

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 Thaqaalayn* 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 Thaqaalayn* and indeed, any responsible media.

Editor-in-Chief

SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF MOURNING FOR IMAM HUSAYN (A),

PART III: HOW TRUE MOURNING CAN LEAD TO THE GOODLY LIFE

MOHAMMAD ALI SHOMALI

ABSTRACT: People are to strive to purge themselves of the superficial aspects of this world. Once we do so, a new life – or the “Goodly Life” – is guaranteed to those who believe, purify themselves, and perform righteous deeds. Because the effect of good deeds counts for very little in this long journey, God, with His infinite mercy, provided shortcuts by endowing us with immaculate male and female role models to assist people on this path to prosper in life and achieve everlasting bliss. Sincerely sharing in Imam Husayn’s grief and mourning over the magnitude of his hardship during the Battle of Karbala is one the quickest ways to achieve the Goodly Life. Those who enjoy this status develop their understanding, actions, and determination through firm faith and righteous deeds that must stem from being truthful. This part of the series further delves into the spiritual essence and outcomes of grieving for Imam Husayn, as well as the duties of the speakers, reciters, and participants of gatherings for mourning. All in all, true mourning attracts divine blessings, mercy, and forgiveness, which eventually removes the veils of darkness and moves us into the light.

God, the Almighty, has granted humanity life – an incredibly valuable gift. This life needs to be respected, protected, and regulated according to God’s will. People are not permitted to commit suicide or even harm their health. We cannot eat something that could possibly make us ill, even if it does not make us fatally ill. However, what is much more important than physical life is the Goodly Life (*al-hayat al-tayyibah*) which can be achieved through faith and righteous deeds. In this part, we will further examine the act of mourning for Imam Husayn and how true mourning can lead to the Goodly Life. Those who attain this go beyond the limitations that ordinary people face with regards to their understanding, power (or action) and will (or determination). In other words, they will grow in all three major elements of life: 1) understanding, 2) power, and 3) will.

Understanding: The understanding of a person who lives the Goodly Life will go beyond the material world; his understanding would not be limited to what he sees, hears, or touches. He perceives what other people cannot perceive, and this can happen in different ways. Sometimes God sends a message directly to someone’s heart and that person would perceive further layers of meaning from the same message others superficially understood. And sometimes it is possible that several layers of meaning envelop one’s form of expression. For example, we agree that when I ask you for water, you will bring it to me along with checking my car in the parking lot. So if I ask you for water, other people will understand one meaning, though you will understand my second message as well. I might have made another agreement with someone else that when I ask for water, he also makes a phone call. Others will only see that someone asks for water, though they are unaware of the additional messages.

God has put many multi-layered meanings in His Qur’an. According to a hadith, the Qur’an has an inward layer (*batin*); and that inward layer has

another layer inside it, and this continues up to seven layers.¹ Of course, the key to reach its inward and esoteric meanings is its outward and exoteric meanings. Exegetes who provide commentaries on the Qur'an that are not in agreement with its outward appearance are incorrect. However, although more can be understood from the actual appearance of the verses, the laymen cannot do this. Only those who live the Goodly Life receive these messages. Others will only understand the apparent meaning of the words, and they might even find some passages irrelevant to their lives and perhaps deem it boring. Those with Goodly Life find clear and powerful messages in every verse to apply to their day to day lives.

A faithful person understands messages in a person's speech that laymen may not understand. As the Iranian proverb goes, "What an elderly (wise) person sees in a mud brick, a young person would not see in the mirror." We understand the literal meaning, although an insightful person understands much more.

Thus, those who enjoy the Goodly Life might perceive, for example, from a person's speech, either through direct inspiration or through intuition and insight, what others might not. To a lesser degree this might sometimes happen to us. You might have experienced that when you are looking for guidance and suddenly an adult or child who does not know the matter in hand says something that solves the problem. If the soul is not perceptive, even the clearest words would not be understood. A perceptive soul receives implicit messages. However, this topic requires further study and is beyond the constraints of this paper.

In the famous divine saying (*Hadith-i Qudsi*) of proximity to God through voluntary recommended acts (*qurb-i nawafil*), God says:

¹ For example, see *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 89, p. 91, where Jabir ibn Yazid al-Ju'fi narrates from Imam Baqir:

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ يَزِيدَ الْجُعْفِيِّ قَالَ سَأَلْتُ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ عَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ مِنَ التَّفْسِيرِ فَأَجَابَنِي ثُمَّ سَأَلْتُهُ عَنْهُ فَأَبَى
فَأَجَابَنِي بِجَوَابٍ آخَرَ فَقُلْتُ جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ كُنْتَ أَجَبْتَنِي فِي هَذِهِ الْمَسْأَلَةِ بِجَوَابٍ غَيْرِ هَذَا قَبْلَ الْيَوْمِ فَقَالَ يَا
جَابِرُ إِنَّ الْقُرْآنَ بَطْنًا وَ اللَّبْطِينَ بَطْنٌ وَ لَهُ ظَهْرٌ وَ لِلظَّهْرِ ظَهْرٌ يَا جَابِرُ لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَبْعَدَ مِنْ عُمُومِ الرِّجَالِ مِنْ
تَفْسِيرِ الْقُرْآنِ إِلَى الْآيَةِ يَكُونُ أَوْلَاهَا فِي شَيْءٍ وَ آخِرُهَا فِي شَيْءٍ وَ هُوَ كَلَامٌ مُتَّصِلٌ مُتَّصِرٌ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ.

None of My servants can seek proximity to Me by that which is dearer to Me than things that I have made obligatory on him. Then, with the performance of *nawāfil* (the recommended acts), he continuously attains proximity to Me so that I love him. When I love him, I will be the ear with which he hears, the eyes with which he sees, and the hand with which he strikes. If he calls Me, I will answer his call, and if he makes a request, I will grant it.¹

If God becomes the ears by which we hear, there will be no limit to understanding the facts. Such a person sees many hidden things, so much so that when you visit him or her, they might see into your heart or read your mind. Prophet Muhammad said, “Be careful about the piercing eyes of the faithful, because they see [everything] by the light of God.”² Therefore, when you stand before a spiritual person, say to God, “O Coverer! (*Ya Sattar!*)” if you prefer to conceal the problems that may exist in your heart. Then, if God wants, that faithful person will not see into your heart.

Power. The Goodly Life increases our understanding as well as our capability. In the abovementioned hadith, God will be the person’s hand by which he strikes. Prophet Abraham, who was asked to break the idols, could not do so single-handedly; it was God who gave power to Abraham’s hand:

*You did not kill them; rather it was God who killed them;
and you did not throw when you threw, rather it was God
who threw, that He might test the faithful with a good test*

¹ *Al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, pp. 352 & 353.

² For example, see *Bal-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 218, where Mohammad ibn Muslim narrates from Imam Baqir (a) that the Prophet Muhammad (s) said:

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مُسْلِمٍ عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ ع فِي قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْمُتَوَشِّعِينَ قَالَ هُمْ الْأَيْتَةُ ع
قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص اتَّقُوا فِرَاسَةَ الْمُؤْمِنِ فَإِنَّهُ يَنْظُرُ بِبُورِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِي قَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّلْمُتَوَشِّعِينَ.

from Himself. Indeed God is all-hearing, all-knowing.
(8:17)

When we throw an arrow that hits the target, we shouldn't give ourselves the credit. Although this might be clearer in unusual and extraordinary circumstances of success, the faithful should understand that all good actions and successes come from God. Then God enables those closest to Him – those who have emptied themselves of their ego and selfishness – to perform the wonders laymen are unable to do.

Stronger will: A person who enjoys the Goodly Life becomes very powerful, and through his will and determination he is able to do what others cannot. God says in a Hadith al-Qudsi:

My servant, obey Me. [If you do so] I will make you an example of Myself. I am alive and will never die; and so I make you alive and never die. I am rich and never become poor, and so I make you become rich and never poor. Whatever I want I say “Be” and it is, so I make you in the way that whatever you want you also say “Be” and there it will be.¹

Human beings can reach such a position, though we do not usually come across such people on a day-to-day basis; it is hard to believe they exist. Nonetheless, humankind can reach such a position. They can reach it in this world, as in the case of the Prophets and Imams, and is certainly possible for the inhabitants of Paradise, where everything a person wishes is available.² The Goodly Life is similar to life in Paradise. Whatever one wishes for will be ready and at hand, though such a person would not

¹ *Al-Jawahir al-Saniyyah fi al-Ahadith al-Qudsiyyah* by Hurr 'Amili, p. 284.

² The Qur'an says:

Enter paradise, you and your spouses, rejoicing (they will be served around with golden dishes and goblets, and therein will be whatever the souls desire and eyes delight in) and you will remain in it [forever]. That is the paradise you have been given to inherit for what you used to do. (43:70-72)

expect anything and everything to be ready at his disposal. The person living a Goodly Life works for the pleasure of God and eventually achieves firm determination.

A person who lives an ordinary life might be engaged in eating, drinking, and the like, but the desire of one who achieves the Goodly Life is spiritual and radiant, as he emits light and energy to the world. He is far-sighted and loves to bring everyone close to God.

For the person who reaches this stage, one of the most complex and difficult matters is to preserve at least some attachment to this world. This is because he becomes so inclined towards the Hereafter that it is difficult for him to look at this world and simultaneously do justice regarding worldly affairs. For this reason, some of those who do reach this level may not pay much attention to worldly affairs. Indeed, they are obliged to heed to such matters, but because they are not perfect or are still new to this type of life, sometimes they may fail to do justice to them.¹ However, this is also a transitional stage, and if a person progresses further, he would eventually do justice to this world as well. This is when such a person becomes like Imam Ali, who, in the middle of his prayer, without neglecting God, gave his ring to a beggar who approached and asked for help. In any case, it is difficult for those who have recently entered this stage to embody the two attributes together. Perfection is to be at the peak of spirituality and otherworldliness as the Prophet was and yet still do true justice to worldly affairs in a meticulous way. For example, such a person should always be neat and tidy by looking in the mirror or should be careful about the way he greets people or welcomes guests and visitors. His mind might be inclined towards the next world while simultaneously doing justice to this world.

¹ For example, grandson of a great contemporary philosopher and mystic, whose name I do not want to mention told me that this great scholar was so focused on non-worldly things that could not even find his daughter's house! Why? Because he was so inclined towards the next world and spiritual matters that such things did not matter to him.

However, sometimes the attention of some spiritual people is deflected away from this world. Some mistakenly think that these spiritual wayfarers lost their senses, though they are simply inclined towards the next world. During his final days, Allamah Tabatabai did not speak with anyone, and turned his face away from the food that was brought to him. He simply sat near the window and gazed outside. Ayatullah Amini says, "During those moments I asked him about for advice on self-purification and he answered, 'Surveillance (*muraqabah*). Surveillance. Surveillance!' meaning: 'Observe your soul. Watch your self!'¹ He did not talk as if he was not aware of anything.

The late Ayatollah Ahmadi Mīaneji said about the Grand Ayatollah Hujjat, one of the Islamic authorities in Qum, "Shortly before his demise, the Grand Ayatollah Hujjat refrained from speaking with anyone, and even if someone talked to him, he would not respond, even to such as, 'Sir! Are you alright? Would you like some tea or food?' He would not say a word. Then one man cleverly asked, "What is the Islamic ruling on eating burnt bread?" Since it was the Ayatollah's duty to respond to questions on Islamic issues, he finally spoke. Though he avoided any talk, he answered that question. Such events in the life of such great personalities speak volumes.

Ayatullah Imami Kashani said that Imam Khomeini did not talk to anyone during the last hours of his life, as if his soul already left this world. Imam Khomeini was thought to be unaware of things happening around him. Ayatullah Kashani said, "When it was prayer time, I reminded Imam Khomeini about it. And for a long moment his eyes had been shut without having said anything, though suddenly his lips moved." The soul might be detached from this world and oblivious to material matters, but if it relates to the spiritual aspect, then the soul might heed to it.

¹ This is what I heard myself from Ayatollah Ibrahim Amini in his visit to Manchester.

How to achieve the Goodly Life - The Goodly Life can be achieved in this world through faith and righteous deeds: *“Whoever acts righteously, [whether] male or female, should he be faithful, We shall revive him with a good life...”* (16: 97)

There is no alternative way or any magic formula. We are only to obey God and do righteous deeds. Why do we look for complexities when we can simply perform our major duties? We tend to make it difficult for ourselves. This is similar to the Israelites’ questions stated in the Qur’an. When God ordered them to sacrifice a cow, they pestered Prophet Moses with questions such as, “What colour should it be?” “How much should it weigh?” “Should it be fat or thin?” It would have sufficed had they sacrificed the first cow they saw. God puts it simply: *“Whoever acts righteously, [whether] male or female, should he be faithful, We shall revive him with a good life...”* (16:97)

Thus, we should be inclined to performing righteous deeds. What is a righteous deed? Simply performing your religious and moral duties and having faith, and you will then achieve everything.

There are certain stages at which one needs special advice, and God will undoubtedly provide us with it afterwards. Regarding Ayatullah Ansari Hamedani,¹ when asked why he journeyed from Hamedan to Pakistan, he answered, “A person who had reached a high level of spirituality was in need of help, and I was ordered to assist him.” God states in the Qur’an: *“As for those who strive in Us, We surely guide them to Our paths...”* (29:69)

God will indeed guide whoever strives on this path. We might think we need someone to push us to strive, yet that is similar to someone who will not put food in his mouth until someone else feeds him. We know we are responsible for working hard. If we do our best and then face a situation in which we do not know what to do, God will definitely help us. It is

¹A great contemporary mystic and the teacher of Ayatollah Dastgheyb and Ayatollah Nejabat.

impossible that such people are not guided. We are to employ and increase our capabilities rather than living carelessly. We are to strive to have faith and perform righteous deeds: *“O you who have faith! Respond to God and the Apostle when he summons you to that which will give you life.”* (8:24)

This verse is a clear, unambiguous one. On the Day of Resurrection, we will be so sorrowful, thinking, ‘Such verses were simple and clear; since my youth I knew that I was to tell the truth, respect my parents and elders, pray on time, and give alms. I was aware of the importance of these deeds, although I did not carry them out.’ Perhaps one reason the Day of Resurrection is called *“Yawm al-Taghabun”* (The ‘Day of Loss’) and *“Yawm al-Hasrah”* (‘the Day of Regret’) is that people will realize they did not practice what they knew, especially for actions that were not difficult to carry out.

As said before, God has also provided role models – the Prophet and his Household – whom we should constantly refer to. This is why we say in the chapter *The Opening (al-Fatiha)*, *“Guide us on the straight path; the path of those whom You have blessed; such as have not incurred Your wrath, nor are astray.”* (1:6-8) As said before, Imam Husayn is one of the blessings God has bestowed upon us to find the path; he is also the Light of the Guidance (*Misbah al-Huda*) – there is neither doubt nor darkness in it. Imam Husayn is not like Prophet Khidr whom even Prophet Moses could not understand. He is the Light of the Guidance, in that even the layman – religious or not – can understand. Through enduring a great tragedy, Imam Husayn opened a shortcut to all people. Moreover, he is the Ship of Salvation (*Safinat al-Najat*), especially if we remember that among the Ahlul-Bayt, the Ship of Husayn is the fastest and the largest.

How do we join Imam Husayn by benefiting from his light and guidance?

As explained in the first part, the key is to share in Imam Husayn’s hardship:

*I implore Allah to give me because of my suffering in you
the best which might be given to an afflicted person, for*

*the sake of your place before Him and your rightfulness
and also the hardship I endured in your way.*¹

The first condition in expressing our grief is through having piety, or awareness, of God. Moreover, to sincerely mourn, we are to be truthful.

Truthfulness: God is the Truth and all true things are from Him: “*That is because God is the True...*” (22:6) He is real and all realities depend on Him. On the other hand, falsehood does not belong or relate to Him. Our actions must be in harmony with reality and with the truth, since the Truth is what exists and must be acted upon accordingly. For example, it is cold here. This is a fact. So, we have to turn on the heater; but if it is warm we should not do so. You won’t say, “I will turn on the heater regardless of it being hot or cold.” A wise person would not talk like that.

The expression “*God is the True*” (*al-Haqq*) does not merely refer to God’s existence since other beings exist as well. But we cannot consider ourselves *the True* (*al-haqq*) since God is the only True One, that what is true depends on Him. All that complies with God and with the generative or legislative will of God will also become true: “*We sent you with Truth.*” This verse means, ‘Your mission is to be at the service of the Truth.’ The message of God cannot be modified, as said in the Qur’an: “*Had he faked any sayings in Our Name, We would have surely seized him by the right hand and then cut off his aorta*” (69:44-46).

This is very strong statement and warning since the Prophet would not do such a thing: “*Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is naught save a revelation that is revealed.*” (53: 3-4) The Prophet only says what God wants and thus God is in fact telling us to be aware. You – the clergy, propagators, Muslims – those who speak in the name of Islam, while sometimes not knowing much about it. Be careful.²

¹ An excerpt from Ziyarat Ashura.

² In 1999, during my first trip to Rome, I asked one of our hosts who had invited hundreds of Muslims from around the world after inviting Jewish community, “What is the difference between

Nowadays, we frequently face situations in which people of relatively little knowledge, although many times with good intentions, speak in communities and even at universities and academic institutes as the representatives of Islam, and it has created serious problems.

God says that even if the Prophet himself says something wrong, He will cut his aorta. Indeed, this arterial supply for the Goodly Life is cut due to vain speech though we may not realize it. Prophet Muhammad said:

لولا تكثير في كلامكم و تخرج في قلوبكم لسمعت ما اسمع و لرأيت ما اري

If you did not indulge in useless talk and harbor vain thoughts in your heart, you would be able to hear what I hear and see what I see.¹

This does not mean we would become the Prophet; rather, our inner eyes would open to see the unseen. The faithful would also have broad vision and insight. It is not necessary to be the Prophet to do so. The more we engage in vain talk, the Goodly Life is bound to fade away. If we watch our words and the ideas in our hearts and minds, and put our knowledge into practice, we will move very fast towards perfection. In this atmosphere of piety and surveillance (*muraqabah*), our daily prayer can uplift us beyond our imagination.

Allamah Tabatabai frequently quoted Ayatollah Qadi as saying, "If one performs his prayers on time and does not achieve spiritual positions, he can curse me." This means that is not difficult to progress spiritually. We tend to look for secrets, but the reality is that we do not need anything mysterious. If we preserve our original purity, divine nature, and the light God has given us, our few acts of worship will become both important and

us and them?" He mentioned two points. The second point he mentioned, and this was very shocking to me, was that he said, "Every Muslim speaks in the name of Islam. Every Muslim says: 'Islam says this or that'. But when members of the other faith community spoke, they always said, 'We cannot speak on behalf of our faith. I am merely giving my own opinion.'"

¹ *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, vol. 5, p. 270, cited from Sunni sources.

powerful. Our prayers, alms, fasts, and our love for the Household will uplift us very quickly.

The problem is that we do good things, but our pure and free soul is hindered or halted due to the poisonous sins committed and the vain talk we engage in. Similar to the stomach's reaction when we eat junk food, we harm our souls when we speak vainly or listen to nonsense. Thus, we are to speak when necessary; moreover, we are to speak truthfully.

How can we be truthful? We have to be truthful in our words, deeds, beliefs, and even thoughts. God tells His Prophet, “*Indeed, We have sent you with the truth*” (2:119) – in other words, ‘Your mission has begun in the service of the Truth!’ The Imams were also fully committed to the truth, as they never committed any wrongdoing. Both Shi‘as and Sunnis have quoted the Prophet Muhammad as saying, “Ali is with the truth and the truth is with Ali.”¹ Imam Ali’s was exceptional because he was in harmony with the truth; he fully observed it, and anyone who doubts the truth should refer to him. His value is not due to God’s fondness for him so much that even if he commits wrong, it would be alright. The Friends of God are not permitted to do everything merely because they are close to God; indeed, they never want to do so, since they comprehend the ugliness of committing sins. There are religious communities who hold their leader at such a high level that they deem it acceptable when he indulges in vicious deeds such as drinking wine, gambling, or refraining from prayer. Such people have not understood the right concept. The requirement of servitude – or a true servant of God – is valuable in this world for his commitment to the truth.

God says that He has sent His Prophet with the truth (“*bi’l-haqq*” - 2:119), but He also warns that “*Had he faked any sayings in Our Name, We would have surely seized him by the right hand and then cut off his aorta*”

¹ For example, see *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 30, p. 352 where Allamah Majlisi writes:

وَقَدْ رَوَوْهَا جَمِيعاً أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ عَلِيُّ مَعَ الْحَقِّ وَالْحَقُّ مَعَ عَلِيٍّ يَدُورُ مَعَهُ حَيْثُمَا دَاوَرَ.

(69:44-46). Of course, God says about the Prophet, “*Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is naught save a revelation that is revealed*” (53:3-4). There remains no place for anyone to be careless about the truth. When Ali’s honour is with the truth, how is it possible that I, the follower of Ali and Husayn, think I can do or say what I please – or commit sins knowing that Imam Husayn will make it all right – because my masters are great? Your own master, the Apostle, is told that if he says a word in vain, he will be dead. How is that possible or even logical? Is this in agreement with a world based on Truth in which there is nothing false? It’s impossible. What is true is that “*Whoever acts righteously, [whether] male or female, should he be faithful, We shall revive him with a good life...*” (16: 97). Have faith and perform righteous deeds, and do not think too much about our natural shortcomings, that our good deeds are few and imperfect. Strive to be in harmony with the Truth; only then will you be given a helping hand and raised up. But this will not happen if we say, “We will do what we wish and Imam Husayn will make it alright!” Imam Husayn won’t – and cannot – do so. We must follow Husayn and let him colour our thoughts and deeds with the colour from God, indeed “*Whose colour is better than Allah’s?*” (2:138).

Imam Husayn – conditional upon our obedience to God, seeking, telling, and hearing the truth – takes hold of our hands. We must live in such a way that when ordinary people and wise people look at us, they say, “This person reminds us of Imam Husayn. He or she must be his follower.” It would not be enough that a person is a so-called follower of Imam Husayn while his deeds are not similar to his. So if we observe all those points on mourning for Imam Husayn and we share in the hardship he suffered for justice and seeking the truth, we will be rescued and given a high status in sharing in this hardship.

How to be truthful in our mourning

Duties of the speakers and reciters

The first duty: The propagators must speak the truth while preaching. Mirza Husayn Nuri¹ in his *Lu' Lu' Wal Marjān* revealed the many lies said regarding the Battle of Karbala. In a chapter entitled “*On the Etiquettes of the First Step of the Pulpit*,” he emphasizes on the importance of truthfulness of the speakers, reciters, and writers in their narration of the events to ensure that nothing false or baseless is said.

What does truthfulness in speech require? Does it suffice to refrain from fabricating stories or hadiths, and repeat what we have heard or read? That's far from demonstrating one's commitment to truth. According to a hadith, the distance between truth and falsehood – between what is seen and heard – is the width of four fingers, the distance between one's eye and ear.² What we hear from others can be wrong but what we actually see for ourselves is right. We cannot rely solely on what we hear. We must check from whom we have heard it from. We are to ask ourselves ‘Who is that person?’ ‘What is his source?’ ‘How careful have they been?’ ‘How much do they read and investigate the authenticity of the source?’

The second duty: Speaking about a particular issue must be ‘with the truth’ (*bi'l-haqq*); speaking about it must be correct, appropriate, beneficial, and advisable within the correct context to serve the truth since *truth* is a broad concept. Saying something true amongst the Muslims may not be wise if said in a non-Muslim setting, although it would not be a lie. Something said on a pulpit in downtown Tehran may not be right if said in Manchester. No principle states that expressing every fact is advisable,

¹ Author of *Mustadrak Wasā'il al-Shi'a* and the teacher of Sheikh 'Abbas Qummi

² *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 16, p. 379, where Hurr 'Amili narrates from the *Nahj al-Balaghah*:

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْحُسَيْنِ الرَّضِيِّ فِي تَهْجِ الْبَلَاغَةِ عَنْ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ع قَالَ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ مَنْ عَرَفَ مِنْ أَحِبِّهِ وَثِقَةً فِي دِينٍ وَ سَدَادَ طَرِيقٍ فَلَا يَسْمَعَنَّ فِيهِ أَقْوَابِلَ الرِّجَالِ أَمَا إِنَّهُ قَدْ يَزِيهِ الرَّامِي وَ تَخْطِئُ السِّهَامُ وَ يَجِيكُ الْكَلَامُ وَ تَأْجِلُ ذَلِكَ يَنُورُ وَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ وَ شَهِيدٌ (أَلَا إِنَّهُ مَا بَيْنَ الْحَقِّ وَ الْبَاطِلِ) إِلَّا أَرَبْعُ أَصَابِعٍ وَ جَمَعَ أَصَابِعُهُ وَ وَضَعَهَا بَيْنَ أُذُنَيْهِ وَ عَيْنَيْهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ الْبَاطِلُ أَنْ تَقُولَ سَمِعْتُ وَ الْحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُولَ رَأَيْتُ.

even if it proves harmful for people in general or for the faithful in particular. Is it right (*bi'al-haqq*) if I teach physics in a meeting held about ethics? Is it acceptable to do so and justify it by merely saying that whatever I claim is true? Is it right to suddenly tell a mother that her child has just died and describe the entire accident to her? Would I not be guilty if she dies of a heart attack? Is not backbiting – one of the greater sins – expressing a true fact about a faithful person who does not want it to be known? It is misleading to think that every fact can be said to everyone and everywhere. What is said must be correct and useful, and it should fulfil a need.

There are facts about the Household's hardships that must not be said just anywhere since some aspects may be misconstrued. This point is to be taken into consideration for meetings held in non-Muslim countries or non-Shi'a environments. Of course, today communications have become so easy that even if one makes a speech or recite a eulogy, he must be aware that it might be broadcasted throughout the world, since privacy is no longer guaranteed. Nowadays, even information and intelligence agencies cannot keep certain facts or data secret. Today we must be very careful to say what is right, truthful, appropriate, beneficial, and advisable.

Duties of the participants: A participant in a gathering for mourning must truly mourn. We must not sit and watch indifferently when people are mourning; or stare at the speaker only to be distracted from the subject. If we can't cry, the least is to look grief-stricken and feel sad. Crying is the best way to know if we are really connected to Imam Husayn or not. This is a test. You would not cry for someone for whom you feel no pity. Crying can only happen when you're truly sympathetic. You can easily smile or laugh for someone's success, but to cry for someone's suffering needs strong sympathy. It should also be noted that there are people who can cry and even shed tears falsely. For example, it is mentioned in the hadiths that one of the characteristics of the hypocrites is their ability to cry whenever they like. So when you see a crying person, do not instantly think, 'Wow! What a great emotional state!' Of course, there's no need to

be concerned with him, nor assume he is a hypocrite. We are expected to be concerned with our own feelings. Moreover, at the time of mourning, it is better to sit next to unfamiliar people.

The core and essence of mourning: The core of participating in Imam Husayn hardship is to feel sorrowful and heartbroken. We should thank God if we manage to cry; if we do not, we should still thank God that we at least feel grief, and then later reflect on why we cannot cry. There may be several reasons why we cannot cry: sometimes it is because of our love for the worldly affairs (*hubb al-dunya*), and sometimes it is for other reasons that might not necessarily be negative. People are in different emotional states at different times. In any case, grief is the most important thing. We must be very worried if we do not grieve. Of course, sometimes we cannot actually cry. Although this may be alarming, we should not let this by itself worsen our feelings. Be aware and be penitent.

How does one feel sorrowful? It comes through understanding. People may hit themselves without any understanding, but sorrow cannot come without some kind of understanding. A person would not have a burning heart nor would they cry unless they have understanding. However, he might be able to shout, hit himself, and tear his shirt off without knowledge. If there is grief, then the truth of mourning is revealed. And if someone cries, they can be sure that their grief has deepened. Sorrow that reaches perfection will make us cry. Now we can see why so much crying for Imam Husayn, or even pretending to cry, is advised. I cannot remember that beating oneself on the chest, or on the head or with a chain is ever advised in the hadiths. I do not want to attempt to disapprove these things. Actually, I am not going to approve or disapprove them. We might beat ourselves on the chest too (although, in a way which we think is rational). But what is mostly advised in the hadiths? To cry for Imam Husayn. Why? Because crying shows that we have arrived at perfect grief for Imam Husayn. The Ahlul Bayt have taught us that if you cannot not cry, at least pretend to, because it will show that you are sorrowful.

Thus, the core and essence of mourning is sorrow and its perfection is revealed in crying. This can take different forms and shapes in different cultures and ages, but they do not constitute the heart of mourning. Everyone does extra things based on his own customs. Based on their customs, someone might beat himself on the chest; others might sit or walk while mourning; others might recite elegies; and yet another might read texts. People do different things based on their customs. This is not a problem whilst they are not doing anything wrong and improper. But it will not be right if they do something against the Islamic law or morals. You can show your grief in whichever way we want, but be careful that it does not violate any rules of Islam. Do it correctly.

Crying is the sign of perfection of grief. Some years ago, I saw a video clip of Ayatollah Golpaygani about the last days of his life. He was sitting on a chair while listening to a lamentation. It seemed that he had recently come from a journey to another country for treatment (although he passed away a while afterwards). He remained absolutely still, while tears were streaming down his face. I thought to myself, 'How sorrowful this man must be, to cry without moving!' We normally move to be able to cry. Usually there must be a lamentation or recital by a professional lamenter or recite. Of course, this can be good if they say nothing wrong and it can also be helpful. But I saw that he was sitting completely still and his tears were flowing. You might remember Imam Khomeini bitterly wept the moment Hujjat al-Islam Kawthari described the tragic event of Karbala.

So the important point is grief, and its perfection is manifested in crying. If we do something more than this, it might be good, but we should be unsure that everything is done in accordance with Islamic rulings. Do not consider the extras as the main point. Grief and sadness result from understanding.

Outcomes of mourning for Imam Husayn: In Part I of this series, we mentioned that those who truthfully mourn for Imam Husayn can expect the praised position in the Hereafter as said in *Ziyarat Ashura*: "I ask Him

to take me to the praised position (*al-Maqam al-Mahmud*) which you [the Ahl al-Bayt] have before Him.”

So what we would achieve in this world? In a part of *Ziyarat Ashura*, we read: “O Allah, make me at this moment one of those who receive from You blessings, mercy, and forgiveness.” This is what we can achieve right now, in this world. As we are sitting, standing, or mourning, we can achieve divine blessings, mercy, and forgiveness. If we want to know whether we have shared in Imam Husayn’s hardship or not, or if we want to know whether God has accepted our mourning or not, we can reflect on whether we feel divine blessings, mercy, and forgiveness in ourselves.

Blessings: What happens when someone receives divine blessings (*ṣalawāt*)? The Holy Qur’an explains it as follows: “*It is He who blesses you, and so do His angels, that He may bring you out from darknesses into light (33:34).*” If God blesses us, we will leave the darknesses and move into light. Is this not the Goodly Life? The Qur’an tells us that the Goodly Life exists together with light: “*Is he who was lifeless, then We gave him life and provided him with a light by which he walks among the people, like one who dwells in a manifold darknesses which he is not leaving? To the faithless is thus presented as decorous what they have been doing.*” (6:221) Thus, you can achieve the Goodly Life if God accepts your mourning for Imam Husayn.

Another way to achieve light through divine blessings is to send salutations to the Prophet. The Prophet said, “Whoever asks from God blessings (*ṣalawāt*) for me, God will send him blessings.” God gives blessings to those who recite a salawat and as a result, we will be bestowed with light.

True mourning for Imam Husayn should give us light. We should feel like we are coming out of darkness. We should gradually feel like our perspective on everything is changing – that our hearing, speech, mind, heart, behaviour, and intentions are all changing. And this may take time since our spiritual eye is not yet open. The person whose spiritual eye is

open will instantly realize that you have changed after a true mourning for Imam Husayn.

Mercy: We should also be able to receive God's mercy, the main factor in running this world in which the entire creation depends on. The creation of the universe is bound up with God's mercy. There is even mercy where God punishes. The phrase "O' One whose mercy exceeds His wrath!"¹ does not just mean that God will have wrath although His mercy exceeds it. One meaning of it is that because of this mercy, sometimes there is wrath. In short, it can be said that nothing happens without God's mercy. If you and I sit and talk continuously about God's mercy we will cover very little of it.

Among all God's qualities in the Qur'an, God's mercy is by far the most frequently mentioned one. It is a key point that God's mercy is mentioned far more than other attributes of God. After mercy, knowledge and power are the most frequently mentioned qualities. To realize the significance of God's mercy, it suffices to reflect on the Chapter *The Opening (al-Fatiha)*. This short and concise manifesto of Islam describes the essence of Islam; it is the only chapter you cannot pray without: "There is no prayer except with the Opening" (*lā ṣalāta illā bi fātihat al-kitāb*).² In this brief account in which God wants to state the essence of everything, He begins with: "*In the Name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds*" and after this again states: "*The All-Beneficent, the Merciful*". If we are to give a message in a short of time, we might think of cutting redundant parts. But in this short statement, God emphasizes on His mercy four times. And this is in addition to the fact that His lordship is also because of His mercy. Thus, the repetition is because of necessity. The expression "*In the Name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the Merciful*" is the only phrase that has been repeated 114

¹ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 95, p. 232.

² *Mustadrak Wasa'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 4, p. 158.

times in the Qur'an. If we want to know God in Islam, the first aspect to know is that He is the all-Beneficent, the all-Merciful.

One function of God's mercy is that it saves and shelters humanity. The Qur'an says: "*And were it not for God's grace on you and His mercy, you would surely have been among the losers*" (2:64).¹

In contrast, those who are far from divine mercy might commit sins very easily and severely. According to several verses in the Qur'an, 'curse' (*la'n*) refers to being far from God's mercy. It is frequently mentioned in various places that such people's hearts will be sealed, rendering them unable to realize the truth and eventually going astray. One verse reads: "*Indeed those who torment Allah and His Apostle are cursed by Allah in the world and the Hereafter, and He has prepared a humiliating punishment for them.*" (33:57) They will be far from God's mercy in this world; therefore, they are capable of doing any crime or mischief. When we curse the enemies of Imam Husayn, it is not us who withdraw God's mercy; it is mercy that was withdrawn from them to deserve such curses. If mercy had not been withdrawn from them, they would not have committed such hideous crimes. In the Qur'an, the People of Sabbath committed so many wrongdoings that they were cursed (5:13) and were thus transformed into monkeys. The People of Sabbath were not transformed into monkeys just in appearance; their spiritual state was worse. Thus, we should not be surprised by the acts committed by the enemies of Imam Husayn. If someone is not cursed, he would never do such things. So, we should not think that we are cursing them now, that we are informing them about their damnation. Thus, asking God to damn them indeed means that we

¹ In one hadith, concerning those whom are gifted with a son or a daughter, reads: "*A son is blessing (ni'mah) and a daughter is a good deed (hasanah).*" This means that we must take care of our sons because "*Then, that day [the Day of Judgment], you will surely be questioned concerning the blessings*" (102:8); however, a daughter will take care of you and brings Allah's mercy and reward to you. Of course that does not mean that we do not need to take care of our daughters. It means that a daughter attracts the mercy of God towards your family; therefore, your chance of being safe will increase.

acknowledge that they have already been away from His mercy. It also means that humanity is still suffering from their crimes and the crimes of their allies throughout the history; therefore, we ask God to withdraw His mercy and abandon them so that no further harm occurs as a result of their actions.

In the Qur'an we read: *"Indeed those who torment God and His Apostle are cursed by God in the world and the Hereafter, and He has prepared a humiliating punishment for them."* (33:57) Indeed, one way to torment Prophet Muhammad was to hurt his children, let alone kill them.¹ Those who fought and then killed Imam Husayn and other members of the Ahlul Bayt on the day of Ashura were cursed.

Thus, mercy protects us and it promotes people. The divinity of God is because of mercy. It is the opposite to damnation.

As said before, a request in *Ziyarat Ashura* reads, "O Allah, make me at this moment the one who receives from You blessings, mercy, and forgiveness." Saying "and forgiveness" is another way of asking Allah to forgive us, bestow light upon us, wipe away past sins, and protect us from committing further sins. If we truly mourn for Imam Husayn, our sins would be forgiven, we would be able to better resist against our lusts and lower desires, and we would express more eagerness to pray and do good deeds. This should start at the same time we are engaged in mourning as we read, "O Allah, make me at this moment one of those who receive from You blessings, mercy, and forgiveness."

Thus, the essence of mourning is grief; there are various ways to express it, though crying is the best form. These different forms and expressions can

¹According to the hadiths narrated by both Shi'a and Sunni scholars, one way to upset Prophet Muhammad was to upset his daughter. Bukhari quotes Prophet Muhammad as saying:

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْوَلِيدِ، حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ عُيَيْنَةَ، عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ دِينَارٍ، عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي مُلَيْكَةَ، عَنِ الْمِسْوَرِ بْنِ مَخْرَمَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: فَاطِمَةُ بَضْعَةٌ مِنِّي، فَمَنْ أَغْضَبَهَا أَغْضَبَنِي

Fatima is a part of me, and he who makes her angry, makes me angry. (*Sahih* of Bukhari, vol. 5, Book 57, Hadith No. 61)

vary from culture to culture or from age to age, but the essence must remain the same and nothing against Islamic rulings should take place in the process. For example, we cannot mourn for Imam Husayn in a way that it could harm our body or damage the reputation and image of the school of the Ahlul Bayt.

Moreover, we must not forget Imam Husayn's advice about mourning. According to Abī Makhnaf,¹ Imam Husayn glanced at his sister and said, 'My sister, do not let Satan take your patience.'² Then Lady Zaynab again fell unconscious and afterwards regained consciousness. Imam Husayn sprinkled water on his sister's face and told her, "My sister, seek piety and have self-control through the assurance God has given to the patient ... My sister, I want you swear [notice the Imam makes his sister swear an oath] and be loyal to what I say: When I pass away, do not scrape your face and tear your clothes."

However, there is nothing wrong with crying. Imam Ridha told Ibn Shabīb, "Whenever you cry, [you should] cry for Imam Husayn."³ No one criticizes crying; indeed, it is highly recommended. Unfortunately, some mourning sessions include inappropriate customs that should be avoided. Anything contrary to what Imam Husayn told his sister is wrong. Lady Zaynab is Umm al-Masā'ib [the mother of hardships], although Imam Husayn asked her to swear not to do such things. No further proof is necessary. Whoever they may be, no-one should do what Imam Husayn prohibited his sister from doing.

Such actions are unjustifiable; those who commit to such customs may not realize what they are doing and thus do not feel responsible. Before every

¹ *Abī Makhnaf's Maqatal* – which is the oldest and perhaps the most authentic chronology

² This is following the event where Imam Husayn recited the poem:

كم لك بالإشراق والأصيل	يا دهر أف لك من خليل
والدهر لا يقنع بالبدليل	من صاحب أو طالب قتيل
وكلل حي سالك سبيل	وانما الأمر إلى الجليل

and Lady Zaynab fell unconscious and then she awoke.

³ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 44, p. 285 & vol. 98, p. 102.

gathering – and perhaps one should leave during a session while being overcome with grief – we are to reflect, perform ablution (*wudu*), perform two units (*rak'ats*), and be conscious of our actions. God's says regarding prayer: "...Do not approach prayer when you are intoxicated..." (4:43) indicates that we are expected to think before we speak and act. Prayer is the pillar of religion. The verse continues: "...until you know what you are saying..." (4:43). Thus, we are expected to pray but at the same time we must make sure that we understand what we are saying, and this requires awareness. When I'm not conscious of my speech and feel my emotions are overpowering me, I should step down from the pulpit. Though it is alright to be overwhelmed with grief, the speaker should end the speech and recitation once he feels he might say or do something wrong, such as tearing his dress or injuring himself. He should not use the excuse of being overcome by his emotions to validate saying or doing unjustifiable things during a normal state of mind. We can't give ourselves the excuse by thinking it is done with pure intentions, for surely Lady Zaynab's intentions were pure, although Imam Husayn still asked her to swear not to cry in an inappropriate manner.

Therefore, mourning for Imam Husayn will bring light to our lives and bestow on us the Goodly Life. Though some say love for Imam Husayn has made them mad, love and mourning for Imam Husayn should actually render "mad" people intelligent, intelligent people wiser, help them cure the sick and bring humanity back to those who do not live a human life. Devotion to God and love for His true servants bring light, wisdom, knowledge, and life.

Imam Husayn is a great Divine blessing bestowed on humanity by God and we are responsible to refrain from anything that saddens Imam Mahdi. As Shi'as, we must not do anything that would displease or confuse a non-Shi'a person when he attends our gathering. If we are heedless about this and other inappropriate actions, we might dim the light of Imam Husayn. The light of Imam Husayn must reach every corner. Why are we becoming like veils covering that light?

THE CAUSE OF THE ASHURA UPRISING: A QUR'ANIC PERSPECTIVE

ISMAT YAZDI

TRANSLATED BY ZAINAB MUHAMMED

ABSTRACT: The Battle of Karbala in which Imam Husayn rose up against the Umayyad caliph Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah is replete with moral lessons laid out in the Qur'an. Imam Husayn's actions revealed his profound understanding of the Qur'an as taught by his parents and grandfather, the Prophet of Islam. This article demonstrates the actions on the Day of Ashura as a reflection of several Qur'anic principles, namely obedience and submission only to God, being free, using the Prophet's way of life as a paradigm for all, commanding right and forbidding wrong, resisting against oppression, rejecting a life of humiliation, and establishing justice. The Imam's accomplishments on that day provided a set of guidelines for all future generations to follow.

There is much literature available about the role of Imam Husayn's revolution, but an independent work on his motives for doing so from a Qur'anic perspective can hardly be found. The aim of this article is not only to give an account of a historical event, a report of the Imam's life, or a study about his characteristics; rather, it is a small effort to explain that Imam Husayn's life, actions, flesh, and blood echoed the morals taught in the Qur'an. Imam Husayn – with his profound understanding of the Qur'an attained during his childhood as taught by the Prophet and under the upbringing of his parents Imam Ali and Lady Fatima – showed that

the higher values of the Qur'an are practical lessons. In this article, we will investigate the uprising of Imam Husayn to discover and illustrate the principles of the Husayni revolution.

With this outlook, we will examine the sayings of Imam Husayn in which he addressed both friends and foes during his journey from Medina to Mecca, and from Mecca to Karbala to understand the Imam's courage, spirituality, and his humane character. In addition, this course will be able us to recognize the Qur'anic principles and foundations that formed the basis of several motives behind the Imam's eternal uprising, thus striving to achieve what is known in the Qur'an as *insight*, or *basirat*.

The lessons behind the Imam's uprising are backed by Qur'anic teachings, some of which are mentioned below:

- His refusal to pay allegiance to Yazid ibn Muawiyeh
- The relationship between the concept of freedom in the Qur'an and Imam Husayn's uprising
- Protecting the Sunnah and preventing heresy
- Following in the footsteps of the Prophet and Ali ibn Abi Taleb
- Enjoining what is good and forbidding what is wrong
- Resistance and defense
- Protecting one's honour and rejecting lowliness
- Establishing justice

A brief description of the above-mentioned points and their background from the Qur'an, hadith, and historical texts is offered below.

Refusal to pay allegiance

After Mu'awiyah's death, forcing the Imam to pay allegiance to Yazid and the Imam's refusal to do so triggered the revolution. Two forms of allegiance have been mentioned in the Qur'an: 1) to obey and submit to God and his Prophet, which is an affirmative form of allegiance. This has

been mentioned in verses 10 and 18 of Chapter *Fat'h* in the form of paying allegiance to the Prophet, and 2) refusing to pay allegiance to the unbelievers or the hypocrites. Therefore, Imam Husayn's refusal in paying allegiance to Yazid was based on the following command from God:

And do not obey the faithless and the hypocrites, and disregard their torments, and put your trust in Allah, and Allah suffices as trustee. (Ahzab 33:48)

There are many reasons and witnesses that prove Yazid to be a disbeliever, and it was based on the above reasons that Imam Husayn did not pay allegiance to him. The Imam said, "If the Islamic nation were to be caught up by the leadership and control of someone like Yazid, then we must bid farewell to Islam."

Freedom

Liberation of the people was one of the principles of the Prophet's agenda, as mentioned in the following verse:

—those who follow the Apostle, the uninstructed prophet, whose mention they find written with them in the Torah and the Evangel, who bids them to do what is right and forbids them from what is wrong, makes lawful to them all the good things and forbids them from all vicious things, and relieves them of their burdens and the shackles that were upon them —those who believe in him, honour him, and help him and follow the light that has been sent down with him, they are the felicitous. (A'raf 7:157)

Indeed, it was mission of all the prophets and messengers of God to assist people in attaining true freedom, and to guide them towards serving none other than Him. As a result, there is a proportional relationship between being a servant of God and freedom: a person's freedom increases depending on the intensity of his servitude to God. Our lusts prevent us from reaching internal freedom; they tie us up, resulting in our inability to

taste the external or social freedom. Imam Ali warns, “Do not be the slave of any other; indeed, God has made you free.”

One of the most beautiful features in the event of Karbala is the spirit of freedom and its outcomes as revealed by Imam Husayn. The Imam’s understanding of freedom reaches such a peak that he no longer feared death. In his sermon in Mina, Imam Husayn likened death to the necklace for young girls and said that he was eager to see the Prophet and his father and ancestors in the same way that Jacob was eager to see Joseph.¹

On the day of Ashura when the severely injured Imam Husayn witnessed the enemy’s attacks his family’s tents, while barely managing to get up, said: “O followers of the family of Sufyan!² If you do not have a religion or if you do not fear the Day of Resurrection then at least be free (*ahrar*) in your world[ly life].” This message was said from the place where he was martyred; he addressed all people of all times by implying that freedom and nobleness are crucial in having a religion. Nonetheless, to be free is essential for all people whether they have a religion or not.

Protecting the Sunnah

Imam Husayn's uprising protected the Sunnah and prevented deviation. In the Qur'an, God reveals the Prophet's high status by introducing him as a role model for people to use his way of life and traditions as a paradigm for their own lives:

In the Apostle of Allah there is certainly for you a good exemplar, for those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day, and remember Allah greatly. (33:21)

In one of his letters to the tribal leaders of Basra, Imam Husayn wrote: “I invite you to the book of God and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Indeed the Sunnah of the Prophet has been left to perish and heresy has come to life.”

¹ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 44, p. 366

² Sufyan: Yazid's grandfather

In his first sermon on the plains of Karbala, Imam Husayn announced that his uprising was to defend the truth and uproot falsehood. He said, “Do you not see that the truth is no longer acted upon and falsehood is not refrained from?”

In relation to the escalation of heresy in society, the Prophet had said, “When heresy becomes prevalent in my nation, the knowledgeable must make his knowledge known and whosoever does not do this, God’s curse would be upon him.” According to this saying, Imam Husayn felt responsible to protect the religion and the Islamic nation from destruction.

During Muawiyah’s era, heretical ideas and manners penetrated into various institutions, such as government, economy, social life, and religious thinking. For example, he changed the caliphate system into a monarchy and introduced the act of cursing Imam Ali in the mosques and from the pulpits; those who refused to curse Imam Ali were sentenced to death. In order to change the people’s mindset, Muawiyah tried to influence the opinion makers of his time, and as a result two groups appeared from amongst the *Murji’ah*³ and those who believed in predestination (*jabriyun*). The beliefs of these two groups enabled the Bani Umayyah to justify their actions. It was in such a situation that Imam Husayn expressed his deep concern. To break the condition and to cut off the trend, there was no other method but to rise up to fight against deviation and accept martyrdom. This was to revive the Sunnah and combat heresies.

Following in the footsteps of the Prophet

In his will, Imam Husayn wrote, “I am moving along the path of my grandfather and father.” Imam Husayn’s moral conduct revolved around the conduct of his grandfather, the Prophet, and his father, Imam Ali.

³ Murji’ah (Arabic المرجئة) is an early Islamic school, whose followers are known in English language as Murjites or Murji’ites. Murjites advocated the idea of deferred judgement of peoples’ belief. They also put little emphasis on actions, compared to faith and this practically led to some kind of carelessness about avoiding sins and performing obligations.

Consequently, one of the ways to understand the Imam's personality is to know the Prophet's conduct.

Enjoining what is good and forbidding what is wrong

In his will, Imam Husayn stated, "I intend to instruct people to do right and forbid them from wrongdoing." These two obligations are of the most significant instructions of Islam, emphasized both in the Qur'an and hadiths: "*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.*" (*Ale Imran*, 104) The word 'nation' in this verse does not refer to the entire Islamic society; rather, it refers to the group of elite scholars from amongst the Islamic nation who must oversee the affairs of the society as their responsibility. One interpretation of "goodness" in the abovementioned verse refers to Muslim unity and harmony amongst them. Society must have a group who invites Muslims towards unity and alliance at all times, and stand up against any form of disunity. These two orders stand as the spirit of society, and if they were to ever disappear, all moral principles would lose its value.

In many verses of the Qur'an and Prophetic hadith⁴ fighting in the face of oppression, corruption, and aggression (*jihad*) is deemed necessary because it guarantees Islam's continuation and the establishment of security. It is for this that Imam Husayn rose up according to God's command and the instructions of the Prophet:

And wage jihād for the sake of Allah, a jihād which is worthy of Him. He has chosen you and has not placed for you any obstacle in the religion, the faith of your father, Abraham. He named you 'muslims' before, and in this,1 so that the Apostle may be a witness to you, and that you may be witnesses to mankind. So maintain the prayer, give thezakāt, and hold fast to Allah. He is your

⁴ Traditions narrated from the Prophet

master — an excellent master and an excellent helper.
(22:78)

Resistance and defense

In the Qur'an, *jihad* (fighting in the way of God), has been ordained to fight against deviation, and not as a means to gain power. In fact, jihad is to resist against oppression: “*And fight in the Way of Allah [against] those who fight you, but do not Exceed the limits; for verily, Allah Does not like the transgressors.*”⁵

In the Qur'an, the barriers in causing jihad have been mentioned in verse 24 of the chapter *al-Tawbah*:

Say, ‘If your fathers and your sons, your brethren, your spouses, and your kinsfolk, the possessions that you have acquired, the business you fear may suffer, and the dwellings you are fond of, are dearer to you than Allah and His Apostle and to waging jihād in His way, then wait until Allah issues His edict, and Allah does not guide the transgressing lot.

Imam Husayn was cut off from all worldly attachments, and his jihad was purely for the sake of God. The result of this jihad as mentioned in the Qur'an is ‘*a great victory.*’

Protecting one’s honour and rejecting lowliness

Honour is one of the most fundamental values in Islam. It is a person’s honour that makes him strong and unbreakable. If a person becomes honourable by means of God’s honour, then he would be impenetrable when facing falsehood and sins, and strong and unwavering on his journey to the truth. Imam Husayn is the founder of a school of thought that instructs a person to struggle until death when striving for Godly aims; on this path, death is an honour and the means for a successful everlasting

⁵ Baqarah 2:190

life. Before the event of Karbala, the Imam said, “To die with honour is better than to live with inferiority.” On the day of Ashura, he said, “This immoral man (‘Ubaydallah ibn Ziyad) has forced me to choose either losing my life or losing my honour. It is impossible for us to accept losing our honour (هيات منا الله).” Indeed, this uprising was an example of fighting for the truth and for freedom.

Establishment of the truth

Another aim behind the uprising of Ashura was to improve the social situation of the Muslims and to establish justice and equality. In some verses, the establishment of these two notions has been presented as the aim of sending prophets:

*Indeed We sent Our Messengers with Signs and Miracles and revealed to them Books of Religion and gave them The Criterion for establishing justice among the people. And We provided Iron wherein is strength to be used in Making arms for the war and also there Are other benefits in it for the people. And Allah makes known those who help Allah, the Unseen and also His Messengers in the Path of the Truth. Verily, Allah is the Invincible Supreme power.*⁶

Carrying out justice in society is so important that the Prophet said, “A kingdom can remain with disbelief but it will not remain with oppression.” Therefore, a society under a just government will remain. The Prophet also said, “The lowest of people in the eyes of God is the one who reaches the position of ruling over the Muslims but does not establish justice in them.”

At the end of Imam Husayn’s letter to the people of Kufa, he explains the characteristics of a leader and guide:

⁶ Hadeed 57:25

An Imam is someone who acts according to the Qur'an. He stands up to ensure that everyone receives his or her due right, that racism is non-existent, and that every individual should have his own position and responsibility in society. He should not deviate from the right path, and this should all be done for the pleasure of God.

Overall, Imam Husayn's take on justice is in fact a reflection of Qur'anic teachings; justice is the soul of a society and a nation can only stand firm if justice flows in its every corner. The mission of separating the truth from falsehood and justice from oppression has always been a great undertaking, and Imam Husayn's uprising was a complete manifestation of this crucial Godly mission.

MIRACLES AND THE PRINCIPLE OF CAUSALITY: CHRISTIAN AND SHI'A PERSPECTIVES

HANIEH TARKIAN

ABSTRACT: The issue of miracles has always been a controversial one, both in theology, philosophy, and science. Most of the philosophers' and scientists' objections against miracles are founded on their claim of miracles being contrary to nature or breaking the laws of nature and the principle of causality. In this paper, I will briefly mention these objections and quote responses and explanations from both the Christian and Shi'a perspectives, and I will conclude that miracles are not against the principle of causality.

Introduction

In proving the necessity of religion, it is established that reason and experience do not suffice human beings in achieving happiness in this world and in the Hereafter. Therefore, revelation is needed. However, how can the reliability of the claim of a Prophet be proven?

The Prophet must prove his claim by showing his link to God, and this is where the importance of miracles and their theological value becomes clear.

Based on this from an Islamic perspective, a miracle can be defined as “*An act contrary to the (normal) course of nature, depending upon the power of God. It has two characteristics: a) it cannot be taught and learnt, and b) it cannot be overpowered by another factor.*”¹ In the case of Prophets, a miracle is accompanied by a claim of prophethood.²

According to Islam, the Qur’an is the most important and eternal miracle of the Prophet Muhammad, and the main proof on which the truthfulness of his claim of Prophethood is based.

The Western philosophical perspective on the general concept of miracle is quite similar. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* defines it as follows:

A miracle (from the Latin *mirari*, to wonder), at a first and very rough approximation, is an event that is not explicable by natural causes alone. A reported miracle excites wonder because it appears to require, as its cause, something beyond the reach of human action and natural causes. Historically, the appeal to miracles has formed one of the primary lines of argument in favor of specific forms of theism, the argument typically being that the event in question can best (or can only) be explained as the act of a particular deity.³

According to Thomas Aquinas a miracle is that which is caused by God:

Now a miracle is so called as being full of wonder; as having a cause absolutely hidden from all, and this cause is God. Wherefore those things which God does outside those causes which we know are called miracles.⁴

¹ Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi, *Rah wa Rahnamashenasi*, p. 61.

² Ibid.

³ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/miracles/>

⁴ *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 105, a. 7.

Thus, it seems that in Christianity miracles are important as well given that they show the presence of God and His will to save human beings from perdition:

A miracle points to an eruption of God in history. It is a sign whose aim is not to astonish human beings by provoking their admiration, but to show them all of His saving love in freeing them from sin and death. Comprehending the meaning of a Christian miracle is not limited to demonstrating God is among us but also seeks to make it genuinely understood that God is for us.⁵

According to Christianity, a *miracle* par excellence is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and other miracles are important “in reference to that which they reveal about Jesus Christ, and to that which Jesus Christ reveals through them.”⁶

Objections against miracles

Baruch Spinoza, a modern philosopher, had a pantheistic vision in which God and nature coincide, which led him to deny the “exceptional” or “contrary to nature” aspect of miracles. This is because for him the activity of nature coincides with the activity of God. The immutability of natural laws is such that even when they break from their course, this breaking away is itself not a violation of normal behavior, but rather a manifestation of a necessary behavior. Consequently, according to Spinoza, miracles are an absurdity.⁷

Section X of David Hume’s *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding* in 1748 argues that if rational people have a choice to believe more than one explanation of an event, they should choose to

⁵ INTERS – Interdisciplinary Encyclopedia of Religion and Science, edited by G. Tanzella-Nitti and A. Strumia, www.inters.org/miracle

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise*, Part II, Chapter VI.

believe the most probable explanation. Hume then argues that miracles are by definition implausible:

A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature. [...] There must, therefore, be a uniform experience against every miraculous event; otherwise the event would not merit that appellation. And as a uniform experience amounts to a proof, there is here a direct and full proof, from the nature of the fact, against the existence of any miracle.⁸

Hume further argues that because the only evidence offered for miracles is eyewitness testimony, and eyewitnesses may be wrong, any reasonable man would assume the eyewitness testimony in error rather than believe an abrogation of something as consistent throughout time as natural law (Hume believed in the rigid immutability of the laws of nature, although he negated the principle of causality).

In the corresponding entry of his *Philosophical Dictionary*, Voltaire speaks of miracles as a “*contradictio in terminis*” (or “an intrinsic contradiction”). They are a kind of “insult to God” because they ascribe to God the task of correcting by means of His miraculous interventions, that which He himself has created and brought into existence. Prior to Voltaire, Bayle had developed analogous arguments. According to these authors, God is seen as merely the architect of the universe and the guarantor of the laws of nature.

Christian response

In response to objections against miracles, Christian philosophers and theologians have always tried to explain miracles in a reasonable way. The mentioned objections had actually already been considered by Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) and centuries before by Augustine (354-430) who

⁸ <http://www.davidhume.org/texts/ehu.html>, SBN 114-115.

had offered a partial solution by simply recalling that the “rule” of nature is God Himself. Augustine says:

There is, however, no impropriety in saying that God does a thing contrary to nature, when it is contrary to what we know of nature. For we give the name ‘nature’ to the usual common course of nature, and whatever God does contrary to this, we call it a prodigy, or a miracle.⁹

Interestingly, Augustine suggests that besides their natural constituents, creatures also possess certain seminal elements (*seminales rationes*) which God can stimulate into operation, contrary to the creature’s ordinary mode of activity, and that in some instances miracles were simply speeded up natural developments, whereas other miracles arise from unknown causes hidden in God. Augustine argues that miracles do not conflict with the creation-order, since both usual and unusual events in nature are the expression of God’s will.¹⁰

The Augustinian concept of miracle remained standard in the Church until the time of Thomas Aquinas, whose definition of miracle is mentioned in the introduction. He also states:

A miracle properly so called is when something is done outside the order of nature. But it is not enough for a miracle if something is done outside the order of any particular nature; for otherwise anyone would perform a miracle by throwing a stone upwards, as such a thing is outside the order of the stone’s nature. So for a miracle is required that it be against the order of the whole created nature. But God alone can do this, because whatever an angel or any other creature does by its own power is

⁹ <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/140626.htm>, *Contra Faustum*, XXVI.3.

¹⁰ Chris Gousmett, *Miracles: Signs of the Kingdom Coming*, <http://gousmett.webs.com/articles.htm>.

according to the order of created nature; and thus it is not a miracle. Hence God alone can work miracles.¹¹

Developing the thought of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas believed that the work of God can never be said to be against nature “since the order of nature is given to things by God; if He does anything outside this order, it is not against nature. Wherefore Augustine says [Contra Faustum XXVI, 3]:

That is natural to each thing which is caused by Him Who disposed all things in nature by measure, number, and order’ [...]. God fixed a certain order in things in such a way that at the same time He reserved to Himself whatever He intended to do otherwise than by a particular cause. So when He acts outside this order, He does not change.¹²

Moreover, Aquinas proposes that miracles are not the effect of a changeable will, but a kind of interplay between the action of God in His ordinary Providence and the action of God outside of it, without creating tension or contradiction in the divine work:

God does not act by going against the laws of nature on account of a changeable will: God indeed from all eternity had foreseen and wished to do that which He works in time. Therefore, He fixed the course of nature in such a way as to order beforehand in His eternal will that at times He would have acted contrary to such a course. In acting by going beyond the course of nature, God does not totally eliminate the order of the universe, in which lies

¹¹ *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 110, a. 4.

¹² *Ibid.* I, q. 105, a. 6, ad 1um and ad 3um.

His goodness, but only the ordering of a particular cause to its effect.¹³

Today, the opinions of Christian and Catholic theologians in particular in defense of miracles are for the most part based on Aquinas' perspective.

On the other hand, in more recent times, there have been theologians and scientists who have tried to explain miracles in a way that can be accepted by science. For example, some prefer to think of an action of God "by means of" the laws of nature rather than by endorsing the idea of an action "contrary to" or "above" the behavior of nature. According to the Biblicist X. Léon-Dufour:

God gives origin to the world. He does not contradict it: He is in fact its author and restorer. From a biblical point of view, one cannot see a miracle as a 'deviation from the laws of nature' because that would result in placing God the Creator in contradiction with Himself. To seek to make God a 'first cause' which supplants the 'second causes' would be comparable to placing Him at the outskirts of the world and in competition with the natural elements.¹⁴

Some others observe that the conduct of nature is more complex and creative than could be imagined in the past.

Some affirm that scientific analysis leaves ample room for unpredictability and indetermination. Physical and biological processes do not operate according to rigid and immutable laws but occur within a world of relations and interactions that are impossible to determine and know in depth. Thus, the miracle would be an action of nature and by means of nature.

¹³ *De Potentia*, q. 6, a. 1, ad 6um and 7um.

¹⁴ *I miracoli di Gesù secondo il Nuovo Testamento*, p. 24, Brescia, 1980.

According to some thinkers, science can speak about miracles as a series of coincidences of phenomena, which are by themselves wholly natural, but in their unexpected yet coordinated occurrence bear the sign and the intentional message of a personal Creator.

Finally, there are those who think what would externally appear to be a miracle would in reality be solely a subjective sensation caused by God's influence upon our psychic or sensible sphere. However, a Christian writer says:

If the preceding ideas seem to have the advantage of presenting miracles in terms more intelligible to the scientific mentality, their consequence is that theology would no longer need to be concerned with empirical observation as one of the means for discerning a miracle. If science 'explains' or 'will explain' that which theology calls miracles, they would no longer have any role in the dynamics of preparation for the faith or in the economy of divine revelation. Miracles would not be a "new" creative action of God, different from that through which He creates and maintains all things in existence.¹⁵

Thus, many Christian theologians believe miracles are reasonable because God is the creator of the universe and He may sometimes act in a way that we cannot understand. It seems to be contrary to the normal course of nature, although this does not contradict the rules that He Himself has established.

¹⁵ INTERS – Interdisciplinary Encyclopedia of Religion and Science, edited by G. Tanzella-Nitti and A. Strumia, www.inters.org/miracle (most of this part of the present essay has been taken from this article).

Responses by Shi'a scholars***- Allamah Tabatabai's point of view***

Allamah Tabatabai analyzes the concept of miracle in his *Tafsir al-Mizan*, exegesis of verses 2:21-25. According to Allamah, the Qur'an repeatedly asserts the occurrence of miracles. A miracle is defined as an unusual preternatural phenomenon, which shows the authority of metaphysical forces over the physical and material world.

He affirms that the efforts some people make to explain miracles to fit the Qur'an into principles of modern physical sciences are unacceptable, as they are a forced burden on language and the Qur'an, which clearly reports miracles as events contrary to the normal course of nature.

The Qur'an says that in this natural world every effect has a cause; thus, it takes the principle of causality for granted when it speaks of life, death, sustenance, and other heavenly or earthly phenomena, although it ultimately ascribes all the effects and their causes too, to God (who is a Cause Himself).

The Qur'an, nevertheless, narrates many events that go against the normal system of cause-and-effect. However, miracles are not unknown to nature. According to Allamah, there are only two differences between a natural event and a miraculous one:

First, in a natural event, the material causes and their effects can be seen, whereas in a miraculous one it cannot.

Second, it is in the speed and steps required to reach the goal. A material cause brings about its effect, in special conditions, at a particular time and space, step by step, in a long series of changes. But when it comes to a miracle, the effect happens without any lapse of time by the will of God. And since we can not see the procedure, we assume it happened without a cause, although this is not the case.

It is not within the main purposes of the Qur'an to identify any cause that would explain all natural and super-natural events; however, it affirms that every material phenomenon has a material cause and it is entirely dependent on God, Who has appointed for it a certain procedure a material cause through which it acquires its existence. However, the belief in the absolute power of God leads us to accept that He is not limited and He has His own way to let a thing happen.

Thus, Allamah affirms that this may possibly happen in two ways: 1) God may bring that thing into being simply by His will, or 2) there may be an alternative cause unknown to us. According to Allamah, this second possibility seems more appropriate in view of the verse "*God indeed has made a measure for everything*" (65:3). This verse shows that every effect, whether it is in accordance with the normal causality or not, has a measure appointed by God; thus, the cause and effect relation is not independent of God. He can attain His purpose through any way He wishes, and for this reason, no academic or scientific theory is capable of explaining all phenomena of the world; it is really as God knows, makes, and manages it.

The Qur'an, while affirming the causal relation between a cause and its effect, ascribes every effect to God. The real cause, in the true sense of this word, is only God. No one else can handle something except by His power; He allows whomsoever He wishes to manage, influence, and affect it to a certain extent. But this divine permission, establishing the relation of causality, does not make that cause independent of God; it is a permission given by the real owner to use his property.

Then Allamah proves the influence of the Prophets' souls on supernatural events through the verse "*... and it was not meet for an apostle that he should bring a sign except with God's permission; but when the command of God came, judgment was given with truth, and those who treated (it) as a lie were lost*" (40:78). In this verse, it was the apostle who brought the sign by permission of God: his soul was given a special power to cause the miracle, and that causal power, like all other causes, created its effect with

God's permission. However, He has made it clear that the cause found in His Apostles, Prophets, and believers is predominant over all other causes, and it can never be overpowered: *"And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the Apostles: Most surely they shall be the assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone shall be the victorious ones."* (37:171-173) - *"I will most certainly prevail, I and My apostle ..."* (58:21)

Allamah further explains that events may be either natural or supernatural, and the supernatural may be good, i.e. a miracle; or evil, such as magic and sooth-saying. But all of them come into being through natural causes and depend on the will of God. In other words, they cannot come into being unless the natural cause coincides, or becomes one, with the permission and command of God. All things are equal in this respect. But when a Prophet brings about a miracle – an additional factor which is the decisive command of God – the desired effect or event unfailingly comes into being: *"I will most certainly prevail, I and My apostles."* (58:21)

Thus, Allamah concludes that miracles, like other natural and supernatural events, need a material cause; however, in miracles this cause is not a normal and usual one. It cannot be seen or felt. Furthermore, miracles have an additional quality: they can never be overpowered, as they are always accompanied by the decisive command of God.

Then Allamah answers the following question: It is strange to say that a miracle is caused by a natural cause. Suppose we discover the real natural cause of a miracle; will it not then be possible for us to create that miracle? If yes, then a miracle is not a proof except against him who is ignorant of its natural cause; therefore, it cannot be put as evidence of the truth of a prophet's claim.

He replies that the miraculousness of a miracle does not depend on the unknowability of its cause; nor is it a miracle because it emanates from an extraordinary or mysterious cause. It is a miracle because it is brought about by such an extraordinary cause which is invincible and cannot be

defeated. Allamah gives the example of a critically ill person, who, all of a sudden, is cured by the prayers of a believer. This cure is a miraculous event because it emanates from an invincible cause. We know that a patient cured by medical treatment is a normal process; but this cause – the medical treatment – could be foiled by other more powerful factors, and that is why it is not called a miracle.

Therefore, according to Allamah, there is no reason to say that miracles are against the principle of causality. They, in fact, have a cause, and the main point on which he insists is that miracles cannot be overpowered because they are accompanied by God's will. Allamah emphasizes very much on the fact that God is the real cause of everything, and this is real faith in monotheism (*tawhid* - in particular, *tawhid* in actions). The belief that the causes are dependent on God in their existence but not in their being a cause is not monotheism; this instead would result in a belief in some kind of independence for them. Furthermore, according to Allamah, even if God has given them the power to cause an effect, He can take away this power from them whenever He wants. Moreover, some causes are given a power of causality that can be overpowered by other factors, though the causes of miracles cannot be overpowered by any other factor.

- *Ayatollah Misbah's viewpoint*

Ayatollah Misbah's point of view is similar to Allamah's:

First, he asserts that both in philosophy and the Qur'an, the principle of causality is accepted and takes no exceptions.

Second, empirical sciences cannot prove that for a certain effect there is just one cause, which is the one that they have discovered, unless they could make experiments on all the cases in the universe, which is impossible.

Then Ayatollah Misbah affirms that miracles are certainly not against the principle of causality because God is their cause in the first place. In that case, we have two possibilities: either their cause can be natural, which, as

we said, is not impossible because science cannot discover all causes; or the cause is supernatural, and this cannot be denied or excluded from a scientific point of view.

Therefore, a) there can exist supernatural and immaterial causes¹⁶ for natural effects: science cannot prove that this is impossible because the immaterial world cannot be empirically experienced, and b) the souls of Prophets or Imams can be the cause of miracles.¹⁷

Hence, Ayatollah Misbah does not see any contradiction between miracles and the principle of causality. For him it is clear that for some effects there can be causes that cannot be experienced empirically.

Conclusion

For both Christian and Shi'a theologians, there is no contradiction between miracles and the principle of causality. The perspectives are summed up as follows: God is the Creator of the Universe who has set up the rules and manages the Universe. This is the pure monotheism in which we believe. Based on some of these rules, phenomena may sometimes be caused by factors – either natural or supernatural – that our experience cannot explain. Through miracles, which are accompanied by the decisive will of God and cannot be overpowered, God reminds us of His absolute power. Shi'a scholars emphasize that miracles also show His support to the Prophets for people to trust their claim of Prophethood. He therefore accomplishes His promise and duty to provide us with guidance towards eternal happiness.

The majority of the scholars of both religions state that the efforts of some people to explain miracles in a way to make them fit the principles of modern sciences are unacceptable. Interestingly, both Augustine and Allamah Tabatabai suggest that miracles may be the effects of speeded up

¹⁶ The main example of a material effect created by an immaterial cause is the universe itself, which was created by God (Mohammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi, *Rah wa Rahnamashenasi*, p. 64)

¹⁷ Mohammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi, *Khodashenasi*, p. 133ff.

natural processes, and this can be a subject of further study in the field of comparative theology.

MAN AND THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL LIFE ACCORDING TO *TAFSIR AL-MIZAN*

MUHAMMAD AKWAN¹

TRANSLATED BY MAHBOOBEH MORSHEDIAN

ABSTRACT: Man is like the rest of the creatures of the world; the difference lies in his possession of intellect and thought while other creatures lack these abilities. In addition, his social living and his formation of society are primary elements in his life. However, man has not shifted from individual life to the social life; he has *an intrinsic tendency to live socially*. What made man live a social life and interact with others is to meet the natural needs of his daily life and to benefit from the intellectual achievements and endeavours of others to live better and grow both materially and spiritually. The natural needs and the endeavours made to attain them are considered as the main sources of the formation of human society. This article investigates the viewpoint of Allamah Tabatabai on the characteristics of man, particularly his social life, the origin of the human society, and man's tendency to establish social justice.

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Statement of the Problem

Throughout history, people have explored many issues, pondered on them, and reached useful and influential conclusions. Not only has the natural environment belonged to this innovative thinking as well as this precise and intelligent contemplation, but people have also paid attention to metaphysics and the intangible world that is secure from sensory experience. By doing so, people have provided themselves and others the precious asset of knowledge and cognition. In addition, they have not neglected themselves, their relation with society, kinship, lifestyle, and administration of justice in group relations. Knowledge of man and his lifestyle, his interactions with others, his relation with the natural environment, the interplay between him and them, and his relation with God and the universe has been studied not only by philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists, but has also been focused on by the divine religions, particularly Islam and its divine book, the Qur'an. Qur'anic commentators paid special attention to research on human nature and man's social and moral life:

Knowing the nature of man which is comprised of both body and soul, knowing immateriality, and the way it is related to material body, being aware of the true perfection of man and how to achieve and guide men into it are all among the issues included in the knowledge about man (theological anthropology). The best way to learn about these issues and principles is to make use of the word of the Qur'an because it has been sent for guiding and perfecting man and has explicitly elaborated on the above-mentioned issues. (Jawadi Amuli, 29)

In fact, the Qur'an takes all aspects of man's life into consideration and illuminates all matters: *"We have sent down to you the Book explaining everything clearly, a Guide, Mercy, and Glad Tidings,"* (Nahl, 89). From the aforesaid verse and other Qur'anic verses, the ultimate objective of the revelation of the Qur'an is to guide man and save him from the darkness

of ignorance: “[*This is*] a Book which We have revealed to you that you may bring forth men from utter darkness into light,” (*Ibrahim*, 1). In *al-Mizan* and his other writings, Allamah Tabatabai pondered on anthropology from a new perspective that was distinct from that of others; he opened up a new horizon in this regard and recognized and revealed unknown aspects of man’s nature.

1. Man and the stages of his life

A person lives and grows while adhering to specific rules and principles for guidance and seeks to employ all his abilities and faculties to bring prosperity so that he can both enjoy worldly blessings and make provisions for his hereafter. This worldly life has a beginning and an end; that is, it is an intermediate stage between two lives – one before and one after it. Therefore, beyond this worldly life, man will live either a happy or wretched life which will itself have some primary or secondary aspects that are considered tools in his life. When all worldly causes fail to function and the veil is lifted, man will be aware of that life. In addition, man had another life before this worldly life, and each of the three lives is modelled according to the previous one. In other words, the third life is dependent on the second life, and the second one on the first. Thus, people are placed between two lives (Allamah Tabatabai, *al-Mizan*, vol. 1, p. 94).

The evidence of the first life is the verse that refers to the world of Dharr (i.e., that before this material world) and the covenant between man and God: “*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,*” (*A’raf*, 172). This verse implies that “before man comes to this world, God created him to give some covenants, and clearly man had a kind of life before this worldly life,” (Allamah Tabatabai, *al-Mizan*, vol. 1, p. 94). There are many verses indicating that the life after this worldly life is dependent on the latter; for example, “*Do not urge excuses today; you shall be requited only for what you did,*” (*Tahrim*, 7), “*Then every soul*

shall be paid what it earned, (Baqarah, 281), and “On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil”, (Ale-Imran, 30). Hence, man has a three-stage life; the worldly life, the life before it, and the life after it. Each stage has its own specific rules; however, there is some link, harmony, and interplay between all stages that shape the entirety of a person’s life.

2. Two deaths and two lives ahead of man

Man’s essence includes stages that should be passed to eventually achieve perfection, since man’s being moves from imperfection to perfection, and undergoes continuous and gradual change. He moves through each stage until it reaches the final stage of perfection. He died before entering this world, and then was revived by God. Likewise, he is again changed by God’s taking away his life and giving it back to him: *“You were without life, and He gave you life; then will He cause you to die, and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will you return” (Baqarah, 28).* This verse refers to the true essence of man, what God endowed him with, the value of his perfection, the vastness of his nature, the stages he passes during his life, namely the worldly life, death, the life in Barzakh (i.e., the Purgatory), the life in the hereafter, and finally, his return to God.

Therefore, man faces two lives and two deaths: the two lives take place in this world and in Barzakh, and the two deaths occur in exiting this world and upon entering the hereafter, as stated in the Qur’an, *“They will say: “Our Lord! You have made us subject to death twice, and You have given us life twice,” (Mu’min, 11).* The first subjection to death occurs after this worldly life, and the first restoration to life happens after death in Barzakh. Similarly, the second subjection to death and resurrection happens in Barzakh and on the Day of Judgment respectively (Tabatabai, *al-Mizan*, 1/113-114).

Allamah Tabatabai maintained that the verse *“You have made us subject to death twice, and You have given us life twice”* refers to the taking away of life on the last day of the worldly life and giving life in Barzakh, then

taking away life in Barzakh and resurrecting on the Day of Judgment for reckoning. Thus, the above verse gives reference to taking away life and resurrecting twice; that is, taking away life after the lives in both this world and Barzakh and resurrecting in both Barzakh and on the Day of Judgment. If there was no life in Barzakh, the second reference to taking away life would be incorrect, since taking away life happens after living and restoring life after death. Both life and death depend on their previous state; otherwise, taking away life and bringing back to life are not meaningful (ibid, 314/17). On the basis of this discussion, Allamah Tabatabai proved the existence of Barzakh, although the explanation is beyond the constraints of this article.

3. Man's vast scope of action

Man is a creature who possesses the ability to think so as to know the world and other things around him, eventually establishing a relationship with them to pave the way for his perfection. Through his voluntary actions that depend on his thinking and willpower, a person proceeds towards perfection through his ability to think. Therefore, man inevitably must have practical and theoretical rules and confirmations regarding any good that is directly or indirectly related to his perfection. These rules and confirmations consist in the very general and comprehensive interests by which man justifies and defines his individual and social actions; or before he takes such actions, he first measures them against these interests, and then he achieves the interests by materializing the actions.

In other words, man has been created in a way that he is related with other earthly and heavenly creatures. Likewise, other natural things have been created in a way that they are connected with and influence each other, hence, perpetuating their existence. However, a person's influence on other creatures and things is greater. That is, in addition to be connected to other natural things, man manipulates them simply and ordinarily to achieve his simple and natural aims. However, as he is equipped with intellect and understanding, his manipulation can be

sophisticated, surprising, and wonderful; other creatures and things are unable to manipulate him this way. It is man who analyzes other things and innovates by mixing some natural things to the extent that nothing is immune from his manipulation. Sometimes he makes for himself things that nature is unable to create; he does the task of nature, and sometimes fights it in order to hinder its task.

Man makes use of everything to achieve his goals. The passage of time and history of man also confirm the scope of his manipulation and increasingly profound theories. The Qur'an supports this claim: *"And He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth,"* (Jathiyah, 13).

4. The relationship between man's knowledge and action

If human beings as such are studied without taking individual, biological, and environmental factors into account, it can be concluded that every human being in his life has some thoughts and ideas that he makes use of as tools. These thoughts and ideas are so numerous and extensive that they cannot be counted; its large quantity and variety amazes the intellect. What creates them, splits them into branches, and links them to each other is either man's five exoteric and esoteric senses, or his manipulation by means of his thinking ability. If man's thoughts, knowledge, understanding, and actions are explored more profoundly, it will become clear that not all of them are equal. Some merely refer to external creatures and things and do not cause or lead to man's willpower and action; rather, they are the products of chemical reactions in man's brain. In other words, when external creatures and things are exposed to our senses, the senses are acted upon, and as a result, we understand that, for example, water flows, pomegranate is a fruit, and land is different from water. Similar is the knowledge gained by observing one's self and its presence or the knowledge gained through perceiving generalities. Such knowledge and perceptions cause neither willpower nor action in man; they only refer to external creatures and things.

Unlike the above category, some of man's thoughts and ideas are perceptions and understanding that are dealt with only when they influence actions or are means of achieving perfections and merits in life. For example, some actions are good and praiseworthy, while others are bad and blameworthy; justice is good, and oppression and injustice are evil; so are concepts like leadership and ownership as opposed to being subordinate and possessed.

In contrast to the first kind of thoughts and perceptions, the second kind does not refer to the objective and external creatures and entities that are separate from man and his understanding. Similarly, they are not created by the effects of the external causes on us; rather, they are perceptions man provides himself with through his esoteric senses. In addition, these perceptions are outcomes of two requirements of man's esoteric faculties that enable him to carry out an action or prevent him from doing so. All moves or changes that occur in his lifetime through either external things or materials inside him are either useful or harmful to his existence, either rendering it "orderly" or lead it to disorder, are either compatible with the natural effort of this way of being or not, and in a nutshell, are either agreeable to his nature or opposed to it. Man's nature requires him to accept some moves or changes and reject some others; some delight him and others do not; he seeks some and fears others. These two requirements create emotions such as love, hatred, and eagerness in man, and these very emotions cause him to develop an understanding of the meaning of good and evil, the praiseworthy and blameworthy, the mandatory and permissible. Then he makes these perceptions mediate between him and objective and external things and creatures; consequently, he takes an action or avoids it to achieve his purpose of living. This way, the relationship between knowledge and action materializes.

Allamah Tabatabai maintained that God imbues man with this knowledge and perception to equip him to take action so as to manipulate the world, and consequently what God wants is fulfilled (Allamah Tabatabai, *al-Mizan*, vol. 2, pp. 115 & 116).

However, this practical inspiration or guidance is of two kinds. One kind of guidance is directed to all creatures; that is, it directs every creature to its specific perfection, and guides it toward its particular actions so that it can protect itself and its offspring can survive: “*He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it,*” (*Taha*, 60). The second kind of guidance is specific to mankind. On the basis of this guidance, every man instinctively knows which actions are good and should be taken, and which actions are bad and should be avoided: “*And the soul and Him Who made it perfect, Then [He] inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it,*” (*Shams*, 7-8).

This intrinsic inspiration – existing in man since his birth – is revealed in the form of a moral sense. This sense then is actualized as he grows. According to the above-mentioned verse and some others, human beings generally enjoy a shared moral sense and are aware of moral principles. This knowledge or awareness is not acquired from external teachings and factors; it has been obtained from divine inspiration that exists in man’s nature. Of course, understanding these moral issues may be the task of human intellect, and not conscience. That is, just as man can gain knowledge of theoretical issues through his intellect, by using it he can develop knowledge of the moral principles in some stages of its development. Therefore, obtaining such perceptions is indispensable to man’s inward structure and is an innate issue not specific to only some men; rather, it can be found in all human beings: “*We revealed to them the doing of good and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of Zakat, and Us [alone] did they worship,*” (*Anbiya*, 73).

Allamah Tabatabai contended that “*We revealed*” in the above verse does not mean revelation and legislative guidance. Instead, it means esoterically and generatively (*takwini*) inspiring and leading man to perform good deeds. In some men, due to their greater capabilities, the esoteric guidance and divine endorsement are actualized more strongly, but they are revealed to a smaller degree in less capable people (Allamah Tabatabai, *al-Mizan*, vol. 14, pp. 306 & 307). However, although all men enjoy the same nature,

their behavioral and personality differences cannot be denied. So what is the source of these differences? "People's behavioral differences are caused by their personality as it was shaped by various individual and social factors, and not by essential differences." (The Office of Cooperation between Hawzah and University, 96)

5. Necessity: the factor that forms social life

Man has a faculty (*quwwah*) called the perceptive thought by which he develops a relationship among events, things, and creatures in the present, what happened in the past, and what will occur in the future. Hence, due to this perceptive thought, he has knowledge of events to some extent.

In addition, God has granted man the ability to connect with and make use of all things in the world, whether it is through connecting with a thing or by considering it a tool for using something else. Consequently, he has developed many sciences and technologies, and opened up new horizons through his thinking ability (Allamah Tabatabai, *al-Mizan*, vol. 2, p. 115).

As a result of these two divine blessings, that is, the ability to think and manipulate, man can employ the world's creatures to protect himself and survive. He began with nonliving beings and then made other specific tools for manipulating plants and animals. However, he did not stop there. He began to employ other men and benefitted from their property and work.

No doubt man is a civil and social being. He wants everything for himself, and he uses the power of nature and all the means and elements for his benefit; he makes use of plants to meet his daily needs and employs them as a tool to reach his long-term goals; he also uses, trains, and employs all kinds of animals to achieve his fundamental aims. He applies the instinct of employing all creatures to other human beings, too. Thus, man seeks to employ other creatures and has selected society to perfect this employment.

Here, the cooperative society and social life are formed; man gives in to the cooperative society and social life since he discovers that through his own endeavor and without using others' efforts, he cannot provide for himself. On the other hand, he cannot use others' efforts without giving anything in return, because they are also people who expect the same from him. Inevitably, he chose the cooperative society and social life as the best tool, and has given in to social life to survive. As a result, necessity has led to the formation of the cooperative society and social life. (Allamah Tabatabai, *The Collection of Treatises*, pp. 28-31)

This view is in sharp contrast with Aristotle's view. Aristotle considered man a creature for which social life is natural, and which innately seeks to build society. "By nature, man is a social animal, and the being which is – innately and not accidentally – without homeland is either inferior or superior to man. He resembles the man who was rebuked by Homer, who said about him, "He does not belong to any tribe and is lawless and homeless," (Aristotle, *Politics*, p. 5). Allamah's view is to some extent similar to the viewpoint of Hobbes', a renowned English philosopher of the 17th century and the author of the well-known book, *Leviathan*. According to Hobbes, what led to the formation of human society is necessity which ultimately resulted in a kind of implicit social contract.

6. Necessity: a factor in social justice

As the process of man's social life continued this way, he detected a grave problem: every human being expects from others what they expect from him. In other words, just as he tried to exploit others' efforts, they equally tried to exploit his. In this stage, man decided to form a civil and social life based on cooperation. After the formation of social life, he discovered that the stability and survival of society and social life were contingent on the balanced nature of human interrelationships so that everybody can restore his rights. This is social justice.

According to Allamah, this discovery implies that man's civil society and social justice is a decision that he was compelled to accept due to necessity,

because if it were not for necessity, no man would agree to limit his volition and freedom. This is the meaning of the well-known saying: 'By nature man is civil' and the meaning of Allamah's quote:

Social justice is man's verdict, and in a word, in both issues, necessity enabled him to accept civilization and social life, and consequently, social justice. If social justice were the basic requirement of man's nature, social justice would be prevalent in social affairs, and collaboration and equality would prevail in most societies in the best possible way. However, we witness that this is not the case. Powerful people impose their desires on the weak, and the victorious enslave the defeated abjectly to achieve their objectives. (Allamah Tabatabai, *al-Mizan*, vol. 2, pp. 118 & 119)

Allamah inferred this view from the following verses: "*Surely he is unjust, ignorant,*" (*Ahzab*, 72), "*Surely man is created of a hasty temperament,*" (*Ma'arij*, 19), "*Surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful,*" (*Ibrahim*, 34), and "*Surely man transgresses, in that he looks upon himself as self-sufficient,*" (*'Alaq*, 6-7).

7. Man and social life

Man's nature requires him to have a social life because not only does necessity entail this but history has also portrayed people as social beings. Allamah asserted, "From the very beginning, man formed society out of necessity so that he could have a social life and a high status in society because of which everybody would associate with him, and he with others; he would also benefit from others' good, and they from his," (Allamah Tabatabai, *al-Mizan*, 18/328).

Many verses in the Qur'an introduce man as a living being who should inevitably live socially to survive: "*O you men! Surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may*

know each other,” (*Hujurat*, 13). On the basis of knowing each other, the system of man’s social and cooperative life stabilizes and becomes perfect.

In other words, man’s needs in this worldly life are so much that people are incapable of meeting those needs alone. Hence, a) some people employ others and benefit from them, b) they base their lives on cooperation and collaboration, and c) members of society learn that they can exchange their possessions with others. The requirement of this type of life is that everybody makes efforts in their area of expertise to do it best. From the results of his work, he keeps what he needs, and naturally its surplus is needed by others because they are involved in another job. He also needs their products and exchanges the excess of these products with his wants. This is because people need the excess of others’ products, and they present their products to others. Of course, this is done differently due to difference in people’s needs for products and in their efforts to attain them. These needs, as well as the process of meeting them, rendered people eager to have a social and collaborative life, and made increasing efforts to improve it so that it can be materialized perfectly.

Aristotle also considered man a social and political being. What can link Hobbes’s view with that of Aristotle is his idea that if man is pulled out of the politico-civil life that makes him adhere to morality, he will become the most vicious and ferocious creature. According to Hobbes, “An individual cannot survive independently, so nature has formed a political organization in which there is division of labour and successively division of classes. As Aristotle in *Politics* said, ‘Man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something that precedes the individual. Anyone who either cannot lead the common life or is so self-sufficient as not to need to, and therefore does not partake of society, is either a beast or a god.’” (Trigg, 34)

8. The gradual evolution of man's social life

Society has not been created perfectly from the beginning; rather, like man's other mental and spiritual affairs, the process of his becoming social was completed in stages. The more material and spiritual merits he enjoyed, the more organized his society and social life became. The first society that emerged was the family through marriage because it had a natural reason that urged man to have a family. However, what is important is that man has not chosen social life out of the process of individual life and has not considered its advantages in detail to select it since there exists no period in history that shows man to have lived individually; instead, natural factors urged him to marry and form a social life. Nevertheless, according to the Qur'anic view, "The first time man discovered the advantages of society, consciously understood its merits in detail, and sought to protect its interests was when the first prophet was raised among the people to guide them. To sum up, he noticed the merits and advantages of social life, thanks to prophethood," (Allamah Tabatabai, *al-Mizan*, vo. 4/ p. 96). In this regard, Allah said in the Holy Qur'an, "*People were a single nation; so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the Book with truth, that it might judge among people in that in which they differed*" (Baqarah, 213).

Conclusion

1. Man's life has three stages: the life before this world, the worldly life, and the life after this world. Every stage depends on the previous one.
2. Man experiences two lives and two deaths. One death occurs on the last day of man's life in this world while the other occurs in Barzakh. The first life means resurrection in Barzakh; the second one is on the Day of Judgment for reckoning.
3. Man is connected to other creatures and both influences and is influenced by them. However, the scope of his effect – as a being having intellect and understanding – is more profound because he can manipulate

other creatures through his intellect and understanding, while other creatures do not have the same ability.

4. Man enjoys two kinds of thought. What caused them are either exoteric and esoteric senses, or his manipulation of other things through his intellect. The first kind is the perceptions causing neither willpower nor action in man; rather, they are of external creatures and thoughts. The second kind is perceptions that do not explain external creatures and thoughts; instead, men obtain them by being inspired by esoteric to make use of these perceptions in action. According to Allamah Tabatabai, God imbued man with such perceptions to help him prepare for life.

5. Man is a social being, and as he cannot meet all his needs alone, he inevitably has given in to the social life to survive. That is, necessity and need led to the formation of social and cooperative life.

6. Social justice has its roots in satisfying the needs of social life because after forming the social life, he discovered that the durability and survival of social life was contingent upon balanced human interrelationships so that everybody could restore his rights. Inevitably, for social life to survive, man should accept that all social facilities are distributed equally.

7. Man's social life has proceeded gradually and has perfected itself throughout history.

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A GLIMPSE AT THE MAJOR SHI'A SEMINARIES, PART III

RASOUL IMANI KHOSHKHU

TRANSLATED BY FATEMEH SOLTANMOHAMMADI

ABSTRACT: The previous articles in this series delved into the historical origins of some of the most important religious seminaries in the Shi'a world. Islamic seminaries are the most valuable institutions in promoting the instructions of the Qur'an and the Ahlul Bayt, and have generated a unique culture in the scientific, social, and political spheres. The seminaries allowed for pious Shi'a scholars who pursued *ijtihad* with the use of the Qur'an, Sunnah, and reason to respond to legislative needs and guide the Muslim community with their contemporary issues. This part largely focuses on the Islamic Seminaries of Jabal Aamel, Isfahan, and Mashhad. Jabal Aamel saw hundreds of Shi'a scholars in the fields of hadith, jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, Qur'anic exegesis, theology, and ethics; Isfahan was the center of Shi'ism, and with their invitation of Shi'a scholars and jurists from Jabal Aamel established great academic schools beginning an academic and cultural movement by translating Shi'a texts to Farsi and writing books on Shi'a theology; and Mashhad, home to the eighth Shi'a Imam, Imam al-Ridha, was the starting point for the establishment of one of the greatest academic institutions in the Shi'a world.

5. *The Islamic Seminary of Jabal Aamel*

Jabal Aamel is a mountainous region of southern Lebanon which runs from Sidon to Tyre (Soor). Its historical Shi'a community is a result of the influence and expatriation of Abu Dharr al-Ghaffari - a companion of the Prophet Muhammad - during the caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan¹ to this city. When after being exiled from Medina, Abu Dharr reached Damascus. Muawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan, governor of Damascus, who would exile his oppositions to the coastal regions of Damascus, present-day Jabal Aamel, sent him to this area as he did with the others. While living in Damascus, Abu Dharr introduced his viewpoints regarding the caliphate and the status of Imam Ali, and this led Muawiyah to send him back to Medina.²

Thus, Shi'ism lasted in Jabal Aamel from the first century Hijri until the present day,³ and from amongst its Shi'as, great scholars have arisen and brightened the Shi'a world. Sheikh Hurr Aamili, in his *Amal al-Amil fi Ulama' Jabal Aamel*, mentions the name of hundreds of Shi'a scholars of Jabal Aamel and others have added more names.⁴ Among the great scholars of the fifth century Hijri in the Islamic seminary of Jabal Aamel are Sheikh Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Hibatullah Tarablusi, of Sheikh Tusi's students;⁵ Sheikh Abu al-Qassem Sa'd al-Din,⁶ known as ibn Buraj, was the chief of justice of Tripoli (Tarablus) and issued fatwas; Sheikh Abu

¹ 23-35 AH

² Hurr Aamili, Muhammad ibn Hasan, *Amal al-Aamil*, researcher Sayyid Ahmad Husayni, Qum Dar al-Kutub al-Islami, vol. 2, 1362, p. 13.

³ Travel writers like Nasir Khusraw, in the fourth century Hijri, and others after him have reported the presence of Shi'as in that land. R.K. Naisr Khusraw's *Book of Travels*, effort of Muhammad Dabir Siyaqi, p. 24.

⁴ *Shi'a Seminaries across the World*, p. 335.

⁵ Author of books like *al-Zuhra fi Ahkam al-Hajj wa al-Umarah was al-Usatrah Bayn al-Nafy wa al-Ithbat*.

⁶ Died 481 AH

al-Fadhl As'ad,¹ Ahmad ibn abi Ruh Tarablusi; and Sheikh Najm al-Din Taman or Tuman,² Ahmad Aamuli's son.

Throughout the historical course of the Jabal Aamel Seminary, the golden age of this school began during the eighth century and ended during the eleventh century Hijri. In the seventh century, a seminary was founded by the Shahid Awwal family in a village called Jizzin in Jabal Aamel. In the later centuries it became one of the important Shi'ā academic and cultural centers that trained outstanding Shi'ā scholars. Shahid Awwal's ancestor, Sheikh Muhammad ibn Fakhr al-Din, along with his father, Sheikh Jamal al-Din Makki, and himself are amongst the greatest scholars of the Jizzin seminary.

Shams al-Din Muhammad Makki Jabal Aamel,³ or Shahid Awwal, is a well-known Shi'ā scholar.⁴ During his youth, he participated in the Islamic seminary of Hillah and Najaf, educating himself under great Shi'ā jurists such as Fakhr al-Muhaqqiqin⁵ and Sayyid Fakhr Musawi. In 755 AH, when he returned to his homeland – Jizzin – and founded a school in which he began instructing and mentoring seminarians and writing books.

The Islamic seminary of Jizzin flourished and rose to such a point during the time of Shahid Awwal that Sheikh Hurr Aamuli – a renowned figure of Jabal Aamel – writes in his honour:

¹ Before 520 AH

² Approximately 728 AH

³ 734-786 AH

⁴ His academic genius and motivation in studying was to such a point that one time in the year 751 AH at the age of seventeen and another time in the year 756 AH he got certification of ijthad and narrating traditions from Fakhr al-Muhaqqiqin. Shams al-Din, Muhammad Righa, *Hayat al-Imam al-Shahid al-Awwal*, p. 41.

⁵ Muhammad ibn Hasa ibn Yusuf (682-771 AH), known as Fakhr al-Muhaqqiqin was a great jurist from Hillah and Allamah Hilli's son. Most of his published works are commentaries on his father's books, which include *Idhah al-Fawa'id* commentary of Allamah Hilli's *Qawa'id*, and *Tahsil al-Nijah* commentary of the book *Nahj al-Mustarshidin*.

I have heard from some of the great teachers that in one of the villages of Jabal Aamel during the time of Shahid Awwal seventy *mujtahids* were in attendance at his funeral. The number of scholars and writers in this region is almost one-fifth of the scholars and writers of other regions, though the geographical expanse of this region is one-hundredth of other countries.¹

After returning to his country from Iraq, Shahid Awwal continued to travel to other Shi'a academic centers in Damascus, Egypt, Palestine, Mecca, Medina, and other cities. In addition to having complete mastery over Shi'a jurisprudence, he was proficient in Sunni jurisprudence and hadith, and by participating in their Islamic studies courses and holding academic debates with them, he became an assured *marja'* according to Sunni scholars. His expertise in their detailed rituals and religious issues was to such a point that he himself proclaimed, "I have permission to narrate works and hadith collections of almost forty scholars from Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, Damascus, Jerusalem (*Bayt al-Muqaddas*), and Maqam Khalil (in Palestine)."²

The longest amount of time the Martyr (*Shahid*) resided outside of Jizzin is during his stay in Damascus, and his longest period of education, teaching, and publishing was during that time. He was also a prolific author; one of his major works is his *al-Lum'ah al-Dimashqiyyah*, a work on jurisprudence written in a span of seven days after a request made by Sultan Ali ibn Mu'ayyad, the last Sarbadars leader in Khorasan in 766 AH.³ Along with its most important commentary by Shahid Thani,⁴ this book has been taught in the seminaries as a coursebook.

¹ *Amal al-Amil*, Sheikh Hurr Aamili, vol. 1, p. 15.

² Mirza Nuri, *Mustadrik al-Wasa'il*, vol. 3, p. 437.

³ Aamili, Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Makki, *al-Lum'ah al-Dimishqiyyah*, p. 24.

⁴ *al-Rawdha al-Bahiyah fi Sharh al-Lum'ah al-Dimishqiyyah*, author Sheikh Zayn al-Din Ali ibn Ahmad Aamili, known as Shahid Thani (911-966 AH).

The social and political transformation in Damascus and the change of its ruler in 784 AH gave Shahid Awwal's enemies the opportunity to prepare false evidence against him.¹ They eventually they managed to imprison him and after receiving the verdict for his death sentence by the city judge, he was executed.

Another Islamic seminary of Jabal Aamel is the school of Jub' and Juba', the name of a region in southern Lebanon that has been the hub of many *mujtahids'* education throughout Shi'a history. Sayyid Muhsin Amin has mentioned 31 students, scholars, and clerics from Juba'.² This seminary was founded by Sheikh Salih ibn Mushrif Aamili Juba'i of Shahid Thani's ancestors. We owe the emersion, expansion, and prosperity of Juba' school to Shahid Thani's ancestors.

Sheikh Zayn al-Din ibn Nur al-Din, known as Shahid Thani,³ is one of the most outstanding jurists and scholars of the tenth century Hijri. He was born in the village of Juba' and after his father's death, he migrated to neighboring cities to study at the age of fourteen. That which stands out in Shahid Thani's life is his travels to various parts of Muslim world and his conversations and companionship with Muslim scholars from other sects of Islam. Egypt, Damascus, Hijaz, Jerusalem, Iraq, and Istanbul are the areas Shahid Thani shortly resided in, and with teaching comparative jurisprudence, he drew the attention and found the respect of scholars from other sects.⁴ His most important works are the commentary of *al-Lum'ah al-Dimishqiyyah* of Shahid Awwal, called *al-Rawdha al-Bahiyah*;

¹ During Shahid's time, an individual named Muhammad Yalushi Aamili, through use of magic, claimed prophethood and invited people to a new religion. Shahid Awwal dismissed his magic and issued the fatwa for his death and convinced the Damascus government to raid his headquarters. Muhammad Yalushi was killed as result of the attack and many of his followers were killed.

² Amin, Sayyid Muhsin, *Khitat Jabal Aamel*, p. 255.

³ 911-966 AH

⁴ As an example, Shahid Thani made a trip to Baalbek in the year 953 AH and with taking responsibility of the Islamic seminary of that are, he started to teach jurisprudence according to the four Islamic schools of thought and became a Shia and Sunni jurist (*marja'*). *Shi'a Seminaries across the World*, p. 338.

the commentary of *Sharh al-Islam* of Muhaqqiq Hilli, called *Masalik al-Iffham*; And *Muniyah al-Murid fi Adab al-Mufid wa al-Mustafid*, taught in the Islamic seminaries from long ago as a distinguished book in field of ethics (*akhlaq*).

This exceptional scholar was martyred in Constantinople by a scheming and revengeful group on one of his trips to the Kaaba in Mecca. After Shahid Thani's martyrdom, his children, grandchildren, and students continued leading the Islamic seminary of Juba'.¹

Other clerics of the school in Juba' are Sheikh Nur al-Din Ali,² father and first teacher of Shahid Thani; Sheikh Jamal al-Din Abu Mansur Hasan,³ Shahid Thani's son, a learned scholar; Sayyid Muhammad ibn Ali Musa Juba'i, Shahid Thani's grandchild, the author of *Madarik al-Ahkam*; Sheikh Fakhr al-Din Muhammad, Shahid Thani's grandchild, author of *Rawdha al-Khawatir*; Sheikh Husayn, Abd al-Samad Juba'i's son and Sheikh Baha'i's father; Sheikh Ali, son of Zuhrah; Sheikh Muhyi al-Din Ahmad ibn Taj al-Din Maybusi Aamili; Sheikh Ibrahim Kafami, of the notable Shi'a scholars⁴ and son of Ali Juba'i, author of *al-Misbah* and *al-Balad al-Amin*.

Among the regions in Jabal Aamel, the village of Karak Nuh in Biqa'⁵ of Lebanon, located near Baalbek, was an academic center. This seminary was renowned in the ninth and tenth century and experienced a period of great expansion in which many scholars arose from it and scores of them who migrated to Iran during the Safavid Dynasty.

¹ *Encyclopedia of Shi'a*, vol. 1, p. 186.

² Died 925 AH

³ 1011 AH

⁴ 905 AH

⁵ Al-Biqā', also spelled Bekaa, or Beqaa, classical Coele Syria, broad valley of central Lebanon, extending in a northeast-southwest direction for 75 miles (120 km) along the Līṭānī and Orontes rivers, between the Lebanon Mountains to the west and Anti-Lebanon Mountains to the east. (*Britannica*)

This migration was an important event in the history of Jabal Aamel's seminary. During the tenth and eleventh century, due to the pressures imposed by the Uthmani government and several Sunnis, the Shi'as were forced to live in small cities and villages and established their Islamic seminaries in faraway areas.¹ In such a situation, with the establishment of the Shi'a Safavid Dynasty, a large group of scholars from Jabal Aamel² saw Iran as an appropriate location for publishing Shi'a ideology. Through traveling to its cities and undertaking chief positions in the Safavid Empire, they played a critical role in institutionalizing the Shi'a faith in Iran.

The most prominent scholars of this period who migrated to Iran are Sheikh Nur al-Din Ali Abd al-Ali Karaki, known as Muhaqqiq Thani;³ Sheikh Husayn ibn Abd al-Samad Juba'i,⁴ father of Sheikh Bahai; and Sheikh Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Ali ibn Husayn Aamili, known as Sheikh Hurr Aamili.⁵

The migration of Jabal Aamel scholars to Qum, Isfahan, and Najaf caused the Jabal Aamel seminary to lose its momentum, but the revival of the Islamic seminary of Lebanon is due to Sayyid Abd al-Husayn Sharaf al-Din,⁶ a great jurist, experienced theologian, exceptional speaker, and a determined fighter who throughout his life worked hard to defend the Shi'a faith and debate and discuss with Muslim scholars. Sharaf al-Din was

¹ *Shi'a Seminaries across the World*, p. 341.

² According to a research done by Ja'far al-Muhajir in his book *al-Hijra al-Alimiyah ila Iran fi al-'Asr al-Safawi*, from the 143 scholars who lived in Jabal Aamel in the tenth and eleventh century, 45 only remained and didn't migrate. Seven migrated and returned to Jabal Aamel; thirty-one traveled to various areas like Hejaz, Yemen, Iraq, and Iran, but didn't remain in those regions; and sixty people moved to Iran and stayed in Iran. Salihi, Abbas, "An Analysis of the Migration of Jabal Aamel Scholars to Iran during the Safavid Dynasty" in the *Hawza Journal*, Farvardin and Ordibehesht 1374, number 67.

³ 870-940 AH

⁴ 918-984 AH

⁵ Born 1033 AH

⁶ 1290-1377 AH

born in Kadimiyya, Iraq and after studying in their seminaries, in particular the Islamic seminary of Najaf, where he studied jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, and exegesis and traditions from the most prominent scholars and *mujtahids*, he received certification for *ijtihad*. In 1321 AH, he returned to Jabal Aamel and was responsible for the leadership of Shi'as in that region for over fifty years during critical events such as Lebanon's movement for independence from Uthmani rule before the First World War as well as their struggle against the French occupation.

Firmly believing in the possibility of achieving unity amongst various Islamic sects, he believed that a careful study of the historical events after the Prophet Muhammad was needed to achieve this unity and that discovering the truth was not simply a matter of writing books, but also in need of discussion, dialogue, and debate.

Thus, he traveled to Egypt in 1329 AH to meet with Sheikh Salim al-Bishri Maliki at the Al-Azhar University. During this time, which lasted for six months, 112 letters regarding the topic of *khilafah* (caliphate) and *wilayah* (governate) were exchanged. All of the correspondence, which led to the acceptance of Shi'a claims in regards to the immediate caliphate of Amir al-Mu'minin by Sheikh Salim, have been gathered into a collection called *al-Muraja'at*, and according to some scholars is "an exquisite example of Shi'a Alawi logic in present day."¹ He owns many books, many of which were burned by the French through the resistance and migration.

Indeed, the most influential religious personality in the current century which was the source of cultural and societal change in Lebanon and the revival of Shi'ism in the Lebanese social and political sphere was the great leader Imam Musa al-Sadr.² After completing the beginner and higher level courses in the seminary in Qum, he moved to Najaf and attended the

¹ Shariati, Ali, *Tashayyu'e Alavi va Tashayyu'e Safavi* (Alawite Shi'ism and Safavid Shi'ism), Entesharat Husayniyyah Irshad, 1350, p. 73.

² Born in Qum in 1307 Shamsi

Najaf seminary, benefitting from renowned scholars, one of whom was the grand Ayatullah Sayyid Abu al-Qasim Khui. In 1958, with the advice of individuals such as Ayatollah Burujerdi, he moved to Lebanon, and while residing there and based on Sayyid Sharaf al-Din's will, he led the Shi'a society. While implementing cultural and developmental programmes, communicating with people of other faiths and sects in Lebanon with respect, and interacting with and consulting heads of neighboring states, Imam Musa al-Sadr took the Shi'a society out of its chaotic economical and societal situation, and with to the establishment of a Shi'a Supreme Council, he transformed the Shi'a from a forgotten group to one of the most active people in Lebanon.

Another factor that played an important role in the revival of the seminary of Lebanon was the migration of specific scholarly personalities from Najaf to Lebanon, such as Sheikh Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din¹ and Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadhlullah.² After completing their studies in Najaf, the two scholars made important scientific contributions in Lebanon after migrating there.

Although Imam Musa al-Sadr's abduction in Libya in 1979 put a halt to his local and international long-term programmes, his great impact on the religious and cultural landscape of Lebanon are evidently seen in the works of his prominent students and trainees.

6. *The Islamic Seminary of Isfahan*

In 23 AH, Isfahan was conquered by 'Umar ibn Khattab, the second Muslim caliph. It held a unique political and commercial opportunity compared to other Iranian cities, such that it was the capital during the

¹ 1312-1379 Shamsi

² 1354-2010 AH

Buyid, Sajuqi, and Safavid era;¹ in the second half of the fourth century, Isfahan was the largest commercial city from Iraq to Khorasan.²

In terms of academia, Isfahan was the center of establishing great academic schools and was the cradle of knowledge throughout various historical time periods. During Ale Kakuyeh's rule, when Abu Ja'far Ala' al-Dawla Kakuyeh (died 422 AH) was the commander of Isfahan, Ibn Sina went to Isfahan and spent the rest of his life teaching in a school credited to him, called Ala'i School. He managed doing so while taking part in other professions. During the time of the Seljuq Empire and simultaneous with Khwaja Nizam al-Mulk's movement in founding schools, six schools have been reported in this city;³ however, the construction of an Islamic Shi'a seminary in Isfahan relating to the uprising of the Safavid Dynasty followed the development of Shi'ism in this region.

It was during the Safavid era that the Islamic seminary of Isfahan reached its peak. With the beginning of Shah Ismail Safavi's reign in 880 Hijri, the necessity of the presence of Shi'a scholars and jurists in a government where Shi'ism was its official religion prompted them to invite Shi'a scholars and jurists from Jabal Aamel. They were invited to migrate to Iran, and with taking on the title of Sheikh al-Islam as a deputy of the Imam of Time, they were responsible for issuing fatwas and managing the peoples' religious affairs. The acceptance of these scholars to move to Iran led to the expansion of the Islamic seminary of Isfahan and formation of one of the main seminaries amongst the Shi'as of this region in the ninth and tenth century Hijri.

Some of the scholars who traveled from the seminary in Jabal Aamel to Iran are Ali ibn Abd al-Aali Karki (870-940 AH), Kamal al-Din Darwish Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Aamili, Ali ibn Hilal al-Karki (died 993 AH),

¹ *Iran's Full Geography*, vol. 1, p. 308.

² Sultanzadeh, Husayn, *An Introduction to the History of Urbanization in Iran*, p. 94.

³ *Islamic Seminaries in History*, pg. 455.

Husayn ibn Abd al-Samad al-Juba'i (918-948 AH), and Baha' al-Din Aamili (953-1030 AH).

The presence of outstanding Shi'a scholars in Iran, and more specifically in the Islamic seminary of Isfahan, was the start of an academic and cultural movement in terms of translating Shi'a texts to Farsi¹ and writing books on introducing and identifying Shi'a theological principles and the branches of Islamic commandments (*ahkam*). During this period, numerous publications were introduced. Today, they are of the most important text in Shi'a seminaries. Some include: *Wasa'il al-Shia ila Tahsil Masa'il al-Shari'ah*, written by Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Aamili (1033-1104 AH); *al-Wafi*, written by Faydh Kashani (1010-1090 AH); *Bihar al-Anwar*, written by Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (1037 AH); and the Farsi exegesis, *Minhaj al-Sadiqin*, by Fathullah ibn Shukrullah Kashani.

Along with the expansion of jurisprudence and hadith in the Islamic seminary of Isfahan during the Safavid era, we also see the rise of well-known Shi'a figures in philosophy and other intellectual sciences. As mentioned, the history of philosophy and wisdom in Isfahan date back to the fourth century during the many years Ibn Sina taught in Ala' al-Dawla school and to his determined student, Abu Abdullah Ma'sumi.²

¹ Of the scholars of this period, who translated numerous works from great Shi'a scholars, was Mawla Ali ibn Hasan Zawarahi. He is of the well-known figures in the tenth century Hijri who owns many books and translation including the exegesis *Tarjumah al-Khawas*, the translation and commentary of the *Nahj al-Balaghah* called *Rawdhah al-Asrar*, the translation of *Kashf al-Ghuma fi Marifa al-A'imah* called *Tarjumah al-Manaqib*, the translation of Sheikh Saduq's *Wasilah al-Nijah*, the translation of Sayyid ibn Tawus' book, *al-Tara'if fi Ma'rifa Madhahib al-Tawa'if*, the translation of Fahad Hilli's book, *Udah al-Da'i wa Nijah al-Sa'ee*, the translation of Sheikh Tabarsi's book *al-Ihtijaj*, called *Kashf al-Ihtijaj*. Golizawarahi Qumshae, Ghulam Ridha, "Tafsir Tarjumah al-Khawas" in the journal, "Aeeneyeh Pajuhesh," number 9, p. 39-47.

² Muhammad ibn Abdullah Ahmad (died 450 AH) was one of Ibn Sina's outstanding students of Isafahan's jurists and philosophers. Ibn Sina preferred him to the rest of his students and would say the following about him: "Abu Abdullah has the same status in my eyes that Plato has in the eyes of Aristotle." Also, Ibn Sina named the book "al-Ishq" after Ma'sumi and wrote it because of his suggestion and in the introduction of his book he called him by Abu Abdullah al-Faqih Ma'sumi. Honarfar, Lutfullah, Isfahan, p. 210 and 211.

Nonetheless, the expansion of philosophy in the Isfahan seminary dates back to the tenth and eleventh century, during the time of Mirdamad,¹ Sheikh Bahai,² and Mulla Sadra Shirazi³ who managed the seminary of Isfahan during the Safavid dynasty. Moreover, the status of Sheikh al-Islam in the Safavid government was occupied mostly by scholars who had tendencies towards Akhbarism, and it created dispute amongst them. The usuli and philosophical scholars could be looked at as one of the greatest challenges of the Islamic seminary of Isfahan in that period.⁴ Some of the outcomes of this dispute include the migration of great scholars of philosophy, such as Mulla Sadra, to other cities which also led to a decline in the field of philosophy.

The Afghan attack on Isfahan ended the Safavid Dynasty 1135 AH and the reign of Zill al-Sultan, Arshad Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar's son, was followed by the destruction of a large number of Isfahan's historical monuments.⁵ Moreover, attack harmed the Islamic seminaries.

The Qajar Dynasty and its kings, who were known for disinterest in science and culture and were renowned for granting concessionary rights to foreigners in Iranian history, saw the presence of insightful and anti-colonialist scholars in the Shi'a seminaries as a barrier to their anti-religious and nationalistic motives. Throughout the Qajar dynasty, the

¹ Muhammad Baqir Damad (961-1041 AH) son of Mir Muhammad Husayn Astarabadi and grandson of Abd al-Aali Karaki (Muhaqqiq Thani) and Ustad Mulla Sadra Shirazi.

² Muhammad ibn Husayn, known as Sheikh Baha'i (935-1030 AH), famous Shia jurist, philosopher, astronomer, and mathematician. Born in Baalbek, Lebanon At the age of 13 he moved to Iran with his father and after learning intellectual and transmitted sciences from scholars of Isfahan, he started writing and teaching students of that seminary.

³ Muhammad Sadr al-Din Shirazi (980-1050 AH), known as "Mulla Sadra" or "Sadr al-Mutalihin." A great Islamic scholar and philosopher and Sheikh Baha'i and Mirdamad's student. Author of the valuable book, *Asfar Arba'ah*. With bring philosophy and Islamic gnosis closer together he instituted a school of thought that with the wisdom of God is prominent even till today.

⁴ Ja'farian, Rasul, Religion and Politics during the Safavid Era, p. 260.

⁵ During the Safavid Era, 137 palaces, 162 mosques, 273 public baths, and 12 graveyards existed, where a large number of them were destroyed by Zill al-Sultan, Jazini Mahsa. "The Era of Destruction in Isfahan," in the Iran newspaper, number 3781, dated 86/8/17, p. 11.

Isfahan seminary saw many great minds who, while completely aware of colonialists and the Qajar kings' support for them, rose up to make known their destructive plans. During this time the name of the Najafi Isfahani family was most seen.

Hajj Sheikh Muhammad Baqir Najafi (died 1301 AH) is the son of the author of *Hidayah al-Mustarshidin* and grandson of Sheikh Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita'. After benefiting from scholars in Najaf such as Sheikh Muhammad Hasan Najafi, Sheikh Murtadha Ansari, and Sheikh Hasan Kashif al-Ghita', he reached higher academic levels, and in the year 1260 AH, he returned to Isfahan and became a religious leader who taught and published books in the seminary. His most celebrated book is *Sharh Hidayah al-Mustarshidin*, where he has compared his father's opinions to that of Sheikh Ansari's on the topic of suspicion (*dhan*).¹ From amongst his children are Hajj Najafi and Hajj Agha Nurullah Najafi whom were some of the top scholars of Isfahan and heroic fighters during the Qajar period.

Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Isfahani, known as Agha Najafi (1262-1332 AH), was among the well-known scholars who returned to Isfahan and was situated at the head of the seminary after studying under instructors such as Mirza Shirazi and Allamah Kashif al-Ghita' in Iraq. Agha Najafi, along with being academically active while teaching, writing, and mentoring students, made great initiatives in the significant events which include participating in Mirza Shirazi's tobacco boycott, fighting tyrannical policies of Zill al-Sultan – the governor of Isfahan – and opposing the Babiyyay group in Isfahan.²

Ayatullah Hajj Sheikh Lutfullah Safi Golpaygani states that the Grand Ayatullah Burujerdi used to frequently praise the deceased Agha Najafi and his brother Agha Sheikh Muhammad Ali Thiqt al-Islam. Ayatollah

¹ Baqiri Siyani, Mahdi, "Sharh al-Hidayah al-Mustarshidin," in the journal, *Aeeneyeh Pajuhesh*, number 115, p. 68-70.

² Sufi Niaraki, Taqi, in *Harim wa Wisal*.

Boroojerdi said that during the time of his study in Isfahan, there were ten thousand students in the seminary, and twice a month or sometimes once a month these two brothers used to distribute salaries to the students. When Thaqat al-Islam passed away, Agha Najafi himself would manage this large seminary and distribute salaries.¹

Another son of Muhammad Baqir Najafi is Ayatullah Mahdi Najafi Isfahani (1278-1346 AH), known as Hajj Agha Nurullah Najafi, who was a scholar in the constitutional revolution in Isfahan. After reaching the level of *ijtihad*, he moved from Iraq to his hometown, Isfahan, and started teaching and mentoring. In 1326 AH, when Muhammad Ali Shah Qajar bombed the national council killing a group of freedom fighters in the Shah's garden, Hajj Agha Nurullah gathered an army of constitutionalists in Isfahan and mobilized them to conquer Tehran with the help of the Bakhtiyari tribe. He then issued a fatwa declaring the support of the constitutional government as mandatory and opposition to it as forbidden. Even after seeing deviations from this movement as a sign of protest against several extremist leaders, he returned to Iraq until 1333 AH. With the coming of Reza Khan, Hajj Agha Nurullah began to protest against the dictatorial rule and in the end mysteriously died there. Currently, his home in Isfahan has been made into a museum called "Khaneyeh Mashruteyeh Isfahan" and contains important documents about this scholar's life as well as the role the scholars of Isfahan in the constitutional revolution in Iran.

After the reestablishment of the Islamic seminary of Qum and its emergence as a central seminary along with the Najaf seminary, the expansion of the Isfahan seminary diminished. However, with the victory of the Islamic republic, this seminary, along with seminaries of other cities and regions, once again became the center of attention. Moreover, with the presence of personalities like Ayatullah Khadimi, Sadiqi, and Safi, the number of practicing seminarians rose to thousands of people. In 1375,

¹ Taken from Ayatullah Buroujerdi's site: <http://broujerdi.org/content/view/433/68>, on 90/1/5.

Ayatullah Madhahiri moved from Qum to Isfahan to organize and manage the Isfahan seminary, and his presence gave a special vigor and joy to the seminary and the schools under its management, which were over thirty in number.

Among the scholars who excelled at the head of the Isfahan seminary are Mulla Muhammad Taqi Majlisi (1003-1070 AH), father of Allamah Majlisi; Allamah Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (1037-1111 AH); Sayyid Ni'matullah Jaza'iri; Ayatullah Mirza Muhammad Ali Shah Abadi (1292-1369 AH); Ayatullah Mirza Ahmad Bayd Abadi (1279-1357 AH); Ayatullah Mujahid Sayyid Hasan Mudarris (1287-1357 AH); and Banu Mujtahids Nusrat Amin (1308-1265 AH).¹

7. The Islamic Seminary of Mashhad

The arrival of the eighth Shi'i Imam, Imam al-Ridha, to the city of Merv and the Khorasan region was the starting point for the establishment of one of the greatest academic institutions in the Shi'a world. The arrangement of various debate and discussion sessions by the Imam with scholars from various denominations, though held with the intention of exploitation by the Abbasid caliphate, actually portrayed the Imam's God-given superiority and depth in knowledge. Like a valuable investment, the necessary motivation for Shi'a scholars to participate in theological and ideological discussions led to the most thorough analysis in theology and the doctrine of Oneness [of God].

After Imam al-Ridha's the martyrdom and his burial in the village of the villages of Tus, called "Sanabad," the Imam's resting place turned into the site of great scholars, and with creating study circles beside the holy land (*turbah*) around which the Imam was buried, they expanded the area and constructed an academic center and educational institution that promotes the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt.

¹ Shi'a Seminaries across the World, p.263-269.

From the time study circles were created in the shrine until today, the Islamic seminary of Mashhad has experienced both expansion and decline depending on societal conditions. The attack by Sabuktigin, the Ghaznavid king, on Mashhad and on the Shrine of Imam Rida (a); the attack by the Oghuz Turks in the year 548 AH on Tus; the killing of people and great scholars; the Mongol attacks on Tus in the year 618 AH; and the mass killing on the people of Mashhad¹ were all unfortunate events throughout a couple centuries, and undoubtedly affected the Islamic seminary of that city. However, during these rough times, we witness great efforts made by scholars of this city and the production of valuable works in the Mashhad seminary such as Tabarsi's efforts made in Qur'anic exegesis and academia.

Abu Ali Fadhl ibn Hasan ibn Fadhl Tabarsi, known as Amin al-Islam Tabarsi, was born in the Mashhad around 460 to 470 AH. He resided in Mashhad for over fifty years, and in 523 AH he moved to Sabzawar and spent twenty-five years in this city teaching and writing. Although Tabarsi was familiar with various sciences such as jurisprudence, hadith, biographical evaluation, literature, and modern Arabic, he often studied Qur'anic exegesis. His most important work in exegesis is *Majma' al-Bayan*, completed in 536 AH, where amongst the Shi'a exegeses holds great value because of its integration of exegesis sciences and its style of writing. After ninety years of living a productive life, Tabarsi passed away in 548. His body was sent to Mashhad where he was buried.

In the history of Mashhad seminaries, the eleventh century was the inception of its revival, the period of academic re-growth, and the restart of courses held by prominent instructors. In the second half of this century, in terms of the number of scholars and instructors, the Mashhad seminary became one of the leading Shi'a seminaries, attracting not only its residents, but international students as well. The renowned teacher, Mowlana Muhammad Baqir, known as Muhaqqiq Sabzawari (1017-1090

¹ *Encyclopedia of Shi'a*, vol. 1, pp. 56-57.

AH), author of two books in jurisprudence, *Dhakhirah* and *Kifayah*, whom held a management position and was called Sheikh al-Islam, moved to Mashhad towards the end of his life. He reconstructed and taught in the old school called “Sami’iyyah,” which was from then on called “Baqiriyyah,” named after him.¹

Another great figure from the seminary of Mashhad is Muhammad Hasan, known as Sheikh Hurr Aamili. He is of the descendants of the “free man of Karbala”, Hurr ibn Yazid Riyahi, who was born in 1033 AH in a region of Jabal Aamel and died in 1104 AH in Mashhad, buried beside Imam Ridha’s shrine.

Sheikh Hurr Aamili is known by one of his famous works, *Wasa’il al-Shia*, which comprises traditions from the infallibles in various jurisprudential topics, a book in which a *mujtahid* does not need in making decisions in Islamic law (*ijtihād*). At the age of forty, Sheikh Hurr Aamili went to Mashhad to visit the Imam Ridha’s grave. After witnessing the condition of Mashhad, he felt the need to reside to defend Shi’ism. During his stay, the Sheikh spent his time teaching and writing; his books amount to over forty-four. When Sheikh Hurr was in Mashhad, his classes and discussions were held in the courtyard of Imam Ridha where his sessions were known as the most interesting during that time.²

In the first few decades of the fourteenth century, with the expansion of the Islamic seminaries of Najaf and Karbala, the migration of scholars, and the formation of the Islamic seminary of Qum, the expansion of the Mashhad seminary declined and advanced jurisprudence and principles of

¹ *Shi’ā Seminaries across the World*, p. 357.

² The deceased Sayyid Muhsin Amin narrates from Sheikh Muhammad Jazayiri: “Sheikh Muhammad Jazayiri writes in the explanation of the book, *Ruh al-Jinan*, I saw Sheikh Hurr in the year one-thousand some ninety and he says after that, he moved to Mashhad and in the year 1099 AH, I saw him there and I saw he has a big seminary and he teaches *Wasa’il al-Shi’ā*. I would participate in his classes for the duration of the time I was in Mashhad.” Amin, Sayyid Muhsin, *‘Ayan al-Shi’ā*, p. 44-64.

jurisprudence were rarely formed in it.¹ However, even during this period, the seminary of Mashhad played a leading role in intellectual sciences and Arabic literature and where outstanding scholars were trained, such as Sheikh Abd al-Jawad Adib Nishaburi (died 1344 AH), instructor in literature; Mulla Muhammad Ali, known as “Hajji Fadhil” (died 1342 AH), instructor in jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, and philosophy; Mirza Askari Shahidi, known as “Agha Bozorg” (died 1355 AH), instructor in philosophy; and Sheikh Asadullah Yazdi (died 1342 AH), instructor in philosophy.

With passing this period, in the second half of the fourteenth century and in recent decades, the Islamic seminary of Mashhad began a new era of academic achievements and has had an influential presence in creating societal changes. The migration of well-known scholarly figures from Najaf, the formation of higher level jurisprudential and theological classes, and the struggle against the wave of the Islamophobia that arose with the coming to power of the Pahlavi regime in an Islamic society were some affairs that once again brought the seminary’s name to the forefront of active Shi’a seminaries in recent decades.

In 1331 AH, Hajj Agha Husayn Qummi moved from Najaf to Khorasan and taught higher level jurisprudence and principles of jurisprudence. He completed the higher level qualifications in Iraq and received permission for *ijtihad* from all his teachers in Najaf. He also obtained permission from the deceased Sayyid Murtadha Kashmiri to narrate hadiths. Because of the Mashhadi people’s request to Ayatullah Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi (Mirza Dovvom) to send a God-conscious (*taqwa*) scholar and a learned and capable mujtahid for them, he put a stop to his forty years of education and moved to Mashhad to take on their leadership role.² Along

¹ The scholars who taught higher level (*dars kharij*) jurisprudence and principles of jurisprudence classes during this period are, Ayatullah Hajj Husayn Qummi (died 1366 AH) and Hajj Mirza Muhammad Kafae Khorasani, known as “Aghazadeh” (son of Akhund Mulla Muhammad Kadhim Khorasani).

² Sharif Razi, Muhammad, Ganjineyeh Daneshmandan, p. 152.

with teaching and mentoring seminarians, this great scholar was not indifferent to the societal changes and the anti-religious initiatives made by the government as he readily stood up against Reza Khan's western mentality.¹ This event led to his deportation from Iran to Iraq in 1354-1314 AH. Additional scholars in the Islamic seminary of Mashhad, also a part of his anti-government oppositions included Hajj Mirza Muhammad Kafaee Khorasani, who was exiled to Yazd and Ayatullah Sayyid Yunus Ardebili, who was imprisoned for some time and then exiled to Ardebil.²

The deportation of jurists such as Hajj Husayn Qummi and Hajj Mirza Muhammad Kafaee Khorasani left the Islamic seminary of Mashhad empty of first-rate scholars, and this led to a period of academic decline and recession once again. Although in 1373 AH with the arrival of Ayatullah al-Udhma Sayyid Muhammad Hadi Milani, a student of Mirza Na'ini, Hajj Agha Husayn Qummi, and Sheikh Muhammad Husayn Isfahani (Kumpani), once again the formation of study sessions and intellectual and philosophical discussions revived its academic vigor and enthusiasm.

The Islamic seminary of Mashhad played a crucial role in the national revolution against the imperial state of the Pahlavis and became a center of resistance against the idolatrous regime. Well-accomplished students, fighters, and speakers, like Shahid Sayyid Abd al-Karim Hasheminejad (1311-1360 Shamsi) and Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei, were trained, and they forced the tyrannical imperialist regime who suppressed, exiled, and tortured seminarian students and demolished the schools with the intention of controlling this seminary and its activities. As a result, the

¹ Of his initiatives was fighting the Reza Khan's law banning hijab. As a sign of protest, he went to Tehran in the year 1353 and in the garden of Siraj al-Mulk in Shar-e Rey he invited people to rise against this law. In Mashhad a large group of people sought refuge in Goharshad Mosque beside the shrine of the holy Imam. After these sit-ins the security forces of Reza Khan's regime entered the masjid after direct orders from him, and after some clashes, they open fired on them and killed a large number of people.

² Andeesheh, the Islamic Seminary of Mashhad Journal, first year, number 2, 1370, p. 79.

opposition was unsuccessful in reaching their goals, and this ended with the victory of the Islamic republic in 1357 Shamsi.

IMAM SADIQ'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SCIENTIFIC MOVEMENT IN THE EARLY PERIOD OF ISLAM

MUHAMMAD WA'IZ ZADEH-I KHURASANI

TRANSLATED BY JABIR CHANDOO

ABSTRACT: Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, the sixth Shi'a Imam, played a major role during the scientific movement in the early 2nd century Hijrah, more so compared to that of other Imams from the Prophet's progeny. Several factors rendered this era a golden opportunity for the Imam to spread his knowledge: the Umayyids' and Abbasids' preoccupation with their struggle to attain power, the scholars' acquaintance with the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt, the general thirst for knowledge during this era, and Imam al-Sadiq's prominence in both religious and natural sciences. A meticulous study of the works of Qur'anic exegesis, jurisprudence, history, and hadith studies depict the Imam's great contributions in science and politics. This article focuses on the Imam's role in developing this scientific movement, offers an account of the number and religious denominations of his students and narrators, and reveals the degree to which this influence extended to include Sunni literature of Islamic studies. Indeed, many scholars and students are indebted to the Imam's vast knowledge and contributions in religious and academic fields.

Introduction

The scientific movement in the Islamic world emerged in the early 2nd century Hijrah, coinciding with the shift of political power from the Umayyads to the Abbasid dynasty. Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq has been one of the most distinguished personalities of this critical period in Islamic history. He was the focus of attention and the point of reference for scholars and academics, particularly the scholars of hadith, the jurists, theologians, and commentators of the Qur'an.

A close analysis of the life and scholarly activities of Imam al-Sadiq clarifies the mysteries that surround the birth, growth, and spread of Islamic sciences and culture. His approach and style in the field of politics, education and training, and in the upbringing of erudite and devoted students during his own time, bears invaluable lessons for scholars, thinkers, and reformers of all ages to come.

A thorough study of the works of hadith, Qur'anic exegesis, jurisprudence, history, and biography (*sirah*) reveals his influence and contribution in different arenas of science and politics. He left behind valuable works as his legacy as well as renowned students in the areas of jurisprudence, biography, theology, and Qur'anic exegesis. Their names, works, views, and narrations reported from the Imam have been recorded in the books related to the above-mentioned sciences.

This paper aims to discuss Imam al-Sadiq's influence on the scientific movement of the 2nd century Hijrah in the Islamic world. However, we shall first briefly discuss the origins of this scientific movement, and thereafter explain the Imam's role in its development.

The inception of the scientific movement in Islam

Until the end of the 1st century Hijrah, the Islamic sciences, in the specific sense of the word, like jurisprudence, theology, Qur'anic exegesis, ethics, and history were communicated mainly in the form of narrations (hadith) and through word of mouth from one generation to the next. According to

historians and scholars of hadith, Islamic sciences in general – and the science of hadith in particular – were not yet available in written form up until this time. It was only in the first half of the 2nd century Hijrah that the recording of hadith was initiated by scholars in large Muslim cities and centres of learning.

This view is partially correct although it cannot entirely be accepted. This is because almost all the companions of the Holy Prophet did not write; hence, his words were not recorded. However, with regard to whether or not the recording of hadith was permissible in the first instance, two apparently contradicting opinions have been ascribed to the Prophet. After a lengthy discussion concerning them, Muslim scholars reconciled between the two views in the following manner:

First view: The Prophet did not permit the recording of hadith in the early days lest his words were confused with the Qur'an. He allowed it towards the end of his life as the Qur'an was already in circulation amidst the Muslims, and hence there was no room for such confusion.

Second view: He allowed it to only those of his companions who were competent to do so. Otherwise, he would not encourage it in general.¹

Even if we were to accept the above opinion in the case of other companions of the Prophet, we cannot accept it to include Ali ibn Abi Talib who, according to Shi'a sources of hadith, individually recorded the words of the Prophet in the Book of Ali that was inherited after him by the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt.²

In any case, the above dispute was regarding the Prophet's companions. In the case of those who followed them in position and knowledge (*tabi'in*), the recording of hadith was unquestionably common amongst them. Muhammad ibn Shihab al-Zuhari (d. 125 H), the teacher of Malik ibn

¹ See: Subhi Salih, *Mabahithfi'Ulim al-Hadith*.

² See the introduction in *Jami'Ahadith al-Shi'ah*, v.1.

Anas, is said to have collected epistles in this regard, such that he would sit in his house surrounded by this huge collection of books.¹

Dhahabi and Ibn Hajar are reported to have said that the recording of hadith started in the 2nd century H. He writes:

In the year 143 H, the Muslim scholars during this period began to write on hadith, jurisprudence, and Qur'anic exegesis. Ibn Jurayj in the city of Mecca, Malik – the author of *Al-Muwatta'* – in Medina, Awza'i in Damascus, Ibn Abi 'Uribah, Hammad ibn Salamah, and others in Basrah, Ma'mar in Yemen, and Sufyan Thawri in Kufa. Ibn Ishaq wrote *Al-Maghazi*, Abi Hanifah – may God have mercy on him, composed works on jurisprudence, analogy (quays) and personal opinion (ra'y). Soon after this, Hushaym, Layth, and Ibn Lahya'ah, and thereafter Ibn al-Mubarak, Ibn Yusuf, and Ibn Wahab all began to author works in different areas. From then onwards, the trend of writing in the area of Islamic sciences and the systematic arrangement of them escalated. Books on the Arabic grammar, lexicons, history, and the important events and days in the history of societies were compiled. Prior to this age, the leading scholars used to impart knowledge from memory or reading from the revised and scrambled up epistles.

As to Ibn Hajar, he says in his commentary on the *Sahih* of Bukhari:

The first people to have compiled the hadith were Rabi' ibn Subayh (d.160 H) and Sa'id ibn Abi 'Urubah (d.156 H). They were followed by the scholars of the third generation like Imam Malik (d.179 H) who composed *Al-Muwatta'* in Medina, 'Abd al-Malik ibn Jurayj (d. 150 H) in Mecca, Awza'i (d.156 H) in Damascus, Sufyan Thawri (d.161 H) in

¹ Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Tabaqat*, biography of Muhammad ibn Shahab al-Zuhri.

Kufa, and Hammad ibn Salamah ibn Dinar (d.176 H) in Basrah, all of whom compiled works. Thereafter, many leading figures followed their footsteps, each one authoring works according to his understanding and level of knowledge.

The words of Dhahabi and Ibn Hajar would be misleading and incomplete without considering the following two points:

One: To consider the 2nd century H to be the period in which the movement to record the hadith was initiated by the above-mentioned pioneers does not necessarily imply that these traditions had not been recorded at all by any person in the earlier periods. It rather means that up until this period the massive body of hadith had not been collected, compiled, and methodically arranged in books. This in no way controverts the fact that in the earlier times the scholars of hadith used to pen down that which they came across of the narration in their journals or books (*suhuf*) as termed by Dhahabi.

It is also worthy of consideration here that according to the findings of the scholarly research by Ahmad Amin, the above initiation in the history of the documentation of hadith was other than the one that was banned during the time of the second caliph, or the one that was about to be launched by 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz.

It has been reported that the second caliph had proposed to the companions of the Prophet the need to collect the Prophetic practice (*Sunnah*) in the same manner the Qur'an had been collected. They all gave their consent to it. However, a month later the second caliph withdrew his suggestion and said, "I do not think this is the right thing to do. The People of the Book embarked on a similar task before us the

outcome of which was that the Children of Israel abandoned the Torah and clung to the practice of their Prophet.”¹

The Umayyad caliph ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz also endeavoured to collect the hadith towards the end of the 1st century H. For this reason, he instructed his governors in different cities, including Abi Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Umar ibn Hazm – the chief justice in Medina, to collect the Prophetic narrations and send them to him. Although his success in accomplishing this is dubious,² it appears from a report in *Al-Ta’rikh* of Bukhari that this task was accomplished. In any case, even if this task was successfully carried out, no effect of it has remained.

Considering what has been said above, we conclude that the movement to record the hadith that emerged in the 2nd century H was different in nature to what was in the mind of the second caliph or ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz. What they had thought of was collecting the entire body of the narrations and practices of the Prophet in one place, like the Qur’an, whereas the scholars in the 2nd century collected only the traditions that were in circulation within their respective cities.

Two: What has been said above is true of the history of hadith in the Sunni world. With regard to the Shi’a Imamiyyah, there are clues that indicate that some of the companions of Ali ibn Abi Talib like Abi Rafi’ – his scribe, and his two sons Ubaydullah and Ali, had compiled the judgements of Ali in a book.³ There are also reports that mention works composed by Ali and the Imams after him before the 2nd century H.⁴

What is obvious is that even the generation after the companions (*tabi’in*) did not give consent for their works to be circulated and destroyed them prior to death. However, it was from the 2nd century AH onwards that the

¹ *Fajr al-Islam*, v.1, p.8-11; and *Al-Mabahith fi ‘Ulum al-Hadith*, the section on Tadwin al-hadith.

² Ibid.

³ *Rijal al-Najjashi*, biography of Abi Rafi’, pp. 2-3, Mumbai edition.

⁴ See vol. one of *A’yan al-Shi’ah*; and *Ta’sis al-Shi’ah li ‘Ulum al-Islam*.

recording of hadith and its circulation became widespread as explained earlier.

Some questions worthy of discussion at this stage are: What were the factors that led to the emergence of such a movement in different cities of the Muslim world, almost around one specific period of time? And who was the pioneer leading the way in these important developments in the history of Islam?

Some researchers assume Ibn Jurayj to be the foremost in recording the hadith than his other contemporaries since he died earlier than all of them. And because he lived in the city of Mecca, it is highly probable that the pilgrims transcribed his work and took it with them to their respective cities. Hence, other scholars of hadith came to know of his work, so they followed his example and compiled the traditions that were with them in separate works.¹

Another factor that was decisive in the emergence of the movement to document the hadith was that the jurists in Iraq, Imam Abi Hanifah being on top of them, were vigorously promoting analogical reasoning. And considering that the scholars in other Muslim cities, especially in Mecca and Medina, did not approve the use of this method, they initiated the move to record the hadith as a means, in their judgement, to preserve the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet and to get away with the innovation of analogical reasoning.

Although each of the above two factors may have been decisive in its own right, none of them can be considered to be the sole reason for the emergence of such a movement. The following two points also need to be taken into consideration:

One: The interest and love to record the hadith and to compose works on it seem to have been existing amidst Muslim scholars since the early days

¹ *Fajr al-Islam*, p. 81 onwards.

of Islam. There can be no doubt about this. What is worthy of investigation here is rather the reason as to why the documentation of hadith did not start earlier. In other words, what are the factors that led to the delay in the recording of hadith? In response to this question, a number of factors can be stated:

1. The disapproval of recording the hadith by the Holy Prophet himself as mentioned earlier. However, the correctness of this view is subject to skepticism.
2. The ban imposed on the recording of hadith by the second caliph. This appears to have become a norm after him in the later period that was carried on by the Umayyad caliphs with the exception of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz. They declared the documentation of hadith to be illegal, or, at the least, did not approve of it by encouraging people to compile them.
3. The religious and political disputes between different groups like the Khawarij, Shi'a, Murji'ah, or similar to the contention between Hasan Basri and Wasil ibn 'Ata that resulted in the birth of the Mu'tazilah tradition. Similarly, the continuation of the bloody wars between Ali and Mu'awiyah, between the clan of Zubayr and the Umayyads, and between them and Mukhtar ibn Abi 'Ubaydah. This was in addition to the continuous uprisings by the supporters and family members of Ali that stretched throughout the period of the Umayyad rule.

This state of affairs continued up until the time of Mansur Dawaniqi when the Abbasid rule was almost established. The relative peace and stability achieved during this period laid the groundwork for the increasing interest in recording the hadith. Put differently, the ground for such a move had been there for long; however, there were obstacles in the way. With the shift of power to the Abbasid dynasty, these hurdles were relatively removed. This is in addition to the fact that Mansur himself was a broadminded person who was fond of knowledge and wisdom. He encouraged educational activities and persuaded scholars to author works

in various subjects. As recorded in the books, it was him who instructed Muhammad ibn Ishaq, the author of *Al-Maghazi*, to compose a work on the life of the Holy Prophet for his son Mahdi, and he complied.¹

Furthermore, the Iranians, who played a significant role in the shift of caliphate to the Bani 'Abbas, gave more importance to knowledge and learning than the Arabs, and had a long history of involvement in this regard. This in itself was a decisive factor in the flourishing of knowledge throughout the period of their influence in the court of the caliphate.

Two: The second point is related to the actual theme of this paper that we shall now turn our attention to after the above preamble. Researchers have mentioned numerous factors that led to the emergence of the scientific movement in the Islamic world in the 2nd century H. However, there is another vital factor in this regard which the historians, scholars, and researchers seem to have turned a blind eye to: The role of the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt, particularly the contributions of Imam al-Sadiq, in the appearance, blossoming, and spread of this blessed movement throughout the Muslim world during that era.

The Imams' role in the Scientific Movement

The history of the involvement of the Prophet's progeny in the spread of the Islamic sciences dates back to the time of Imam Ali himself. According to the testimony of the Prophet's companions and the generation after them (*tabi'in*), Ali was the most learned of all companions in matters related to the Qur'an, Sunnah, Islamic law, and judiciary. Instances that allude to this fact are beyond numeration. The Shi'a and the Sunni sources are replete with the narrations he reported from the Prophet of God, alongside his words and views.

In his work *Al-Musnad*, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal has named one of its chapters as *Musnad of Ali* in which 3,000 hadiths were reported from him.

¹ *Sirah Ibn Hisham*, Introduction.

In *Al-Musnad*, Ali apparently comes second after Abi Hurayrah to have narrated the largest number of hadiths in this book.

These copious but scattered narrations were in circulation through word of mouth for decades amongst Muslim scholars and traditionists. Each one of them was aware of only part of this massive body of reports and used to transmit it to others. The complete version of these reports, according to the belief of the twelver Shi'a, was to be found only with the Imams from the Prophet's progeny. They inherited them from one another and imparted them to their followers.

The narrations from Ali have reached us through the following five channels:

1. The Sunni sources purely through their chains of narration. Most of the reports found in *Al-Musnad* of Ahmad and other Sunni collections of hadith are of this kind.
2. The Imams of the Prophet's progeny, but through the Sunni narrators. They are many in number to be discussed later in this paper.
3. The Shi'a narrators who have reported most narrations from the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt.
4. The Zaydiyyah narrators attributed to Zayd son of Ali, son of Husayn ibn Ali. Zayd was a learned, ascetic, and revolutionary person who rose against the Umayyad rule in 122 H. Despite the fact that he was defeated and ultimately martyred in Kufa, his movement had massive impact in the weakening of the Umayyad caliphate and its eventual decline.

These narrations have appeared in the book *Al-Majmi' al-Fiqhi* which is also called *Musnad Zayd ibn Ali*, and in the book *Ra'b al-Sad* famously known as *Amali Ahmad ibn 'Isa ibn Zayd* or *Al-Amali* of Shajari, as well as in other Zaydiyyah works like *Al-Bahr al-Zakhkhar*. The total number of these reports is considerable.

5. The Shi'a Ismaili creed, attributed to Isma'il son of Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad. They believe in the first six Imams from the Prophet's progeny. This sect emerged after the demise of Imam al-Sadiq in 148 H as a result of their acceptance of the leadership of his son Isma'il who had already passed away during Imam Sadiq's lifetime. They did not follow Imam Misa ibn Ja'far and were divided into a number of sub-sects in the course of time. The Bohra and the Agha Khanis are the two important subsisting sub-sects within the Ismaili tradition.

The narrations from the Imams of the Prophet's progeny through the Ismaili sources are mainly from the famous and authentic work of *Da'aim al-Islam* by Qadi Nu'man Misri. He was greatest distinguished jurist, chief justice, and missionary of the Fatimid caliphate, and has authored many significant works. He passed away in Cairo in 363 H.

In his *Da'a'im al-Islam*, he reported narrations, though without their chains of narration, related to all chapters of the Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) from Imam al-Sadiq and the Imams before him. Many of these traditions go back to the Holy Prophet and Imam Ali through the intermediary of other Imams.

Nonetheless, considering that Qadi Nu'man lived 150 years after the time of Imam al-Sadiq, there has been a lengthy debate as to the sources of his reports from the Imams before al-Sadiq. In any case, this discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.¹

The narrations that have reached us from Imam al-Sadiq and the Imams before him have also been through the same five channels as mentioned above. The volumes of traditions reported from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq by Sunni and Shi'a narrators brought together is considerably large.

One of the important discussions that has not received due attention from researchers in the field is the critical examination of the Ahlul Bayt's

¹ I have prepared notes on this discussion.

narrations transmitted through the above five channels to discover a) both the areas in which they are congruent with one another and the areas in which they are not, b) that which have been the causes of such incongruity between these reports, and c) which of these five channels is more authentic and reliable than the other. In addition to this, the number of traditions commonly reported by all five channels, and the ones exclusive to each of them, need to be precisely identified.

The conflict between these reports is to be considered as one of the factors that has led to the difference between the Shi'a and the Sunni, and also between the various sects within the Shi'a tradition. Moreover, the differences within one particular sect, such as the differences between the Zaydiyyah and the Shi'a Imamiyyah scholars, have their root definitely in these conflicting narrations.

The narrations of the Ahlul Bayt from Sunni sources

The traditions of the Ahlul Bayt have not been reported only through the twelver Shi'a sources or those of other Shi'a sects; rather, these narrations are to be copiously found in Sunni sources as well, as mentioned in the introduction to *Al-Muqni' wa al-Hidayah*. Afterwards, research has been conducted through 25 major Sunni works of hadith, tafsir, and biographies (*sirah*) written from the third to the sixth century. More than ten thousand hadiths from the Ahlul Bayt in these works on different topics were found. Those hadiths were classified and sent to a number of instructors in the Islamic seminary in Qum. The idea was that they should take the project further by adding to its narrations from other Sunni works and eventually have it published. It is hoped that when the project is finished and the result is published it will unearth the attachment and friendly relationship based on the love that prominent Sunni scholars and traditionists had with the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt, especially with Imam al-Sadiq. Moreover, it also uncovers the fact that studying under the tutelage of the Imams and citing religious precepts and hadith from them

was widely common in those days amongst the Sunni scholars and masters of hadith.

Imam al-Sadiq's role

The contributions of Imam al-Baqir and al-Sadiq in the diffusion of Islamic sciences and hadith is much greater compared to that of other Imams from the Prophet's progeny. In comparison with other Imams, the number of traditions reported from these two Imams in the works of hadith is also considerably high.

One of the reasons behind this is that the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt who came after Ali were under great pressure, especially after the tragic event of Karbala and during the rule of Hajjaj ibn Yusuf al-Thaqafi, the bloodthirsty Umayyad governor over Iraq. They were less able during this period to disseminate their knowledge until after the death of Hajjaj in 95 H when the atmosphere of suppression was replaced by relative freedom.

Indeed, this period had coincided with the inception of the Abbasid campaign to assume the caliphate. It was in the early 2nd century that Ibrahim al-Imam began his call to invite people to support the Bani 'Abbas which eventually culminated after decades of struggle in the coming to power of the Abbasid dynasty in 132 H. The Umayyads and the Abbasids were preoccupied during this time with their struggle to attain power and thus, showed less concern for the Imams' activities.

This period of time that lasted for almost 70 years coincided with the divine office (imamah) of Imam al-Baqir (d.114 H), Imam al-Sadiq (d. 148 H), and partially included the time of Imam Musa al-Kadhim. Al-Baqir and al-Sadiq made the maximum of this opportunity to spread their knowledge.

However, the period in which Imam al-Sadiq lived was more conducive for such scientific activities compared to other times due to the following reasons:

1. The period of his divine office was longer and lasted for about 34 years.

2. The prolongation of the political and military confrontation between the Umayyads and the Abbasids brought about great opportunity and freedom for the Imam, as well as for the growth of the scientific movement in general. This is taking into consideration that the events that transpired before and after the shift of power coincided exactly with the times of Imam al-Sadiq.
3. Many students and masters of hadith had already become acquainted with the noble teachings of the Ahlul Bayt through Imam al-Baqir. The sweetness of these teachings aroused in them the desire and craving for the knowledge and wisdom of the Prophet's progeny. Hence, they gathered after him around his son Ja'far al-Sadiq with unparalleled enthusiasm and zeal.
4. The scientific fame and position of Imam al-Sadiq himself contributed to the intensification of such an interest amongst the seekers of knowledge during that period.
5. The political stand of Imam al-Sadiq on the outside together with his total devotion to scientific activities was a decisive factor in attracting students to attend his lessons without any concern or fear.
6. The prevalence of knowledge and the increase in the number of its seekers during this period of time, in addition to the growth of Islamic sciences and other disciplines related to it as mentioned earlier, were effective in the creation of a favourable atmosphere for scientific activities during Imam al-Sadiq's time.
7. Besides being well-grounded in religious sciences like tafsir, jurisprudence, and theology, Imam al-Sadiq was also thoroughly familiar with the natural sciences. This is attested by numerous reports, including the works attributed to Jabir ibn Hayyan – which in itself requires an independent research, as well as by narrations transmitted from Mufaddal ibn 'Umar and others. This dimension of the Imam's scholarship also played its role in attracting around him those interested in this field of study.

All these factors brought together were crucial in creating a brilliant image of Imam al-Sadiq in the people's minds that such scientific fame and position had not been acquired in the history of Islam by anyone up until that time. The same holds true of the considerable number of narrators who have recounted reports from him. The position of Imam al-Sadiq during this period can be equated to that of Imam Ali during his time; it could perhaps be even said that, taking into account the atmosphere during Imam al-Sadiq's time, his scientific fame excelled over that of his grandfather Ali.

In any case, the above factors gave Imam al-Sadiq a great share from this golden opportunity, more so than his father Imam al-Baqir and his son Imam Musa ibn Ja'far.

The lesson circles of Imam al-Sadiq in Kufa

Beside his academic activities in Medina, Imam al-Sadiq travelled several times to Kufa¹ where he spent a considerable amount of time delivering lessons at a location inside the mosque of Kufa commonly known today as Imam al-Sadiq's place (*maqam*). A close study of the biographies of those who narrated reports from him reveals that most of them were from Kufa.

Sheikh Tusi in his work *Al-Fihrist* as well as Abi al-Abbas Najjashi in his *Al-Fihrist*, famously known as *Rijal al-Najjashi*, are committed to refer to this group of narrators by the term *kifi* ("The Kufian"). This term seems to have been employed by them to denote the reliability or – most likely – the weakness of a narrator. However, this matter requires further investigation.

In any case, it is uncontested that Kufa was the first and most important centre in which the Shi'a faith and the divine teachings of the Prophet's progeny emerged. It was the hub of Shi'a scholarship that gave birth to all other Shi'a centres of learning.

¹ The city of Kufa was the stronghold of the Shi'a faith. It was in this city that Tashayyu' developed and came on the scene.

In support of what has been said above, consider the following example: Najjashi narrates in his work¹ that Ahmad ibn Ahmad ibn Isa Ash'ari Qummi – one of the masters of Hadith in Qum, says:

I went to Kufa in the pursuit of collecting narrations. For this purpose, I went to see Hasan ibn Ali al-Washsha', one of the companions of Imam al-Ridha'. He gave me a book and asked me to copy [reports] from it so that he may thereafter read them for me [to ensure that I have copied them correctly]. But I said, 'Read it for me right now, as no one knows what will happen in the future.' He said, 'May God have mercy on you! Copy them first and then come to me. Had I known that these narrations are so much in demand, I would have strived to collect more than these, for I have seen 900 scholars and tutors in this mosque of Kufa, all of whom used to say, 'Ja'far ibn Muhammad has told me ...

The approximate number of Imam al-Sadiq's students

Abi al-'Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Sa'id (d.333H) – famously known as Ibn'Uqdah, who was amongst the Zaydiyyah scholars, and one of the masters and reporters of hadith in the twelver Shi'a tradition, has composed a work on the people who have narrated from Imam al-Sadiq and has mentioned 4000 of them by their names.² Although this work is no longer available, it cannot be disputed that Sheikh Tusi and other masters of biography (*rijal*) during that period have seen this work and benefitted from it.

In his work of biography,³ Sheikh Tusi has listed alphabetically 3223 students of Imam al-Sadiq, that is, 777 persons less than the number given

¹ *Rijal al-Najjashi*, p.28.

² The figure 4000 has not appeared in *Al-Rijal* of Najjashi or *Al-Fihrist* of Sheikh Tusi, but it appears in *Nadlat al-Idah* as an appendix to *Al-Fihrist* of Sheikh Tusi, p. 42, Spingar edition.

³ First edition, 1381/1961, Najaf, pp. 142-342.

by Ibn 'Uqdah. Even if we assume that Sheikh Tusi had seen the work of Ibn 'Uqdah which contained 4000 names, it remains unknown as to why he did not record all the names in his own work.

However, we also need to take into consideration that the sources from which Sheikh Tusi has narrated the names of these people who have transmitted reports from Imam al-Sadiq or other Imams are not known for us. In other words, it is not known whether he was only quoting these names from other scholars, or it was the result of his own research by looking into the chains of narration, the indexes, and the works of biography before him.

In any case, the valid scientific methodology to identify the names of the narrators of Imam al-Sadiq and other Imams would be to examine the text and chains of narration of all the traditions that have been recorded in the Shi'a and Sunni books, and note the name of every narrator who has reported from any of the Imams.

The late grand Ayatullah Burujerdi composed two books on Shi'a works of biography and important Shi'a works of hadith like *Al-Kafi* of Kulayni, *Al-Tahdhib* of Sheikh Tusi, *Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih*, and other books of Sheikh Saduq, both waiting to be published.

Although it is obvious that the work on *Rijal* by Sheikh Tusi does not contain the names of all the narrators who have reported from Imam al-Sadiq or other Imams, a quick comparison of the number of narrators of each Imam reveals that the number of Imam al-Sadiq's students exceeds that of the students of the other Imams; the number of his students alone is almost equal to the total number of all who have narrated from other Imams.

Unfortunately, the narrators in the work of Sheikh Tusi are not numbered; their names have been listed only in alphabetical order. As such, although I could only count the narrators of Imam al-Sadiq from the book, we can roughly understand the major difference in the number of his narrators compared to those of the rest of the Imams by looking at the number of

pages the narrators of each Imam occupy in the book: the names of Imam al-Sadiq's reporters alone appear in about 200 pages, while the companions of the Prophet and those of the rest of the Imams occupy only about 197 pages.

Identifying the religious denominations of Imam al-Sadiq's narrators

Bearing in mind the distinguished personality of Imam al-Sadiq and the position he enjoyed during his time, it could be easily misconceived that all of his students followed the Shi'a faith. A similar misconception is held by the people concerning the companions and supporters of Imam Ali and other Imams, whereas this contradicts the historical evidence at hand.

In the case of Imam Ali, apart from a group of his distinguished companions, the rest of his supporters were jurists and traditionists who belonged to the Sunni school of thought. Their position in favour of Ali was on the basis of considering him to be the rightful and legal caliph after Uthman, contrary to the people of Jamal, Siffin, and Nahrawan who were not willing to accept his caliphate even at this level. Most of them showed their love for Ali and the Prophet's progeny, and as such, they were Shi'a in the broader sense of the word, and not in the specific sense of the term. Now, by referring to the works on biographies (*rijal*), the same fact can be easily established with regards to Imam al-Sadiq's students and companions, some of whom were renowned Sunni scholars who held the positions of judiciary and issued religious verdicts (*fatwa*).¹ In fact, many

¹ Such as: Isma'il ibn Muslim ibn Abi Ziyad al-Sakuni al-Kufi (p. 147); Isma'il ibn 'Abdillah al-A'mash (p. 147); Al-Hakam ibn 'Utaybah al-Kufi al-Kindi (p. 171); Hammad ibn Abi Hanifah al-Nu'man (p. 173); Hafs ibn Ghiyath al-Qadi (p. 175); Kharijah ibn Mus'ab al-Khurasani (p. 188); Zayd ibn Aslam Mawla 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (p. 197); Sa'd ibn Ibrahim ibn 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Awf al-Zuhri (d. 125 H) – the chief justice of Medina (p. 202); Sulayman ibn Mahran al-A'mash – d. 148 H- (p. 206); Sufyan ibn Sa'id al-Thawri – d. 161 H- (p. 212); Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah – d.198 H- (p. 212); 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Ansari – Abu Tawalah, the chief justice of Medina during the reign of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz (p. 224); 'Abullah ibn Shibrimah al-Kufi al-Faqih (p. 228); 'Abdullah ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani – the brother of Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Faqih (p. 228); 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Umar al-Awza'i al-Faqih – d. 157 H, the Imam of Sham (p. 231); 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Umar ibn Hafs ibn 'Asim ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (p. 229); 'Abd al-Rahman ibn

of them were the descendants of the Prophet's companions and the past caliphs.¹ Furthermore, the names of quite a few of the distinguished theologians² of the time, as well as some of the well-known scholars of Prophetic biography, historians,³ commentators of the Qur'an,⁴ and members from the progeny of Ali and his companions – who rose against the oppressive rule of the time, are also to be seen among the names of his students.⁵

Zayd ibn Aslam (p. 232); 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Jurayj al-Umawi (p. 233); 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Abi Salamah al-Majishun –who is considered as reliable by the Sunni scholars (p. 234); 'Ubayd ibn 'Abdillah ibn 'Isa ibn 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Layla al-Qadi (p. 240); 'Amri ibn Jami', Abi 'Uthman al-Azdi al-Basri –the chief justice of Ray (p. 249); 'Asim ibn 'Umar ibn Hafs ibn 'Asim ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (p. 243); Ghiyath ibn Ibrahim (p. 270); Malik ibn Anas ibn Abi 'Amir al-Asbahi al-Imam (p. 308); Nuh ibn Darraj al-Nakha'i al-Qadi (p. 323); Al-Nu'man ibn Thabit Abu Hanifah al-Taymuli al-Kufi al-Imam (p. 325); Wahab ibn Wahab Abu al-Bakhtari al-Qarashi al-Madani (p. 327); Yahya ibn Sa'id ibn Qays al-Ansari –d. 143 H, who was the chief justice at Hashimiyah during the rule of Abu Ja'far al-Mansur (p. 333); Qasim ibn 'Abdillah ibn 'Umar ibn Hafs ibn 'Asim ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (p.274); Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Layla al-Ansari al-Qadi al-Kufi –d. 148 H (p. 293); Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Awf al-Zuhri (p. 294); Muhammad ibn 'Uthman ibn Rabi'ah –famously known as *Rabi'at al-ra'y* (p. 295); Muhammad ibn 'Umar ibn 'Ubayd al-Ansari al-'Attar al-Kufi –d. 176 H, who was said to be equal to a thousand men (p. 296); and Muhammad ibn Muslim al-Zuhri –Ibn Shahab who was the teacher of Malik ibn Anas, d. 124 H (p. 300).

¹ Like Muhammad ibn al-Mundhir ibn al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwam (p. 301); Muhammad ibn Abi al-Hakam ibn al-Mukhtar ibn Abi 'Ubaydillah al-Thaqafi (p. 306); Hisham ibn 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwam (p. 329); Kulayb ibn 'Ubayd ibn Malik Abi 'Ubaydah ibn 'Abdillah ibn Mas'ud al-Kufi (p. 278); and others whose names have appeared under footnote 15.

² Like Zafr ibn al-Hudhayl al-Kufi (p. 201); and 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd al-Basri (pp. 80-144).

³ Such as Musa ibn 'Uqba ibn Abi 'Ayyash al-Madani, who was apparently amongst the *tabi'in* and had authored a book on the battles of the Holy Prophet (p. 307); Muhammad ibn Ishaq ibn Yasar al-Madani –d. 151 H, who had a work on the battles fought by the Holy Prophet (p. 281); Hisham ibn 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr (p. 329); and Lut ibn Yahya –Abi Mikhnaf, who composed a work on the martyrs of Karbala (p. 279).

⁴ Like Muqatil ibn Sulayman al-Khurasani –the exegete (p. 313).

⁵ Al-Hasan ibn Salih al-Hayy –among the great scholars of Zaydiyyah (p. 166); Sulayman ibn Khalid Abu al-Rabi' al-Hilal –who accompanied Zayd in his uprising but did not leave the company of Abu Ja'far and others (p. 207); Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-'Abbasi ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn 'Abd ibn al-'Abbas (p. 280); Muhammad ibn Zayd ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn (p. 287); Abu Khalid al-Kabuli –the senior as well as the junior (p. 328); Yahya ibn Zayd ibn Ali who was martyred in

The relationship of the four Imams of the Sunni schools with Imam al-Sadiq

Imam Abi Hanifah (80 - 150 H) preceded the other three Imams in time, and as such he was more in the company of Imam al-Sadiq and his father Imam al-Baqir than any of the other three Imams. His birth and demise dates are very close to those of Imam al-Sadiq (85-148 H).

It is for this reason that some scholars such as Sheikh Abu Zuhrah do not consider their relationship to be a teacher-student one; rather, they look at them to be contemporaries of one another. It appears from some reports that Imam al-Sadiq addressed him as the learned (*faqih*) of the people of Iraq, and dealt with him as a scholar and not as his student.

However, there are reports that have appeared in *Jami' al-Masanid* which Abu Hanifah has narrated from Imam al-Sadiq. But before we mention those reports, we will briefly look at the relationship between Abu Hanifah and Imam al-Baqir. We shall mention here a summary of one report that reveals the height of his veneration towards Imam al-Baqir:¹

Abu Hanifah reports that one day I went to see Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn, I greeted him and took a seat. He said, "O my brother from Iraq! Avoid sitting here as the people of Iraq have been banned [by the authorities] to have audience with us." Abu Hanifah says that thereafter I inquired from him about the second caliph and his relationship with the scholars and the learned, and then he also spoke of the fine relationship between him and Ali. Abu Hanifah then said to Imam al-Baqir, "You do not disown the first two, whereas there are people amidst us who disown them; you could write a letter to them [and stop them from this]." The Imam replied, "You are closer to me than they are. But still when I

Juzjan in 125 H (p. 332); and Yahya –the martyr, son of 'Abdallah ibn al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan – Sahib al-Daylam (p. 332).

¹ Taking into consideration that Imam al-Baqir passed away in 114 H, it is evident that Abu Hanifah must have met with in his youth and received pedagogical instructions from him.

ordered you not to sit in my audience, you did not obey me; so how can I expect them to obey me?"¹

As to his reports from Imam al-Sadiq, they are of two categories:

1. The traditions that he reported from Imam al-Sadiq which, through his father and forefathers, traced back to Ali. The following are a few examples:
 - a. I report from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, who reported from his father, who reported Ali – may God be pleased with him, to have said, “A slave man can marry two wives, and can divorce two times.”²
 - b. I narrate from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, who narrated Ali as saying, “The legal punishment of a slave when he accuses a married person of adultery is half [that of a free man].”
 - c. I report from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, who reported from his father, who reported that Ali, may God be pleased with him, punished a slave with forty lashes because of accusing somebody of illegitimate birth (*firyah*).³
2. Reports in which he quotes from Imam al-Sadiq himself, such as the two narrations below:
 - a. Abu Ja'far al-Mansur once sent me a message that I should prepare some difficult questions for Ja'far ibn Muhammad as people have been extremely fascinated by his knowledge. I thus prepared forty questions and sent them to him at Hayrah. One day, he summoned me as well as Ja'far ibn Muhammad to his court. He then reclined on his seat, and Ja'far ibn Muhammad sat to his right. He inspired such awe in me that the personality of Mansur did not. Mansur then asked me to take a seat. He then turned towards Ja'far and said: “O Abu

¹ *Jami' al-Masanid*, vol. 1, p. 204.

² *Ibid.* vol. 2, p. 145.

³ *Ibid.* p. 211.

‘Abdillah, this is Abu Hanifah.” He answered, “Yes, I know him.” He then turned towards Abu Hanifah and told him: “O Abu Hanifah, ask him what is on the paper.” Abu Hanifah says, “I started posing the questions to him one after the other, and he answered all the forty questions so well that he made everyone dumbfounded.” I found him to be the most acquainted of people with regard to the different opinions held by scholars. Hence, I consider him to be the most learned scholar I have ever seen.¹

- b. ‘Abd al-Jabbar ibn ‘Abdal-’Aziz ibn Abi Ruwwad reports that we were at Hajj with Ja’far ibn Muhammad when Abu Hanifah came to see him. He greeted him and embraced him, and thereafter started asking him questions to the extent that he even inquired from him about his close family members. So a person asked the Imam, “O son of the Apostle of God, do you know who this man is?” Abu Hanifah retorted at this saying, “I have not seen a man more ridiculous than you! You see me inquiring from him about his inner family circle, and you are asking him whether or not he knows me? I am Abu Hanifah, and this [Ja’far] is the most learned of person of this land.”²

Imam Malik ibn Anas (d. 179 AH) – the jurist of the people of Medina, and the head of the Maliki school of jurisprudence, saw the times of Imam al-Sadiq since his youth through to his middle adulthood, and also took lessons from him.

In his book *Al-Muwatta’*, Malik has reported around 40 narrations from the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt through the following ways:

1. From Malik, from Shihab, from Ali ibn Husayn...³

¹ Ibid. vol. 1, p. 222.

² Ibid. vol. 2, p. 83.

³ *Al-Muwatta’* (Dar Ihya’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyyah, reviewed by Muhammad Fu’ad ‘Abd al-Baqi), vol. 1, p. 76.

2. From Malik, from Rabi'ah ibn 'Abd al-Rahman, Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn ...¹
3. From Malik, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from Ali ibn Abi Talib said ...²
4. From Malik, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father, from Jabir ibn 'Abdillah [Ansari], from the Messenger of God ...

The manner in which the Holy Prophet performed his Hajj has been reported by Malik and all other Sunni authorities only through the above chains of transmission.³ It was due to this very reason that Abu Hanifah has been reported to have said, 'Were it not for Ja'far ibn Muhammad, the Muslims would not have known the Hajj rituals.'

Besides Malik, Muhammad ibn Ishaq has also narrated reports in his book *Al-Maghazi*, directly and indirectly, from Imam al-Sadiq and Imam al-Baqir.⁴

As to Imam Shafi'i (150-204 H) and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d.241 H), although there is no evidence that they were in contact with any of the Imams during their time such that they may have narrated from them directly, there are reports in the book *Tartib Musnad al-Shafi'i*⁵ as well as

¹ Ibid, vol. 2, p. 501.

² Ibid, vol. 1, p. 385.

³ See: *Al-Hajj fi al-Sunnah* by the author.

⁴ Like in: 4/144: Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn –Abi Ja'far- reported to me ...; 1/258: Abu Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn narrated to me from the Messenger of God ...; 4/203: From Muhammad ibn Muslim al-Shahab al-Zuhri, from Ali ibn al-Husayn ...; and 1/225: From 'Amr ibn Abi Ja'far, from Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Labibah, from Ali ibn al-Husayn.

⁵ The following are the chains of narration through which Imam al-Shafi'i narrated reports from Imam al-Sadiq and the Imams before him: (1) From Ibrahim ibn Muhammad, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father, from the Holy Prophet (pp. 97, 251 & 216). (2) From Muslim, from Ibn Jurayj, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father, from Jabir (p. 370). (3) From 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Darawardi, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father, from Jabir ibn 'Abdillah (pp. 163 & 371). (4) From Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Khalid ibn Abi Karimah, from Abu Ja'far (p. 180). (5) From al-Thaqafi –who is reliable, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father, from Jabir (p. 180). (6)

in *Musnad Ahmad* that trace back to the Prophet through Imam al-Sadiq and the Imams before him.

Conclusion

Imam al-Sadiq's role in the scientific movement during the early days of its inception in the 2nd century H was, indeed, significant. His scientific influence was not limited to the Shi'a jurisprudence or hadith only; rather, it extended to include the Sunni literature of hadith, jurisprudence, theology, history, and the commentary of the Qur'an. Many renowned scholars are, directly or indirectly, are indebted to his vast knowledge and multi-dimensional scholarship. This is in addition to his unique contributions in the field of physical sciences observed mainly in the works of Jabir ibn Hayyan. Moreover, he was indirectly involved in the political movements initiated by the descendants of Ali, some of whose activists were amongst his students.

Ibn 'Uyaynah, from al-Zuhri, from Ali ibn al-Husayn (p. 190). (7) From Malik, from Ibn Shahab, from Ali ibn al-Husayn (pp. 86 & 190). (8) From Malik, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father (pp. 130 & 204). (9) From a group of people, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father, from Ali (p. 83). (10) From Ibn 'Uyaynah, from Muhammad ibn Ishaq who said: I said to Abu Ja'far ... (p. 97). (11) From Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Shafi' –my uncle, from 'Abdallah ibn Hasan ibn Hasan, from a group of his family members, from Zayd ibn Ali ... (p. 240). (12) From Ibrahim ibn Muhammad and others, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father, from the Messenger of God (s) ... (p. 163). (13) From Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from 'Amri ibn Dinar, from Abu Ja'far ... (p. 127). (14) From Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Shafi' –my uncle, from Ali ibn al-Husayn, from the Apostle of God ... (p. 129). (15) Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father, from 'Abdallah ibn Ja'far ... (p. 216). (16) From Sufyan, from Ja'far, from his father, from Jabir, from the Messenger of God ... (p. 39).

LOVE FOR THE AHLUL BAYT AND ITS OUTCOMES¹

HUSAYN ANSARIYAN

SUMMARISED AND TRANSLATED BY MOHAMMAD JAVAD
SHOMALI

ABSTRACT: The Ahlul Bayt are the ideal exemplars chosen by Allah to lead and guide people, as they represent Him. Those who desire to be true believers ask themselves if they merely declare their love or truly do so by revealing that adoration through actions. Using the Qur'an and hadiths, this article offers the effects of having love for the Ahlul Bayt in this world and in the next. A person who is Godwary and obedient, who exhibits qualities such as humbleness, trustworthiness, attending to orphans and the unfortunate, constantly remembers Allah, and restrains from vices is a true believer. It is only then that such a person deserves the intercession of the Ahlul Bayt. The best way to prepare one's soul to better follow their instructions are – but not limited to – fully familiarizing themselves with the Ahlul Bayt, emulating them, befriending their friends, detesting their enemies, and patiently enduring difficulties. Consequently, such a believer will experience peace of heart, feel delight at the moment of death, enter heaven permanently, and earns the love of the Ahlul Bayt in return, both in this world and in the next.

¹ A summarized extract of pages 549 to 601 of the book "*Ahlul Bayt: 'Arshiane Farsh Neshin*" by Husayn Ansariyan, Dar ul-Irfan Publications.

The Ahlul Bayt have mentioned various qualities for their true Shi'a followers. A person can be a true Shi'a through achieving these qualities if he or she strives to restrain from all kinds of vices.

Jabir ibn Yazid al-Ju'fi narrates that one day Imam Baqir asked him, 'Is it enough for a person who claims to be a Shi'a to only love us?' Then the Imam added, "Only the person who is Godwary and obeys Him is our Shi'a. Our Shi'as are only known by humbleness, trustworthiness, abundantly remembering God, fasting, prayer, goodness towards the parents, attending poor neighbors, taking care of the unfortunate and the orphans, honesty, reciting the Qur'an, and refraining from backbiting."

Jabir then tells the Imam that he does not know any person with such qualities. The Imam replies, "Is it enough for a person to claim loving Ali and knowing him as the guardian while he does not try to prepare for the hereafter?" The Imam responds:

وَاللَّهِ مَا يُتَقَرَّبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى إِلَّا بِالطَّاعَةِ، وَمَا مَعَنَا بَرَاءَةٌ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَلَا عَلَى اللَّهِ لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ حُجَّةٍ، مَنْ كَانَ لِلَّهِ مُطِيعًا فَهُوَ لَنَا وَلِيِّ، وَمَنْ كَانَ لِلَّهِ غَاصِبًا فَهُوَ لَنَا عَدُوٌّ، وَمَا تُنَالُ وَلَا يَتُّنَالُ إِلَّا بِالْعَمَلِ وَالْوَرَعِ.

By Allah, there is no means for achieving proximity to God except for obedience. We do not possess a letter to free people of punishment. No one has any excuse before God with respect to his sins. Whoever obeys God will be our friend and whoever disobeys Him will be our enemy. Our guardianship and love cannot be achieved by anything other than righteous deeds and piety.¹

On another occasion, Imam al-Baqir told Fudayl:

يَلْبَغُ مَنْ لَقِيْتِ مِنْ مَوَالِينَا عَنَا السَّلَامَ، وَقُلْ لَهُمْ: إِنِّي لَا أَعْنِي عَنْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِلَّا يَوْزَعُ، فَاحْفَظُوا أَسِنَّتَكُمْ، وَكَفُّوا أَيْدِيَكُمْ، وَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ.

¹ *Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 74, chapter on obedience and piety, hadith number 3 and *Rawdat al-Wa'izin*, vol. 2, p. 294 and *Mishkat al-Anwar*, 59.

Convey my salaam (greetings) to our followers and tell them we cannot do anything for you regarding God's punishment unless you practice piety. Thus, guard your tongues and restrain yourselves from committing sins. Be patient and perform prayers for, indeed, God is with the patient.¹

In this regard, Imam al-Sadiq says:

مَعَاشِرَ الشَّيْعَةِ، كُونُوا لَنَا زِينًا، وَلَا تَكُونُوا عَلَيْنَا شَيْنًا، قُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا،
وَاحْفَظُوا أَلْسِنَتَكُمْ وَكَفُّوْهَا عَنِ الْفُضُولِ وَقَبِيحِ الْقَوْلِ.

O Shi'a. Be an ornament for us, and do not be a disgrace for us. Speak nicely to people, guard your tongues, and restrain them from unnecessary and indecent words.²

Imam al-Sadiq also said:

يَابْنَ جُنْدَبَ! بَلِّغْ مَعَاشِرَ شَيْعَتِنَا وَقُلْ لَهُمْ: لَا تَذْهَبَنَّ بِكُمْ الْمَذَاهِبُ، فَإِنَّهُ لَا تُنَالُ
وَلَا يُنْتَهَى إِلَّا بِالْوَرَعِ وَالْإِجْتِهَادِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمُؤَاسَاةِ الْإِخْوَانِ فِي اللَّهِ، وَكَيْسَ مِنْ
شَيْعَتِنَا مَنْ يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ.

O son of Jundab, tell our followers, 'Do not let different paths distract you.' By Allah, our wilayah cannot be achieved by other than piety and endeavour in the world and having sympathy with brothers in faith. He who oppresses people is not one of us.³

According to the Ahlul Bayt, committing sins and indecent acts is the conduct of their enemies and their followers ought to avoid them. They also emphasise that their followers never eat riba, occupy others'

¹ *Da'aim al-Islam*, vol. 1, p. 133. *Wasail al-Shi'a*, vol. 12, p. 195, chapter 119, hadith number 16067.

² *Al-Amali*, Sheikh Saduq, 400, al-majles 92, hadith number 17; *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, vol. 12, p. 193, chapter 119, hadith number 16063 and *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 68, p. 310, chapter 79, hadith number 3.

³ *Tuhaf al-Uqul*, 303 and *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il*, vol. 12, p. 193, chapter 19, hadith number 160603 and *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 68, p. 310, chapter 79, hadith number 3.

possession, commit adultery, betray, break a promise, and oppress and hurt others.

Therefore, those who do not follow the instructions given by the Ahlul Bayt and pursue their own desires are at loss. The Ahlul Bayt have made it clear that they will not support those who commit sins and hurt others; their intercession extends only to those who strive to obey God and follow them, and there is no way to success other than this.

The question arises: What is the best way to prepare ourselves and train our souls to better follow the instructions of the Ahlul Bayt and the Prophet? It is cultivating their love in our hearts. A lover will always try to imitate the beloved and will naturally be influenced by him or her. If we choose the Ahlul Bayt as our beloved ones, their virtues will influence us and will transform us into better human beings.

Having love for the Ahlul Bayt

In this world, we are very much in need of God's mercy and attention. According to the Qur'an, we are to choose the path leading to heaven and God's pleasure. To carry out these two we need the necessary means that can assist in drawing God's mercy and attention towards us.

A fisherman knows best how to catch fish; and an author knows best what words can better convey a message. If we are to know what we need in our journey to earn God's pleasure and mercy, we must ask Allah who is most familiar with these realities, and that is none other than God.

If we refer to the Qur'an, we will find that God mentions loving the Ahlul Bayt and obeying their orders as the only means to His mercy. How can this love be achieved? Through knowledge, since it is the key to love. When a person tries to familiarize themselves with the Ahlul Bayt, they encounter their pure hearts, virtues, and lofty morals, and this triggers a love for them in his heart.

The warmth of this love will motivate a person to strive to emulate the beloved at every moment. And since the Ahlul Bayt are manifestations of

God, emulating them is an attempt to become Godly. In the same way any type of worldly love does not occur before seeing or hearing about the beloved's admirable qualities, knowledge, love, and friendship towards the Ahlul Bayt cannot be achieved.

After love finds its place in the heart, obedience will follow it, and the heart will be influenced by the loved one until he or she resembles the beloved according to one's capacity. When Prophet Muhammad said Salman al-Farsi is "one of us"¹ it portrayed how a person can resemble the Prophet by loving and obeying him.

Affection as the reward of prophethood

Having love and affection for the Ahlul Bayt is so valuable that God has mentioned it as the only reward for the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad:

قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ

Say, 'I do not ask of you any reward for it except the affection for [my] relatives. (Qur'an, 42:23)

In both Sunni and Shi'a hadiths, the word "relatives" refers to the Ahlul Bayt. Moreover, the word "affection" (*mawaddat*) is love that is coupled with obedience.

The question arises: Why didn't God count abundant prayer and fasting as the reward of prophethood, and instead asks us to love the Ahlul Bayt and follow their instructions? This shows that this love is superior to those actions, and if it is not achieved, other acts will lose their value and may not be accepted.

Hadiths on love for the Ahlul Bayt

Prophet Muhammad said:

لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ أَسَاسٌ، وَأَسَاسُ الْإِسْلَامِ حُبُّنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ

¹ Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha, vol. 2, p. 64, chapter 31, hadith number 282.

Everything has a foundation, and the foundation of Islam is to love us, the Ahlul Bayt.¹

Imam Ali said:

سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ يَقُولُ: أَنَا سَيِّدُ وُلْدِ آدَمَ، وَأَنْتَ يَا عَلِيُّ وَالْأُمَّةُ مِنْ بَعْدِكَ سَادَةٌ أُمَّتِي. مَنْ أَحَبَّنَا فَقَدْ أَحَبَّ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَنَا فَقَدْ أَبْغَضَ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ وَالَانَا فَقَدْ وَالَى اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ أَطَاعَنَا فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ عَصَانَا فَقَدْ عَصَى اللَّهَ.

I heard the Prophet say, 'I am the master of Adam's children, and you, Ali, and the Imams after you are the masters of my nation. Whoever loves us, has indeed loved God. And whoever dislikes us has indeed disliked God. Whoever accepts our wilayah has chosen God as his guardian. Whoever obeys us has obeyed God, and whoever disobeys us has disobeyed God.'²

Loving the Ahlul Bayt indicates the following:

God's love for people

Loving the Ahlul Bayt is a gift from God given to some people. Abu Basir quotes Imam Baqir as saying:

إِنِّي لِأَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْحُبَّ الَّذِي تُحِبُّونَا لَيْسَ بِشَيْءٍ صَنَعْتُمُوهُ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ صَنَعَهُ

I know that the love you have for us is not what you have caused yourself; it is initiated by God.³

This is one example that implies that love for the Ahlul Bayt is a precious gem given by God to the people. In another hadith, this love is likened to gold whose source is close to God.⁴

¹ *Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 46, chapter on Nisbat ul-Islam, hadith number; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 27, p. 82, chapter 4, hadith number 22.

² *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 27, p. 88, chapter 4, hadith number 38

³ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 5, p. 222, chapter 9, hadith number 4

⁴ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 75, p. 291, chapter 24, hadith number 2

Since loving the Ahlul Bayt is a gift from God and gifts are only given to friends, it is a sign that God loves those who love them.

Purity of heart

Loving the Ahlul Bayt is also a sign of purity of one's heart. Imam Sadiq said:

وَاللّٰهُ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يُحِبُّنَا عَبْدٌ حَتَّىٰ يُطَهِّرَ اللّٰهُ قَلْبَهُ

By God, By God, no one will love us unless God has purified his heart.¹

Faith and acceptance of deeds

Having love for the Ahlul Bayt is also a sign of faith and God's acceptance of a person's deeds. Prophet Muhammad said:

عَاهَدَنِي رَبِّي أَنْ لَا يَقْبَلَ إِيمَانَ عَبْدٍ إِلَّا بِمَحَبَّةِ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي

God has promised me not to accept the faith of a servant except by the love of my Ahlul Bayt.²

Imam Ali said:

إِنَّهُ لَعَهَدَ النَّبِيُّ (صلى الله عليه وآله) الْأَقْبَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّنِي إِلَّا مُؤْمِنٌ وَلَا يَبْغِضُنِي إِلَّا مُنَافِقٌ

Truly, the Prophet promised me that only the believers will love me and the hypocrites will dislike me.³

The Imam then said, 'If I strike a believer with my sword to become my enemy he will not, and if I provide a hypocrite with everything to love me he will not'.⁴

¹ *Da'aim al-Islam*, vol. 1, p. 73

² *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, vol. 1, p. 204

³ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 39, p. 301, chapter 87, hadith number 115.

⁴ *Nahj al-Balaghah*, saying number 45; *Al-Gharat*, vol. 1, p. 27; *Mishkat al-Anwar*, 79, Chapter 4.

The effects and requirements of loving the Ahlul Bayt

The Ahlul Bayt do not need a shallow and pretentious love. They want a love which has its requirements and brings forth great effects. The requirements of love for the Ahlul Bayt and its effects are explained as follows:

1. Following their instructions

A person who loves the Ahlul Bayt will never stop trying to please God and perform good deeds. This person will always look at the Ahlul Bayt and strive to resemble their virtues as far as possible to be a better person. The Ahlul Bayt said:

مَنْ أَحَبَّنَا فَلْيَعْمَلْ بِعَمَلِنَا

Whoever loves us will act like us.¹

2. Tawalli

Imam Ali said:

فَإِنْ كَانَ يُحِبُّ وَلَيْتَنَا فَلَيْسَ بِمُبْغِضٍ لَنَا، وَإِنْ كَانَ يُبْغِضُ وَلَيْتَنَا فَلَيْسَ بِمُحِبِّ لَنَا

If someone loves our friend they will not be our enemy and if has hatred towards our friends they will not be our friend.²

Imam Sadiq said:

مَنْ تَوَلَّى مُحِبِّنَا فَقَدْ أَحَبَّنَا

Whoever loves our friends, loves us.³

3. Tabarri

A person who loves the Ahlul Bayt will naturally dislike their enemies. Imam Ali said if a person wants to know how much he loves the Ahlul

¹ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 67, p. 306, chapter 57, hadith number 30; *Tuhaf al-'Uqul*, p. 104.

² *Al-Amali*, Sheikh Mufid, 334, al-majlis al-tase' wal-thalathun, hadith number 4

³ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 97, p. 124, chapter 2, hadith number 34

Bayt, he should check his heart to see he has affection towards those who encourage people to disobey the Ahlul Bayt or not. If so, then he should know that he has God as his enemy.¹ He also said:

فَإِنْ شَارَكَهُ فِي حُبِّنا حُبُّ عَدُوِّنَا، فَلَيْسَ مِنَّا وَ لَسْنَا مِنْهُ

If along with the love for us, a person has the love of our enemies he is not one of us and we have nothing to do with him.²

4. *Test and calamity*

There is nothing more beneficial for purifying the heart than tolerating calamities and undergoing suffering. The same way food is kept at low temperature to prevent it from spoiling, sometimes people need to undergo difficulties and tragedies to become immune from corruption. This is why God at times puts His friends into trials like poverty, disease, or loss of a dear one so that through observing patience they become more determined on the right path and worthy of God's mercy, thus enabling them to have easy access to heaven.

Replying to a person who complained about his poverty, the Prophet said:

إِصْبِرْ أَبَاسَعِيدَ، فَإِنَّ الْفَقْرَ إِلَى مَنْ يُحِبُّنِي مِنْكُمْ أَسْرَعُ مِنَ السَّيْلِ عَلَى أَعْلَى الْوَادِي، وَمِنْ أَعْلَى الْجَبَلِ إِلَى أَسْفَلِهِ

Be patient, O Aba Sa'id, for poverty is faster to reach a person who loves me than a flood on top of a valley or top of a mountain to reach its bottom.³

Once, a person came across the Prophet and immediately felt concerned when he saw the Prophet's face. After asking the Prophet what the problem was, the Prophet said it was hunger. He felt so moved that he ran back to his house to find some food. To his dismay, he didn't find any in

¹ Ibid. vol. 27, p. 83, chapter 4, hadith number 24

² Ibid. vol. 27, p. 51, chapter 1, hadith number 1

³ *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, vol. 4, p. 85

the house. He left and found a place nearby where there were people pulling water from a well. After making an offer to do the job for them, he received some dates which he afterwards humbly offered the Prophet. After the Prophet asked him to explain how he had got the dates, the Prophet said, ‘I believe you must love God and His messenger.’ That person said:

أَجْلُ وَالَّذِي بَعَثَكَ بِالْحَقِّ، لَأَنْتَ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ نَفْسِي وَوُلْدِي وَأَهْلِي وَمَالِي

Indeed, I swear by the one who rightly appointed you that I love you more than I love myself, my children, my family, and my possessions.

Then the Prophet told him to be prepared for poverty explaining it in the same way he had explained it to Abu Dharr.¹ In another hadith, Imam Ali said:

مَنْ أَحَبَّنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ فَلَيْسَتْ عَدَّةٌ لِلْبَلَاءِ

Whoever loves us should be prepared for various calamities.²

Narration: Once Imam Baqir was informed that Muhammad ibn Muslim – one of his closest companions – was arriving to Medina while very ill. The Imam immediately prepared him some medicine to send to Muhammad. After feeling better, Muhammad stood up and went straight to the Imam. Once Muhammad saw him, he started crying and the Imam asked him the reason. He told Imam Baqir that his despair was due to his loneliness, remoteness of the hereafter, poverty, and being distant from the Imam.

Imam then told him that as for poverty, “God wanted our friends to live this way and has directed trials and tragedies towards them.” With regards to loneliness, Imam Baqir told him to take Imam Husayn as his role

¹ *Usd al-Ghabah*, vol. 4, p. 294

² *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 39, p. 295, chapter 87.

model, the Imam who was left alone in the desert. Imam then continues by saying that a believer is always a stranger in this world and among the people until he leaves this world for the other world; God will look through his heart and reward him for his intention of wanting to be with the Imam.¹

5. *Mutual love*

Having love for the Ahlul Bayt causes them to love us. This is the least it can do for us, which is of course a great achievement and better than all the wealth of this world.

Imam Sadiq narrates that, “One day, my father and I entered the mosque of the prophet. People were sitting in groups in different spots. My father passed them without paying attention until we reached a group of people. My father stopped and said:

إِنِّي وَاللَّهِ أُحِبُّ رِيْحَكُمْ وَأَرْوَاحَكُمْ

By God, I love your smell and your souls.’

Imam Sadiq added: ‘They were all our Shi‘as.’”²

The love of the Ahlul Bayt for their lovers is so strong that if a person disrespects the Ahlul Bayt’s followers, the Ahlul Bayt will disregard him.

Narration: Once, Imam Sadiq asked a group of people why they disregard his followers. Surprised by the question raised by the Imam, one of them swore to God that he had never done so. The Imam told him that he was one of the people who did so by neglecting the needs of a fellow Muslim. The Imam then said that whoever disregards a Muslim has disregarded them and has insulted God.³

¹ Ibid. vol. 64, p. 244, chapter 12, hadith number 84.

² Ibid. vol. 64, p. 146, chapter 18, hadith number 95.

³ *Al-Kafi*, vol. 8, p. 89, hadith number 73.

6. *Happiness at the moment of death*

For most people one of the most difficult and horrific moments in life is when they are lying on their deathbed, waiting to be detached from this world. There, the veils will be removed, and according to their deeds, manners, and beliefs, they will either encounter horrific realities or happy ones depending on their love for the Ahlul Bayt.

When asked how a believer feels when his soul is being taken, Imam Sadiq explained that when the angel of death tells the believer not to be afraid; that he will be kinder to him than the believer's parents. Then the believer will open his eyes and see the Prophet, Imam Ali, Lady Fatima, and the other Imams next to him to help.¹ He also explained that their followers will have deaths similar to theirs, and that the only barrier between a believer and happiness will be his death.²

A beautiful hadith from the Prophet states that when a believer is dying, the angel of death will show him his place in heaven and will then ask him if he would rather have this instead of what he has in this world. The believer says yes and then the angel of death will show him the Prophet, Imam Ali and the other Imams after him and will ask him would you rather be with these people instead of what you have in the world and the believer will swear to God and say that he would be happier to die and be with them.³

7. *Protection from punishment*

A follower of the Ahlul Bayt who has restrained himself from all evil and sin and who is supported at the moment of death by the presence of the Imams will be protected from any punishment in the hereafter.

¹ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 6, p. 196, chapter 7, hadith number 49.

² *Al-Kafi*, vol. 8, p. 81, wasiat ul-nabi le amir il-muminin, hadith number 38.

³ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 6, p. 176, chapter 7, hadith number 2.

In a hadith by the Prophet we read that on the Day of Judgment God will call Lady Fatima and tell her to ask for anything to be granted. Lady Fatima will reply by saying:

أَسْأَلُكَ أَنْ لَا تُعَذِّبَ مُجِبِّي وَمُحِبَّ عِزَّتِي بِالنَّارِ

I ask You not to punish with fire those who love me and love my family.

Then God says:

يَا فَاطِمَةُ! وَعِزَّتِي وَجَلَالِي وَارْتِفَاعِ مَكَانِي لَقَدْ آلَيْتُ عَلَى نَفْسِي أَنْ لَا أُعَذِّبَ مُجِبِّكَ وَمُحِبِّي عِزَّتِكَ بِالنَّارِ

O Fatima, by my dignity, glory and high position I have avowed that I will not punish those who love you and love your family.¹

These hadiths and many others regarding loving the Ahlul Bayt leading to immunity from punishment on the Day of Judgment are along with many hadiths that state that intercession only includes those who not only love the Ahlul Bayt, but also follow them and obey God. Disobeying God and expecting to be safe merely by loving the Ahlul Bayt is a thoughtless assumption; moreover, a person who does not strive to be pious should also doubt his love for the Ahlul Bayt.

8. Consistency on the right path

Love for the Ahlul Bayt also enables us to be more consistent in our journey towards God. The Prophet said, “The most steadfast of you on the path is the one who is stronger in his love for my Ahlul Bayt.”²

The Prophet also said, “If a person who loves us makes a mistake, in his next step he will be guided until the Day of Judgement when God will rescue him.”¹

¹ Ibid. vol. 27, p. 139, chapter 4, hadith number 144.

² Ibid. vol. 8, p. 69, chapter 22, hadith number 16.

أَتَّبِعْتُمْ قَدَمًا عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ ، أَشَدُّكُمْ حُبًّا لِأَهْلِ بَيْتِي

9. Forgiveness

Love is like an engine that motivates a person to move towards the beloved. A person who loves the Ahlul Bayt will strive to purify his soul and will endeavor to attain virtues and righteous deeds to get closer to them. Hurr ibn Yazid Riyahi is a clear example. On the day of Ashura, his love for Imam Husayn made him lose interest in his high position in Yazid's army and instead joined Imam Husayn's army. This love made him sacrifice his life for the Imam, resulting in his attainment of a true repentance. The Prophet said: "Our love removes sins and multiplies good deeds."²

10. Resurrection with the Ahlul Bayt

A follower of the Ahlul Bayt who has resembled them as much as possible through his love for and obedience to them deserves to be resurrected with them:

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ
وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا

Whoever obeys God and the Apostle, they are with those whom God has blessed, including the prophets and the truthful, the martyr and the righteous, and excellent companions are they. (Qur'an 4:69)

The Prophet said:

مَنْ أَحَبَّنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ فِي اللَّهِ ، حُشِرَ مَعَنَا

Whoever loves us, the Ahlul Bayt, for the sake of God, will be resurrected with us.³

Abu Dharr narrates that the Prophet told:

¹ *Durar al-Ahadith*, 51.

ما أَحَبَّنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ أَحَدٌ فَزَلَّتْ بِهِ قَدَمُهُ إِلَّا تَبَتَّهْ قَدَمُهُ أَحْزَى ، حَتَّى يُنَجِّهَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

² *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 65, p. 100, chapter 18, hadith number 5

³ *Ibid.* vol. 46, p. 201, chapter 11, hadith number 77.

يَا أَبَادِرَ الْمُرءِ مَعَ مَنْ أَحَبَّ

O Abu Dharr, one will be resurrected with the one whom he loves.¹

Once, a person from Khorasan, eastern Persia, went to visit Imam Baqir in Medina. When he saw the Imam he told him he travelled this great distance only due to his love for the Ahlul Bayt. Hearing this, the Imam replied:

وَاللّٰهُ لَوْ أَحَبَّنَا حَجَرٌ حَسَرَهُ اللّٰهُ مَعَنَا

By God,² even if a stone loves us, it will be resurrected with us.

Hakam ibn 'Utaybah narrates that once he was with the Imam in his room filled with people. Suddenly, an elderly person entered and said "salam" to the Imam and then to everyone else. After a moment of silence, he then turned towards the Imam and swears to God that he loves the Imam and whoever loves him. The elderly man continued by saying that his love was pure, and not due to worldliness. He explains how he dislikes the enemies of the Imam and always respects what has been made lawful (*halal*) and prohibited (*haram*). After this, he asked the Imam if there is any hope of salvation for him. The Imam told him to come forward and sit beside him, and then described how another person had asked the same question to his father, Imam Sajjad. Imam Sajjad had replied: If a lover of the Ahlul Bayt dies, he would meet the Prophet, Imam Ali, Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn; Imam Sajjad and that when the moment of death comes, his soul will be taken while he is happy and in peace. Upon hearing this, the elderly man began crying loudly, and, moved by his state, everyone cried with him. The Imam wiped his tears, and when he left the Imam told the people who were there:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يَنْظُرَ إِلَى رَجُلٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ إِلَى هَذَا

¹ Ibid. vol. 27, p. 104, chapter 4, hadith number 75.

² Ibid. vol. 27, p. 95, chapter 4, hadith number 57.

Whoever wants to see a person from heaven should look at him.¹

It is narrated from Imam Ridha that:

حَقٌّ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ وَلِيَّنَا رَفِيقًا لِلتَّيِّبِينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءَ وَالصَّالِحِينَ
وَحَسَنَ أَوْلِيَّكَ رَفِيقًا

God has made incumbent upon Himself to make our friends the company of the prophets, the martyrs, and the righteous, and what companies they are!²

11. Entering Heaven

Imam Sadiq narrates a beautiful story from the Prophet. During one of his journeys, the Prophet came down from his camel, prostrated five times on the ground, and continued to ride his camel. Having seen this act for the first time, one of the companions asked the Prophet why he did so. The Prophet explains that Gabriel approached him and informs him that Ali will be from the people of heaven, and consequently the Prophet expressed his gratitude by prostrating. As he lifted his head from the ground, Gabriel informed him that Fatima will also be from the people of heaven and thus the Prophet's second prostration. Again, as the Prophet lifted his head, Gabriel informs him that Hasan and Husayn will be the masters of the youth in heaven, and thanking God for the news, the Prophet performed another prostration. Afterwards, Gabriel informs him that their lovers will also be from the people of heaven, and at last Gabriel tells the Prophet that the lovers of their lovers will also be from the people of heaven, and the Prophet performed the fifth prostration.³

Once, Imam Sajjad was ill and a group of his followers attended his house to visit the Imam. After the first greetings, the Imam asked them about

¹ Ibid. vol. 46, p. 361, chapter 10, hadith number 3

² Ibid. vol. 65, p. 32, chapter 15, hadith number 38.

³ Ibid. vol. 65, p. 111, chapter 18, hadith number 24

their condition and they replied that they were indeed lovers of the Imam. Imam Sajjad replied:

مَنْ أَحَبَّنَا لِلَّهِ أَسْكَنَهُ اللَّهُ فِي ظِلِّ ظَلِيلٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَوْمَ لَا ظِلَّ إِلَّا ظِلُّهُ

Whoever loves us for the sake of God will be placed under a strong shadow [protecting them from the heat of sufferings] on the Day of Judgment, when there will be no shadow but God's.¹

12. Eternal life

A person named Yunus tells Imam Sadiq that the love he has for the Imam and the knowledge he has about the Imam is more valuable to him than the entire world. Yunus narrates that the Imam became upset and tells him that the two cannot even be compared. What is this world other than enjoying one's food and dress while on the other hand loving the Ahlul Bayt results in an eternal life?²

Indeed, loving the Ahlul Bayt is the foundation of an eternal life that begins with a pleasant death:

أَلَا وَمَنْ مَاتَ عَلَى حُبِّ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ بَشَّرَهُ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْجَنَّةِ، ثُمَّ مُنْكَرٌ وَنَكِيرٌ، أَلَا وَمَنْ مَاتَ عَلَى حُبِّ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ يَرْفُفُ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ كَمَا تَرْفُفُ الْعُرُوسُ إِلَى بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا

Be aware that he who dies having the love of the family of Muhammad in his heart will be given glad tidings of heaven by the angel of death first, and then by Munkar and Nakir³. Be aware that he who dies having the love of the family of Muhammad in his heart will be taken to heaven the way a bride is accompanied to her house.⁴

¹ *Yanabi' al-Mawaddah*, vol. 2, p. 375, chapter 58, hadith number 62

² *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 75, p. 265, chapter 23

³ Munkar and Nakir, *The Denied and The Denier*, in Islamic eschatology, are angels who test the faith of the dead in their graves.

⁴ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 23, p. 233, chapter 13

In another narration, once a rich person went to one of Imam Sadiq's servants and asked him to tell the Imam that he is ready to offer all his wealth to this servant and instead take his place in serving the Imam. The Imam told him if he had lost interest in serving the Imam, he was free to go, yet since he had served the Imam for a long time, the Imam gave him advice: on the Day of Judgement, the Prophet would be covered with light, Imam Ali will hold on to him, the Ahlul Bayt will hold on to Imam Ali, and the Shi'as will hold on to the Ahlul Bayt and will be taken to where the Ahlul Bayt will go. When the servant heard this from the Imam, he decided to stay and the Imam gave him a thousand dinars to make up for the money he had refused to accept.¹

13. Peace of heart

The love of the Ahlul Bayt does not only come in handy at the moment of death or in the hereafter; it has many advantages in this world as well. One of the many benefits this love is peace and tranquility of the heart, a valuable asset in this world where a bit of stress can make one's life bitter or even miserable.

Imam Ali said that when the verse, "*Look! The hearts find rest in God's remembrance*" (13:28) was revealed, the Prophet said that this not merely about those who sincerely love God, but also His messenger and the Ahlul Bayt; he also loves the believers both in their presence and their absence.² The same has been narrated by Imam Sadiq, that the Prophet told Imam Ali that this verse is about those who believe in the Prophet and submit their affairs to Imam Ali and the Imams after him.³

¹ Ibid. vol. 50, p. 87, chapter 5, hadith number 7

² *Al-Durr al-Manthur*, vol. 4, p. 642; *Al-Ja'faryyat*, 224

³ *Tafsir al-Furat*, 207, hadith number 274