the Imam’s approval of Mukhtār was displayed by accepting the gifts which Mukhtar had sent. In some cases, it has been reported that Imam had made a benevolent prayer for Mukhtār.² Moreover, Āyatullāh al-Khūī says, “It can be understood from hadiths that the uprising of Mukhtār took place with the Imam's permission.”³ Also, when they returned to Kūfa, when Mukhtār asked about their discussions with the Imam, they said, “He commanded us to assist you.”⁴

Considering the analysis regarding the measures Imam Sajjad (a) took, the following questions are posed:

Reasons why Imam Sajjad (a) did not revolt

Why didn’t Imam Sajjad rise up and lead a revolution? The importance of this question and the answer given determines the history of Shī’ism.

¹ Ibn Namā Ḥillī, Ja’far, *Dhūb al-Naḍār fi Sharḥ al-Thār*, p. 96; *Baḥār al-Anwār*, vol.45, p. 365; Khūī, Sayyed Abū al-Qāsim, *Mu’jam al-Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol.18, p. 101.

² Imam Sajjad did prostration of thanksgiving for killing 'Ubaydullāh and prayed for Mukhtār as:

جَزَاهُ خَيْرًا .

May Allāh reward him for the good.

Tārīkh al-Ya’qūbī, vol.2, p. 259; Ṭūsī, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, *Ikhtiyār Ma’rifah al-Rijāl*, pp.125,127; Qāḍī Nu’mān, *Sharḥ al-Akḥbār*, vol.3, p. 270 .

³ *Mu’jam al-Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol.18, p. 101.

⁴ *Dhūb al-Naḍār fi Sharḥ al-Thār*.

- Did the Imams want to establish a government? Was it the duty of an Infallible Imam to establish an Islamic government grounded on Islamic principles?

- What was the priority of the Shi‘a Imams? Political struggles or cultural and scientific activities?

- What are the measures to determine the form of political and cultural activities?

- Is the different accomplishments of the Imams justifiable or not? How?

-From a historical view, is the history of Shi‘ism apparent enough for the Shi‘a to find the way of struggle and its pattern in determining political and cultural activities?

The reasons as to why Imam Sajjad did not rise up are as follows:

1. The political conditions were not prepared for the Imam. The people faced intense apprehension and fear of being killed and were not able to revolt.

2. The Imam strove to protect the Shi‘a from death; hence, he did not want to involve them in unknown rebellions. This was similar to Imam Hasan’s peace treaty aimed at defending the Shi‘a.

3. A suicide-based movement was not an admirable act. The Imam showed a new approach to cultural activities to save religion from deviation and instability.

4. The scientific movement proved to be a logical replacement for the political movement which was condemned to defeat.

5. Because no one was better informed on public interests than Imam Sajjad he took the position by considering the consequences of the conditions and performed according to the circumstances of time.

6. The decisions of Imam were intellectual, not emotional. Sentimental movements were temporary and condemned to defeat; thus, the Imam refused to encourage or participate in such decisions.

7. Uprisings and revolutions which are undertaken to achieve political changes are successful when they are combined with social changes; hence, a movement that triggered both political and social change was required.

During the time of Imam Sajjad (a), the social circumstances were declining; any type of revolution was useless. Thus, through cultural movement and scientific revolution, the Imam brought about social change and established an Islamic society by 'enjoining right and forbidding wrong' (*amr bi ma'roof wa nahy an il-munkar*). He called the people towards One God, and displayed utmost wisdom in his discourse and accomplishments to rouse the slumbering conscience of the community. Therefore, considering the circumstances, the Imams did not rise up because the grounds were not yet paved for a revolution.

5. Martyrdom of Imam Sajjad (a)

According to narrations, Imam Sajjad (a)'s martyrdom was in 92¹, 94² or 95³ AH and the day of his martyrdom has been recorded as 12,⁴ 22⁵ or 25⁶ Muharram. He was poisoned by the order of Walīd ibn 'Abd al-

¹ *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol. 2, p. 101.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Al-Kāfī*, vol.2, p.368.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁵ *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol. 2, p. 101.

⁶ *Al-Irshād fi Ma'rifah Hujajallāh Ala al-Ibād*, vol. 2, p. 185.

Malik¹ and is buried in the *Garden of Heaven Cemetery (Jannatul Baqi')* in Medina, Saudi Arabia, where other renowned Islamic figures are buried.

Conclusion

Without a doubt, the Umayyads lacked social justice and a fair judicial system. They denied Islamic teachings and distorted them to their own benefits (*bid'at*). The spread of ignorance among the people proved to be the most viable means to protect their power. The Umayyads' policy included lowering the status of Imam Ali by downplaying his virtues, frightening the Shi'a through use of threats, and punishing those who narrated the Imams' virtues. The economic policy of Umayyads weakened the Shi'a, the Alawids, and the followers of Ahlul Bayt. Indeed, Imam Ḥusayn had spoken about the circumstances and the people of that time:

الناس عبيد الدنيا و الدين لعق على السنتهم يحوطونه ما درت معائشهم فاذا
محصوا بالبلاء قل الديانون

The people are the servants of world and religion is only on their tongue, they turn around it as long as it suits their livelihood, but when they are entangled with difficulty, those who remain pious turn out to be very few.²

Thus, the 'period of catastrophe' is the most comprehensive name for the period in which Imam Sajjad (a) was living. People observed how Yazid was determined to maintain his rule even to the extent of killing the grandson of the holy Prophet. The period of losing hope of victory through armed movement was the result of intense fear created by the Umayyads. To destroy Mecca and Medina from being the centre of

¹ *Al-Ithāf Biḥub al-Ashrāf*, p. 143.

² *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 44, p. 382.

religion, high social standards, and holiness, the Ummayyads policy was to turn cities into the centre of corruption and prostitution. The prevalence of prostitution in the community could distance people from uprising, politics, and government.

Thus, the tragedies did not end after Imam Zayn ul-Abideen patiently bore the events of Karbala. He continued to live in a society faced with absolute turmoil under the Umayyad rule. The rulers fearfully struggled to seize the Imam's rightful leadership by snatching the people's economic, political, and social rights through various oppressive measures. They cut pensions and salary, exerted severe punishment, fabricated narrations (*hadiths*) in their favour, spread prohibited amusements to pacify the people, and limited freedom of thought and expression on the leadership (*wilāyah*) of the Ahlul Bayt. Imam Sajjad struggled with these movements as he strove to resist immorality, educating the people on Islamic law, principles, and ethics. His devotional activities included encouraging people to recite the salawāt, attend the Friday congregational prayers, and being present during the Hajj pilgrimage. His political activities included the revival of the 'Ashura movement, enjoining good and forbidding evil, divulging the oppression of the Umayyad regime, and firmly rising up against any oppressive ruler. Without question, those who were acquainted with the Imam were deeply fond of him and yearned for his presence, knowledge, wisdom, and piety.

Shi'ite Authorities in the Age of Major Occultation

Part I: Sheikh Mufid

Ali Naghi Zabihzadeh¹
Translated by Maryam Savadi

ABSTRACT: Sheikh Mufid, a highly distinguished theologian and jurist, was the founder of developing the tradition in the fields of theology (*kalam*) and legal studies (*fiqh*). His role included establishing an independent identity of the school of Ahlul Bayt, created a model for the development of Shi'i fiqh, and formulated a method in theology and legal studies based on logical coherence between reason and revelation. This paper offers an explanation of Sheikh Mufid's efforts to revive the principles of fiqh and kalam, a brief history of the political situation during his time, and his status with prominent scholars and the Ahlul Bayt.

Introduction

Every year, Shi'a Muslims revere Muhammad ibn Muhammad in Nu'man, known as Sheikh al-Mufid, a prominent personality in the growth and achievement of legal studies (*fiqh*), theology (*kalam*), and religion of the Ahlul-Bayt. Sheikh Mufid was born in a Shi'i family in 336 AH. Sheikh Tusi, (d. 460 AH) introduced his mentor Sheikh al Mufid, in his *al Fihrist* thus:

¹ Researcher of the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, Qum.

Muhammad b. Muhammad b. al-No'man, al-Mufid, had the kunya Abu Abdillah, and was well known as Ibn-al-Muallim. He was among the Imamiyya theologians, and was its final authority in his time. And he was a jurist (Faqih) of the advanced order, a man of polite demeanor, he was insightful and quick at repartee.

Indeed, Sheikh Mufid dedicated his whole life to studying and promoting Islamic values. Shi'i jurists and theologians continue to benefit from his influence until today.

Tributes by other scholars

A very practical way to understand the real status of a scholar is to refer to the words of other great scholars about him. Of course, this task becomes very easy when the scholar at issue is Sheikh Mufid, who as *Najjāshi* said “was too famous to be introduced.”¹ It is common for ordinary people to admire scholars. However, it is more valued when a scholar is praised by other scholars. Ibn Nadim stated regarding Sheikh Mufid in his book, *Fihrist*:

In our age, the authority of theology and the leadership of Shi'a theologians exclusively belong to him. In theology, he is superior to others. He is intelligent, bright, and sharp. I saw him having advantage over others in leading discussions and debates.²

Ibn Nadim is not the only one to find Sheikh Mufid's life worthy of praise. Yāfi'ī wrote about the Sheikh:

¹ Najjāshi, *Rijal*, p. 399; Cf. Sheikh Muhammad Tustari, *Qāmūs ar-Rijal*, vol. 9, p. 552.

² Muhammad ibn Ishāq al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 332 & 365, with little changes in phrases, Tustarī, *ibid*.

He is one of the Twelvers' dignitaries and he is the master of jurisprudence, theology and principles of jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*). He would discuss and debate with the followers of every belief. He had a remarkable and worthy position in the Buyid government. He used to give charity very often and prayed a lot and practiced fasting frequently. He was a man of modesty and midnight prayer. He wore rough and coarse clothes. He wrote more than 200 books. More than 80,000 Shi'ites attended his funeral.¹

In addition to his great knowledge, Sheikh Mufid has also been praised for his spirituality. Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani wrote:

80,000 people embraced Shi'a because of him. He was a true worshipper and ascetic. Sheikh Mufid was a man of midnight prayer. He was steadfast in acquiring knowledge. Little after the beginning of the night, he would wake up and begin prayer, then he would study and read the Qur'an.²

¹ *Mir'āt al-Jinān*, vol. 3, p. 28.

² Ibn Hajar, Shahab ad-Din 'Abulfaḍl' Ahmad ibn 'Ali ibn Hajar al-'Asqalanī, *Lisān al-Mizan*, vol. 5, p. 368; Cf.: Muhammad Mahdi Bahr al-'Ulūm al-Tabatabai, *Fawā'id ar-Rijālīyyah* (Sayyid Bahr al-'Ulūm), p. 312.

About the greatness of Sheikh Mufid, it would be enough to mention that the Naṣībī Khaṭīb Baghdadī wrote about him out of anger, enmity, intense hatred, weakness and inferiority concerning the scientific influence of Sheikh that: "Sheikh is extremist Shi'a and teaches their religion. He wrote many books to defend Shi'ite beliefs. He is the person who derided the Companions [of the Prophet] and their Successors among the jurists and the general authorities. He was one of the leaders of the Wrong by whom lots of people were killed until he died and Muslims became tranquil (cited from Ibn Hajar, *Ibid.* [Cf. *Tārīkh Baghdad*, vol. 3, p. 231, cited from Tustarī, *Ibid.*, p. 555])

The Sheikh was so important that counting the important events of the year 413 AH Ibn Kathir Shāmi wrote:

The great sheikh and Shi‘ite scholar passed away in that year. He was one of the major Shi‘ite authors and supporters of their seminaries. He had credit and influence among the kings of neighboring regions. Sharif Radi and Murtada were his students. They composed some couplets in his grief after he passed away.¹

Sheikh Mufid’s devotion to the Ahlul Bayt

Sheikh Mufid was supported by Imam Mahdi to the extent that he was among the few people who received letters (*tawqi‘*) from the Imam. During his leadership, Sheikh Mufid pleased the Imam with his actions. Upon reading the letters, the Imam illustrated he was satisfied with Sheikh Mufid. In one of these letters, after starting the letter in the name of God, the Imam wrote:

اما بعد سلام عليك ايها الولي المخلص في الدين

Peace be with you, O' my friend, the pure in his faith.

In another letter to Sheikh Mufid, the Imam wrote:

سلام الله عليك ايها الناصر للحق الداعي اليه بكلمه الصدق

Peace be with you, O' the supporter of the Truth and the one inviter to Him through true speech.²

¹ ‘Abulfidā’ ibn Kathīr ad-Damishqī, *al-Bidāya wan- Nihāya*, vol. 12, p. 15.

² Ṭabarsī, *al-‘Ihtijāj*, vol. 2, pp. 597 & 600; Cf. Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi Baḥrūl ‘Ulūm, *Fawā'idur Rijāliyyah*, vol. 3 & 4, pp. 317–320 and Muhammad Taqī Tustarī,

Qāmusur Rijāl, vol. 9, p. 533. Tabarsī quoted the text of Imam of Time's (aj) blessed letter to Sheikh Mufid, as follows:

"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent the Merciful, Peace be with you, O' my friend, [who is] devoted to religion. Indeed, we praise Allah: there is no other god but Him and we implore Him to send peace upon our master, the messenger of Allah, Muhammad and his family – May Allah give you enduring divine success - to aid the truth.

We inform you that we have become permitted to honor you by corresponding with you and ordering you to carry out the obligations on our behalf regarding our friends now and before you. May Allah powerful through their obedience and suffices their important issues through supervising and preserving them. May Allah approve you by His support.

Be careful about what I inform you of and about observing your duties and passing it to one about whom you are sure and God willing, I will inform you about his signs.

Though, we are far from tyrants and the Almighty determines for us, what suffices us and the faithful, until the world is at oppressors' hands; but meanwhile, we are aware of your status and conditions and there is nothing about you hidden to us. Any of you must do what makes us contented and avoids of what causes our repugnance and wrath; since our action [uprising] will be done suddenly when repentance is of no use and remorsefulness of sin do not make one free from our retribution. Allah gives you promotion and knowledge and grants you success out of His favours.

Imam has written in another letter:

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent the Merciful. God's blessings be upon you whom are the aid of the Truth and inviter to Him. O' One who invites to Allah through truth and honesty. Indeed, we praise Allah who has no equal. May Allah, the Almighty, supports you by His aid; One who approved passed friends of us.

We promise you that any faithful brothers of us who is wary of God and delivers the portion of the needy in his property to them, will be safe from the troubles of the misguiders and darkness shaded on peoples; and anyone who is miserly and mean towards Allah's blessings and does not give them to those whom he should bond with them, will be wretched in this world and in the Resurrection.

Some believe that during the thirty years of Sheikh Mufid's leadership, he received thirty letters from Imam Mahdi. The Imam's use of the phrase "Dear committed brother, Sheikh Mufid" conveyed the high position of the Sheikh before Imam Mahdi (aj).

Ahlul Bayt's support for Sheikh Mufid

In addition to receiving these precious letters, he was supported in other ways as well. In an anecdote, once a person from a village in the neighborhood asked the Sheikh to advise him on the death of a lady in their village - and that lady died while delivering her child. The Sheikh told him to bury the lady with her baby. The man expressed his gratitude towards the Sheikh and left. On his way, someone called him and said that the Sheikh has sent you a message: first take the baby out from the mother's womb and then bury her. Indeed, the child is still alive. A few years later, that man and the child came to the Sheikh again and thanked him for sending that message. The Sheikh was excited upon realizing that the man with the message was sent by Imam Mahdi. The Sheikh understood his mistake, and sadly went to his house, closed the door, and decided not to issue fatwas anymore; but the Imam wrote a letter to him and stated:

And if Allah makes our Shi'as successful in His obedience and in being united and in fulfilling their commitments, the blessing of our visit would not delay because of them. And this visit is because of the truth of their knowledge and sincerity which they have about us; so nothing makes them far from us except the reprehensible actions they do and we disapprove them and we would not choose for them.

«و الله المستعان و هو حسبنا و نعم الوكيل و صلواته على سيدنا البشير النذير محمد و

آله الطاهرين و...»

"And God is the [our] resort and Allah is sufficient for us, and He is the excellent trustee, may His blessings be upon our master, the bearer of good news and the warner: Muhammad and his pure family and..." (About this, see also Sheikh 'Abbas Qummi, *Fawā'id al Razawīyyah*, vol. 2, p. 128)

You should issue fatwas and will support you.¹

In another narration, the Sheikh saw Lady Fatima in his dream. Holding Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn's hands, she approached the Sheikh and said, "O Sheikh, teach them jurisprudence." Stunned by what he had seen, he woke up. That morning, when he went to the mosque of Karkh district in Baghdad, he saw that the mother of Sayyed Murtadhā and Sayyed Radhī holding their hands and came to the Sheikh accompanied by her servants. She then asked him to teach them jurisprudence. Thus, his dream was actualized.²

After the Sheikh passed away, the following couplets were written by Imam Mahdi about him, a couplet that was then carved on his grave:

*Be not heard the voice of the person who announced your death;
For the day of your death is overwhelming for the Household.
Though you are covered underneath the soil,
The knowledge and Godliness have resided in you.
The Uprising Mahdi is pleased ever since you began teaching lessons"*³

Teachers

His father, al-Mu'allim, brought him to Baghdad to study. He participated in the classes of many Shi'ite and Sunni scholars. Among the Shi'ite theologians, Abu 'Ali Iskāfī, Abu 'Abdullah Marzbānī, Abu

¹ Tunkābuni, *Qiṣaṣul 'Ulamā'*, p. 399.

² Ibn Abil- Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha*, vol. 1, p. 4. Quoted from Tustarī, *Qāmūs ar-Rijāl*, vol. 9, p. 554.

³ Quoted from 'Afandi, *Riyāḍul- 'Ulamā'*, vol. 5, p. 172; *Majālisul-Mu'minīn*, vol. 1, p. 477. The Sheikh 'Abbas Qummi, *al-Konya wal-'Alqāb*, vol. 3, p. 165; Cf. Tustari, *Qāmūs ar-Rijāl*, vol. 9, p. 554.

‘Abdullah Baṣṭrī and Abulhasan Ali ibn Isā Rummānī were his teachers.¹ Ibn Qulavayh Qummi, Abi Ja‘far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Bābiwayh (Sadūq) ibn Walīd Qummī, Abi Muhammad Hasan ibn Hamzah ‘Alawī, the famous jurispudent, Ibn Junayd ‘Iskāfī, and Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Dawūd, were also among his famous teachers.²

Students

Among his distinguished students were Sayyid Mortada Alam al-Hudā and his brother Sayyid Radī, Sheikh Tūsī, Najjashi Abuya‘lī Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Hamzah Al-Ja‘farī and Abuya‘li Sallār ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Ad-Daylamī, Abulfaraj Ali ibn Al-Husayn Al-Hamdānī,³ and Muhammad ibn Ali al-Karājakī⁴ and others.

Publications

Sheikh Mufid wrote many valuable books in the fields of ethics, history, and jurisprudence according to the needs of the society. His books were used in scientific and religious discussion circles. He wrote *Awā’il al-Maqālāt fi al-Madhāhib wa al-Mukhtārāt*, *Al-Nukat al-I’tiqādīyyah* and *Ajwibat al-Masā’il al-Sārawīyyah* on theology. The last one is a compilation of Sheikh Mufid’s answers to the people of Sari. This has been recently published in a collection called *‘Uddat al-Rasā’il*.

¹ ‘Abdullah Ni‘mah, *Falsafeh ye Shi‘e*, p. 363. Joel Kremer, *Ihya ye Farhangī dar Āli Buyeh*, p. 111.

² Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi Bahr al-‘Ulūm Tabāṭabāī, Op. Cit, p. 313- 314.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Sayyid Muḥsin ‘Amīn, *A’yān ash-Shī‘a*, vol. 9, p. 421.

In his works, he made the society of that time familiar with the Islamic political philosophy through explaining the principles of Imamate and leadership in Islam.

On jurisprudence, he wrote the books *al-Muqni'a*, *Al-A'lām*, *Al-Masā'ilu Hāghānīyyah*, etc. He wrote *Al-Amālī* on hadith and Islamic ethics. *Al-'Irshād* and *al-Jamāl* are his historical books. He wrote and *Al-Tazkiratu bi Usūl al-Fiqh* on principles of jurisprudence. Part of his *al-'Irshād* and other books like *al-Fusūl al-'Asahrah fi al-Ghaybah*, *Al-Jawābāt fi Khurūj al-Mahdi*, and *Al-Kabīr fi al-Ghaybah* were written about Imam Mahdi's occultation.

Many of his books were to strengthen the principles of the Twelver beliefs, even *Muqni'ah*, which is his most important jurisprudential book. He discussed doctrinal issues in the first part and mentioned what Muslims must know and then he talked about jurisprudential issues.

Sheikh Mufid wrote books on Imamate and political philosophy in Islam such as *Al-Ifsāh fi al-Imāmah*, *Al-Fusūl al-Mukhtārah*, *Tafḍīl Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'alā Sā'ir al-Ṣahābah*, *An-Nass 'alā 'Amīr al-Mu'minīn bi al-Khilāfah*, *Imāmat-u Amīr al-Mu'minīn min al-Qur'ān*, *Al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, etc. As mentioned earlier, it is said that he wrote 200 books during his life. Sayyid Muḥsin 'Amin mentioned 195 of them.¹

Mufid's efforts to revive the principles of jurisprudence

After the occultation of Imam Mahdi, for about one or two centuries, Shi'ite jurists solved their issues only by referring to the text of hadiths and the Qur'an. However, as time passed, the emergence of new issues motivated them to use principles of jurisprudence to solve

¹ Cf. *ibid*, pp. 423 – 424; Najjashi, *Rijal*, p. 399 – 403; Muhammad Ali Tabrizi, *Rayhānah*, vol. 4, p. 60.

their issues. Ibn Abi ‘Aqil¹ and Muhammad ibn Junayd Iskāfi² were among the pioneers of this science.

Ibn Ali ‘Aqil taught Sheikh Mufid’s teacher, Abulqasim Ja’far ibn Muhammad Quluwayh Qummi and ibn Junayd Iskāfi directly taught the Sheikh. These two honorable men refined jurisprudence, using interpretive reasoning (*ijtihad*) methods. They acted upon principles of jurisprudence and rational proofs in Shi’ite jurisprudence and began interpretive reasoning (*ijtihad*).³ They both influenced Mufid’s way of thinking.

He benefitted from their ideas and wrote a book on the principles of jurisprudence based on their fundamentals; he used the interpretive reasoning of principles of jurisprudence in deduction of rulings. His famous book on jurisprudence is called *al-Muqni‘ah*.⁴

Mufid’s role in promoting kalam

The Sheikh wrote in a simple style. He wrote *Tashihul I’teqād (Correction of Beliefs)* as a commentary on Sheikh Sadūq’s *Risāleh-ye I’tiqādāt*⁵ (*An Essay Concerning Beliefs*) and opened the doors of reasoning to prove the justifiability of Shi’ite ideology.

Theology is the most important science every Muslim needs to be able to defend his religion. This science studies God’s existence and attributes, His great actions such as creation of the universe, and

¹ Also known as Hasan ibn ‘Ali al-‘Ummānī, one of the Shi’a theologians who wrote *al-Mutamassik bi Habl-i Ālir-Rasūl*

² (412 – 336) himself was one of the Sheikh Mufid’s teachers and wrote the book *Tahzib Ahkām ash-Sharī‘ah* in 20 volumes

³ Ali Davāni, *The Millennial Commemoration of Sheikh Ṭūsī*, the lecture of Seyyed Muhammad Kazim Imam, p. 382, A Summary.

⁴ About this, Cf. Ali Davani, *Mafākher-e Islam*, vol. 3, p. 242; *The Millennial Commemoration of Sheikh Ṭūsī*, pp. 384 – 386.

⁵ Husayn Modarresi Tabataba’i, *Muqaddameh-ei bar Fiqh-e Shi’i*, p. 46.

sending messengers and the Books. It also discusses issues such as faith and disbelief, power and capability of acting, determinism and free will, excommunication and frustration (of the acceptance of actions), Imamate, and intercession.

After the development of Islam and after Muslims met the Egyptians, Roman, and Iranian nations, and the Jews, Christian, Magus, and Zoroastrian scholars and found access to their scientific sources, Muslims began to translate some of the Greek, Syrian, and Pahlavi books starting from the second century (AH) and changed its style using reason and philosophy. In this way, differences in religious doctrines emerged, particularly in issues such as justice and other attributes of the God, the seeing and transcendence of God, imamate, and intercession. As a result, the Mu'tazilite and Ash'arite schools were formed. Because the Mu'tazilites were followers of rational and philosophical rules, and Asha'arites focused on the outward sense of the verses and traditions, the two groups denounced one another. The Mu'tazilites who preceded had prominent figures who created the two Islamic cities of Basra and Baghdad and propagated their religion. This infiltrated the political sphere, which resulted the Abbasid caliphs: Mansūr and Ma'mūn's interest in I'tizāl; both acknowledged the high authorities of that sect.

At this time, Shi'a theologians felt responsible for the situation, and by the command of the Imam Mahdi (a) they began to engage in discussions and debates with both the Mu'tazilites and Ash'arites which were the paths of extremism and wastage. Sheikh Mufid accelerated that theological movement. His debates are found in sources such as *Al-Iḥṣāḥ fī al-Imamah* and *Al-Irshād fī al-Faḍā'il* and *Majālis al-Manāṭ* and *Al-Imāmī*. He wrote books and treatises on kalām, especially the concept of imamate.

Although the Shi'ites collaborated with the Mu'tazilites on issues such as justice and the creation of the most fittings, the createdness of the Qur'an and the necessity of appointing the Imam. They also differed in issues such as the knowledge and infallibility of the Imams and the way in which they are appointed by God.

At that time, Sheikh Mufid, a person with high eagerness, held debates with Ali ibn 'Īsā Rummānī, and Judges Abubakr Bāqilānī and Abdul Jabbār Mu'tazilī. He wrote about 200 books verifying Shi'i Islam.

Sheikh Mufid's debates

Sheikh Mufid was an alert scholar who fought with deviations of thought and religious innovations. He had expertise in various disciplines such as theology, jurisprudence, and Qur'anic sciences. Having acquired information about different religions and beliefs from their own words and works helped him offer Shi'a beliefs and opinions in the best possible way. Knowing his period of history and deviational groups and their beliefs, he began theological debates for restoring the rights of the Shi'a.

He benefited from the help of the Buyids in his path as the Sheikh's debates with the judge Abdul Jabbār gained him 'Aḍud ad-Dawla Daylamī's respect.

It is said in *Rijal*¹ by Sayyid Baḥr al-'Ulūm's that when Sheikh Mufid came to Baghdad from his birth town, 'Ukburā, he attended the class of Judge Abdul Jabbār. One day, in the class Sheikh Mufid stated a very nice point. Judge Abdul Jabbar was so stunned by the Sheikh's point that he asked for the Sheikh's name and invited him to sit in his place and said, "You are truly *mufid* (beneficial)."

¹ the science of the biographies of narrators

The scholars and students who were in the class became astonished. The judge addressed the students, "Now, we are desperate to answer him. You answer him so that he goes and sits in his seat." 'Aḍud ad-Dawla Daylami heard about this and thanked the great service of this Godly man by awarding him a slave, a gown, a turban, a special horse with a golden saddle and bridle, and a hundred caliph's golden dinars, each of which was equal to ten dinars (9-gram gold coins). He also ordered that they give the attendees of the Sheikh's class ten man¹ bread and five man meat every day. After this event, the Sheikh was nicknamed Mufid and was soon publicized.

After that, the kings of neighboring regions realized the aspiration and scientific superiority of Sheikh Mufid. He lived in an era when he could freely defend Shiite beliefs. Thus, he took advantage of every opportunity and debated with scholars of other sects. He persuaded them and was usually disliked by some for doing so. However, due to his political authority, they could not protest against him. Sometimes they would wish for his death.

It is written in Ibn Kathir Shami's chronology that Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Nu'man Abu Abdullah entitled as ibn al-Mu'allim was the Sheikh of the Shi'as and an author of their beliefs and a their supporter. The kings of the neighboring regions believed in him. Because vast majority held Shi'a beliefs, many scholars from the tribe attended his circles and benefited from him. He eloquently defeated his opponent scholars. Therefore, those who opposed Sheikh Mufid cursed him because they were defeated in their debates with him. Furthermore, due to their arrogance, they would not relinquish the ideologies of their predecessors. Their arrogance was to the extent that according to Ibn Kathir Shami, after Sheikh's demise, one of those scholars ornamented his house out of happiness, called his followers to congratulate him,

¹ An old scale of measurement equal to about 3 kg.

and told them that his own death was no longer hard for him since he finally saw Sheikh Mufid's death.

However, some of these scholars after being defeated in debates by the Sheikh confessed to the Sheikh's skills and knowledge in different fields of science, since they did not want to become notorious or to be left alone.¹

Mufid's debates show that he used the open political atmosphere resulted from relationships with the Buyid dynasty to strengthen and promote the Shi'a organizations.

The political situation during Sheikh Mufid's time

Sheikh Mufid was contemporary with some Abbasid caliphs like Ta'i' Abbasi and 'Aḍud ad-Dawla. As mentioned before, the Buyid brothers Mu'izz ad-Dawla Ahmad in Baghdad, 'Imād ad-Dawla Ali in Fars, and Rukn ad-Dawla Hasan ruled in Rey. Rukn ad-Dawla's son was 'Imad ad-Dawla and was contemporary with Sheikh Mufid. After him 'Aḍud ad-Dawla, his nephew, went to Shiraz to rule after him.²

'Aḍud ad-Dawla himself was a scholar who would communicate with other scholars in various fields. He tried to build many buildings and established the 'Aḍudī hospital in Baghdad and employed physicians there. He established different constructions, such as digging wells and repairing paths in his dominion, especially in Baghdad and Shiraz. He ruled for 34 years and left behind many constructions, the most important of which was the shrine of Imam Ali in Najaf, Iraq until his death in 372 AH.

¹ Quoted from the book *Majālisul-Mu'menīn*

² Muhammad ibn Khund shah ibn Muhammad known as Mir Khānd, *Tarikh-e Rawḍat al-Safā*, vol. 4, p. 45, cited by Abbas Parviz, *Tarikh-e Dayālamah va Ghaznaviyān*, p. 60.

As mentioned, 'Aḍud ad-Dawla's father was Rukn ad-Dawla who had a warm relationship with Sheikh Saduq. Moreover, his uncles and other members of his family, and all of his companions such as Sahib ibn 'Ubbād were devotees of the Prophet's descendants; naturally, his father and close relatives' beliefs influenced him. 'Aḍud ad-Dawla had a special respect for Imam Ali. To build the Imam's holy shrine, he and his troops stayed in Najaf for one year and donated money to build a splendid construction¹ and assigned endowments for it. This building went under construction until 735 AH.²

'Aḍud ad-Dawla deeply respected Sheikh Mufid and used to set aside great gifts for him.³ He prepared the grounds for the Sheikh to preach Shi'a beliefs.

The vast parts of the Islamic lands became the territory of 'Aḍud ad-Dawla. According to Tha'ālibi, in our time, the ruler who repossessed nine countries of great rulers was 'Aḍud ad-Dawla and Abu Shujā' Fanā Khusru.⁴ Not only did he possess the territories of Imād ad-Dawla, Rukn ad-Dawla, and Mu'izz ad-Dawla, but he also annexed other islands to his domain. Upon scrutinizing the writings of Ibn Juzi, Abul Mahasin (Ibn Tughri Bardi) and Ibn Imād, it can be implied that rulers of Egypt were to adhere to the rules commanded by 'Aḍud ad-Dawla and other Buyid rulers. All people were to strictly obey him.⁵ Abul Mahasin says:

¹ Cf. Aqili, *Āthārul-Wuzarā'*, p. 197, and *Irshad- e Daylami*, a book of the 8th century AH, vol. 2, p. 225, cited from Ali Asghar Faqihi, *Shāhanshāhiy-e 'Aḍud ad-Dawla*, p. 128 & 130.

² Ibn Zuhrah, *Ghāyatul- Ikhtiṣār fil- Buyūtāt al-Alawiyyatul- Maḥfūzatu minal- Ghubār*, a book of the 8th century AH, p. 161, cited item, p. 132.

³ *Rawḍatul- Jannāt*, p. 538, cited item, p. 133.

⁴ Tha'ālibi, *At-Tā'iful- Ma'ārif*, p. 83, cited item, p. 198.

⁵ Ibn Khalkan, *Wafayātul- A'yān*, vol. 1, p. 454, cited item, p. 200.

In 338, Anjavi, the son of Akhshīd, ruler of Egypt sent gifts for ‘Aḍud ad-Dawla and made some requests about his government.¹

Moreover, ‘Aḍud ad-Dawla repossessed Shām. The governor of Damascus, the Turk Abu Mansūr Iftakīn, who was Mu‘izz ad-Dawla’s slave before, wrote to ‘Aḍud ad-Dawla that Shām was conquered and asked for permission to attack Egypt.

‘Aḍud ad-Dawla established many bureaus in his government, one of which was the bureau of inspectors. At that time, inspectorship was among the most important positions and jobs, since they had full law enforcement authority and they could interfere in various issues. They were chosen from among those who were distinguished, those who would not be affected by anything and anyone in performing their duties. An inspector was one who would enjoin people to good and forbid them from evil. Such a person, along with his assistants, would walk around in the lanes and bazaars day and night and took proper action in any case. For example, if they saw a person quietly reading the verses of the Qur’an in his prayer while he should read aloud, they would remind him of that. Or if they saw that the prayer leader prolonging his prayer more than usual, and this may irritate the weak or the sick, they would forbid him from that. If they saw people not attending the Friday or communal prayer, they invited them to it. Anytime they saw someone yelling in the streets or bazaars while drunk, they would perform discretionary punishment or a legal punishment on him. They always took action when needed and the people did not dare defy their commands. These cases included shortchanging or blocking part of a lane or bazaar, bothering a neighbor, loading his animal more than he can handle, or loading a ship

¹ Jamaluddin Abul Maḥāsīn Yusuf ibn Tagharī Bardī al-Atābakī, *al- Nujumuz-Zāhirha Fi Mulukil- Miṣr wal- Qāhirah*, vol. 3, p. 298. Ibn ‘Imād Ḥanbalī, *Shadharātuz- Dhahab fil Akhbār min Dhahab*, vol. 3, p. 68, cited item.

more than its normal capacity where it would likely sink, or waited at the judge's house and the judge did not come out on time.¹

The chieftainship (*niqābat*) of the Alawites was common from the second period of the Abbasid caliphate (after Mu'tasim). One of the descendants of the Prophet, called Sayyid, from the family of Talib, was chosen by the caliph to look after the affairs of the descendants of the Prophet, who were Shi'a, and anything related to the Alawites was done through the "Chief" (*naqīb*). This was a kind of privilege and respect granted to the Alawites.

In addition to the capital, 'Aḍud ad-Dawla assigned chiefs of the Alawites in other cities as well in 263 AH He assigned Abul Hasan Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Ishaq Alawi in Baghdad and Wāsiṭ and Abul Fath Ahmad ibn Umar ibn Yaḥyā in Kufa and Abul Hasan Ahmad ibn al-Qasim al-Muhammadī in Basra and Ahwaz.²

One of the political events during the period of Sheikh Mufid occurred when Baha' ad-Dawla Daylamī discharged Ta'i' Abbasī and recalled Qadir. In 381 AH, he became the caliph by the allegiance of his companions and relatives.³ At the time of Qadir, caliphate flourished. He could refresh the declining glory and majesty. Later, the Buyid Dynasty became extremely weak. After Baha' ad-Dawla Daylamī, his son, Sultan ad-Dawla, became his successor in Baghdad. In 411 AH, the Baghdad army revolted against Sultan ad-Dawla and dismissed him and made his younger brother, Abu Ali Mushrif ad-Dawla, his

¹ *Darbāreh-ye Ahkām-e Ḥasabeh va Muḥtasab*: Cf. Al-Qāḍi Abi Ya'lā Muhammad ibn al-Hussayn al-Farrā', *Ahkāmus- Sultāniyyah*, vol. 2, from p. 240 on; Ibn 'Abdirabih Andulusī, *Aqḍul- Farīd lil- Mulk al-Sa'īd*, p. 175 on, cited from Faqīhī, *ibid*, pp. 228 & 229.

² Cf. *Shāhanshāhi-ye 'Aḍud ad-Dawla*, p. 228.

³ Hamdullah Mustowfī Qazvīnī, *Tarikh-e Gozīdeh*, p. 349. According to Hamdullah Mustowfī, in 375 AH, Ismailis took possession of Sham and Hejaz from Abbasids (Cf. Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Mukhtasar Tarikh al-Duwal*, p 243 & 248).

successor. After his death, his son, Abu Ṭāhir Jalal ad-Dawla became the ruler of Iraq and Khurasan. He did not go to Baghdad and stayed in Basra. Residents of Baghdad sermonized in the name of 'Abu Kalijar, son of Sultan ad-Dawla, but Abu Kalijar was faced with some obstacles; therefore, there was no emir in Baghdad for two years. At the same time, a group of residents in Baghdad supported Abu Kalijar, while some others were followers of Jalāl ad-Dawla. Finally, in 418 AH, he went to Baghdad and officially began his ruling.

At the time of the caliphate of Qadir, the local emirs, with the intention of expanding their territories, repeatedly invaded, plundered, and killed in the cities of Islamic countries.¹ At the same time, the Shi'a were being attacked by extremists in Baghdad. They repeatedly invaded Karkh (residence of Sheikh Mufid and the Shi'a) and burned it. In such a turbulent situation, Sheikh Mufid patiently tolerated the hardships although he was sometimes required to leave the city. Despite these sufferings, he successfully led the Shi'a.

Religious challenges in Sheikh Mufid's time

During the period of the Buyid Dynasty, the Hanbalis played the role of political and religious party. Their main stronghold was in Baghdad, in Bāb al-Basra neighborhood and the Great Mosque of Mansur where well-known propagators spoke. From Bāb al-Basra, some attacked the Shi'a who were mainly inhabited in the Bāb al-Ṭāq neighborhood on the right side of the river and in the Karkh locality in the left side. The

¹ Cited from Bayāt, *Tarikh-e Iran az Zuhūr-e Islam ta Dayalameh*, pp. 146 &147. According to Hamdullah Mustowfī, in 399 AH, Sham was taken out of Hakim ibn 'Azīz Isma'īlī's hands and repossessed by Banī Kilāb tribe. From Egypt, the Fatimi ruler wrote letters to Baha' ad-Dawla, Ibn Abi ash-Shawk, Qarwāsh ibn Muqallid 'Aqīlī, ruler of Mosul and Ali ibn Mu'ayyid and Manṣūr ibn Husayn and Hasan ibn Sammāk al-Hifālī which were powerful emirs and invited them to Baṭinis. They accepted his invitation (but the Aqili ruler of Mosul recognized Abbasids as ruler through the advices of some of his friends and relatives) *Tarikh-e Gozīdeh*, p. 350.

Shi'as' stronghold was the Burāthā Mosque. During this period, the Hanbali school went through two distinctive phases: the first was when the caliph al-Rāḍī (323/935) reacted to their harsh actions and charged the Hanbalis as violators of religion and the second was when the caliph al-Qādir (441/1018) recognized the Hanbali school as the official religion of the government.

In this period, Tabari, the great historian and commentator of the Qur'an, was charged with infidelity and was buried secretly in the doorway of his own house.¹ The Hanbalis' disturbance forced the caliph Muqtadir to order the destruction of the Burāthā Mosque in 313/925 because of the accusations that some of the companions of the Prophet were cursed by some Shi'a worshippers in that mosque or because of some of the actions of some extremists. But the extremism of Barbahari and his followers in oppressing people for various accusations caused the caliph al-Rāḍī to warn the Hanbalis and condemn them for spreading doubtful beliefs and offending Muslims, accusing the Shi'a of apostasy, inviting Muslims to respect the tomb of ibn Hanbal and yet prohibit the people's pilgrimage to the graves of the Shi'a infallible Imams.² Finally, the Abbasid caliph condemned Barbahari's actions and issued the command of imprisoning his followers. This event occurred before the ruling of the Buyid Dynasty in Baghdad.

After an increase of violence and issuance of the order of the caliph al-Rāḍī, in 323/935, the tensions were temporarily appeased. But later, at

¹ Yāqūt ibn 'Abdullah Rūmī, *Irshād al-Arīb Ilā Ma'rīfat al-Adīb*, vol. 6, p. 423; Ibn Athīr, *Al-Kāmil*, vol. 80, pp. 98 & 99; Ibn Athīr, *Bidāyah*, vol. 11, p. 132, No. 45-46. Quoted from Joel Kremer, *ibid.*, pp. 103 & 104.

² Miskawayh, *Tajaribul Umam*, Vol. 1, pp. 322 & 323. Ibn Athīr, *al-Kamil*, vol. 8, pp. 229 – 231; *idem*, *Bidayah*, vol. 11, pp. 181 & 182, cited *idem*; Cf. Howzah Magazine (No. 54), Bahman & Isfand, the millennial commemoration of Sheikh Mufid, p. 4 (This matter shows that even before Buyid rule Shiites had a good situation and influence in Baghdad somehow.)

the time of Bajkum the enmity blazed again. When he repaired and equipped the Mosque of Burāthā in a reply to the request of the Shi‘a, Bajkum had to stop the resistance of the Hanbalis. After Bajkum was killed in a fight with Kurds, his Hanbali oppositions continued their severe rebellion and savagery and plundered Darb al-‘Awn, the financial center of city where many Jews lived and tried to destroy the Burāthā Mosque. Caliph al-Muttaqī, who had once decorated this mosque, protected it and imprisoned many Hanbalis. He also commanded the detention of the leader of the Shi‘as of Bāb al-Ṭāq (943 CE/ 332 AH) and in this way he opposed the instruction of Nasir al-Dawlah for supporting the Shi‘a. It has been suggested that one cause of dismissal of Mustakfi was his order to arrest the leader of the Shi‘a and his refusal to release him despite the command of the caliph.¹

Joel Kremer says:

In the Buyid period, the special relation of the Hanafi school with the Abbasids became weak, and Abubakr Rāzī, the Imam of the Hanafis, refused being appointed as the high judge by the command of the caliph al-Muṭī‘ who considered Rāzī to be a puppet of Buyids.² But the Shafi‘is wanted to fill the gap made by resignation of the Hanafis. The Hanafis were generally stricter than Shafi‘is in religious issues. Tanūkhī, the famous Hanafi judge was a stubborn opponent of the Shafi‘is. The Shafi‘is had many followers in Eastern part and the Buyids supported their goals in the Mesopotamia. At the beginning of the Buyid period, ‘Utbat ibn Abdullah was the supreme judge of Baghdad. In Basra, there were many Malikis and Baqilani, the famous theologian of

¹ Joel Kremer, *‘Ehya-e Farhangi dar Ahd-e ‘Al-e Buyeh*, p. 104.

² Abubakr Rāzī, one of the students of Karkhī, d. 370 AH / 981 CE, Cezgin, AS, vol. 1, pp. 444- 445, cited item, p. 107.

Asharis and Malikis, was from Basra. Abubakr Abhari Maliki (d. 375 AH / 985 CE) taught in the mosque of Mansur in Baghdad. The Zahirites were mostly residents of Mesopotamia and Iran and they were few; but their judge and some of their clerics were in Baghdad. The Jaririds titled after the founder of their school, Muhammad ibn Jarir Tabari, had some famous scientists such as Mu'afa ibn Zakarya (d. 390 AH / 999 CE) whose slave, Jarīrī had a public debate with one of the leaders of the Akhawānuş- Şafā. During the period of Buyids, Mu'āwiyya, worshipping became widespread in some regions. At that time, the Kharijites were not so active. There is clear evidence that they were living in the regions far from the capital Baghdad in Azerbaijan, Sistan, Oman, and Ḥaḍramūt. The Kharijites rose up after the death of Mu'izz ad-Dawla in Nazwā and there selected an Imam called Ḥafş ibn Rāshid as their leader and an emir called Ward ibn Ziyād, but Muṭahhar ibn Abdullah, the vizier of 'Aḍud ad-Dawla suppressed this rising.¹

The dominant theological school during the time of the Buyids was Mutazilite. Abu Bakr Baqilani masterfully defended the Ash'ari ideas at the same time. The Mutazilites and Ash'arites moved their center of activities from Basra to Baghdad. Mutazilite school of Basra and Baghdad had a branch in Rey.

The Ash'arites were always considered as Sunnites and Mu'tazilite were divided into two: Sunnis and Shi'as, most of whom were Zaydis. In Baghdad, there were three Mu'tazilite branches: the old branch

¹ Ibid., p. 109.

whose founder was Abulhasan Khayyāt, and the Bahshamiyyah¹, founded by Abu Hashim Jubā'ī, and the Akhshidiyyah, established by Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Akhshīd. These groups accused each other of atheism and apostasy, and this difference of opinion was used by their opponents among the hadith scholars and philosophers. Abu Hashim Jubā'ī (d. 321 AH / 933 CE), son of Abu Ali Jubā'ī (d. 303 AH / 915 CE) transferred the Basra branch to Baghdad. Bahshamiyyah had many followers such as Abu Abdullah Basri (d. 369 AH / 980 CE) who was followed by many people such as the famous judge, Abdul Jabbār. The vizier Sahib ibn 'Ubbad² was one of the devoted Mutazilites and a student of Abu Hāshim and Abu Ishāq Naṣībaynī who invited Abdul Jabbār to Rey. Therefore Baghdad and Basra schools had a branch in Rey. This school kept its close relationship with the Zaydis and many of them, such as Abu Abdullah Dā'ī studied in the class of Abu Abdullah Baṣrī. Some of the Zaydi Imams were students of Abdul Jabbār. At the end of the 4th century AH / 10th century CE, Mutazilite's influence in Zaydi Shi'a reached its climax. Akhshidiyyah had a considerable difference of opinion with Bahshamiyyah. Ali ibn 'Isā Rummānī was one of the tenacious defenders of Bahshamiyyah, the competitor of Abu Abdullah Basri (Bahshami) and wrote a book on rejection of Jubā'ī. Meanwhile, the Buyids tried to reconcile them.³

In the 3rd century AH / 9th century CE, some of Mutazilites were influenced by the Shi'a. They had relationship with the famous and the Shi'a family of Nowbakhtī who combined the Mutazilite theology with the Shi'ite ideological system in issues such as divine attributes and justice and will, while they kept the opposition of the Shi'a ideology to

¹ Bahshamiyyah was titled after its founder Abu Hāshim Jubā'ī.

² However, There are evidences that Sahib accepted Shi'a because of his relationship with important Shiite personalities such as Sheikh Sadūq; therefore, it is said that half of his poetry was eulogy of Muhammad's family and also Sheikh Sadūq dedicated his book *'Uyun-u Akhbūr ar-Riḍā* to him.

³ Ahmad ibn Yaḥya ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqātul Mu'tazilah*, p. 107, cited item, p. 119.

Mu‘tazilite principles. Shi‘ite hadiths scholars of Qom reacted in opposition with the Nowbakhtis’ tendency toward Mutazilites, in which Abu Ja‘far ibn Bābiwayh was their leader. Abulhasan Karkhī, the famous Baghdadi teacher (d. 340/952) combined Hanafī jurisprudence with Mu‘tazilite theology and Abu Abdullah Basrī and Abu Abdullah Dā‘ī were among his students in jurisprudence. Abulhasan Hasanī (one of the Alawis) also taught jurisprudence and theology....¹

At the time of the caliphate of Qadir when the power of Buyids was weakening and a new authority of Sunnis was going to begin, Mutazilite actions and influences decreased. In 409 AH/1018 CE, caliph announced that the believing in non-eternality of the Qur‘an is a form of atheism deserving death and used his power to prevent the appointment of Mutazilites as judge and witness and deputy.²

Generally, the 4th century AH was the climax of religious oppositions and conflicts. In the meantime, the conflicts between the Shi‘a and opponents is an important part of this period. Therefore, the responsibility of Sheikh Mufīd in presenting pure Islam in different fields especially in ideology and theology was very burdensome; therefore, as a devoted and effortful soldier he would defend the intellectual borders of Islam and Shi‘a viciously despite all dangers threatening him. While tolerating dangers of attacks of opponents and accepting the pain of exile, first he started stating the principles of justice of Shiite attitudes against the non-Shi‘ites and second, among different schools of Shi‘a, especially the Isma‘īliyyahs and the Zaydīs justified the Twelver Shi‘a schools and taught students such as Sayyid Murtada Alam al-Hudā, Sayyid Raḍī and Sheikh Ṭūsī, both of which followed him during their own lives.

¹ Ibid., p. 112 & 115; Abu Manṣūr Tha‘ālabī, *Yatīmatu Dahr*, vol. 3, p. 197; ibid, p. 121.

² Cf. Ibn Jowzi, *al-Muntazam*, vol. 15, p. 128.

The Domination of Sheikh Mufid's Religio-Political Thought

In his youth, Sheikh Mufid benefited from the knowledge of the Imams regardless of all the dangers that threatened him. He held scientific and theoretical circles. He would defend the truth of the Imams' authority in mystical, religious, political, and judicial fields without any dissimulation. He also challenged the deviants and the misguided. Presentation of Islamic position concerning government in that deviant and despotic society was among his most considerable political activities. Such issues questioned the legitimacy of the government.

To play his role in the political activities of that time, Sheikh Mufid, the intellectual leader of the Shi'a, highlighted the issue of Imamate and leadership and for the first time, raised the issue of guardianship (*wilāyah*) of the highest jurispudent, and introduced it as a divine authority in the shadow of the Buyids' temporary supports while he was facing the dangers of deviant oppositions who were intellectually dependent on the tyrant Abbasid Caliphate. The notion of *wilayah* was derived from the Imams' speeches, and was supported by other great Shi'a scholars. It prepared the ground for fulfilling jurisprudential management of social and political aspects of the society at special historical periods of the political life of the Shi'a among which are the periods of jurisprudential management of jurisprudents such as Sayyid Murtaḍā and Sayyid Raḍī, Allamah Ḥillī, Khajeh Naṣīrid-Din-e Ṭūsī, Muḥaqqiq Karakī, the Sheikh Bahā'ī, Allamah Majlisī and at last, the comprehensive management of Imam Khomeini over the notion of *wilayah*.

Through presentation of the issue of *wilayah* in his jurisprudential books, especially in *al-Muqni'ah*, Sheikh Mufid made an abundant and noticeable effort in reinforcing the principles and basics of Shi'ism. This holy notion made him one of the most hated Shi'a jurispudent by the scholars of other schools of thought. Although his scientific awe,

grandeur, and reverence humbled his opponents, they desired his death because of their feelings of inferiority.¹

Sheikh Mufid interpreted wilāyah as the authority of the jurists to serve as political leaders. In his book *al-Muqni'ah*, he introduced the jurisprudents as the supervisors of the issues which sultans are in charge of them.²

Sheikh Mufid frequently used the words *Imam*, *sultan*, and *jurisprudent* and clarified the responsibilities of those who held these titles. Sheikh Mufid entered the term "Sultan" in the Shiite jurisprudential dictionary for the first time, because the powerful Abbasid emirs, such as the Samanids and Buyids, considered the word *sultan* and *caliph* as synonyms in Sunni terminology, and had chosen the title *sultan* to be distinguished from Abbasid caliphs. It is obvious that by the term *sultan*, the Sheikh meant a just sultan or the sultan of Islam, i.e. those who are appointed by God, such as Imams of the Shi'a and the emirs appointed by them. "Jurisprudent" is the third title used in Sheikh Mufid's interpretations and he mentioned the following responsibilities for him is similar to an Imam's:

1. Collecting legal alms and passing them to those deserving them
2. Establishing the law of God if at all possible
3. Judging the disputes in society
4. Establishing the Friday congregational prayer and the Eids.³

¹ Cf. Ahmad Azari Qummi, *Velayat-e Faqih az Didgah-e Fiqahay-e Islam*, p. 167.

² Cf. Sheikh Mufid, *Muqni'ah*, pp. 537- 616 & 643. Cited from Azari Qummi, *ibid*, p. 184.

³ In his valuable book, *Muqni'ah*, Sheikh Mufid says, "Upholding the law is assigned to the sultan of Islam, i.e. Imams whom are appointed by Allah, the Almighty. Their honor have appointed Shiite jurisprudents as rulers and have granted them the permission to decide about these issues; so whereas they can observe the law about

Overall, Sheikh Mufid believed that the guardianship and sultanate of jurisprudents is equivalent to the absolute guardianship and government of Prophet Muhammad and the Imams, and with this guardianship, people must be absolutely obedient to them.¹

His death

At the time of ‘Aḍud ad-Dawla, Sheikh Mufid lived with respect and grandeur. At the age of about thirty years old, he spoke, debated, and discussed with scholars, but neither his freedom nor opportunities lasted long. The jealousy of the opponents and sometimes hatred of ill-wishers disturbed the calmness and security of Sheikh Mufid and eventually led to him being captured and exiled.² Despite the Buyid’s Shi‘a government, Sheikh Mufid was exiled from Baghdad twice after internal disputes between Sunnis and Shi‘ites (1002 CE / 393 AH & 1007 CE / 398 AH).³ Once he was exiled in 393 AH when there was a riot in Baghdad and Bahā al-Dawlah sent his major commander to Baghdad. He forbade the Sunnis and Shi‘ites from expressing their religious opinions and for this reason, he exiled Sheikh Mufid. Again in

their slave or children and they are not afraid of a tyrant sultan, they must do it and in the case of any harm to their own self or their religion, they are absolve from this responsibility. Shi’ite jurisprudents can be the Imam or hand it over whom they appoint in daily prayers, prayers of Eids, the prayers due to the eclipse of the sun or the moon, if they are safe from the harm of mischief-makers. They can judge in disputes and reconcile the parties in case of lack of clear evidences and uphold whatever is referred to a judge in Islam; since Imams have assigned these duties to them.” Sheikh Mufid also considered the gathering of legal alms and passing them to those who deserved them as a task of jurisprudents to supervise.

(Regarding this, refer to: *Muqni‘ah*, pp. 252, 812, 164 & 178; Cf. *Hawzah* magazine, The millennial commemoration of Sheikh Mufid, 1992 AD, issue No. 54, pp. 89 – 94).

¹ Cf. Azari Qummi, *ibid*, p. 178.

² As-sayyid Ja‘far Murtada, *Sirā‘ul Hurriyyah fī Asrel- Mufid*, p 22; Rasul Ja‘fariyan, *Tarikh Tashayyu‘ dar Iran*, vol. 1, p. 365.

³ Ibn Athir, *Al-Kamil*, vol. 9, p 126, 146, 147, below the events of two aforesaid years, cited by Ju‘il Kurmir, *‘Ehyay- e Farhangi dar Ahd-e Al- e Buye*, p 111; Cf. Jafariyan, *loc cit*.

409 AH, Sultan al-Dawlah appointed Ibn Sahlān, son of Bahā al-Dawlah as governor of Baghdad. Upon arrival in Baghdad, Sahlān exiled Sheikh Mufid.¹ And in 413 AH, he bid farewell to this world.

Sheikh Mufid died on the eve of Friday, 3rd of Ramadhan, 413 AH His student Syed Murtadha prayed the Salaat of Mayyit for him, in the presence of nearly eighty thousand people, a crowd never seen before in any funeral in Baghdad. Sheikh Tusi (d. 460 AH) describes this event in al-Fihrist: "The day of his death drew the largest crowd ever seen in any funeral, and both, friends and foes, wept uncontrollably".

Al-Mufid remained buried in his own house for two years; afterwards, his body was relocated to Kadhimain, Iraq, where it was buried near his mentor, Ja'far b. Qawlayh's grave facing the 9th Imam, Imam Muhammad Taqi al-Jawad. Today, the thousands of pilgrims who visit the holy shrines in Kadhimain continue to visit his grave.

Conclusion

Sheikh Mufid's contributions to Shi'ism continues to serve as the foundation of Shi'a doctrines ten centuries after his demise. Numerous scholars praised him as a result of his great influence on the society of his time, and scholars praise him until today. The Sheikh fulfilled the needs of the society in the fields of ethics, history, and jurisprudence and familiarized others with the principles of Imamate and leadership in Islam. Many of his publications strengthened the principles of Twelver beliefs. Additionally, he revived the principles of Islamic law with the emergence of contemporary issues. His role in promoting theology with his publications and expertise in debate offered a moderate view as opposed to the extreme positions of the Mu'tazilites

¹ Ibn Athir, *Al-Kamil fit- Tarikh*, vol. 5, p. 5, cited by Ahmad Luqmānī, Sheikh Mufid (Mualim Ommat), pp. 29, 128. Earlier in 391 AH Sunnites attacked to Karkh neighborhood by the help of anti-Shi'ite Turks of Baghdad (Cf. Ibn Athir, *Al-Kamil*, vol. 9, p. 76, cited from Hawzeh magazine (54), *ibid*, p 15).

and Ash'arites. The ruler of his time, Sultan Adud al-Dawla, gave the Sheikh the opportunity to spread this vast knowledge. With the emergence of the caliphate of Qadir and their oppressive rule, Sheikh Mufid patiently endured the hardships and adamantly led the Shi'a. As a result of his high morals and spirituality, he pleased the Ahlul Bayt with his actions and they continuously supported him throughout his endeavors.

The Stages of Development of Shi'a Jurisprudence¹

Sayyid Mahmud Hashemi et al.
Translated by Amin Rastani

ABSTRACT: The science of jurisprudence dates back to the earliest Islamic era. It deals with an array of problems confronting society based on Islamic principles, morals, and practical laws. These precepts are manifested in the Qur'an and tradition as these are the main sources in which legal rulings derive from, and these rules are firmly abided by without exercising one's own opinion. In this article, the stages of the development of jurisprudence will be clarified, along with revealing its prominent authors, major collections of narrations, and the notions that drove scholars to enhance jurisprudential progress.

What sets the school of the Ahlul Bayt apart from other schools of thought is that it considers Islamic precepts manifested in the Holy Quran as well as Sunnah to be the main sources for the origin of legal rulings. This school sees the whole of the literature and narrations issued by the Prophet Muhammad and the Imams of his household to be what constitutes the Sunnah - a tradition which all must abide by and against which none can exercise their opinion. This school also deems it necessary that the whole process of jurisprudence is aimed at

¹ This paper is the translation of an extract of the Introduction of the following: Hashemi, Sayyid Mahmud and the Board of Experts of the Comparative Islamic Jurisprudence Encyclopedia, *Comparative Islamic Jurisprudence Encyclopedia* (Mawsū'ah al-Fiqh al-Islāmī al-Muqārin), Qum: 1423 A.H. (2002), Islamic Jurisprudence Encyclopedia Institute. pp. 20-31.

understanding these precepts and narrations. There are two stages (or eras) during the course of the history of this jurisprudence: 1) The stage of the issuance of Islamic precepts (*fiqh* of narrations), and 2) The stage of jurisprudence within the framework of Islamic precepts.

The stage of the issuance of Islamic precepts

This era extended from the date of the appointment of the Noble Prophet throughout the imamate of the Imams until the beginning of the fourth century AH, during the major occultation of the twelfth Imam (aj). Within this timeframe a great amount of Islamic literature was compiled, enabling the jurists to deduce the rulings of all jurisprudential branches and issues based on the understanding of these literatures and Islamic precepts.

Most of the focus and effort of the Imams - especially from Imām Bāqir onwards - was spent on training the jurists and narrators of tradition to preserve religion and be its guardians.

The number of narrators of the Imams (beginning from Imam ‘Alī (as) [d. 40 AH] until Imām Ḥasan al-‘Askarī (as) [d. 260 AH]), that al-Sheikh al-Ṭūsī enumerates in his *rijāl* book reaches 5,436 narrators, 3217 were narrators of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as), with the remainder belonging to the rest of the Imams, including the narrators of Imām al-Mahdī (aj). The details are as follows:

- 1- Imām ‘Ālī – 442 narrators.
- 2- Imām al-Ḥasan (as) – 41 narrators.
- 3- Imām al-Ḥusayn – 109 narrators.
- 4- Imām al-Sajjād – 173 narrators.
- 5- Imām al-Baqīr – 466 narrators.
- 6- Imām al-Ṣādiq – 3217 narrators.
- 7- Imām al-Kādhim – 272 narrators.
- 8- Imām al-Ridhā – 317 narrators.

- 9- Imām al-Jawād – 113 narrators.
- 10- Imām al-Hādī – 183 narrators.
- 11- Imām al-‘Askarī – 103 narrators.
- 12- Imām al-Mahdī – 52 narrators.

Regarding the books of narrations compiled by the companions of the Imams, Seyyid Muḥsin al-Amīn [d. 1371 AH] says:

The early Shī‘a scholars who were contemporaries of the Imams from the time of the Commander of the Faithful (as) until the time of Abī Muḥammad al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī, have compiled over six thousand six hundred volumes on the narrations narrated from the Ahl al-Bayt, coming from the holy prophet, the city of knowledge...¹

All of these books have been mentioned in *rijāl* books. For example, Sheikh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī [d. 1104 AH] has recorded them in the end of his fourth note of *Wasā’il al-Shī‘a*. He in turn obtained this information from the biographies of the authors of these books, gathering what *rijāl* scholars say about each one and putting them together to yield this number.²

Some scholars have categorized these books into two groups: *uṣūl* (principles) and non-*uṣūl*. The *uṣūl* are the books in which the authors have compiled the narrations they have directly heard from an Imam, or have heard from a narrator who has narrated directly from the Imam. In other words, the narrations found in *uṣūl* books are ones that haven't been narrated from another book. Rather, only narrations heard from an Imam or from one who narrates directly from an imam have been relied on in compiling these books. On the other hand, non-*uṣūl* books are

¹ *Al-Shia fī Masārihim al-Tārīkhī*: 422.

² See: *Wasā’il al-Shīa* 30:165.

ones to which or in which their authors have narrated their content even if it is a written book they are narrating from.

The authors of collections of narrations narrated from these books (both *uṣūl* and non-*uṣūl* ones) and compiled their own collections after the Imams. These books themselves would later become the main base, establishing the second stage of the school of the Ahl al-Bayt, the stage of jurisprudential fiqh (*al-Fiqh al-Ijtihādī*), which will be covered later. The majority of these *uṣūl* and other books have been gathered in the four major collections of narrations: *al-Kāfī*, *Man lā Yahḍuruhū al-Faqīh*, *al-Tahdhīb*, and *al-Istibṣār*. These collections encompass a great deal of narrations regarding legal rulings from the prophet or one of the infallible Imams. And this is one of the advantages of the fiqh of the Ahl al-Bayt. There are 16,199 narrations in *al-Kāfī* alone, 13,590 in *al-Tahdhīb*, 5,963 in *Man lā Yahḍuruhū al-Faqīh*, and 5,511 in *al-Istibṣār*.

After this came al-Sheikh al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī in the eleventh century [d. 1104]. He gathered narrations from the four major narration collections, other books, and *uṣūl* into his encyclopedia of narrations titled “*Wasā’il al-Shī’a*”, containing a total of 35,852 narrations.

Al-Mirzā al-Nūri [d. 1320 AH] was able to collect more narrations on legal rulings from other narration sources and added them to *Wasā’il al-Shī’a* to further complete it. He named this work of his “*Mustadrak Wasā’il al-Shī’ah*”, which contained a total of around 23,000 narrations. This means that the total number of narrations in these two encyclopedias of narrations on legal rulings is close to sixty thousand, rendering them unmatched in any school of thought.

After the completion of the compilation of noble narrations and literatures on Islamic law, the graduation of many great scholars and jurists under the Imams, the high reception of the school of the Ahlul Bayt (a) by the people, as well as the spread of the Shī’a faith in every corner of Muslim countries, the later Imams began to make

preparations for the independence of *fiqh* and scholars. They began to pave the way for the gradual self-reliance of the Shi'a. This happened through the Imams ordering the people to refer to the scholars and narrators of their traditions. From then on, these individuals were called 'deputies' of the Imam (*Nuwwāb al-Imām*). The religious responsibility they would carry out was called 'general deputyship' (*al-Niyābah al-Āmmah*) and the act of following their verdicts was referred to as *Taqlīd* (emulation).

This era, the era of the issuance of Islamic precepts, where it was possible to contact an Infallible (a) and attain knowledge and narrations from him directly or indirectly through one of his special deputies, ended in the year 329 AH, marking the beginning of the second *fiqhi* stage, the jurisprudential *fiqh* period.

It is important to note that the period of issuance (*ṣudūr*) possesses advantages and legal characteristics different than those in the second stage of jurisprudence, most notably:

1- Possession of the 'supreme imamate' and 'great authority' by the Prophet and the Imams after him, as well as their presence in this period, making it obligatory upon all to obey and refer to them in all affairs and abide by what they say, as the noble verse of the Quran says:

O you who have faith! Obey God and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you. And if you dispute concerning anything, refer it to God and the Apostle, if you have faith in God and the Last Day. That is better and more favourable in outcome. (4:59)

2- The possibility of reaching the actual legal rulings of issues in this period by referring directly to them, asking about the realities, rulings, and secrets of religion.

3- The impermissibility of anyone exercising opinion against their word and judgment by anyone, because that would be an example of *ijtihād fī muqābil al-naṣṣ* (exercising jurisprudential opinion when there is legal evidence on an issue), which is forbidden and false both rationally and religiously.

4- The impermissibility of the jurists assuming any type of position, be it of judgment, issuing verdicts, governance, collecting religious alms or anything else, except by referring to the infallible first and being appointed by him.

5- When practicing jurisprudence and deduction of rulings, it is unacceptable for the scholars to initially refer to the general principles and rules - in order to reach the ruling of an issue without asking the infallible first - because of the possibility of there being restrictives (*muqayyid*) and qualifiers (*mukhaṣṣiṣ*) or an overruling precept (*ḥākīm*). This would make the ruling they deduce from these general principles unbinding because such would be an instance of relying on generality without first searching for restricting conditions (*al-tamassuk bi al-'umūm qabl al-faḥṣ 'an al-mukhaṣṣiṣ*) at a time when an Imam is present. Searching (*al-faḥṣ*) takes place only by inquiring him.

6- Jurisprudence in this era was characterized by the study, memorization, and transmission of tradition and narrations in addition to issuing verdicts based on their clear and apparent contents. Regarding complicated jurisprudential matters, the Imams were referred to, except when it was not possible, as was the case when the school of the Ahl al-Bayt gradually expanded and spread, entailing more suppression and surveillance by the rulers of the time.

This is an important characteristic of the jurisprudential process during the time of the infallibles. It makes it limited in its essence, the reason being that in that time, its sources couldn't be completed and finished. This is because there was always the possibility that the infallibles

would issue another restrictive, explanatory, or overruling precept. This would hinder the generality of the narrations the narrators had at hand, and make it impermissible for them to restrict themselves to these narrations which they had preserved or narrated in the process of jurisprudence.

This matter has also been referred to by some of the 'remedial' (*'alājī*) narrations that have obliged halting (*tawaqquf*) or precaution (*iḥtīyāt*) when faced with two contradictory narrations and putting the matter on hold until referring to the Imam (as).¹

The stage of jurisprudence within the framework of Islamic precepts

From the time it began to advance and develop until its completion and maturity, jurisprudential *fiqh* has passed many stages in the hands of the jurists of the school of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). The stages are titled as follows: 1) The Establishment Stage 2) The Developmental Stage, 3) The Period of Independence and Completion, 4) The Period of Extremes, 5) The Period of Rectification and Moderation, and 6) The Period of Completion and Maturity.

1. Establishment Stage (Early fourth century – mid-fifth century AH)

Some of the most significant jurists of this period are:

- 1) Mūhammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kuleinī [d. 329 AH]
- 2) The two Ṣadūqs (Alī b. al-Ḥusein b. Bābwayh al-Qummi [d. 381 AH])
- 3) Ja'far b. Mūḥammad b. Qūlawayh [d. 368 AH]
- 4) Mūḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Kātib (Ibn al-Junayd al-Iskāfī) [d. 381 AH]

¹ *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām* 6:303.

- 5) Mūḥammad b. Mūḥammad b. al-Nu‘mān (al-Mufīd) [d. 413 AH],
- 6) al-Sharīf al-Murtadhā [d. 436]
- 7) Abu al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ḥalabī [d. 446 AH]
- 8) Ḥamzah b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Daylamī (Sallār) [d. 463 AH]

What makes this period distinct is that the jurisprudential process therein was a recently developed one, showing itself in the distribution of the text of narrations in different *fiqhi* chapters. The process is shown as trying to draw conclusions from narrations through their own wording and text and reconciling contradictory narrations by ‘conventional conciliation’ (*al-jam‘ al-‘urfī*) or preference (*tarjīḥ*), ‘classifying as issued out of dissimulation’ (*al-ḥaml ‘alā al-taqiyyah*), etc. Other factors that contributed to such distinctness are as follows:

- The compilation of two of the most important new *fiqhi* encyclopedias i.e. *al-Kāfī* and *Man Lā Yaḥduruḥ al-Faqīḥ*;
- the presentation of verdicts (*fatāwā*) with the same wording as that found in the narrations, distributed in their respective *fiqhi* chapters and issues, as is the case with the book of *al-Sharāye*’ of Ali b. Ḥusayn b. Bābiwayh, and the books of *al-Hidāyah* and *al-Muqni‘ah* by his son, al-Sheikh al-Ṣadūq.

During this period, *fiqh* developed according to the new issues that would occur as well as new problems that would arise. And, based on the issues and divisions, other schools of thought (and their *fiqhi* literatures) had addressed, the branches of *fiqh* expanded. This in turn led to the independence of the *fiqhi* method from narrated *fiqh*, both in its compilation and presentation.

The compilation of two books in the field of ‘Principles of Jurisprudence’ (*Uṣūl al-Fiqh*), *al-Tadhkirah bi-Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (by al-Sheikh al-Mufīd) and *al-Dharī‘ah ilā Uṣūl al-Sharī‘ah* (by al-Seyyid

al-Murtadhā), marked the beginning of the formation of the science of 'Principles of Jurisprudence' (*Uṣūl al-Fiqh*) and the isolation of its rules (literary, rational, and legal) from *fiqhi* issues, making this yet another development in this period.

Another discipline that was set into motion during this period was comparative *fiqh* involving other schools of thought; the works of *Kitāb al-I'lām* (of al-Sheikh al-Mufīd) and *al-Intiṣār wa al-Nāṣiriyyāt* (of al-Seyyid al-Murtadā) are examples of books written in this discipline.

This period ends with the shining of al-Sheikh al-Ṭūsī in both the spheres of *fiqh* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*, surpassing the rest in terms of his jurisprudential competence and the rich scholarly heritage he produced. This prompted the beginning of a new stage and era in jurisprudence.

2. Developmental Stage (mid-fifth century – mid-seventh century AH)

This period begins with the final years of the life of Sheikh al-Ṭūsī [d. 460 AH] and continues until the emergence of al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī [d. 676 AH]. Some of the most prominent jurists of the period are: al-Sheikh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ṭūsī, Muḥammad b. Alī b. Abī Ḥamzah al-'Alawī [d. 570 AH], al-Qādhī 'Abd al-'Azīz b. al-Barrāj al-Ṭarāblisī [d. 481 AH], Ḥamzah b. Alī b. Zuhrah al-Ḥusaynī [d. 575 AH], Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī [d. 573] and al-Sheikh Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Ḥillī [d. 598 AH].

Some of the most important features of this period are the development of jurisprudential *fiqh* and it taking on the correct methodological form by al-Sheikh al-Ṭūsī. This was a result of him making jurisprudence systematic in the framework of legal evidences (*adillah shar'īyyah*) and expressing his methodology in his *uṣūl al-fiqh* book: '*Uddah al-Uṣūl*'. In this period, four sources of jurisprudence and *fiqhi* evidence were introduced by *uṣūl al-fiqh* books in this period: The Quran, tradition

(*sunnah*), consensus (*ijmā'*) and intellect (*'aql*). What was meant by consensus was a type of consensus that contained the actual opinion of an infallible within or the infallible's opinion could be concluded from it. This would make such a consensus revealing of tradition, while what was meant by intellect was its axiomatic and definite judgments, not conjecture (*dhann*), analogy (*qiyās*) or discretion (*istiḥsān*).

This is how the jurisprudential process was refined by certain common, yet unorthodox, methods used by other schools of thought, and also of reliance on certain intellectual and theological discussions of the time. These discussions were substituted with reliance on the original jurisprudential method, meaning the deduction of legal rulings from the true legal sources which are the Quran and traditions issued by the Prophet and the infallible Imams.

One of the distinctive characteristics of this period is the compilation of two great narration collections by al-Sheikh al-Ṭūsī: *al-Tahdhīb*, which is an argumentative commentary of the narrations found in the book *al-Muqni'ah* (of Sheikh Muḥīd), and *al-Istibṣār*, which is a book aimed at reconciling conflicting and contradictory narrations on legal issues. This led to Sheikh al-Ṭūsī becoming the one to put together all of the necessary tools needed for endeavors in jurisprudential *fiqh* both in theory and application.

This new methodology was applied in a vast and developed form in *fiqh* and all of its branches, something that clearly showed itself in the book of *al-Mabṣūṭ*. This enabled Sheikh al-Ṭūsī to establish the strength of Imamate *fiqh* and its sources on their ability to address different legal issues and branches no matter how diverse and varied they would become.

At the same time, another feature that characterized this period is the development and completion of comparative *fiqh*, represented in the book *al-Khilāf* by Sheikh al-Ṭūsī. A look at this book and comparing it

with the book *al-Intiṣār* by al-Seyyid al-Murtadhā will show the great amount of development that has been achieved in this regard.

Another feature of this period, is the attention given to Quranic studies, especially the science of 'Fiqh of the Quran'¹, embodied in the commentary (*tafsīr*) of *al-Tibyān* by al-Sheikh al-Ṭūsī and *Fiqh al-Qurān* by Rāwandī, a major development when compared to previous Quranic-*fiqhi* works.

This period ends in the mid-seventh century with the shining of yet another great figure in jurisprudence and other sciences, al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī.

3. The Period of Independence and Completion (mid-seventh century – end of tenth century)

This period begins with the emergence of al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī Najm al-Dīn Ja'far b. al-Ḥasan [d. 676 AH] and extends till the 'Second Martyr' Zayn al-Dīn b. Alī b. Aḥmad al-'Amelī [d. 966 AH]. Some of the other prominent jurists of this period are al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī al-Ḥasan b. Yūsūf b. al-Muṭahhar [d. 726 AH], his son Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan [d. 771 AH], the 'First Martyr' Muḥammad b. Makkī al-'Amelī [d. 786 AH], al-Fādhil al-Miqdād Jamāl al-Dīn al-Suyūrī [d. 826 AH], al-Muḥaqqiq b. Fahd al-Ḥillī [d. 841 AH], al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-'Amelī [d. 940 AH] and others (may God be pleased with them).

What makes this period stand out is the independence of Imamate jurisprudence from corresponding with that of other schools of thought, both in subject matter and methodology. Except in works on comparative fiqh, only Shi'a heritage was relied on.

¹The science that examines the verses on legal rulings in the Quran [trans.].

In this stage, books such as *Ma'ārij al-Uṣūl* by al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī and *Nihāyah al-Wuṣūl ilā 'Ilm al-Uṣūl* by al-‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī were written on the science of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. They were distinguished by their originality, depth, and reliance on rules and principles derived from the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt.

Also during this period, *fiqhi* thought came up with new theories in the science of *dirāyah*, resulting in a fourfold categorization of narrations (*al-ṣaḥīḥ*, *al-ḥasan*, *al-muwathaq* and *al-ḍa'if*), in addition to the compilation of new *rijāl* collections that were more precise than their predecessors, such works as the *rijāl* books of ‘Allāmah [726 AH] and Ibn Dāwūd [d. 747 AH].

Another feature of this period is the classification of legal issues based on a logical division and confinement into the four groups of worship (*Ibādāt*), bilateral contracts (*mu'āmalāt*), unilateral contracts (*Īqā'āt*), and judgments (*aḥkām*).

The compilation of ‘*fiqhi* principles’ (*al-qawā'id al-fiqhiyyah*) and its isolation from legal issues and branches were another thing that took place in this period; the ‘First Martyr’ (Shahīd I) authored the book *al-Qawā'id wa al-Fawā'id*, and after him, al-Fāḍil al-Miqdād al-Suyūrī wrote *Nadd al-Qawā'id al-Fiqhīyah* and the ‘Second Martyr’ (Shahīd al-Thani) penned *Fawā'id al-Qawā'id*.

One other feature that sets this period apart is the expansion and precision employed in the application of *uṣūli* and *fiqhi* principles (*qawā'id uṣūliyyah wa fiqhiyyah*) to legal issues, most notably in the *fiqh* of binary contracts. This can be observed by comparing the jurisprudential argumentative works of al-‘Allāmah, his son, the two Martyrs, al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī and other great figures of this period with those of al-Mufīd, al-Murtaḍā, and al-Sheikh al-Ṭūsī.

In this stage, the method of comparative jurisprudential studies was continued in a broader and more accurate fashion, with 'Allāmah compiling the book *Mukhtalaf al-Shī'ah fī Aḥkām al-Sharī'ah* on the comparison of Shī'ah jurists and the books of *Taḍkirah al-Fuqahā'* and *Muntahā al-Maṭlab* with the theme of comparing different jurisprudential schools of thought.

During this period, the Imamate jurists took on the formulation and legislation of the *fiqhi* laws of government and Islamic rule according to the school of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). They also took on the role of 'general deputyship' of Imam Mahdī during his occultation either through attending to the different responsibilities of being Islamic legal authorities (*marja'iyah*) or through their supervision of the government and its divisions, as was the case for al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī during the time of the Safavid dynasty.

4. The Period of Extremes (end of tenth century – end of twelfth century)

This stage begins with the era of al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ardibīlī (rah) [d. 993 AH] and continues until the end of the rise of *Akḥbārism*, closing towards the end of the twelfth century.

The reason this period has been titled 'The Period of Extremes', is because it is therein that two opposing jurisprudential currents emerged, each rejecting the other. On the one hand, there was the rationalist idea that was severely against only referring to narrations [in jurisprudential argumentation], while on the other hand, there was the *akḥbārī* notion that was totally against utilization of reason and the surface meanings of verses pertaining to legal rulings. Al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ardibīlī and some of his students, such as al-Seyyid Muḥammad b. Alī al-'Āmeli, author of *Madārik al-Aḥkām* [d. 1009 AH] and al-Sheikh Ḥasan b. Zayn al-Dīn, author of *Ma'ālim al-Dīn* [d. 1011], were the

pioneers of the jurisprudential current, the most notable features of which are as follows:

- a) Consideration of the science of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* and the employment of rational and philosophical reasoning for proving some of its issues.
- b) Narrowing the scope of the authority (*ḥujjīyah*) of ‘single source narrations’ (*khabar al-wāḥid*).
- c) Doubt in the true value of many of the consensuses of the early jurists’ views that were famous or widely accepted without question, and the rational and methodological critique of these views.
- d) Utilization of rational and philosophical principles in jurisprudential arguments.
- e) More dependence on absolute (*muṭlaq*) and unconditional (*‘umūm*) precepts asserted in legal Qur’anic verses and definite tradition [i.e., tradition that has definitely been issued by the infallibles], and the derivation of legal verdicts (*fatāwā*) based on them and the refutation of any narrations that might restrict or qualify them as a result of strictness implemented in the *rijālī* authentication of their chains of narrators.

As for the latter jurisprudential current (the *akhbārī* notion) opposite to the first, it was represented by a group of scholars, some of which were: al-Amīn al-Astarābādī [d. 1033 AH], who is considered the peak of this pole of extremism, al-Muḥaddith al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī [d. 1091 AH], al-Muḥaddith al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī [d. 1104 AH] and al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī [d. 1111 AH].

The most important features of the *akhbārī* current are as follows:

- a) The unreliability of rational and philosophical reasoning in jurisprudence and derivation of legal rulings, as in the case of

exercising personal opinion (*al-ijtihād bi al-ra'y*). Their employment was considered erroneous in the *fiqh* of the Ahl al-Bayt.

b) More utilization of narrations recorded in narration collections and deeming all of them as definite (*qaṭ'īyyah*) and authentic. This freed the scholar of unneeded *rijālī* and *uṣūl al-fiqh* discussions pertaining to the authority of narrations (*ḥujīyat al-akhbār*).

As a result of this importance given to narrations, some of these jurists embarked on the collection of narrations recorded by early scholars, compiling them into dense narration collections: *al-Wāfī* (by Fayḍ Kāshānī), *Wasā'il al-Shī'a ila Taḥsīl Masā'il al-Sharī'ah* (al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī) and *Bihār al-Anwār li Durar Akhbār al-'Immah al-At'hār* (al-'Allamah al-Majlisī).

c) Denial of the authority of consensus (*ijmā'*) and counting it as one of the sources of legislation in the *fiqh* of other schools of thought.

d) The invalidation of *ijtihād* and *taqlid* (emulation/following the legal verdicts of a jurist) and making it obligatory to directly refer to the narrations of the infallibles [to learn of one's religious duties]. This was a stance belonging to the most radical of them, from which some of their scholars turned away, such as al-Muḥaddith al-Baḥrānī, author of *al-Ḥadā'iq al-Nādirah* [d. 1186 AH] and al-Sheikh Ḥusayn Āl 'Usfūr [d. 1216 AH].

This stage of 'extremism', in both of its poles, only constituted a very short period of the lifetime of the Imamate *fiqhi* school of thought; an exceptional state that befell this school and whose dark clouds and ignorance soon scattered and ceased. Both of these extremes vanished and disappeared; the Imamate jurisprudential *fiqh* returned to its genuine approach and original methods.

5. The Period of Rectification and Moderation (end of twelfth century – first half of thirteenth century)

This period begins with the efforts of a group of jurists to confront the *akhbāri* movement, most notably: al-Seyyid Ḥusayn b. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Khānsārī al-Kabīr [d. 1098 AH], al-Sheikh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shīrwānī [d. 1098 AH], his son Jamāl al-Dīn [d. 1125 AH], and his son's student Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Raḍawī al-Qummī [d. 1160 AH]. These individuals set the stage for the establishment of the comprehensive *uṣūl al-fiqh* school by the great jurist, al-Seyyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Waḥīd al-Behbahānī [d. 1205 AH]. This school was able to put an end to the *akhbāri* jurisprudential current and put Imamate jurisprudential *fiqh* back on its sound *uṣūl al-fiqh* course.

Thus, on the one hand, al-Waḥīd al-Behbahānī was able to defend the views of the majority of the early Imamate jurists against the severe criticism that al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ardebīlī posed regarding some of their judicial verdicts. He also showed how a portion of al-Ardebili's critique was incorrect and unacceptable from a scholarly point of view.

He was also able to resolve the problem of authentication of narrators (*rāwī*) and chains of transmitters (*sanad*) in his *rijāl* book of *Manhaj al-Maqāl*.

At the same time, he firmly resolved to confront the *akhbāri* movement and all the arguments supporting it using Imamate *uṣūl al-fiqh*.

One thing that he succeeded in clarifying was the difference between *uṣūl al-fiqh* according to the Shia perspective and *uṣūl al-fiqh* according to the perspective of other schools of thought. He was also able to show the need for such a science and that without it, jurisprudence would be infeasible.

As a result of the open and continuous scholarly debates of al-Waḥīd al-Behbahānī and al-Muḥaddith al-Baḥranī (an *akhbāri*), the presence of these two great figures in Karbalā' and the Islamic seminary therein factored greatly into this awakening and its momentum. Their piety also played a major role in the disclosure of knowledge and realities to their students. Eventually, this led to al-Muḥaddith al-Baḥranī's inclination towards moderation and the acceptance of jurisprudential *fiqh* and consensus (*ijmā'*) – when it is revealing of tradition (which is what Imamate *fiqh* means by the term 'consensus') – and caused him to withdraw from some of the stances the first generation of *akhbārīs* had gone to extremes in.

A series of great jurists and scholars graduated from the school of al-Waḥīd al-Behbahānī such as al-Seyyid Muḥammad Mahdī Baḥr al-'Ulūm [d. 1212 AH], al-Sheikh Ja'far Kāshif al-Ghiṭā' [d. 1228 AH], al-Seyyid Muḥammad al-Mujāhid [d. 1242 AH], al-Muḥaqqiq Muḥammad Mahdī al-Narāqī [d. 1209 AH] and his son Aḥmad [d. 1244 AH]. In turn, more great jurists graduated from under these students, such as al-Sheikh Ḥasan b. Abd al-Raḥīm al-Ṭehrānī author of *al-Fuṣūl al-Gharawiyah* [d. 1250 AH], al-Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Isfahānī author of *Hidayat al-Mustarshidīn fī Sharḥ Ma'ālim al-Dīn* [d. 1248 AH] and al-Sheikh Ḥasan al-Najafī author of *Jawahir al-Kalām fī Sharḥ Sharāye' al-Islām* [d. 1266 AH].

6. The Period of Completion and Maturity (mid-thirteenth century – present)

In reality, this period is seen as a continuation and extension of the previous period, the base of which was further consolidated by al-Waḥīd al-Behbahānī's school and his prominent students.

This stage went on to reach the pinnacle of maturity, depth and comprehensiveness through two generations of jurists of this school, especially one of the most outstanding of them, al-Sheikh Murtaḍā al-

Anṣārī (rah) [d. 1281 AH]. The progress made at this stage was to the extent that this period can be considered a new era in the history of *fiqh* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*. This matter becomes especially manifest when one compares the books of *al-Makāsib fi Fiqh al-Mu‘āmalāt* and *Farā'id al-Uṣūl* by al-Sheikh al-Anṣārī with other works of the same themes by previous jurists from the same school; there is a great difference between them in content, methodology, and argumentation technique.

Many great jurists have graduated under al-Sheikh al-Anṣārī, most notably: al-Muḥaqqiq al-Shīrazī al-Kabīr [d. 1312 AH], al-Sheikh Ḥabibullah al-Raṣṭī [d. 1312 AH], al-Sheikh Mullā ‘Alī al-Kanī [d. 1306 AH] and al-Sheikh Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Āshtiyānī [d. 1319 AH].

In turn, generations of jurists and jurisprudents graduated under these jurists, such as: al-Muḥaqqiq al-Khurāsānī author of *Kifāyat al-Uṣūl* [d. 1319 AH], al-Muḥaqqiq al-Hamedānī [d. 1322 AH], al-Seyyid al-Fishārakī [d. 1314 AH] and al-Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī al-Shīrāzī [d. 1338 AH], all of which were also followed by a series of eminent jurists extending to the present.

Conclusion

The school of Ahlul Bayt considers the Qur'an and Sunnah as the main sources for the origin of legal rulings. Everyone is expected to abide by the traditions of the holy Prophet Muhammad and the Imams of his household. The purpose of the process of jurisprudence is to understand these principles and narrations. In the first stage of the issuance of Islamic principles, jurists deduced the rulings of all jurisprudential issues based on the understanding of the literature. This era extended from the time of the appointment of the Prophet until the beginning of the fourth century AH in which the later Imams prepared for the independence of *fiqh*, where people were ordered to refer to the deputies of the Imam, and follow their verdicts (*taqlid*). In this period, jurisprudence was characterized by the study, memorization, and

transmission of hadiths as well as issuing verdicts; the Prophet and Imams were present, making it obligatory upon all to obey and refer to them, as well as enabling people to reach actual legal rulings of issues; exercising opinion against their word was impermissible; jurists claiming any type of position was impermissible; and scholars initially referring to general principles and rules was unacceptable.

Since the task did not reach its completion, the new era of establishing jurisprudence within the framework of Islamic principles emerged, and this stage is divided into six sub-stages. Within these stages, the majority of these principles were gathered in four major collections of narrations: *al-Kāfī*, *Man lā Yahḍuruhū al-Faqīh*, *al-Tahdhīb*, and *al-Istibṣār*.

Exemplary Women: Lady Umm Salamah

Fahimeh Fahiminejad
Translated by Zainab Mohammed

ABSTRACT: Lady Umm Salamah was the highest-ranking wife of the Prophet after Lady Khadijah. Her two migrations – one to Medina and the other to Abyssinia (*Habasha*) – alongside her presence in many wars and her defence of the household of the Prophet resulted in her elevated status. She was so trustworthy that at the time of leaving Mecca to go to Iraq, Imam Husayn left behind some deposits with her which were to be handed to Imam Sajjad (a). Furthermore, 378 narrations have been reported from her through the Sunni sect, the most important being the Hadith of the Cloak (*hadith al-kisā'*). This paper offers a biography of Umm Salamah along with the attributes that distinguish her from the rest of the Prophet's wives, namely her role in Fatima al-Zahra's upbringing, her political activism, her accounts of the Prophet's narrations, and her unwavering defence of Imam Ali's personality and leadership.

Introduction

In the Era of Ignorance, a female was considered as an immature existence who was forced to live on the sidelines of social life. The protection of a woman was very difficult for clans and tribes who were busy migrating and/or in war. Women were not fighters and needed extra protection because being captured by the enemy would result in shame and humiliation for the tribe as she would be made into a servant for the enemy, and if she were saved she would be subjected to much

humiliation from her own tribe. Some women, however, were recognised and appreciated because of certain attributes they possessed. For example, female singers who would be recognised within tribes, but many a time these songs would result in tragic outcomes like war or inciting tribesmen to attack and participate in hostilities. Nevertheless, the Prophet Muhammad's arrival created a new identity for women. This meant that women were able to enjoy a special status in society, some of whom were the wives of the Prophet. In this work, a brief description of the status of the wives of the Prophet in the Islamic society has been offered with an elaborated account of Umm Salama, known to be the most prominent wife after Lady Khadija, and the significant role she played in Islamic history.

The status of the wives of the Prophet in the Islamic society

In verses 30 and 32 of chapter Ahzab (33) in the holy Qur'an, in which the wives of the Prophet have been honoured by being addressed as "O the wives of the prophet!", there are several reasons for their distinction:

'Mother of the Believers': The greatest attribute of the wives of the Prophet is demonstrated as 'Mother of the believers' and according to the verse 'and his wives are your (pl) mothers'. They have truly been honoured by this title. Additionally, it was prohibited for them to marry any other man:

وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَنْ تُنكِحُوا أَرْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا

You may not torment the Apostle of God, nor may you ever marry his wives after him. Indeed that would be a grave [matter] with God. (33:53)

Here, it is clearly specified that they are not allowed to re-marry after the Prophet; however, in rulings about modest dressing (*hijab*), and other similar rules, they have the same obligations as other women.

Role models in society: The Qur'an indicates that the wives of the Prophet are expected to be exemplars for the public:

يُسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ مَنْ يَأْتِ مِنْكُمْ بِفَحْشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ يُضْعَفُ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ لِحُكْمِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا نُؤْتِهَا أَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا كَرِيمًا يُسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنْ أَتَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا

O Ye wives of the Prophet! Whosoever of you shall commit a manifest indecency, doubled for her would be the punishment twice over; and with God that is easy. And whosoever of you shall be obedient unto God and His apostle and shall work righteously, her hire we shall give her twice over, and we have gotten ready for her a generous provision. Wives of the prophet! ye are not like any other of women. (33:30-32)

From these holy verses it can be understood that, however high the rank and status of a wife of a Prophet is, her punishment in the case of committing a sin will be bigger and harder, and in the case for obedience her reward will be doubled. As for her doubled reward, one reward is for her obedience to God and the other for the positive impact that it has on others.

Divine revelation proclaimed in their homes: Another excellence the wives of the Prophet hold over all other women is the fact that the divine revelation took place in the house where they lived. The verse above continues by saying:

وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَىٰ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا

And remember what is recited in your homes of the signs of God and wisdom. Indeed God is All-attentive, All-aware. (33:34)

Narrators of hadith: Some of the wives of the prophet were also his companions and they played an important role in relating a number of hadith. For example, Lady Umm Salamah narrated 378 hadith, among them the revelation of the Verse of Purification, the narrative of The Blanket, and the narrative of The Two Weighty Things. Twenty-four people from amongst the companions have related this narrative, Umm Salamah being one of them.¹

It is worth mentioning that even though the wives of the Prophet were among prominent members of their community, the Verse of Purification excludes them from the Ahlul Bayt.

Verse 33 of chapter Ahzab has been named the Verse of Purification due to the last phrase:

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

And stay quietly in your houses, and make not a dazzling display, like that of the former Times of Ignorance; and establish regular Prayer, and give regular Charity; and obey God and His Messenger. And God only wishes to remove all abomination from you, ye members of the Family, and to make you pure and spotless. (33:33)

¹ Hindi, 1381, p. 481-2

In fact, the verse contains two distinct addressees: 1. The wives of the Prophet, and 2. The family of the Prophet (the Ahlul Bayt). There are three opinions about who is counted among the Ahlul Bayt:

- a) Those who because of their relation to the prophet are prohibited from accepting offerings and alms, such as the families of Ali and Aqeel;¹
- b) The wives of the Prophet;
- c) Ali ibn Abi Taleb, Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn.

According to a consensus of the Shi'a scholars and the majority of Sunni scholars, the third opinion is deemed to be correct. The second opinion is rejected for the following reasons:

Early on in the verse, the wives of the Prophet are reprimanded while later in the verse we see that God glorifies and purifies the Ahlul Bayt in such a manner that if both parts were addressing the same group of people, the verse would be discordant. This is because from an intellectual point of view, glorification and reprimand are incompatible.

1. Umm Salamah narrates that this verse was revealed in her house at time a when only the Prophet, Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn were present. As will be discussed later in this paper, the Ahlul Bayt does not even include Umm Salamah even though she was present in the house at the time of revelation.²
2. If the Verse of Purification referred to the wives of the Prophet, the pronouns would have been in the feminine form just as they are in the beginning of the verse. If the latter part of the verse referred to the wives of the Prophet it would read:

¹ Aqeel was the second of four sons of Abu Talib, and brother of Ali ibn Abu Talib. Abu Talib was the uncle and protector of the Prophet Muhammad.

² Feiz Kashani, 1356, vol. 2, p. 351-352

لِيَذْهَبَ عَنْكَ وَيُطَهَّرَكَ

Instead, we see that the masculine form has been used:

لِيَذْهَبَ عَنْكُمْ وَيُطَهَّرَكُمْ

Wives of the Prophet

The number of the Prophet's wives is disputed. According to some, collectively they were 11; Khadijah, Umm Salamah, Hind, Umm Habibah Ramlah, Joweyra, Hafsa, Sawdah, Ayishah, Meymunah, Zainab daughter of Jaysh, and Zainab Halaliyah. Of the 11, nine were alive at the time of the Prophet's death, and Khadijah and Zainab Halaliyah had already passed away.

The reasons behind the plurality of the wives of the Prophet

The following are possible reasons for the plurality of the wives:

1. All of the Prophet's speech and traits were in line with the will of God. There is a narrative from the Prophet in which he confirms this opinion: "I have not married a single woman, nor given my daughter's hand in marriage to anyone except after having received a heavenly revelation which Gabriel had brought down to me from my glorious Lord."¹
2. Some women wanted to marry the Prophet in order to gain honour for themselves or their families. According to the belief of commentators and jurists, the first part of verse 33:33 refers to four of the wives - Umm Shareek, Khule daughter of Hakeem, Zainab daughter of Khazeemah, and Maymunah daughter of Hareth - who gifted themselves to the Prophet (that is, they became wives of the Prophet without demanding dowry).

¹ Madras Tabrizi, 1374, vol. 8, pg 448

3. These marriages could have been in order to create harmony and friendship through the union of marriage between tribes in order to prevent tribal wars or to remove obstacles of conversion to Islam. Thus, the aim of these marriages was never of a sexual nature, because history is a witness that the majority of these women were widows and not young at the time of their union with the Prophet. It is noteworthy to mention that the actual reason behind some of the marriages may be beyond our intellect.

The superiority of Umm Salamah after Lady Khadija

Hind (Umm Salamah), the daughter of Abi Umayyah Hazfiyah, was the most superior wife of the Prophet after Khadija, and from among all the wives, she was the last one to pass away and reach the mercy of her Lord.¹

Date of Birth and Death

Hind, the daughter of Soheil - also known as Abu Umayyeh - was born in the year 28 BH, which coincides with the year 596 CE² The date of her death is a matter of dispute. Records vary from the year 59 to the year 64 AH; it seems that the latter date is more accurate because she was still alive after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn. As for her age, it has been reported by her son that she lived until she was 84 years old. Her grave lies in the Baqi', a cemetery where many of the Prophet's relatives and companions are also buried, located outside the Prophet's mosque in Medina.³

¹ Madras Tabrizi, 1374, vol. 8, p. 307-308

² Zar Kuli, 1986, vol. 8, p. 97

³ Bujnordy, 1381, vol. 10, p. 219

Lineage and Name

Hind was the daughter of Abi Umayyah Abi Mughayrah ibn Abdullah ibn Umar ibn Makhzune ibn Qurashi. Her father, Abu Umayyah, was among the most generous from amongst the Arabs and hence his title Zaad-e-Rakeb.¹ Her mother was Atika, daughter of Aamir son of Rabi'e Kanani, although others say she was Atika daughter of Abdul Muttalib.² From her first husband, Hind had four children: Salamah (hence her title Umm Salamah – mother of Salamah), Umar, Dore, and Zainab from her first husband hence she has been called by the title Umm Salamah, meaning mother of Salamah.³

Biography

Umm Salamah is known as one of the superior and distinctive companions of the Prophet, in addition to being his wife. It has been mentioned with indications in certain narrations that she was the most worthy wife of the Prophet after Hazrat Khadijah. Before marrying the Prophet, she was the wife of Abu Salamah, the son of Abdulasad Makhzuni, with whom she had migrated to Habashe. All the narratives concerning the Quraishi messengers to Abyssinia and their discussions with Ja'far ibn Abu Taleb in the presence of King Najashi, have been related by Umm Salamah. She then returned to Mecca with her husband and thereafter migrated to Medina as the first woman from the Quraish tribe to do so. Her husband's family did not agree with his migration and so she migrated alone, with her husband and children left behind. For a year Umm Salamah stayed in a place called Abtah and wept.

In the year 4 AH Abu Salamah died as a result of the wounds he had received in the battle of Ohud, after which the Prophet married Umm

¹ Zar Kuli, 1986, vol. 8, p. 97

² Majlisi, 1403. vol. 22, p. 203

³ Madras Tabrizi, 1374, vol. 8, p. 307

Salamah. It has been reported that after the passing of Eddah (a period of time after a woman's marriage has ended during which she is not allowed to marry) both Abu Bakr and Umar proposed to her, but she refused all proposals until the Prophet proposed to her. She addressed the Prophet saying, "Someone like me is not suitable to marry you; I am quite old and cannot bear any more children. I am a jealous woman and have four children."¹ The Prophet replied to her saying, "As for your age, I am older than you. As for your jealousy, God will remove that. And as for your children, they are the responsibility of God and his Messenger"; thus, she accepted the proposal.²

Umm Salamah's special attributes from among the wives of the Prophet

Some of the characteristics that are exclusive to Umm Salamah as a wife of the Prophet are as follows:

Migrant to Abyssinia

As mentioned earlier by the command of the Prophet, Umm Salamah migrated twice-once to Abyssinia and once to Medina. She also participated in multiple battles such as Mesri' (6 AH), Khaybar (7 AH) Hodaybiyah, Khandaq (5 AH) the conquest of Mecca (8 AH) and Hunayn (8 AH). She would also salute the martyrs of the Battle of Uhud every time she visited the battlefield.

Narrator of hadith from the Prophet

She had related many narrations from the Messenger which have also been recorded in Sunni books. *Masnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal contains 378 of her narrations.³ The following are some of her most important narrations:

¹ Jealousy here is used as a translation for the Arabic term 'ghirah' which here means not to want her husband to be married to someone else.

² Zar Kuli, 1986, vol. 8, p. 97

³ Zar Kuli, 1986, vol. 8, p. 97 / Madras Tabrizi, 1384, vol. 8, p. 307

Participation in event of revelation of the Verse of Purification and the Hadith of the Cloak (Hadith al-Kisā)

Commentators of the Qur'an such as Tabarsi and Tha'labi have narrated from the *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal that Umm Salamah narrates: "One day Lady Fatima having cooked some food brought it to my house for the Prophet. The Prophet said, 'O the light of my eyes, call Ali and your sons so that we may eat this food together.' When all had gathered and they had eaten from that food, Angel Jibra'eel descended and revealed the following verse:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

Indeed God desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification.

Upon hearing the verse, the Prophet laid out a cloak over them and said:

اللهم هؤلاء اهل بيتي و خاصتي اللهم فاذهب عنهم الرجس و طهرهم تطهيرا

Oh God, these are the people of my household. They are my confidants and my supporters. Oh God, remove impurity from them and keep them thoroughly pure.

Umm Salamah relates, "As I heard this prayer from the Prophet, I said: 'O Messenger of God! Am I also with you?' To which he replied: 'You do not have the level of my Ahlul Bayt, but you are a lady of noble traits.'"¹ It has also been related from Imam Baqir that this verse was

¹ Bahrani, 1393, vol. 3, p. 321-351

revealed regarding the Prophet, Ali ibn Abi Taleb, Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn in the house of Umm Salamah, the wife of the Prophet.¹

Responsibility for Lady Fatima's upbringing

Umm Salamah said, "When the Messenger of God married me, he left it upon me to take care of his daughter, and so I engrossed myself with her upbringing. I swear by God that she had better conduct than I, and she displayed more knowledge than I in all affairs."²

Defending Lady Fatima's right to the land of Fadak

Fadak is a land situated outside Medina. In those days it would take two days to cover the distance between Fadak and Medina, and between Fadak and Khaybar there is approximately the distance of a day's journey. It was something that God gave the Prophet as war booty.³

The Prophet victoriously conquered Fadak, and after having done so, he returned to Medina, and upon his visit with Lady Fatima, he said, "My dear daughter! God has bestowed Fadak to your father's property and has made it special for him. So Fadak is your fathers' property, and the people have no right to it; I may do as I wish with it. My daughter! For Khadijah there was a dowry upon your father and I your father grant Fadak to you in replacement of your mother's dowry, so that during your life it will be yours and after you it will be for your children." Then the Prophet called Imam Ali and told him to bring a piece of animal skin. He then ordered him by saying, "Write that I have granted Fadak to Fatima." And to this Imam Ali, the Prophet's servant, and Umm Aieman bore witness.

¹ Feiz Kashani, 1356, vol. 2, p. 351-352

² Majlisi, 1403, vol. 43, p. 10

³ Farahidi, 1414, vol. 3, p. 1379

When the Prophet passed away and Abu Bakr seized the caliphate, the latter sent someone to Fadak in order to remove Lady Fatima's lawyer from there.¹

In defence of her right, Lady Fatima gave a sermon in the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina in the presence of Abu Bakr and others. When Umm Salamah heard Abu Bakr's words regarding Lady Fatima, she said:

Should such words be uttered in regard to Fatima al-Zahra, daughter of the Messenger of God who by God is a *hourī* [heavenly woman] from amongst the humans? She is the best and most distinguished of all women and the mother of the youth of paradise, and she is the parallel to Maryam. It was through her father that prophethood was sealed...Be calm! The Prophet sees you and on day you will stand before God. Woe unto you! It is only then that you will see the result of your actions.

It was then decided that her yearly rations would be cut for that year – a price she paid for having defended the Prophet's daughter, and speaking the truth, her yearly rations would be cut from that year.²

Advising Othman ibn Affan

At the time of Othman's caliphate, Umm Salamah offered him plenty of advice, and at the end of her words she would say, "This was your motherly right which I have carried out for you. Now it is left for you to obey."³

Guidance to Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari

¹ Kazvini, 1404, p. 320

² Bujnordy, narrating from Ibn Rostam, 1381, vol. 10, p. 219 / Kazvini, 1404, p. 488-489

³ Madras Tabrizi, 1374, vol. 8, p. 308

When Muawiya failed to attract some of the people towards him through corruption, he began to threaten them. Jabir, being one of the victims of this approach, sought guidance from Umm Salamah saying, “Surely I have fear that I will be killed, but paying allegiance in such a situation is surely a path to misguidance. What should I do?” Umm Salamah replied by saying, “Whenever such a situation arises, pay allegiance, because dissimulation (*taqiyya*)¹ forced the People of the Cave (*As-hab al-Kahf*) to wear the cross around their necks and attend the pagan festivals of the Romans with their families.”

The author of *A‘ayān al-Shi‘a* believes that she was a jurist who understood the complicated religious rulings, and this was why Jabir would refer to her.²

Defending Imam Ali’s leadership

The following are some of the many indications that prove her advocacy of Imam Ali after the death of the Prophet, some of which we will point out here:

Defending Imam Ali concerning the Battle of Jamal: Imam Ali succeeded Othman after his death in the leadership of the Islamic nation, and thereafter Talha and Zubayr took Imam Ali’s permission to leave the city under the pretext of seeking to perform Umra. Upon reaching Mecca, they joined forces with Ayesha and encouraged her to wage war against Imam Ali. Ayesha then approached Umm Salamah, “My cousin and brother-in-law have informed me that Othman was killed innocently, and that the majority of the people did not agree to paying allegiance to Ali. A group of people have instigated opposition in Basra. If you join us maybe God will amend the matters of Mohammed’s nation through our hands.” Umm Salamah said to her,

¹ A practice emphasized in Shi‘a Islam whereby one conceals or disguises one’s beliefs, convictions, ideas, feelings, opinions, and/or strategies at a time of eminent danger, whether now or later time, to save oneself from physical and/or mental injury.

² Ya’qubi, 2536, vol. 2 p. 105 / Amin, 1403, vol. 10, p. 372

“The pillars of religion will not be erected by us women. That which is praiseworthy in women is that they lower their gaze, hide the shape of their body, and hold their skirts. Surely God has removed this duty from our shoulders.”¹ Umm Salamah then continued to warn about her decision in standing against Imam Ali, but Ayesha did not pay attention to her. When Umm Salamah lost hope in convincing Ayesha, she informed Imam Ali about the plans of the people of Jamal and dispatched her son Umar to be at Imam Ali’s service. Afterward, Imam Ali made this son the governor of Bahrain, and Fars, and according to some he was also made the governor of Halwan, Mah, and Masbandan (some areas in current western provinces of Iran).

Attesting to the qualities and attributes of Imam Ali: Mohammed ibn Hashub has said, “One day I was sitting in the presence of Umm Salamah, when suddenly a man entered and greeted her. He was asked, “Who are you?” to which he replied, “I am Abu Thabet, the servant of Abathar.” Umm Salma said, “You are most welcome. Please come and sit down.” As he was sitting down Umm Salamah said to him, “O Abu Thabet! On that day in which the hearts flew to different places, where did your heart fly to?” Abu Thabet said, “My heart flew towards Ali. Umm Salamah said, “May you be successful. I swear by God that I heard the Prophet saying, “Ali is with the Quran, and the Quran is with Ali.” They will not separate until they come before me near the Fountain of Kawthar. And so I sent my son Umar, and my nephew Abdullah bin Abi Umayyah to fight alongside Ali, and if it were not that the Prophet denied us from leaving the house, surely I would have left Medina in order to take part in the army of Ali.”²

Preventing Imam Ali from being cursed: It has been related from Imam Sadiq that Umm Salamah had a servant who disparaged Imam Ali. When she heard of this, she immediately called her and said to her, “O

¹ Ya’qubi, 2536, vol. 2, p. 78

² Majlisi, 1403, vol. 22, p. 221 / Amin, 1403, vol. 10, p. 727

my child! I hear that you have been using abusive language in relation to Ali?" The servant confessed. Umm Salamah having heard his reply asked him to sit down and listen to a narrative she heard from the Prophet: "We were nine women in the house of the Prophet, and the Prophet had allocated one night and day for each one of us. When it was my turn, the Prophet came to the door of the house and in one of his hands was Ali's hand and with his other hand he was leaning on Ali's shoulder. He said to me, "Please distance yourself from the room and let us be at peace." I went outside and asked for permission to enter a few times, but was refused. After the third time that I asked I was granted permission to enter, I saw Ali sitting in front of the Prophet. He was saying; "May my mother and father be sacrificed for you! If such and such were to happen what would you command me to do?" The Prophet replied, "I command you to be patient." Then Ali repeated his question and was given the say reply, when he asked for a third time the Prophet said, "If such were to happen unsheathe your sword and fight so that when you meet me in that world, blood would trickle from your sword." Then the Prophet turned to me and said; "O Umm Salamah, listen and bear witness that he Ali is my brother in this world and in the hereafter. O Umm Salamah, listen and bear witness that he Ali ibn Abi Taleb, is my minister in this world and in the Hereafter. O Umm Salamah, listen and bear witness that he, Ali ibn Abi Taleb, is my flag bearer in this world and will be tomorrow on the Day of Judgment. O Umm Salamah, listen and bear witness that he, Ali ibn Abi Taleb, is my successor and executor after me. He is the bearer of my religion and the preventer of my enemies from my fountain. O Umm Salamah, listen and bear witness that he Ali ibn Abi Taleb is the commander of the Muslims, the Leader of the Pious (قائد الغر المحجلين) and the killer of Nakeseen, Qaseteen and Mareqeen. I said, "O messenger of God! Who are the Nakeseen?" He replied saying, "Those who will pay allegiance to him in Medina and will break their allegiance in Basra. I then asked, "Who are the Qaseteen?" He said, "Muawiya and his helpers, the

people of Damascus. “Who are the Mareqeen?” I asked. The Prophet said, “The people of Nahravan....” When Umm Salamah reached this point, the servant said, “You have saved me; may God save you. I swear by God I will no longer speak abusively about Ali.”¹

It has been narrated that someone went to Umm Salamah, and she asked them, “Do any of you curse the Prophet?” they replied: “I take refuge in God!” Umm Salamah said, “I heard the Prophet saying, “Whosoever curses Ali has cursed me.” Furthermore, when Umm Salamah heard that Imam Ali had been cursed from the pulpit, she wrote a letter to Muawiya in which she reprimanded him severely.²

The Prophet’s narrative about the incident of Karbala

Umm Salamah, the Prophet’s wife, was the first person to weep in Medina, as a response to the killing of Imam Husayn. During his lifetime, the Prophet had given Umm Salamah a glass bottle that contained white-coloured sand, and he had said to her, “Jibra’eel has told me that my nation will kill Husayn. Whenever this soil turns into blood, know that Husayn has been killed.” She had kept the soil with herself and when the time came, she would check on it every hour. When she saw that it has turned to blood she cried out, “Oh Husayn! Oh the son of the Messenger of God!” and it was then that the women began to weep and the sound of distress filled the city of Medina like never before.³

In some records it has been written that when Imam Husayn decided to travel towards Karbala, he entrusted the reserves of Prophethood and

¹ Majlisi, 1403, vol. 21, p. 222

² Amin, 1403, vol. 10, p. 272

³ Ya’qubi, 2536, vol. ol. 2, p. 182-183 / Majlisi, 1403, vol. 45, p. 228, 230, and 23

the deposits of Imamate to Umm Salamah, so that after the event of Karbala, they be handed over to Imam Sajjad, and she did so.¹

Conclusion

Lady Umm Salamah was an exceptional wife of the Prophet after Lady Khadijah in her faith and morals as seen in her private and public life. As a Shi'a Muslim woman, Umm Salamah carried out and completed all of her duties. Before her marriage with the Prophet, she participated in major Islamic historical events, such as in numerous wars and during two the notable migrations - to Medina and Abyssinia - during which she migrated twice by the command of the Prophet. During her marriage with the Prophet, she strived to keep the Prophet happy and held high respect for him. And after the death of the holy Prophet, she was the supporter of the Ahlul Bayt through her speech and actions, firmly protecting their sanctity and recounting their knowledge and wisdom. With her unshakeable faith and actions, it is with no doubt that the Ahlul Bayt deeply revered her.

¹ Kulayni, 1388, v 1, p. 304 / Majlisi, 1403, vol. 47, p. 18, 19, and 48

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Imamate and Wilayah¹

Part III

Mohammad Ali Shomali²

ABSTRACT: In the previous parts of this series, the importance of Imamate in Shi'i Islam was discussed. In doing so, narrations of the Prophet regarding the necessity of simultaneously holding on to the Qur'an and the Ahlul Bayt (a) were presented. Using mainly Sunni sources, both the meaning and authority of Ahlul Bayt were studied. In this part, we will examine one of the characteristics of divinely appointed leaders including both prophets and Imams, that is, infallibility. With respect to the Prophets, both Shi'a and Sunni scholars agree on the necessity of infallibility with respect to the delivery of the message, but there are differences of opinions with respect to their personal life and the period before the prophethood. The Shi'a believe in the Prophets' and Imams' infallibility during and before their mission both in their public and private lives.

¹ This paper is based on first part of lecture four and all of lecture six of a series of lectures delivered by Dr Mohammad Ali Shomali in summer 2004 in Qum. Lecture five and the remaining part of lecture four relate to the ban by the first three Caliphs on narrating hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (a) and will be published separately in upcoming articles.

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Terminology

'*Ismah* literally means 'to save' or 'to protect'. An example of this is seen in the Qur'an when Prophet Noah asked his son to get on board, and his son refused:

قَالَ سَأُوِي إِلَىٰ جَبَلٍ يَعْصِمُنِي مِنَ الْمَاءِ قَالَ لَا عَاصِمَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ وَحَالَ بَيْنَهُمَا الْمَوْجُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُهْرَقِينَ

He said, 'I shall take refuge on a mountain; it will protect me from the flood.' He said, 'There is none today who can protect from God's edict, except someone upon whom He has mercy.' Then the waves came between them, and he was among those who were drowned.

In this verse, '*ya'simuni*' means 'protect'. The literal meaning of the term *ismah* refers to 'protection'.

Ma'sum literally means 'the one who is saved or protected'. However, in Islamic theology, it does not refer to one who is protected from, for example, physical dangers or disease; rather, the person is protected from committing mistakes, errors, and sins. Thus, we can say *ma'sum* means infallible, immune from sins, or immaculate.

According to all Muslims, the Prophets are *ma'sum*. But they disagree on the extent of this infallibility.

Infallibility with respect to delivery of the message

All Muslim theologians agree that the Prophets were infallible with respect to delivering the divine message to mankind. Furthermore, we need to understand the divine plan for human perfection and the roles reason and revelation play in fulfilling that plan.

God's wise plan for creation: We believe God created us with a wise plan. He did not create us in vain or in order to preoccupy Himself. His wise plan was to give us the opportunity to improve ourselves and reach perfection. Some question as to why God creates people for the sake of self-improvement without Him gaining anything in return. The answer is clear: God creates to give, not to receive, as God does not obtain or earn anything. A person who is needy and does something, he or she must look for some kind of benefit. If I make a house, it is for shelter. If I work, it is for earning money or benefits. If I'm working for God, it is because I want to earn extra blessings and rewards. All in all, it is because I want to receive something, although God does not act or give to obtain anything. In a Persian poem the poet says on behalf of God:

I have not created the people to make some profit; rather,
I have created people in order to show my generosity.

A generous person does not wait for people to approach him for their needs. A generous person constantly looks for opportunities to give to the people.

Thus, God created us for a wise plan: to give us the opportunity to become perfect and eventually achieve proximity to Him. This needs a plan for life. And this plan needs two aspects: reason and revelation.

The need for reason: Part of this plan is understood by our intellect, and this is why reason is important to Muslims, especially the Shi'a. However, although intellect is beneficial, it is not sufficient. We need revelation. Every human being appreciates life; however, for those who favor abortion, people use reason to judge as to whether a mother is free to carry the baby or not. But whether reason is used properly or not is another subject. We need guides. We need revelation.

The need for revelation: Revelation cannot remain in the kingdom of God. Revelation must descend. There are two ways to think of how can we receive revelation:

1. *To send revelation directly to every human heart.* This is not possible. Every person is not capable of receiving revelation. Receiving it is not as simple as receiving a letter. Anyone can receive a letter. But receiving revelation needs qualification. Not everyone can receive the most sophisticated philosophical doctrines or physical theories if he or she is not trained to comprehend it. It is not easy to be addressed by heaven. The prophets prepared themselves for many years and some received revelation after decades of spiritual struggle.

2. *To have qualified people chosen by God to act as prophets:* The Prophet Muhammad was not an ordinary person who was chosen by chance and then God sent him revelation. He was truly different from other people. His piety was apparent from the very beginning: he never worshipped idols and instead worshipped God in the cave of Mount Hirā. There, he had reflections and contemplations, rendering him fully prepared for the mission. With this in mind, receiving revelation is still an arduous task:

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا

Indeed soon We shall cast on you a weighty word.

(73:5)

In this verse, ‘weighty word’ means heavy to receive, understand, and maintain. Sometimes this is manifested in the physical world. When the prophet received revelation, his facial expression displayed that he was under pressure. When the prophet rode on a camel while receiving revelation, the camel could not tolerate the weight of the prophet, and his back caved in, even though revelation is not physical matter. Thus, it is impossible to expect God to send down His revelation to all of us

because we are incapable of receiving it. Moreover, people must be tested. If God spoke directly to the people and everyone was able to see Gabriel, then there would be no real test. The test is that you believe in *ghayb*, the unseen.

To sum this up, God has devised a wise plan for creation. We need guidance, and in order to receive it there are two possible ways: 1) to make all of us prophets, which is not possible, and 2) to have a few qualified people chosen by God to act as prophets.

If these prophets make mistakes in receiving, understanding, or teaching revelation, the benefit of sending revelation is lost. If you prepare a very big feast, and you want to invite people, it would make sense to ask a few people to give everyone on your behalf invitation cards, but if those agents themselves do not understand or misunderstand where and when the feast will be held, your purpose will not be achieved.

Thus, the Prophets must a) receive the revelation well, b) understand it correctly, and c) deliver the message flawlessly; otherwise, prophethood proves futile.

Infallibility with respect to Prophets' personal life before and during the period of prophethood

A controversial issue among Muslims is with regards to the prophets' personal life and conduct. Some Muslims believe that the prophets were infallible only during their spreading of the message although they may have committed some minor sins and/or mistakes in their personal lives. For example, the Ash'arities, a predominant sect in the Sunni world, confine infallibility to intentional sins. They believe the Prophets never commit sins intentionally, although they may unintentionally do so, such as forgetting to pray or fast. Whether the mistake or sin is major or minor, they may commit it unintentionally.

The Mu‘talizites, another predominant Sunni sect, believed that the prophets were infallible with regards to major sins: they did not commit any major sin intentionally or unintentionally, although they may have committed minor ones.

Al-Baghdadi, a famous Sunni theologian and the author of a renowned book *al-Farq bayn al Firaq (The Differences between the Sects)*, stated the view of Sunni Muslims:

They believe in the infallibility of the prophets in relation to sins. They have construed what is narrated about their lapses as having occurred before their prophethood.¹

According to Baghdadi, the Sunnis believe that the prophets do not commit sins and if a hadith or verse in the Qur’an suggests that they have committed sins, it was before prophethood. This implies that the Prophet Muhammad may have committed sins before his prophethood at the age of forty.

But the great Shi‘a scholar and prolific author Allamah Hilli in his *Bāb al-Hādī ‘Ashr (The Eleventh Gate)* describes the creed of the Shi‘a as follows:

Truly, the prophets are infallible from the beginning of their lives till the end, because the hearts of the people do not tend to obey those whom they have witnessed previously committing different types of minor and major sins and hateful or unpleasant acts.²

He points out that the prophets are truly infallible from the beginning of their lives until the end because the hearts of the people do not tend to

¹ Al-Baghdādī, *Al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, p.343.

² Al-Ḥillī, *Bāb al-Ḥādī ‘Ashar*, p. 63.

obey and follow those who have witnessed a person previously committing various types of minor and major sins, or hateful or unpleasant acts. Such a person would immediately be deemed untrustworthy.

Sheikh Muhammad Rida Muzaffar, author of *Aqaid al-Imāmiyyah (The Faith of Shi‘a Islam)*, says about ‘ismah:

The reason for the infallibility of a prophet is that if he commits a sin or mistake, we are to choose between two alternatives: either we obey his sins and mistakes, and eventually do wrong, or we must not obey his sins and mistakes, which too is wrong, because this is contrary to the concept of prophethood where obedience is necessary. Moreover, if everything he says or does has the possibility of being either right or wrong, then it is impossible for us to follow him. The result is that the benefit of his mission is lost. It becomes unnecessary, and the prophet becomes like laypeople whose acts and speech do not have the excellent worth that we seek, with the result that there will be no obedience and his actions will be unreliable.¹

If one claims to understand the Qur’an and hadith, and by using that criteria he or she judges a prophet, it defeats the purpose in having a prophet because the mere ability of judging would give people authority. Someone who can judge whether a prophet is doing wrong or right renders a prophet useless. It is similar to following a scholar in which I label myself as the judge of his laws (*fatwas*), and if his laws are satisfactory, I follow him. But if we can give ourselves the right to judge, we can claim ourselves to be scholars. We would not need to follow one.

¹ Muzaffar, *The Faith of Shi‘a Islam*, p. 21.

Thus, there is no solution here: if we disobey the prophet, there is no use in sending him by God; if we obey him while he commits sins and mistakes, we will be misled; if we want to select him, we cannot do so since that would assume we are better than him.¹

The destructive nature of sins: The Shi‘a believe that the Prophets, including the Prophet of Islam, were all infallible from birth. They believe that a prophet must be spiritually prepared, and not a layperson who, for example, worships idols, drinks alcohol, and then unexpectedly becomes a prophet. Sins are too dangerous. Even if one does not intentionally commit them, he or she may still suffer from their destructive consequences. One who drinks alcohol without realizing it will still experience drunkenness. It will also drive one’s spirit far from God.

In other words, God’s choice is not arbitrary. To be addressed by God, to receive revelation and immediate communication from the unseen (*ghayb*) is so extra-ordinarily demanding an experience that it can only be borne by one possessing a high spiritual capacity:

إِنَّا سَأَلْنَاكَ عَلَىٰ قَوْلٍ نَّقِيلاً

¹ In 2003, we had a discussion at the first Catholic-Shi‘a Dialogue in the UK with some Christian friends about the Prophet Abraham. We had our similarities and differences about the Prophet. One of the differences was that we believed in his infallibility. But some opposed and argued that the Prophets were not perfect and indeed their fallibility was better for them, because they could better relate to a Prophet who had shortcomings and occasional sins rather than follow perfect beings. I argued there that, as mentioned above, if a prophet is not perfect, he cannot receive revelation. Moreover, the argument includes a practical problem: whenever we have our own opinion about something and we are not happy with the position took by a given Prophet we may say that indeed this was one of the areas that the Prophet made a mistake and I better understand. For example, if a prophet fought against oppression and you are a pacifist, you may judge the Prophet’s position as a shortcoming and choose what you deem noble or what suits you.

‘Surely We will make to light upon you a weighty Word.’ (73:5)

None can reach the requisite position if he is tamed by false belief or sin. Sins are harmful to the spirit and to the purity of the soul, even if committed unintentionally. The Shi‘a thus highly esteem prophethood; they believe that the Prophets were pious and pure throughout their entire lives and that they are completely immune from committing sins or other acts which drive others away from them. Our scholars point out that even the outer appearance of the Prophets is equally important. The Prophets should not look unpleasant, as this can also drive people away.

Moreover, sometimes other people’s sins affect us. For example, if the food eaten is not halal while we are unaware, it is lawful to eat it according to Islamic law. Although we are not committing a sin by eating it, the spirit will suffer. This is why some scholars are cautious about eating from unknown shops or unfamiliar people.¹

The Shi‘a also believe the prophets to be immune from making mistakes. If people witness prophets making mistakes in their personal lives, people will consider them as being no better than them. If a prophet forgets, a person may think of his own memory to be better and

¹ Imam Khomeini’s father, Sayyed Mustafa Khomeini, was a very pious scholar in the city of Khumain and who fought against the injustice of the governor of that time. He was eventually martyred when Imam Khomeini was very young. In an historical account, when Imam Khomeini was born, his mother could not feed him because she did not have enough milk. After some time, his father knew of a pious woman who had recently delivered a child who died during birth. Because of her piety and the fact that she was producing milk at the time, Imam Khomeini’s father recommended that she provide milk for his son. The pious woman and her husband were grateful to serve the son of a Sayyid Ayatullah. So they set up a timetable for feeding. Imam Khomeini’s parents did not bring Imam Khomeini, but they bought food instead, and Imam Khomeini’s father said, ‘For two days eat only food that I have sent and nothing from your house; after two days I will bring my son.’ This is the caution scholars practiced with regards to what they eat.

disregard following such a leader. If a prophet loses his own address, although it is a personal matter and not a sin, he would still lose the trust of the people. Those who are enemies of the prophets look for minor excuses not to believe in him. If people witnessed a prophet to be forgetful and unable to show social skills, they will use these as excuses not to believe in him.

If a prophet before his prophethood commits unintentional sins, he is not prepared to receive God's message. If a prophet commits sins or even commits mistakes and people believe him to be ordinary, they cannot accept him as chosen by God. The Prophet was exceptional from the very beginning, even before his prophethood, and everyone admired him. He was given the title *al-Amin* (The Trustworthy). Though they had the habit of deceiving one another from time to time, they still appreciated the quality of trustworthiness in the Prophet. Although the people then were immoral, the Prophet was not associated with any of the actions committed by them. As a result, the people trusted him. It is also important to bear in mind that the Prophet's enemies constantly looked for any minor problem as an excuse and exaggerated it to mislead people with regards to the Prophet and his message. When the Prophet was given the message by God, he asked the people, "If I warned you of an army behind this mountain ready to kill you, would you believe me?" They replied, "Of course. We have never known you to tell lies." The Prophet then warned them about the hereafter and the punishment for those who do not follow the truth and commit immoral actions.

Similarly, if Muslims observe a leader committing unintentional sins, making mistakes, and being forgetful, they would not trust him even though he is truthful. If this is the case with fellow believers, how can people obey a fallible prophet who changes the people's lifestyles by making them lose their pride through having them destroy their own

idols? This is impossible. Hence, it is believed that the Prophets have always been pious and infallible.

The Prophet is also believed to have been pious in his childhood. When a Prophet does his best in the period in which he is accountable, God will protect him in the period in which he is not accountable, such as during his childhood, or before committing mistakes unintentionally. If he does his best for that which he is in control of, then God will look after that which he is not in full control of.

Once, when the Prophet was a child, a group of boys were playing by carrying larger stones. During his time, the Arabs wore a long dress without an under dress. And so, in order to be able to carry the stones, they had to lift the bottom of their dress, making their private parts visible. When the Prophet wanted to play with them, before he could lift his dress to carry the stones, he was stopped by an angel. Though he would not have sinned if he had done that since he was a child and was not accountable, God protects such a person even before he becomes mature, because this person is to be given a great mission, and thus, God prepares him in advance.

What is special with the Prophets and Imams that make them infallible?

A question then arises as to the difference between the Prophet and the rest of humankind. Some believe that if God had provided other people with special care, they would have certainly become prophets. But God knows in advance as to whom will be pious enough to be qualified for Prophethood; thus, the Prophet is given extra protection in advance. This is similar to an experienced teacher who knows the bright student's future in advance. God may give the Prophets extra care while they are in the wombs of their mothers because He knows that when these people mature and are accountable for their actions, they will be the most pious people. This is not discrimination; the prophets

deserve this. It is not because of the extra care that they become different; rather, because they are different God gives them extra care.¹

The nature of infallibility

All 'ismah is not based on protection by God. The most important part of it is because of the prophets' will-power. The protection of God is for those perform exceptionally with what they are accountable for. So it is a mixture of one's decision, determination, and willpower; afterwards, God protects them. One cannot rely on himself if the protection of God is absent.

When Satan and the angels knew they would be tested a very important test, and all knew in advance that one of them would fail, the angels were anxious and asked God for help. Satan, who was known for his piety after having worshipped God for thousands of years, told them,

¹ It is believed by many scholars that before we were created in this world we were all in another world called '*Ālam al-Dharr* (the Universe of the Particles). In that universe, we were all able to witness the Oneness and Creatorship of Allah. This is why all human beings have an innate knowledge of God. In that universe, the people displayed differences in their response i.e. some were hesitant to believe and some were quick to believe and as a result they display differed ranks of faith in this universe. The following verse is believed to attest to this:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

'And when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their backs, their descendants, and made them bear witness against their own souls: Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes! we bear witness. Lest you should say on the day of resurrection: Surely we were heedless of this.' (7:172)

This idea is also used to explain why some people receive special support from God right from the time of their birth or even before. Of course, I personally believe that '*Ālam al-Dharr* was not temporally before this universe; rather it is a universe before this universe in order and not in time. It does not mean that there was a time we were present there and then we came here. These are parallel worlds. But in order '*Ālam al-Dharr* came before this current one, because the spiritual world is prior to the physical one.

“Do not worry; I will pray for you, and you will all be saved.” He was so proud of himself without having any worries, yet he failed the test because of his complacency.

Being complacent is the most dangerous state. Instead of being self-righteous based on one’s religion or inheritance, one should worry about failing a test. Even the Prophet asked God for guidance. On one night when the Prophet (s) stayed with his wife, ‘Aishah, she asked him why he exhausted himself by worshipping and praying, while God said, “Surely We have given to you a clear victory that God may forgive your community their past faults and those to follow...” The Prophet (s) replied: “Oh ‘Aishah, Should not I be a grateful servant [of God]?”¹

Therefore, we must always worry about complacency. We should be worried about our self a few times before worrying about others to ensure that we do not go astray.

The reality of infallibility

Khwaja Nasir al-Din al-Tusi in his *Talkhis al-Muhassal* explains the nature of infallibility as one who is able to sin but chooses to refrain from doing so:

Infallibility is when the servant [of God] is able to perform sins but does not wish to do so at all. And this lack of will [for sins] or the existence of something that

¹ *Al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, p. 95. The original text of hadith is as follows:

حُمَيْدُ بْنُ زِيَادٍ عَنِ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ سَمَاعَةَ عَنْ وَهْبِ بْنِ حَفْصٍ عَنْ أَبِي بصيرٍ عَنِ
أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ قَالَ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص عِنْدَ عَائِشَةَ لَيْلَتَهَا فَقَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لِمَ تَتَعَبُ نَفْسَكَ وَ
قَدْ غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَكَ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ فَقَالَ يَا عَائِشَةُ أَلَا أَكُونُ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا قَالَ وَكَانَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص يَقُومُ عَلَى أَطْرَافِ أَصَابِعِ رِجْلَيْهِ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى طَهُ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا
عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْفَى.

prevents him from it is a Divine grace. So he does not disobey God not because he is unable to do so, but because he does not will to do so, or because there is something that overrides his will. Thus, considering his power and free-will it is possible for him to perform sins, but considering his lack of will or the existence of the overriding obstacle, it is impossible.¹

There is both no will to commit sins as well as a protection from God. It is not merely that God arbitrarily chooses a person who will be protected from sins; people themselves perform their best, and consequently God provides them with extra care. This is a general law in the universe; whoever does good and takes one step forward, God will support them:

كُلًّا نُمِدُّ هُوْلَاءِ وَهَؤُلَاءِ مِنْ عَطَاءِ رَبِّكَ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَاءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُورًا

To these and to those - to all We extend the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not confined.
(17:20)

Both groups are supported: for those who do good or bad. If someone deliberately and insistently commits mistakes and sins, God may help him so as to increase his crimes. Whichever way you take and strive in that way, you will receive help, either to increase your goodness or your badness. The Prophets and Imams therefore do their best, and God then supports them. It is not an advantage if sins are impossible to commit. For example, it is not a privilege not to look sinfully because one's eyes are sealed or made blind. The Prophets were able to commit sins and yet they choose not to do so. Indeed, many of us are infallible with respect to some sins because we realize its ugliness, such as drinking blood. For the prophets, all sins are deemed ugly, and because

¹ Al-Ṭūsī, *Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣal*, p. 525.

they strongly comprehend its ugliness they do not commit them. Just as we find drinking blood impossible, the prophets deem lying and backbiting the same. Secondly, the pious never commit sins intentionally. For example, the criterion of a prayer leader is that he must be just, i.e. not commit any sin. However, they are not infallible. He may still make mistakes and sins, but for the prophets, infallibility is guaranteed.

Al-Ijī, a prominent Ash‘arite theologian, explains infallibility as follows:

For us [the Ash‘arites] infallibility is that God does not create in them (the prophets) any sin. For the philosophers, it is a character (*al-malakah*) that prevents one from sinning and is caused by knowing the wretchedness of sins and the merits of obedience to God and is strengthened by the repetition of revelation of commands and prohibitions.¹

The Ash‘arites believe in determinism, that God creates our acts inside us. We are merely the subject or the place for Divine acts. Thus, a person do something good or wrong is not a result of their actions; rather, it is the creation of God. This view is false as it contradicts with the idea of free will and human accountability. In any case, according to them, God creates sins in laypeople, whereas He prevents the infallibles from doing so.

According to Shi‘ite theologians, the same quality of ‘ismah must also exist in the Imams because they are to continue the role of the Prophet in teaching Islam. If they fail to correctly present Islam with an infallible demeanor, they would not be fully trusted and the benefit of having an Imam will be lost.

¹ Al-Ijī, *Al-Mawāqif*, p. 262.

For the Imams and Ahlul Bayt, there are particular arguments attesting to their infallibility. One of them is the verse of *Tathir* (the verse of purification - 33:33), which suggests that these people are purified by God a thorough purification:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

‘...God only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying.’ (33:33)

This verse means much more than simply not committing sins. There are many good believers who do not commit sins, which is the concept of ‘*adālah*, that is, the prayers leaders and the judges must not commit sins. However, an Imam is someone who is immune from committing sins *and* mistakes; they are thoroughly preserved and purified by God. God talks about *muttaqin* in the Qur’an - those who have piety and obedience towards God:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طُغْيَانٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ

Surely those who guard (against evil), when a visitation from the Shaitan afflicts them they become mindful, then lo! they see. (7:201)

People can be either Satan themselves, Satan’s servants, Satan’s soldiers, or all three. We also have better people, those who although they are not Satanic, they easily follow him.¹ For the pious, the Satans

¹ Shaikh Ansari, a great Shi’a scholars and marji’, was an extremely pious person. When his wife was going to deliver a baby, the ladies who were available were to help prepare a special meal for her, that which needed a lot of oil to give strength. Sheikh Ansari did not have money of his own, although he had the money of khums which he used to spend on students. He thought, as I am the teacher of all these students, I can take the money for the students and pay for the oil. When he took the

merely visit and pass by them quickly, but they cannot accompany them. When Satan visits, these pious people realize his presence as they quickly become alert. For a moment, they may experience a momentary darkness. But because they are pious, God removes all the veils from them and they are enabled to see clearly and think properly, as said in the Qur'an. The Ahlul Bayt have the highest level of piety. It must be much higher than not committing sins or mistakes because this is applicable to all pious people. Ahlul Bayt are purified from God from any and every unpleasant entity.

Did the prophets commit sins?

According to intellectual and revealed arguments, the Shi'a scholars interpret the verses of the Qur'an about the Prophets in a way that they do not contradict their infallibility.

Prophet Adam's incident

For example, we study here the case of Adam (a):

أَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَّتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءَاتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَصَى
ءَادَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَى

money and went to buy the oil, he felt regret and returned to leave the money from whence he got it. The next day, someone went to Sheikh Ansari and said, 'I saw the Satan in my dream with different kinds of rope and chains. I asked the Satan, 'What are these ropes and chains for?' Satan replied, 'For every person I have a special rope or chain to catch him and make him follow me. Some are very strong because these are strong believers, so I need to have a very strong chain or rope to prevent them from escaping. For some we do not need a strong rope; a thread is enough.' The man asked, 'Which is my rope or chain?' The Satan replied, 'You do not need one. You already follow me.' Then he saw a strong rope and asked, 'What is the strongest one for? Who is the one who you try to fasten with this?' He replied, 'This is for Sheikh Ansari. I was able to fasten him once, but he untied himself and escaped.' When he explained this to Sheikh Ansari, he realized that this was a test, and that although he was legally qualified to take the money, he thought, 'If I use this money, are all students able to use this money and buy oil for their wives? If all students cannot do this then I as a marji' cannot do this.' And he returned the money.

So they both ate of it, and their nakedness became evident to them, and they began to stitch over themselves with the leaves of paradise. Adam disobeyed his Lord, and went amiss. (20:121)

Prophet Adam disobeyed his Lord, and this is what the Christians call the ‘original sin.’ To understand whether Adam (a) committed a sin in its ordinary sense or not we should take into account that first of all, the mistake he made was not done in this universe. This world is the only world in which there are regulations, laws, and responsibilities with no further obligations in the hereafter:

Today you just act and there is no judgment, tomorrow it is the opposite.¹

The hereafter is not a place for accomplishing our duties. That is to be accomplished in this world. This is the case about heaven in which Prophet Adam and Eve lived in. There was no obligation. Obligation began and will end in this world. Sin, in the in the legal sense, was not applicable to that world.

Secondly, the Prophet Adam did not know that there is a possibility of someone cheating and telling lies. He was so pious while in heaven; it didn’t occur to him that someone like Satan would approach and lie to him. He was mistaken in thinking that Satan is telling the truth. It was a mistake, not a sin. It was before coming to this world, and therefore, it was not relevant to the issue of ‘ismah. ‘Ismah was after the birth of the Prophets or Imams up until their death, which is all in this world. Though he should not have trusted Satan, but he did so because he did not think that someone would dare to tell lies.

God called this disobedience ‘*ma’siya*’ because although it was not a sin in the legal sense, it was a grave mistake that was not expected from

¹ *Al-Kāfi*, vol. 8, p. 58.

someone like Adam. There are many cases where something is considered as a mistake or sin for the Prophets, but for ordinary people it is not a sin. For example, if the Prophet Muhammad says his prayer in front of God in the way that we say it, this is a sin. In a legal sense it would not be a sin, but God expects more from him than he expects from us. The Prophets considered some of their own acts as sins, but it was not disobedience according to our understanding; it was a matter of not being able to perform their best. They always sought to do the best, as they never were satisfied with less. When a Prophet asks for forgiveness, it is not because he has told lies or he has eaten a prohibited food. Rather, it was because of performing an action which was not at its best, or because of not remaining in the state of remembrance of God that they prefer to be in.

Conclusion

One distinctive aspect of Shi'i thought is the extent of infallibility with regards to the Prophets and Imams. All Muslims agree that the Prophet Muhammad was infallible during his Prophetic life; however, the controversy lies as to whether he was infallible in his personal life before and during his mission. The non-Shi'a may believe in the possibility that the prophets may have committed mistakes and sins in their personal lives before and during their prophethood. On the other hand, the Shi'a firmly believe the Prophets and Imams to be infallible before and during their mission because if they were flawed they would lose the people's trust. They displayed piety throughout their lives and were completely immune from committing sins, mistakes, or other acts that may drive people away from them. Nonetheless, the Infallibles do not commit sins as they have a profound recognition of its ugliness. For the guidance of humankind, infallible leaders are a part of God's plan for creation. This plan necessitates qualified leaders chosen by God to support humankind in accomplishing their role of servitude towards

Him. By protecting the Prophets and Imams against unintentional mistakes, God indeed helps all of humanity in their pursuit of guidance.