

Investigating the Heritage of Transmitted and Intellectual Sciences in Shia Thought

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Abstract

The Shī'a School of thought enjoys an enduring and influential history during various periods and among different Islamic denominations. It is traced back to the time of the Holy Prophet whose opinion and those of his pure household take precedence over the opinions of others in matters concerning beliefs, jurisprudence, Hadith and other sciences.

The intellectual heritage of Shī'ism has various dimensions, including hadith, theology, and history, each going through changes in the course of its development. Shī'a scholars have made extraneous efforts throughout history to compile Islamic sciences and preserve the Islamic heritage. In the contemporary era, the knowledgeable scholars also have done everything they have been able to do to introduce and defend the scientific capacities of Shī'a thought. Their efforts led to the compilation of precious books, such as *Al-Ghadīr*, *A'ayān al-Shī'a*, *Al-Mīzān*, *Al-Ḥayāt* and numerous other works.

This study seeks to explain the general principles of the Shī'a School of thought highlighting its precious heritage particularly the valuable and distinguished intellectual and textual works in different periods of history. Efforts have been made to introduce the capacities of Islamic sciences of the Shī'a School and its heritage by benefiting from data description and analysis method with a qualitative approach based on library resources.

Keywords: Shī'a, Origin, Written Heritage, Intellectual Science, Transmitted Science, Shī'a Scholars.

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1. General Principles of the Shī'a School

The ideological foundations of the Shī'a School are based on the verses of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Holy Prophet, may peace be upon him and his family.¹ This fact is important from two perspectives inasmuch as it firstly proves that Shī'ism originates in Islam and its beliefs are rooted in Quranic texts and traditions. Secondly, it shows that the emergence of this religion, at least in terms of belief, dates back to the age of Prophethood not to the historical events and developments following the demise of the Prophet (pbuh). The beliefs, jurisprudence, ethics, principles and codes of conduct of the Shī'a religion have their origins exactly in the very initial period of Islam and in the exact era of the prophethood. Shī'a, as a religious movement intended by the Messenger of Allah, is in line with the prophetic mission as evidenced and confirmed by numerous explicit

1. Some verses of the Qur'an and traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) that indicate the fundamentals of Shia belief are:

1- Tawhid, 1: «قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ»; Nisá, 87: «اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ»

2- Prophethood: (Hadīd, 26)

«قُلْ اللَّهُ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يَجْمَعُكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ»

3- Resurrection: (Jāthiyah, 26)

«قُلْ اللَّهُ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يَجْمَعُكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ»

4- Justice: (Qasas, 59)

«وَمَا كُنَّا مُهْلِكِي الْقُرَىٰ إِلَّا وَأَهْلِهَا ظَالِمُونَ»

5- The verse Indhār (warning): (Shu'ara, 214)

«وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ»

6- The verse Ghadīr:

«يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ»

7- Imamate: (Māidah, 3)

«الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا»

8- The verse Vilāyat: (Māidah, 55)

«إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ»

9- Sura Nisá, 59: «... يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ...»

10: Sura Ahzāb, 33: «إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا»

11- The verse Mubāhilah:

«فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ»

12- Hadith Thaqaalain:

«وَقَالَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمْ الثَّقَلَيْنِ مَا إِنْ تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا بَعْدِي كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَعَشْرَتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي وَإِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّىٰ يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ»

13- Hadith Safineh:

«إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي فِيكُمْ كَمَثَلِ سَفِينَةِ نُوحٍ، مَنْ دَخَلَهَا نَجَّى، وَمَنْ تَخَلَّفَ عَنْهَا غَرِقَ»

texts. Shī'a scholars support this point of view and cite many corroborating proofs from the sources of the two branches of Islamic faith. "The call to Shī'ism began on the same day that the great liberator of mankind, Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) declared addressing the people by saying "There is no god but Allah" (Muḥaffar, 1986: 8).

The use of the word Shī'a by the beloved Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and its application to Imam 'Alī (as) and his followers is evidenced by traditions narrated by both Shī'a and non-Shī'a historical sources. In one of the prophetic traditions, it has been reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "O 'Alī, you and your Shī'as will be the best of men on the Day of Resurrection." (al-Ṭabarī, vol.16:171).

In his *Al-Rasā'el*, Al-Shaykh Al-Kulaynī al-Rāḍī has narrated on the authority of 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm that Imam 'Alī (as) ordered a letter to be read out to the public every week on Friday. The letter read: "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful, This letter is from the servant of Allah, 'Alī, Amīr alMū'minīn to his Shī'as; and this name (Shī'a) is the name which Allah adores, and has put down in the Qur'an, 'Surely one of his (Noah's) Shī'as was Ibrāhīm' (Qur'an, 37: 83) And you are (in fact) the Shī'as of the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) and Shī'a is not a specific name, and it is not a new thing or a heresy either. Peace and blessings be upon you. (al-Majlisī, 1992, vol. 30: 8) With regard to the validity of this report, it suffices to say that after Al-Shaykh Al-Kulaynī, scholars such as al-Sayyīd Ibn Ṭawūs, al-'Allāma al-Majlisī and others have also quoted it.

In the Glorious Qur'an, the term "Shī'a" is used three times to refer to subservience to the prophets. For example, in the verse (28:15) Allah Almighty speaks of one of the followers of Moses as one of his Shī'a. Elsewhere, Abraham is introduced as a Shī'a of Noah (37:83).

Also, different definitions of the term Shī'a have been offered by Muslim scholars. For example, 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī writes: "Shī'a are those who consider the succession of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) as the exclusive right of the Prophet's progeny and follow Islam according to the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (as)." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2009:4)

The term Shī'a has also been used in the books authored by Sunni scholars to refer to the followers of 'Alī (as) and the Ahl al-Bayt (as).

Shahristānī (d. 548 A.H) in his *Al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*, an outstanding source about different sects in Islam, writes, "Shī'ā are those who followed 'Alī in particular and believed in his Imamate and caliphate according to the explicit teachings and will of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)." (Sharistānī, vol. 1, p. 146) Ibn Khaldūn writes, "You should know that Shī'ā literally means friends and followers and in the words of the early and recent jurists and theologians, the term refers to followers of 'Alī (as) and his offspring." (Ibn Khaldūn, 1983, vol. 1: 269)

These are accurate definitions, since the Shī'ā themselves believe that the reason for following 'Alī (as) is that it was required by the Prophet (pbuh) and it was not their personal decision to choose whom to follow, unlike the non- Shi'a who, after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), followed the one who was chosen at Saqīfa and believed that the Prophet (pbuh) had left it to the people themselves to decide whom to follow. However, the social role and function of Shī'ism became more evident on the day of Saqīfa and in the events following the demise of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny.

2. Written Heritage of Shī'ism

The Prophet's (pbuh) strategy in preserving the religious heritage

Almighty Allah praises His noble Messenger for the knowledge He endowed him with, "We taught you what you did not know." (Sūra al-Nisā', verse 13) The words of Prophet of Mercy (pbuh) are therefore a part of that divine knowledge which had been taught to him. In order to preserve this divine knowledge and pass it down to future generations, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) ordered the recording of hadiths. He encouraged his followers to write down and narrate his teachings and knowledge. Many of the books written by his companions and their successor have reached us and are available here and there in the form of books and collections. (Murtaḍā al-Āmilī, 2012, vol.1: 104) Despite the fact that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) greatly emphasized that his traditions be recorded, according to the evidence, there is no ban on writing hadith in Shia and they followed the Prophet's order.



Role of Shīʿa Imams in Compiling the Shīʿa Intellectual Heritage

After the Prophet (pbuh), his successors also paid attention to collecting and transmitting the hadith ordering their Shīʿas to write down the prophetic traditions and words of the Imams (as). They always encouraged their followers to meet and discuss with each other about recording hadiths and memorizing them so that the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) would not be lost. (Al-Majlisi, 1992, vol. 2: 152) This special concern on the part of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) made the Shīʿas embark on extensive compilations inasmuch as the recording and compilation of hadith by them reached their peak during the time of Imam al-Bāqir and Imam al-Ṣādiq (as). After these two Imams, the Shīʿas had a written text for everything they needed in their religious affairs. (Al-Kulaynī Al-Rāḍī, 1986, vol. 1: 57) The Shīʿa School had a large number of diverse compilations and books in different sciences, thanks to the guidance and command of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) as well as to the special effort, hard work and endurance of excruciating pains by the Shīʿa scholars. Therefore, the books made available by the Shīʿa scholars during the time of the Infallible Imams (as) suggest that they enjoyed a special scientific and cultural privilege in this time. Therefore, on account of plans and strategies adopted by the Imams (as), the sciences and knowledge recorded and compiled in this time made this great culture permanent in history inasmuch one of the functions of the book is to transfer culture and knowledge to the next generations. The pure Imams (as) enriched the future generations with various Islamic teachings and sciences. Al-Shaykh Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī says: "Many hadith books whose number exceeds six thousand and six hundred were written during the time of Imams (as)." (Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, 1981, vol. 3: 165) There were so many volumes of these writings that among the Shīʿa scholars, some started cataloging them as a result of which various catalog books were compiled.

3. Shīʿa Heritage of Transmitted Knowledge

After the Glorious Qurʿan, the most important source for understanding Islam is the hadith and transmitted knowledge (*ʿulūm naqlī*). The narratives and teachings of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and those of his household are of special significance inasmuch as they are

the greatest sources of Islamic knowledge. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) and the pure Imams (as) not only encouraged Muslims to learn, understand and act upon the hadiths, but they also asked them to endeavor to preserve, compile, disseminate and publish them. Needless to say, the prolific Shī'a scholars bequeathed a huge cultural asset to Shī'ism, which consisted of the books and writings of the luminous words and the revealed sciences of the Pure Imams (as). The Shī'a School had such a huge scientific asset in the first *hijrah* century thanks to the existence of Ahl al-Bayt (as) and the efforts of great men such as Zurāra, Hishām b. Ḥakam, Muḥammad ibn Muslim, Ibn Abī 'Umayr, Al-Bazanṭī and many other great traditionists.

Peculiarity of Shī'a School in Preserving the Hadith Heritage

There is no doubt that Shī'a religious scholars made scientific and fundamental effort to record and preserve hadith from distortion and alteration¹; they dedicated many books and study circles to the revival of the hadith. The expansion of hadith teachings resulted, over time, in the proliferation of diverse sciences whose first and foremost mission was to preserve and protect hadith. The hadith-related sciences that evolved and gradually became more complete, is one of the most important and significant parts of the scientific heritage of Islam, a characteristic which makes it superior over other religions. That is because such a broad and precise source of knowledge is not seen in other religions. In the meantime, the Shī'a School has played a huge part in the development and publication of hadith and hadith-related content because continued efforts by Shī'a scholars following the period of the Infallibles (as), according to Shī'a, caused the Shī'a hadiths and narratives to be superior and better in terms of quantity and quality than those narrated by Sunnis. Research and investigation in the works of the predecessors as well as in the written sources and heritage of the Shī'a School shows that Shī'a scholars made tremendous efforts in various fields of hadith sciences to preserve, record, teach, explain and translate hadith.

1 . (text and document filtering, presentation of hadith to imams (as) and scholars, Compare the version with the original version, permission to quote hadith list method, agreement of the text of hadiths with the explicit teachings of the Qur'an)

Contrary to the prohibition of recording, narration and compiling the hadith imposed by the caliphs, the Shī'a Imams(as) laid emphasis on preserving the hadith encouraging their friends and students and leaving written legacies to them. The book of Imam 'Alī (as), the *Mushaf of Lady Fāṭima* (as), the *Sahīfa Sajjādiyya*, the commentary of Imam al-Bāqir (as), the commentary of Imam al-'Askarī¹ (as) and numerous other hadith and commentary books left behind or reported in historical sources are proof of this claim.

The history of Shī'a hadith is fully connected and no missing link can be noted until the era of Prophethood and Imamate. For this reason, the first historical period of the Shī'a hadith is the era in which the first hadith writings are to be found. The difference is that the first hadith recordings of Sunnis are at least a century away from the era of Prophethood, but the first recordings of Shī'a hadith are completely connected to the era of the Prophethood and Imamate. (Mahrīzī, 2001, vol. 1: 50)²

Course of Development of the Transmitted Heritage of the Shī'a School

A) Era of formation:

The era of formation is in reality the period of the presence of the Prophet (pbuh), the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them), and their followers, when several companions compiled books consisting of their teachings and works. This period continued until the occultation of the

1 . A group of hadiths and contents in Imam Askari's Tafsir have preserved their narrative style and are in accordance with the criteria of evaluation and validity of hadith. Some other narratives in this book can be cited in terms of content. Also, some hadiths in this book are available in Arba'a Shia books or other authentic books.

2 . - The first clarification about the entry of fake hadiths into the Shiite tradition was made by the infallible imams themselves.

- Before the Arba'a List of Rijāl Books (Rijāl Kashi, Najashi List, Tusi Rijāl, Tusi List), some Companions had many Rijāl books. That is, the refining of hadiths started from the time of Imam Masum, and the Shia comm Rijāl entators, knowing the men of hadiths, started writing hadiths, not blindly and without criticizing and correcting; For example, Abdullah ibn Jablah Kanani (219 AH), Mohammad ibn Isa Yaqtini, Hassan ibn Mahbub (224 AH) and Hassan ibn Ali ibn Faddal (224 AH) and other Companions also had books of men.

- It also happened during the time of the authors of the Shia Arba'a books. They, who were experts and committed people, as they have stated, collected hadiths to be the proof between Allah the Almighty and them.

twelfth Imam(as) in the year 940 C.E. which coincides with the death of Al-Shaykh Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī al-Rāḍī, the great scholar of hadith, and author of *al-Kāfi*, the most important and authentic collection of hadith that deals with themes of doctrinal and ethical significance in the most coherent and systematic manner.

Mūḥaqqiq al-Baḥrānī writes: "The method used by the early Imāmiyya scholars in the time of the presence of the Infallible Imams (as) which lasted about three hundred years until the time of al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī (Died in 941 AD), al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq(d 991) and al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī(d 1067) was to record and compile the traditions in the meetings attended by the pure Imams (as). They were hastening to write down what they heard from the Infallibles (as) because they were afraid of making mistakes and forgetting what they had to record."¹ (Al-Baḥrānī, 1996, vol. 1: 9)

Following the efforts made by the Shī'a Imams to compile the hadith, the initial writings were prepared by hundreds of their students, which are referred to as *Al-Uṣūl al-arba'ami'a* (lit. the four hundred principles)". (Al-Mudarrisī, 2004: 12) *Al-Uṣūl al-arba'ami'a* are four hundred hadith collections recorded by four hundred great scholars from among the companions of the Infallible Imams (as), especially Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, (upon both of whom be peace). Unfortunately, these early works were destroyed due to historical events, such as the burning of al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's library in Baghdad, following the rise of sectarian conflicts, and only sixteen of those books remained.

B) Era of compilation:

No sooner these collections were made available and considering their being scattered, then a group of great Shī'a hadith scholars tried to arrange and classify them. Thus from the third to the fifth century of *Hijrah*, the primary heritage of Shī'a hadith i.e. *al-Kāfi*, *Man layaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh*, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām* and *al-Istibṣār* came into being. This is a period in which important Shī'a hadith collections were compiled by scholars such as al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq one of the greatest

1 . From the method: (Presenting the hadith in writing or reading to the Imam(as). Through special substitute. Presentation to hadith scholars. Etc)

Shī'a muḥadith (traditionist) who authored nearly three hundred books, al-Shaykh al-Mufīd(d 1022), al-Shaykh al-Tūsī, Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī(d 1178), al-Sayyīd Sharīf al-Raḍī(d 1015) (the compiler of *Nahj al-balāgha*) and al-Sayyid Murtaḍā 'Alam Al-Hudā(d 1044), al-'Allāma al-Ṭabarsī(d 1153), the author of the famous *Majma' al-bayān*, Ibn Shahr Āshūb (d 1192), al-Sayyīd b. Ṭāwūs(d 1266), as well as al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī(d 1325) and others who lived in this period and compiled important works in various fields of Islamic sciences.

C) Era of change:

In the following centuries, a number of other experts in the field of hadith sought to complete the works of their predecessors leading to the formation of the secondary hadith heritage of Shī'a. Prominent scholars such as the late Fayḍ al-Kāshāni(d 1680), al-Shaykh Ḥurr al-'Āmilī (d 1693), al-'Allāma al-Majlisī(d 1699), Mīrzā Nūrī authored works such as *Kitāb al-wāfi*, *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, *al-Burhān*, *Bihār al-anwār*, *Mustardak al-wasā'il*, *'Awālīm al-ūlūm*, and *Jāmī' al-Ma'ārif wa al-aḥkām*, which are considered a precious heritage of Shī'a transmitted sciences. As an example, the book *Bihār al-anwār* authored by Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1667 C.E) consists of 110 volumes which on the whole contain more than 85,000 hadiths in various fields of Islamic sciences. The book is undoubtedly one of the largest Shī'a hadith collections.¹

E) Age of development:

In the contemporary era, the task of completing and compiling the Shī'a hadith heritage is still being pursued. (Nāṣirī, 2009: 25) Some of the most important contemporary works authored in the contemporary period are the following:

Jāmī' aḥādith al-Shī'a, *Mīzān al-ḥikma*, *al-Ḥayāt*, *A'ayān al-Shī'a*, *al-Ghadīr* and *al-Mīzān*.

Jāmī' aḥādith al-Shī'a by Ayatollah Burūjerdī consisting of thirty-one volumes containing more than forty eight thousand hadiths.

1 . Based on reliable hadiths, there are many proofs of the correctness of the hadith. And sometimes it happens to someone and sometimes it doesn't happen to someone. The basis of authentic news is reliable, well-known and accepted by the majority of scholars. (حَدِيثٌ خَيْرٌ مَوْثُوقٌ بِهِ)

Kitāb al-ḥayāt authored by Muḥammad Riḍa Hakīmī includes a new arrangement of hadiths and verses. These 12 volumes include an Islamic encyclopedia, science, and research that has introduced the individual, social, economic, and political way of life based on the Qur'an and traditions to the Islamic and non-Islamic societies.

Mīzān al-ḥikma authored by Muḥammad Muḥammadī Rayshahrī contains more than twenty three thousand traditions.

Al-Dharī'a ilā taṣānīf al-Shī'a, encyclopedia of bibliography, consisting of 29 volumes that contain reviews of 55000 Shī'a books.

A'ayān al-Shī'a, the encyclopedia of Shī'a scholars and personalities, by Sayyid Muḥsin Amīn, authored in eleven volumes.

Kitāb al-Ghadīr, authored by 'Allāma Amīnī, to prove the guardianship (*wilāyah*) of the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī (as) and rightfulness of the Shī'a religion, in twenty volumes.

Some contemporary Quranic *Tafsīr*: *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* in twenty volume, Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī. *Jāmī' Tafsīr* in fifteen volumes, Seyyed Mohammad Ebrahim Boroujerdi. *Tafsīr-i Nimuna* in twenty-seven volumes, Makarim Shirazi. *Tafsīr Min Huda al-Qur'an* in eighteen volumes, Seyyed Mohammad Taghi Madrasi.

And many other Shī'a hadith sources which are not mentioned here for the sake brevity since they are not within the scope of this article.

4. Legacy of Shī'a Intellectual Sciences

The perfect teachings of the Imams (as) have formed a large collection of books and treatises that have been the focus of Shī'a thoughts for centuries. These thoughts derive ultimately from the prophetic religion, not from any other sources. For this reason, it is essential to call them "Islamic teachings" which several successive generations of Shī'a theologians and experts of Islamic tradition have endeavored to collect and record in their books, as well as to determine ways to trace them back to the Infallibles (as), and verify their authenticity and the validity of their chains of transmission.

Role of the Shī'a School in the Formation of Intellectual and Theological Thinking

Among the numerous works of the Companions, not a single independent work containing pure intellectual sciences or debates has

been passed down and narrated. In fact, the most profound intellectual and theological thoughts and views are seen only in the letters, sermons and maxims of Imam ‘Alī (as), Imam al-Şādiq (as), Imam al-Rīḏā (as) and some of his students. During the time of Imam al-Şādiq (as) intellectual sciences also expanded simultaneously along with the development of Islamic sciences. On the other hand, nothing other than secondary issues can be found in all of the Sunni hadith books. When it comes to Shī‘a hadith books, there is an entire book dedicated to *‘aql* and *jahl* (lit. reason and ignorance) in Kulyani's *al-Kāfi* while such topics have not been brought up in the books authored by Sunni traditionists.

Although in the era of the presence of Imams (as) the Shī‘a School did not have a codified theology applying a logical method, the codified theology is very important for the Shī‘a in terms of establishing and solidifying the principles of belief. The numerous traditions that have been passed down from the Imams (as) and the outcome of the discussions between many students of those noble Imams with their opponents, prepared the ground for establishing the principles of belief based on logical analogies. In the 4th and 5th hegira centuries, the intellectual sciences were revived by al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and Abū Naşr al-Fārābī, and later, the intellectual sciences were fully developed, thanks to the efforts made by Ibn Sīnā (better known in the West as Avicenna). In the 6th century, however, the Philosophy of Illumination was refined by al-Shaykh Shahāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī. During the Safavid period and the Isfahan School, Mīrdāmād and Mullā Şadrā Shīrāzī and their students, understood and offered the unbreakable unity of faith and mysticism as a repository of conscientious knowledge of Shī‘a based on prophetic revelation and philosophical reasoning that understands the inner meaning through prophetic spiritual contemplation. (Al-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, 2009: 98)

Shī‘a scholars established the most progressive theological school, which can be said to be unprecedented, using the literal meanings of the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the traditions passed down from the Imams (as). They laid the foundation and principles of belief and practice of this religion in such a way that it not only survives

throughout history, but also maintains its progress and offers solutions to social problems. This means that, on the one hand, they introduced the principle of justice as one of the principles of belief, and on the other hand, they recognized reason as a source of Shī'a thought and a tool for the derivation of general secondary rules. Hence, contrary to the non-Shī'a denominations that rejected *ijtihād*, they opened its gate forever. In other words, the Shī'a scholars recognized the authority of reason in both fields of belief and practice. Henry Corbin, the French philosopher, says: "In the Islamic world, Shī'ism, the only school that accepts the agreement between reason and revelation and benefits from the niche of prophetic lights, has been able to reach the middle path which is the path of prophetic philosophy" (Corbin, 1992: 232).

Place of Reason in the Shī'a Religion

Shī'a believe that the reason is a reliable and important source of knowledge. The Shī'a sources are indicative of the special place that the reason enjoys in the foundations of their thinking. Its position is such that according to the existing hadiths of the Infallibles (as), the value of people's worship is measured by their intellect. Imam al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) was told about someone's worship. The Imam (as) said: "How is his intellect? The value of every individual's actions is according to his intellect." (Al-Kulaynī al-Rāḍī, vol. 1: 42) Sunni scholars and those who made progress in knowledge have admitted the Infallibles' rational approach in all cases. They have not been able to conceal or deny their arguments and reasoning just as Abū Ḥanīfa said, "I have not seen a jurist more proficient and knowledgeable than Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (as)." (Ṣādiqī, Mūḥammad 2011: 69).

In the Shī'a religion, apart from the fact that reason is one of the four sources for derivation of legal rulings, along with the Qur'an, *Sunnah* and consensus, it also enjoys a significant role in matters of belief inasmuch it is necessary for a Muslim to believe in the fundamentals of faith with his own insight and understanding, and he cannot follow anyone in this respect i.e. he cannot accept the word of another who knows, simply because he has said it. Despite the infallibility of the Imams (as) as a main Shī'a doctrine, the reason (*ʿaql*) is seen in complete harmony with revelation. This togetherness and harmony of reason and

revelation is a safe and error-free path towards guidance and the derivation of legal rulings whereas in other religions, the path of guidance, which originates from a pure and divine source, has undoubtedly been contaminated in the initial stages, after the Holy Prophet (pbuh), with interpretations based on personal opinions and a literalism.

Conclusion

This article explains the principles and foundations of the Shī'ā School as well as the origin of its formation, which dates back to the time of the prophetic mission. It also points to the special and dynamic features of this school in preserving and maintaining its heritage with an emphasis on the transmitted and intellectual sciences. In this regard, the most important valuable heritage of Shī'ism in different centuries, especially the present era, and its transformative role in creating scientific order and vitality in the Islamic world have been highlighted. Also, the superiority and special privileges of the Shī'ā School compared to other denominations have been explained from the theological and jurisprudential perspectives.

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