

## Shi'ite Schools of Thought on Imâm, A Critical Survey

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### Abstract

Imâmate and Imâm, either Religious or political institution or both is one of cornerstone elements of Shi'ites belief. In the periods of minor occultation and early periods of major occultation, so many different opinions emerged on the concept of Imâmate. These differences gave rise to the creation of many sects among the Shi'ites and lead also to apostasy and conversion of a great group of the Shi'ites into other beliefs. Studying the Shi'ite schools of thoughts including those of the Kûfa, Qum and Baghdâd, this paper is an attempt to study their disputes on the concept of Imâmate and some publications of the Shi'ite scholars including 'Shaykh Mûfid,' 'Shaykh Şaduq,' 'Muhammad Ibn al-Hasan Ibn Farrukh al-Şaffâr al-Qummi,' and 'Kulayni' and their effective roles in determining the concept of Imâmate.

Kûfa school of thought holds a radical and exaggerated view towards Imâms. The Qum school of thought which is a more tradition-based school of thought expresses a balanced view. Baghdad school of thought has a radical and at the same time reasonable views and is in fact a conjunction of Kûfa and Qum schools of thoughts.

**Keywords:** The Period of Occultation, Imâmate, Traditional and Theological (Kalâmi) Schools of Thoughts

### Introduction

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After death of Imâm Hasan al-Askari in 260 A.H. (873-4 A.D.), Shi'a entered a new stage of its historical periods. Imâm Askari passed away when his successor was not known to people and people were not facing an individual from the prophet's descendants as an Imâm, but the Imâm of the society was in the state of occultation and the mediator between him and the Shi'ites were his representatives. This condition lasted up to the year 329 A.H. and is termed as the "Minor Occultation." After that, i.e. from 329 A.H. (940-41A.D.), Imâm entered into the period of Major Occultation and the connection of the Shi'a society with its Imâm al-Zamân (The Leader of the Age) was completely disconnected for an unknown period and it was called the major occultation.

The Shi'ite society in those conditions underwent a critical condition. The Shi'ites also experienced a state of doubt and confusion because they had faced such a new position for the first time, the succeeding Imâm was not known to them and also many previous expectations and interpretations before the occultation had not been materialized (Tabâtabâ'i, 157-159).

There happened many internal differences in the Shi'ite society and so many sects came into existence which made a great group of the Shi'ites divert to apostasy and convert into other faiths. The existing differences in the Shi'ite society on the concept of Imâmâte made those conditions even more complex.

Amid this situation, the Shi'ite religious scholars undertook the great responsibility of establishment of peace among the Shi'ites and specification of the limits of Shi'a doctrine in particular Imâmâte, so that they could be able to present a meaning of Imâmâte which could meet the needs of the Shi'ite community.

Naturally, this great responsibility was undertaken by the traditional-theological schools of thoughts existing in the society of the Shi'ites (Qum, Baghdâd and Kûfa). These schools of thoughts were responsible to specify one dominating current of thought out of the two parallel currents of thoughts towards the Imâmâte and its concept before the occultation in the Shi'ite society. In line with this idea, many disputes took place among the scholars of those schools of thought and numerous works representing their views were published.

This paper is an attempt to study the Shi'ite schools of thought, their disputes over the concept of Imâmâte and some of the remaining works of the scholars of these schools of thoughts. This will help specify which definition of the concept of Imâmâte could become the dominating thought of the scientific circles of the Shi'ites and the Shi'ite public.

### **Kûfa School of Thought**

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Muslims entered Kûfa city in 17 A.H. which was firstly considered to serve as a military base. The primary population of this city included twelve thousands from Yemen and eight thousands from Nizâr. In addition to the Arabs, a group of Iranians and the Jews were residing in that city (DJa'fari, 143, Fayyâz, 182).

The noticeable point in the population combination of Kûfa was the colorful and strong presence of the Shi'ites who established a Shi'ite center. The Yemen-originated people had an inclination towards the leadership of a king-priest and his successor and the Persians who believed in the existence of Charisma in the rulers formed the dominating population of Kûfa, i.e. about two thirds of its population and they were tending to the thinking current of the Shi'ites (DJa'fari, 143, 'Abdol'âl, 10). As for the political stands over caliphate, they took the side of Imâm Ali (A.S.) ('Abdol'âl, 11).

Kûfa was the place of mixing different beliefs including the Jews, Christians, Iranians, Manichean, Mazdakism and Gnosticism ('Abdol'âl, 16, 17, 65 Momen). The advocates of these

beliefs were blended with the people of Kūfa and had a great impact on the Shi'ite thought. It was such that Kūfa was converted into the center of Ghāli (extremist) and radical thinking towards Imāms which had been created under the influence of non-Islamic beliefs.

It can be said that the first deviated sect among Shi'ites (Kaysāniyya) was established in the same place under the influence of the non-Islamic views (Ibrāhim Hasan, vol, 2, 112, DJa'fari, 348, Sheibi, 21).

In the periods of Imām al-Ṣādiq and Imām al-Bāqir, Kūfa was also changed into the center of Shi'ism and the most prejudiced Shi'ites were from Kūfa. Many companions and students of Imām were living in Kūfa and were elaborating the doctrine of Shi'ism through discussion and disputes with radical beliefs.

However, in the course of these disputes, some of the Imām's companions were deviated from the way of moderation and joined the Ghāli school of thought. They were cursed by Imāms and this group took action to forge traditions which were attributed to the Shi'ites (DJa'fari, 349, 65, Momen).

Thus, with the majority presence of the Shi'ites in Kūfa and their affection and interest in Shi'ite Imāms, and their efforts to expand and continue Shi'ism, the Kūfa school of thought was changed into a center to disseminate Shi'ite sciences and development of sources of Shi'ite tradition. It was changed into a venue in which different people were coming from different areas to learn the doctrine of Shi'ism and convey it to their own cities (Ataee Nazari, Rāsikhun, p.73).

The dominating literature in this Shi'ite school of thought (based on the reasons which were mentioned earlier) was a radical and Ghāli-based literature. Consequently, the definition which was presented for the Imām and his attributes by this school of thought was also a radical definition.

There existed the Qum school of thought against this school of thought. The scholars and narrators of tradition began to fight against the penetration of the radical thought and filtering the radical currents of thoughts from the Shi'ite beliefs and traditions.

In the next parts, that school of thought and related activities will be discussed.

## **Qum School of Thought**

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Qum is one of the important seminaries of Shi'ism. The history of the arrival of Shi'ite thought into these area dates back to the end of the first century A.H. The Ashā`ra were the first family who expressed openly their belief in Shi'ism and made effort to flourish it (Ma'arif, 374, 375, Halm, 88). The Ashā`ira at the age of Imām al-Bāqir (A.S.) and after that, in which they were subject to persecution migrated to Qum and had less contact with Medina which was the central place of Imām.

At the age of Imām al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) in which the political atmosphere was open, they had

more contacts with Imâm and about 16 people from the Ashâ'ira were disciples (students) of Imâm al-Şâdiq (A.S.). Up to the age of the Twelfth Imâm, (the connection of Qum as the place of Shi'ites,) the followers of the prophet's family with Imâms continued (Khezri, vol. 2, 74-75).

Due to the link of Qum people with Imâms, other Shi'ite seminaries had trust in them and they were able to form an independent teaching domain at the end of the second century A.H. which was the climax of Qum school of thought in those years too (Ma'ârif, 277).

One of the specific features of this school as compared with other Shi'ite schools of thought was its fight against exaggeration. The Ghâli school of thought which had prevailed among the Shi'ites in the second and third centuries A.H. was a serious threat to Imâmiyyah and the base of the views of Qum school of thought was to fight against this current of thought.

The Qum scholars were trying by all means to prevent the great flood of the Ghâli literature which was prevailing very fast. They used to term any Shi'ite traditionalists and scholars as Ghâli who were attributing supernatural affairs to Imâms and in many cases they discharged them from their own cities (Tabataba'i, 50, Khezri, 176-177, Al Maqâlât v al Risâlât, vol. 69, Farshchiyân, 110-111, Newman, 52).

Another feature of this school of thought is radical narration such that they intended to present an integrated jurisprudential-theological system through traditions remaining from the books of prophet's companions (al-Maqâlât v al-Risâlât, vol. 69, Safari Forushâni, 2006, 275).

Shaykh Şaduq, Shi'ite scholar of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.H., was one of the most outstanding personalities of Qum school of thought. He can be considered as the representative of the theological and traditional school of thought of Qum. It is possible to learn the dominating principle of Qum school of thought through reviewing his works.

### **Baghdâd School of Thought**

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Baghdâd was one of the newly established cities which were founded by Mansour Abbasid in 145 A.H. That city found an outstanding position very soon and changed into the center of the caliphate (Dinvari, 424). A great number of the Shi'ites migrated to this city. The most important reason for their migration in the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> century and early 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.H. was to attract some of the Shi'a Imâms to Baghdâd or Sâmirrâ (Ya'qoubi, vol. 2, 414, 485).

Mansour Abbasid and his successors, i.e. Hâroun and Ma'mûn were interested in science. Having this interest, and while supporting the scholars, they paid special attention to the establishment of scientific centers and changed Baghdad into a city of science, jurisprudence, tradition and theology (Ma'ârif, 301-370, Maqâlât v al Risâlât, vol. 69).

At the age of Imâm al-Şâdiq (A.S.) and Imâm al-Kâzim (A.S.), some of the Shi'ites and scholars of Kûfa including Hishâm ibn Hikam, migrated to Baghdâd, where they paved grounds for the expansion of jurisprudence, tradition and theology of Shi'ism. However, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries A.H., Baghdâd witnessed the broader presence of the Shi'ites. There, the Shi'ite

and Sunni jurisprudents, traditionalists and theologians were expressing their beliefs and there were many discussions and polemics among scholars and theologians.

Many scholars such as Ibn ʿKulouyah, Shaykh Mūfid, Sharif Razi Murtaẓā and Shaykh Ṭūsi emerged out of this region and helped with a noticeable advancement in Imāmiyya thoughts (Maḳālāt v al Risālāt, vol. 69, Ma'ārif, 372, Madelung 128).

One of the famous and effective families of the Shi'ites in this school of thought was the family of Nowbakhti. Taking into consideration their attitude towards philosophy and theology, they made the growth of rational sciences in Shi'ite theology. They are considered one of the pioneers of theology in Shi'ism. Nowbakhtid believed that Muslims should study their religious issues with a philosophical mind. Of course, their radicalism in rational and basic principles gave rise to the creation of a different opinion between Shaykh Mūfid and Nowbakhtid (Khezri, 186-193).

Amid these, Shaykh Mūfid who was one of the Shi'ite theologians coordinated the Shi'a principles with rational principles. He was trying to make the Shi'ite principles find a rational confirmation, but at the same time, he had not forgotten his emphasis on sacredness and superhuman features of Imāms. In fact, Baghdād school of thought and Shaykh Mūfid as its eminent personality were trying to rationalize Kūfi Shi'ism (of course to the extent not moving out the limit of narrative confirmations).

This is exactly the opposite point to Qum school of thought which was pursuing oral traditions and condemning the radical thoughts (Şafari Foroushani, 2006, 275, Maḳālāt v al-Risālāt, vol. 69, Madelung 129).

### **Measures Adopted by the Shi'ite Scholars to Specify the Limit of Imāmate**

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After Imām al-'Askari (A.S.), and when the Shi'a society had lost a direct contact with the absent Imām, due to the critical conditions (which was described earlier), the Shi'a society experienced differences. As a result of that, activities of the Shi'ite scholars were in line with specifying the definition of Imāmate to prevent the Shi'ites to convert into other Shi'a sects.

The Shi'a scholars who were dependent on one of the Shi'a schools of thoughts intellectually began to publish works on Shi'ia thoughts. Thereby, they started to specify the concept of Imāmate, features and his particulars. In accordance with their intellectual framework, and the needs of the Shi'ite society, these scholars chose one of the existing views in respect of Imām (radical and non-radical views) among the Shi'ites.

The important works of Shi'a scholars of those periods providing for the topic of Imāmate and its meaning before those scholars including Şaffār Qummi, Shaykh Kulayni, Shaykh Şaduk and Shaykh Mūfid are here reviewed.

### **Muhammad Ibn al-Hasan Ibn Farrukh al-Şaffâr al-Qummi**

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He was living concurrent with Imâm al-‘Askari (A.S.) and some considers him as one of the companions and Mavâli of ‘Ash‘arite family. Nobody has spoken of his birth date but it is believed he died in 290 A.H. (902-3A.D.) and scholars such as Shaykh Tûsi, Najâshi and Ibn Nadim have termed him a trustworthy figure. (Madani Bajestâni, 212-218, Zamiri 361-362).

There are many works attributed to Şaffâr in the field of Shi‘ite thoughts but one of their most important is “Başâir al-Darajât al-Kubrâ Fi Fazâil Âl i Muhammad” which will be reviewed in this research. The result of the general study of this traditional book shows that it is a radical image of Imâmns which are presented through narration of traditions.

In a part “Fi al-‘A‘immah innahum Ta‘rozu `alayhim al-A‘amâl,” he refers to the miraculous creation and birth of Imâm (Farrukh al-Şaffâr, 1425, 399-4020) and in many traditions, he expresses the extraordinary features of Imâmns such as disconnected umbilical cord, born circumcised, their consciousness in sleep, and also Fatimah (S) who had no menstrual period. In addition, Imâmns enjoy specific science by which they acquire special capabilities. One way to gain science for Imâm is a glittering column which is opened to him upon birth and by that, he can observe whatever is in the west and the east of the world (Farrukh al-Şaffâr, 1425, 402). Using this lustrous column, he can see the practices of humans and observes whatever happens in the neighboring cities (Farrukh al-Şaffâr, 1425, 403). Other ways of acquiring science by Imâm are as follow:

1- Observing by eyes, 2- By heart, 3- Connection through ear, 4- Being addressed (Farrukh al-Şaffar, 1425, 299-301).

Having such knowledge, Imâm is aware of whatever is in the sky and the earth, in the paradise and the hell, whatever exists from the beginning to the end of creation (Farrukh al-Şaffar, 1425, 132-133). He can read the human’s minds and inner self (Farrukh al-Saffar, 1404, 255-381). Imâm can enliven a dead person. He can cure the blind and the deaf. He can walk over water (Farrukh al-Şaffar, 1425, 259-261) and Imâm is also aware of the time of his own death (Farrukh al-Şaffar, 1404, 503).

In Başâir, some other methods have been mentioned to transfer the science of Imâmte such as through saliva, body perspiration, or by body contact. Among other affairs that in this book are within the limit of the features of Imâm is the issue of creation and religious legislation which had been entrusted to him by God (Farrukh al-Şaffar, 1425, 354-361).

What is presented so far are the dominating views of the book “Başâir” on Imâmte and his attributes. Imâm here is a superhuman full of surprising features and extraordinary capabilities. In these descriptions, Imâm finds a semi-god image and is able to do many divine practices. The question which arises here is how such a book with a claim of superhuman character finds a position in the intellectual-religious environment of Qum. More importantly, how is it that these claims with an exaggerated attitude towards Imâmns are welcomed in Qum,

a city which is highly against those ideas. There had been individuals in Qum city who were sent to exile because of narration of traditions containing exaggerated views on Imâms. Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Isâ who was one of the companions of Imâm al-Ridâ (A.S.), Imâm al-Djavâd (A.S.) and Imâm al-Hâdi (A.S.), was expelled from Qum because of narrating the radical traditions and also weak traditions, also narrators such as Muhammad ibn Uroumeh Abu Dja'far Qummi, Ahmad ibn Khâlid Barqi author of traditional books of Mahâsin, Younos ibn Abd al-Rahmân were discharged and disdained (Farshchiyan, 102-111, Newman, 52).

The change in the stand of Qum school of thought toward the exaggerated perception of the personality of Imâm and meaning of Imâm from disagreement to agreement on new interpretation or the convergence of Qum school of thought with that of Kûfa school of thought in understanding the meaning of Imâmate and Imâm's personality has been noticed and elaborated as follows:

A- According to the claim by Mudarresi Tabâtâbâ'i, a great part of Baṣâir of Qummi is annexed (Tabâtâbâ'i, 2004, 15). According to the writings of some of these scholars, it is learned that Baṣirah was written on two parts of minor Baṣâir and major Baṣâir. The major Baṣâir was a part annexed to minor Baṣâir. It is said that this annexed part does not belong to Ṣaffâr and had been forged after his death, i.e the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.H. by some radicals (Ṣafari Foroushâni, 2006, 107, Madani Bajestâni, 214-215).

B- The second hypothesis is the possible gradual change in the views of Qummi people from the early second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. This period starts with the arrival into Qum of Ibrahim ibn Hâshim, one of the first traditionalists of Kûfa school of thought identifiable by Kûfi trends and he approaches the views of Qum to those of Kûfa. The creation of works with Kûfa orientation such as Baṣâir al- Darajât can be an indication for the beginning of this change in the attitude (Ṣafari Foroushâni, 2006, 127-128).

In addition to what was discussed in the second hypothesis on reasons for Kûfi inclinations of Qum school of thought, it is possible to refer to the dominating political conditions over Qum and the situation of Shi'ite society after the occultation period. The Shi'ites of Qum in that age, i.e. the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century were facing the occultation state of Imâm and the lack of the presence of an Imâm among them on one hand, and on the other hand, they were facing a great set of political challenges including the dominance of Sunni political organization and also a constant threat to Baghdâd.

These threats were due to some reasons such as lack of paying tax and land auditing by people of Qum which had led many times to being exposed to attacks and city plundering, destruction of its walls and encircling the city. Of course, the hard conditions of the Shi'ites in

Qum was not restricted to political conditions, but the Shi'ites were faced with unceasing attacks of Shi'ite groups such as Zaydiyyah, Ismâilid and Ghûlât on the doctrine of Shi'ism which was one of the spiritual challenges towards the Shi'ites and scholars of Qum (Newman, 194).

Amid this situation, outlining the specific and exceptional feature of Imâm's power could flourish religion and assurance of the Shi'ites in the hard conditions and could serve as an obstacle to prevent the Shi'ites from resorting to other definitions on Imâm by other Shi'ite groups.

It seemed irrational for the Shi'ites to ignore an Imâm with an extraordinary ability who could make changes in the universe and refer to other definitions of Imâmate, an Imâm who could make any action to improve the Shi'ite life in hard times. For this reason, in Başâir, we are facing a set of extremist traditions on Imâm's and their attributes (see Newman, 197-200).

### **Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishâq al-Kulayni Al-Râdi**

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Kulayni is one of the Shi'ite scholars of the period of minor occultation. He spent his last two years of life in Baghdâd. Kulayni is known as one of the scholars of Qum school of thought and most of the narrators of its traditions are from Qum. His famous work is "al-Kâfi" which is divided into parts of Principles and Secondary Issues of al-Kâfi. The secondary issues of al-Kâfi includes scientific and jurisprudential topics of the Shi'ism, but the Principles of al-Kâfi deals with the expression of traditions on Shi'ite doctrine and the most important principle of them, which is Imâmate. The topics related to Imâmate are put forth in "Kitâb al-Hüjjah" which is a large part of the principles of al-Kâfi.

The book "Kitâb al-Hüjjah" is divided into two parts. The first part deals with general issues of Imâmate and Imâm and the second part deals with a small part of historical life of the Fourteen Infallibles and possibly mentioning a miracle made by them (Şafari Foroushani, 2006, 120-121). What is mentioned in "Kitâb al-Hüjjah" on Imâmate includes the general issues about Imâmate as follow:

The necessity of the existence of Imâm and Hüjjah in the creation system, the position of Imâm's in the creation system, Specific features and attributes of Imâm's, broad knowledge of Imâm's on calamities and deaths, knowledge of inner self of humans, knowledge of what will happen up to resurrection day, knowledge of heavens and acquisition of science sometimes in unnatural ways (Kulayni vol. 1, 324, 383, 389, 392), the necessity of obeying Imâm, the quality of connection of Imâm with ultra universe, entrusting the power of creation and legislation to Imâm's (Kulayni volumes 2, 5 and 4), antecedent creation of Imâm's and their glittering existence before God (Kulayni, vol. 1, 442), knowledge of what has been and what has not been and what will happen (Kulayni, vol. 1, 388) and unnatural creation of Imâm's (Kulayni vol.2, 35).

The image which is presented by Kulayni in the book "al-Kâfi" is closer to the intellectual



current of Kūfa school of thought but the radical aspect of Imāms fade in his traditions in comparison with the book of “Baṣīrah” for the following reasons:

- 1- Anti-extermist atmosphere of Baghdād due to the fear of rebels by Zanj and Ḳarāmita and other sporadic risings in region.
- 2- Tendency of Sunni forces to integrate the outstanding Shi'ites such as Bani fūrāt with Ḳarāmita
- 3- A challenge which was created by individuals such as Ḥallāj and Shalmaḳāni for the Shi'ite society (Ibn Asir, vol. 8. 289-294; Newman, 121).

Of course, with all these, we are witnessing a great number of traditions on supernatural feature of Imāms in al-Kāfi (Newman, *Ibid*).

Form the viewpoint of documents, “al-Kāfi” book includes many individuals who are blamed for exaggeration and such individuals as Qazāiri, Najāshi and Ṭūsi have narrated this accusation. It is obvious that if we could not prove the accusation of a great number of these individuals for having a Ghāli-oriented attitude, we cannot rely on them with an important topic such as beliefs. However, in the course of history of the Shi'ism, because of the dominance of radical dialogue on Shi'ite theology and degradation of critical views which had emphasized the human character of saintly Imāms, these traditions could maintain their dominance over Shi'ite theology despite their weak document chains and they could remain safe against any criticism because of their coordination with the beliefs and desires of Shi'ite society (Ṣafari Froushani, 2006, 125-127) (Nāme-ye Tāriḳh Pajuhān, Year One, No. 2).

Concerning the traditions of al-Kāfi, and the chain of its transmitters like the book of Ṣaffār e Qummi, this question comes into the mind: how is that despite the treatment of Qum scholars with such kind of traditions and their transmitters, we suddenly face a book from a personality from Qum whose traditions had been extracted from weak individuals from Qum and with a Ghāli-oriented attitude without creating any sensitivity in the side of Qum people?

Here, the response still goes back to Ibrahim ibn Hāshim Kūfi and his arrival into Qum and the role he played in changing the views of Qum people, because Ali ibn Ibrāhim who was the son of Ibn Hāshim and naturally had the same view of his father served as the teacher of Kulayni. It is interesting that he has the greatest share among the teachers of Kulayni in al-Kāfi. In fact out of 15339 traditions, 7068 traditions have been directly narrated by Ali ibn Ibrāhim.

Also, this possibility has been put forth that due to blindness of Ali ibn Ibrāhim in the middle of his age and that he was unable to teach and discuss, Kulayni could use his library which was the heritage of his father to collect traditions. This issue can show further the possibility of the influence of Kūfi people in the traditions of al-Kāfi and following that in the

scientific assemblies of the Shi'ites (Şafari Foroushani, 2006, 127-128).

### **Abu Dja'far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Husayn ibn Mūsâ ibn Bâbevayh Qumi**

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Known as Shaykh Şadûk, he was one of the great traditionalists of the fourth century A.H. (320-381). Out of his teachers, his father and Ibn Valid had specific positions and a great impact on his views. However, he changed his mind in respect of the views of Ibn Valid in his old age because of narration of a group of weak and infamous narrators which Ibn Valid avoided to narrate them (Ma'ârif, 496-498).

He was one of the scholars of Qum and from the traditionalists who could theorize many Shi'ite theological foundations in particular Imâmâte through his numerous publications.

An image, which is presented by him in his works, is a combination of two human and superhuman viewpoints. That is to say, on the one hand, he emphasizes the human attributes of the saint Imâms and considers Imâms as lofty humans with human attributes, and on the other hand, he gives them superhuman attributes and attaches an extraordinary practice. These types of traditions on Imâm's attributes and capabilities in Şadûk's book indicate the conditions of Qum of those periods (Şafari Foroushani, 2006, 199), i.e. the anti-Ghâli thought and human view towards the saint Imâms which was the intellectual feature of Qum school of thought along with the influence of the thoughts of Kûfa school of thought and conditions of the Shi'ite society and its superhuman inclination towards the saintly Imâms. (It was discussed in the previous topics.)

In this part, efforts will be made to present a general image of what Shaykh Sadûk portrays of Imâm.

Şadûk presents a different image of Imâm. In one image, he portrays Imâms as follows:

The most knowledgeable, the most enduring figure, the bravest, born circumcised, pure and capable of seeing his back as he could see what occurs in front of him, without having any shade, the one who talks at birth, he does not have a wet dream, he does not commit any mistake even when he is asleep, i.e., his heart does not sleep, he is a traditionalist, he does not have urine or excrement, he knows the names of his friends and enemies through eternity (Şadûk, 1404, vol.1, 213). Imâm is a person whose knowledge comes from a luminous column. Imâm realizes any things which are necessary to know from that luminous column (Şadûk, 1404, vol. 1, 214). He can speak all languages (Şadûk, 2006, 5). He forecasts the future, his death and the death of others (Şadûk, 2006, 577). (Şadûk, 2005, 247). He talks with the inanimate and performs actions beyond the realm of ordinary affairs (Şadûk, 2005, 943 and 779).

The other image is a human image of the saintly Imâms which sometimes includes both attributes for Imâms.

In these traditions, Imâm is a human which, despite his knowledge, comes through a luminous column which does not necessarily illuminate forever. In other words, if he is

supposed to know something, God reveals it to him and if God does not want; he may not have knowledge on everything (Şadûk, vol. 1, 1404, 214).

In "al-Touwhid," the author believes that the knowledge of Imâm is taken from their fathers and goes back ultimately to the prophet (Şadûk, 1999, 309). Only the duty of religious legislation is entrusted to Imâm. The act of creation and provision of livelihood is specific of God (Şadûk, vol. 1, 1404, 217). Imâm is a natural creature who is born like other humans. He becomes sick and recovers from sickness. He eats and drinks. He urinates and defecates. He marries and sleeps. He forgets. He becomes happy and sad. He laughs and cries. He dies and is enlivened, and he will be present in resurrection day and will be questioned (Şadûk, vol. 1, 1404, 214).

In a tradition from "Oyûn Akhbâr al-Riđâ," Ma'moun asks Imâm al-Riđâ (A.S.) to tell him the signs of Imâm. He summarizes them in two features: His Knowledge and having his prayers answered.

He believes that his knowledge of future affairs is an acquired knowledge which is inherited from his fathers. He attributes his knowledge of human's inner self to the clearness of a faithful person. God entrusts a light to the faithful person in accordance to his faith and insight and he acquires an insight and then can observe the human's inner self.

In the continuation of discussion of the tradition, he refers to the confirmation of the saint Imâm by the Holy Spirit which is a luminous column between him and God (Şadûk, vol. 2, 1404, 200). In this tradition, the mixture of two viewpoints can be clearly observed in Şadûk's traditions.

In connection with the discussion of chastity, it is believed that mistake and forgetfulness are permissible for the saintly Imâm and the prophets and it does not deny the chastity position. It is only God who is not afflicted with mistake and forgetfulness (Şadûk, vol. 1, 1404, 219).

The issue of prophet's inadvertence (mistake), is a topic over which the Qum and Baghdad scholars have a great number of disputes regarding its confirmation or negation. Shaykh Saduğ's emphasis on this issue has roots in his adherence to Qum anti-Ghâli school of thought and his record as a student to Ibn Valid. His teacher was one of the Qum scholars and very strict in radical traditions. He considers the denial of prophet's inadvertence as the first degree of the exaggeration and believes that by rejecting a tradition which indicate the prophet's mistake, he must reject many other traditions as well (Abedi, 255).

When Shaykh Mûfid and other scholars of Baghdad school of thought considered the believers of prophet's mistake as culprit, including Ibn Valid, then Şadûk in his book, entitled, "al-'I'tiqâdât," writes that one sign of adherents of Ghâli sect is the attribution of Shi'ite scholars and elders to offence (Şadûk, al -'I'tiqâdât, 75, al - Mağâlât v al Risâlât, vol. 69).

This definition and a report which was presented by Shaykh Saduğ on Imâmte through traditions and expression of his beliefs is a mixture of human and superhuman views towards

Imâms. Perhaps, it can be said that it was the prevailing and acceptable views of the then Shi'ite society towards the saint Imâms. These views are accepted by the Qum and Baghdâd scholars by decreasing or increasing some of the attributes of Imâms (Şafari Foroushani, 2006, 203).

### **About Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn al-Nu'mân**

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He is known as "Shaykh Mûfid" and was one of the theologians of Shi'ite Imâmiyyah in the fourth and fifth centuries A.H. There are many works on the theology of Shi'ism and expression of the features of life of Imâms written by him. In the introduction part of the book "Avâil al-Mağâlât," about 230 works written by him are listed (Mûfid, 1993, 30, 63).

Shaykh Mûfid is one of the scholars of Baghdad school of thought. As it was mentioned earlier, the dominating literature of this school of thought is rationalism. In his works, Shaykh Mûfid tries to present a rational image of Imâmate. While having a belief in superhuman aspects of Imâms, in his views, he presents a rational and defensible image of Imâms against his opponents (Şafari Foroushani, 2006, 270).

In his days, the effects of rationality of Ibn Aqil Ammâni and Ibn DJunaid Iskâfi, the direct and indirect teachers of Shaykh Mûfid were observable in the tradition, jurisprudence and theology of Baghdad scholars. Also the tradition-oriented attitude of Qum scholars was famous in their works. Shaykh Mûfid in his learning period before Şadûk and Ibn DJonaid created a balance between these two radical methods and in many of his views we are witnessing his position at the middle of rationality and narration. Of course, sometimes one feature becomes more colorful and sometimes one feature becomes colorless or disappears (Şafari Foroushani, 2006, 275).

In his views towards Imâmate, Shaykh Mûfid sometimes sees them as creatures fully human and sometimes as superhuman. On the one hand, he wants to make the Shi'ite teachings compatible with reason and present a rational image of Imâms, and on the other hand, he is unable to reject many Shi'ite traditions in which Imâms are superhuman creatures, so he accepts some of the superhuman attributes of Imâms due to the numerous existing traditions.

One of the discussions which are put forth by Shaykh Mûfid on the issue of Imâmate is the knowledge of hidden things, an issue for which there had been many traditions on its confirmation or rejection. He nullifies the absolute knowledge of hidden things by Imâms obviously. He believes that knowledge of hidden things is specific to God and states that the followers of the Ghâli sect believe in such a thing.

As for the reading of humans' minds, sometimes the Imâms are able to read the inner self of some of the believers and know some affairs before occurrence, but this ability is not one of their attributes or a condition for Imâmate. In fact, God's grace has been granted to them, and this grace is due to their prayers and practices which they had performed at the divine

threshold. It doesn't have a rational obligation but it finds obligation because of narration (Mūfid, 1993, 21). As for Imāms' judgment, he believes that their judgment is based on evidence and testimony of witnesses rather than the inward nature of affairs, because the inward nature is not always open to them (Mūfid, 1993, 20). According to Mūfid, there is no rational prohibition for Imāms to know all languages, nor is it obligatory. Due to numerous traditions, we should confirm that sometimes, Imāms knew languages and had different professions (Mūfid, 1993, 21).

The other topic is the Imāms' chastity. He thinks that Imām's chastity is a precondition as it is for the prophet. So if an Imām commits an error, then he will need another Imām to prevent him from mistake, and in that case, an endless chain takes place (Mūfid, 1414, A.H., 39). He believes that chastity is God's grace which doesn't prevent Imāms to do a wrong thing and it also does not compel Imāms to perform good deeds (Mūfid, 1414, 128), but Imāms have power to do a vile action.

Considering infallibility (chastity), Shaykh Mūfid believes in lack of Prophet's mistake opposite to Ṣadūḳ. Referring to those who believe in Prophet's mistake, he considers Shaykh Ṣadūḳ and his teacher Ibn Valid and other Qum scholars who term the deniers of prophet's mistake as Ghāli, as guilty persons (Mūfid, 1414, 135, Ṣadūḳ, 1414, 17-19).

Among other things which are denied by Mūfid on Imāmate is the special creation of Imāms, which states Imāms were created from a united light thousands of years ago and they were present before God. A great number of samples of such kind of traditions are available in the traditions by Ṣaffār, Kulayni, and Ṣadūḳ too (For further information of the set of these traditions, please see: *Bihār al-Anvār*, vol. 25, Chapter on "al-Bida' fi Khalkihim Va Tinatihim Va Arvāhihim") (Ṣafari Foroushani, 2006, 290).

These traditions are present in Ghāli books, and like the traditions of the book "Ummul Kitāb" and "al-Haft v al-Zillah" are about the creation of Imāms and are acceptable at present by many traditionalists, theologians and philosophers. In "Masāil al-Akbariyah," Shaykh Mūfid deals with this topic and states: that the essence of Imāms existed before Adam (A.S.) is invalid and far from reality. The ignorant and trash collectors, i.e. Ghāli followers who are not aware of the reality of words believe in such a thing (al-maḳālāt va al-Risālāt, vol. 42).

Mūfid's viewpoint on miracles in respect of their possibility and their lack of rational obligation by Imāms refers to many traditions, which confirm the performance of miracle by Imāms (Mūfid, 1993, 22). The most direct phrases by Shaykh on accepting the miracles and rejecting the opponents are "al-Irshād." While narrating a miracle by Imām Ali (A.S.), he compares any disagreement with Imāms' miracle as disagreement of heresies, Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians against the prophet's miracles (Ṣafari Foroushani, 2006, 301).

Most efforts made by Shaykh are to show a rational image of the Imāms, so that he has tried to show the miracles in a rational way. In the case of the miracles, which might not be accepted by some intellects, he intensively tries to justify them (Ṣafari Foroushani, 2006, 324).

## Conclusion

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As it was stated, in addition to the various internal and external problems, the Shi'ite society in the year 260 A.H. (873-4 A.D.) faced a new phenomenon under the name of the absence of Imâm. In those specific conditions, the duty of Shi'ite scholars was to bring stability and peace to the society and they did this job with the establishment of a united route in the Shi'ite doctrine.

Depending on different schools of thought, the Shi'ite scholars showed different images of Imâm in their works in which there were two radical and non-radical views towards Imâm. As it was discussed, the radical view towards Imâm was a dominating element in some scholars and a defeated element in some others. Furthermore, in some scholars, these two views were in an equal condition.

Finally, what was put forth in the fifth century by the Baghdâd school of thought and scholars such as Shaykh Mûfid and his students (Shaykh Murtazâ and Tûsi) became the dominating current in scientific circles of Imâmiyyah — a current of thought which sometimes sees the Imâm as a fully human creature and sometimes, has a radical view towards Imâm. In other words, on the one hand, it wants to adapt the Shi'ite teachings with intellect and on the other hand, it does not have an ability to reject many Shi'ite traditions with a Ghâli-oriented view towards Imâm and accepts some of the radical descriptions of Imâm due to the multiplicity of existing traditions.

Among these approaches to identity of Imâm (Kûfa, Qum and Baghdâd Schools of thought), I think the approach of Qum is more acceptable. It is at least for two reasons. The first reason is, what is common among Shi'tes (popular) about Imâm can be seen in. Popular Shi'ites know Imâm as a heavenly being, he is light, such as God (Holy Quran, 24/34) whose body is virtual and is not real object, his knowledge is as knowledge of God, his power is power of God and etc. Some Narrations confirm this belief. Among Shi'ite pilgrimage guides (Ziâratnâma) some of these narrations have been quoted. One of these narrations (I bear witness that verily you were a light in sublime loins and purified wombs) has addressed to Imâm al-Hossayn (A.S.) (Ziârat i wârisa, see. Qumi, Hâj Shaykh Abbâs, Mafâtiḥ al-Jenân; E12, vol.XI). I myself do like to know my Imâm as an average Shi'ites knows, him and make relation with them as they do. Second reason is that Shi'ite Scholars' (from Qum School of thought) approaches to Imâm seem to be plausible. On the one hand they know Imâm as supra-physical being and accordingly, are associated with popular Shi'ism. On the other hand, they deny extremist perception of Imâm so that this attitude helps them make defensible the Shi'ite system of thought against their opponents who know them from Ghûlât (extremists).

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