Intellectual, Political and Social Status of the Shi'ites on the Verge of Occultation

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In the period prior to the beginning of occultation (260 A.H), Shi'ites were fortunate to have outstanding intellectual scholars who were trained by Imams (A.S) and to whom the principles were taught. Those principles were known as the “Four Hundred Principles” (Usu-l 'Arbi'a Mi'ah). Principles of Shi'ite jurisprudence and beliefs were explained by Imams (A.S) and were gathered in these collections of hadith. However, the situation was politically grave and critical. Imams of the Shi'ites were besieged and despite their firm taqi-yah (prudent dissimulation); they were brought to Samarra from Medina to be kept under stricter control. Shi'ites' contact .with Imams was very risky and difficult

In that stage, when the struggle became so crucial and complex, the strategic plan of the Shi'ites was formed in the “Secret Network of Deputation”; a network which was founded during the age of Imam Sa-diq (A.S) and came to power during the age of 'Askari-ya'n (A.S) (the two imprisoned Imams i.e. the 10th and the 11th Imams). The secret network of deputation was a very complex organized system whose depth, complexity and significant role cannot be analyzed without an intensive study and analysis of its hidden aspects.

In that period, having hidden tactful contacts [with his companions] the Imams (A.S) developed that network and subsequently guarded, strengthened and developed the Shi'ite community.

During that momentous stage of oppositions, another step that Shi'ite Imams took was to support and advocate some of 'Alawi-s' oppositions in weakening the pillars of Abbasid government and preventing their tyranny and aggression.

From the social view, the Shi'ite community was under Caliphs' strong pressure and aggression. Their properties were confiscated and their lives were in danger. They were also unseated from important posts and positions and oppressed as much as possible. Some of them took important posts by practicing taqi-yah so that they could help the poor and the oppressed and take appropriate measures when necessary.

Although Shi'ite leadership was kept under control, as with the other Imams (A.S), it had an outstanding authority among all social classes.

Kulayni quoted from a member of Bani- Hani-fah tribe living in Si-sta-n who had told him: “At the beginning of Mu'tasim's Caliphate, I accompanied Abu Ja'far, Imam Jawa-d (A.S), when he

was going to Hajj. Then one day, when we sat to eat while some people of the royal court were with us, I told him: “O' May I be sacrificed in your way! Our governor is one who is among your Shi'ites and in his records (account book, record book) some taxes are assigned for me. I wondered if you think it is appropriate that you write a letter to him and tell him to have mercy on me [about this].”

Abu Ja'far (A.S) stated: “I do not know him.” I said: “O' May I be sacrificed in your way! As I mentioned, he is among your Shi'ites and your letter will be to my benefit.” So, he (A.S) took a paper and wrote: “In the Name of Allah the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. And then; the carrier of this letter described your religion and undertaking as to be very nice. Surely, the beneficial deed for you is the one in which you do the good; then do well by your brethren and know (be aware) that the God Almighty will ask you about [your deed even if having] an amount of a particle.”

The man said: “when I came to Si-sta-n, I found that Husayn b. 'Abdullah Neysha-bu-ri-, the governor, already knew about the matter. He came out of the city about two parasangs [about 11~12 kilometers] to welcome me; then I gave him the letter. He kissed it and put it on his eyes and asked me: “what do you want?” I said: “There is some tax assigned for me in your finance bureau.” He ordered to abolish that [unjust] tax from me.[1]

Intellectual Status

Intellectually, Shi'ites had a privileged status in that period. Moreover, their doctrines of religion were established by Imam Sa-diq (A.S) and Imam Baqir (A.S) and also Hadiths were saved in forms of Usu-l and Jawa-mi'[2] while validation criteria of Hadiths and their refinement were gained from Imams (A.S). Sheikhs, pupils and companions[3] were trained to resolve crises and also support Shi'ite's reputation in beliefs and jurisprudence against different groups and sects, especially those who had Caliphs' support.

Guarding Islam and the concept of revelation and protecting it from misleaders and crises are among the duties of Imams (A.S). Some significant features of this period were 'Askariyain's (A.S) illuminations and true policy-makings against society's intellectual deviances such as the Waqifites, the Mufawwidah, dualists (thanawiyah) and zealots (ghula-t).[4]

Answering to jurisprudential questions and thought problems as well as keeping Shi'ites away from engaging in useless debates and unnecessary conflicts were among remarkable characteristics of that period.

Once, in answering one of the Shi'ites' question about whether the Qur'a-n is created [by God], Imam Ha-di- (A.S) wrote: “In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful; May God keeps

us from being affected by this tribulation for then He has bestowed us the greatest bounty and the rest is all distractions ahead of us. In our opinion, arguing about the Qur'a-n (that if it has been created or it has been eternal) is a (reprehensible) innovation whose questioner and questioned are involved; because the questioner is looking for what he does not deserve it and the one who is questioned runs himself into trouble for an unimportant matter which is out of his competence.

The creator is no one but Allah and all others are creatures except Him, so the Qur'a-n is His words. Then, do not name it otherwise, for then you will be among the those who go astray. May Allah hold you and us up as exemplars of His word that states: 'The pious who fear their Lord in secret, and who are apprehensive of the Hour. (21:49).'"[5]

Of the other key measures 'Askari-ya-n (A.S) took in that period was to provide intellectual preparation for Shi'ites for entering "the age of occultation"; among whose procedures were their hadiths about approaching occultation and their good news about the birth of Allah's authority (the promised Mahdi).[6]

Other activities consisted of referring the Shi'ites to Imam's deputies[7] and validating some of jurisprudential books and hadith references[8] and finally reducing their direct contacts with Shi'ites, until even in Samarra, they would answer Shi'ites' problems and issues by letter or their deputies and doing so, they prepared the Shi'ites to adapt themselves to conditions of the age of occultation and also indirect contact with Imam (A.S).[9]

As we will see later, this was the policy that the Twelfth Imam (A.S) himself later on adopted during the age of "minor occultation" and gradually prepared Shi'ites for the "greater occultation".

Political Situation

1. Transferring 'Askari-ya-n (A.S) from Medina to Samarra and strict Control Over Them

In that period, the policy of the 'Abbasid Caliph Mutawakkil was the same as Ma'mu-n's against Imam Rida- (A.S) and Imam Jawa-d (A.S) and that was to draw Imam Ha-di- (A.S) nearer to the court and limit him to the periphery of government to be able to control Imam totally and to know about all his movements and to isolate him from the Shi'ites. The same policy was followed with respect to Imam 'Askari- (A.S); therefore, similar to his father, he was kept under control in Samarra and had to call the Caliph's palace every Monday and Thursday.[10]

The reason for calling Imam Ha-di- (A.S) to Samarra was the reports that Mutawakkil had

received about Imam's activities in Medina and people's attention and interest about him.[11] They brought Imam from Medina to Samarra forcibly[12] and kept him under strict control and attacked his house at midnight and inspected it on the slightest pretext, such as that Imam had hidden money and weaponry.[13]

After Imam Ha-di- (A.S) passed away, Imam 'Askari- (A.S) became the next Imam at the age of 22 and until his martyrdom at the age of 28, he was under control of the Caliph's agents in Samarra.

2. 'Askariya-n's different methods of political oppositions

'Askariya-n's political oppositions, similar to their intellectual oppositions, had different approaches and aspects; from the policy of taqi-yah to allowing some Shi'ites to assume positions in the government (in order to help the poor and the opressed),[14] preservation of the Shi'ites[15], fulfilling their needs[16], approving and supporting some opposing groups[17] and most of all, developing and reinforcing the secret network of deputies; a network which was founded at the time of Imam Sa-diq (A.S) and in 'Askari-ya-n's period came to develop at a faster pace.

More about this network and the factors of its development in that period, its importance, features and historical course will be discussed in detail in the next section; and are mentioned here just to introduce the matter. We will have a brief look at the policy of taqi-yah as the key to understand Imamate history.

With respect to taqi-yah, it should be briefly stated that it is a complex form of opposition. Taqi-yah is not doing nothing, but it is doing everything needed in secret; and in all its kinds, it is a kind of holy struggle and defense. We read in hadiths, "Taqi-yah is a part of my faith and my fathers', and no one is faithful unless he practices taqi-yah [if needed]";[18] "Nine tenth of the religion is in taqi-yah, and no one follows the religion unless he practices taqi-yah";[19] "The faithful should be like descendants of Imam Ali. The faithful should be a [holy] struggler, but you are recommended to perform the practice of taqi-yah under an illegitimate government and to fight full-frontally under a legitimate one."[20]

Taqi-yah has been the reason for Shi'a's survival against all illegitimate rulers and arrogant powers. The history of Imams' taqi-yah is the key to understand the history of Shi'a, and without it, Imams' movement will not be analyzable while it will also be considered as non-systematic, non-strategic, weak and cowardly. Inevitably, we have to cose this issue with three hadiths from Imam 'Ali (A.S), Imam Ha-di- (A.S) and Imam 'Askari- (A.S) about the importance of taqi-yah.

Referring to the what happened after the demise of the Prophet Muhammad, Imam Ali (A.S)

states: “…I sat aside and thought whether I have to fight without hands or I must be patient with the blind unknowingness. This unknowingness which kills the old, ages the child and grinds the faithful down in pain till he meets his Lord. I found patience with this all better and wiser. So I tolerated with wet eyes and aching throat; while I was watching my heritage being robbed.”[21] And that is the very Imam 'Ali's taqi-yah. He had to forbear in loneliness.

Imam Ha-di- (A.S) told Da-wu-d Sarumi-: “O' Da-wu-d! I would have been right if I had stated that the one who ignores taqi-yah is like the one who leaves daily prayer”.[22] In this tradition, giving up taqi-yah is compared to giving up the prayer.

Imam 'Askari- (A.S) told one of his Shi'ites who had advised his friend to practice taqi-yah: “You are the exemplar of what the Prophet (p.b.w.h) stated that: One who advises another to the good, it is as though he himself has done it.” Then Imam (A.S) continued: God gave him reward for the sake of your friend's taqi-yah as to the number of those who practiced it and those who gave it up (rightly) from among our followers and Shi'ites, as if the slightest amount of those rewards would absolve sins committed in a hundred years. Moreover, because of your advice you receive as much reward as your friend does.[23]

It is obvious that this much reward is for many fruits of taqi-yah. The amount of practice of taqi-yah during Imam's (A.S) period was to such an extent that he would send his Shi'ites a message that they had to point or wave with their hands instead of say ing hello to Imam (A.S) in order to save their lives.[24]

And once he (A.S) told one of his Shi'ites openly that: “If you did not practice taqi-yah you would be killed; [you have to choose] either taqi-yah and concealment or death and being killed.”[25]

Social Situation

In this part, we will analyze the social situation of the Shi'ites, their status and their leadership authority.

1. Shi'ites' Situation

Although in that period, many cities were Shi'ite-resident centres,[xxvi] Shi'ites' condition could be described as being poor, suppressed, removed from posts and most of all, deprivation from the privilege of being with Imam (A.S) and in fact, reducing the contact with Imam (A.S) to the minimum.

1.1 Minimum contact with Imam (A.S)

Although Imam (A.S) would make contact with his Shi'ites, by any means, strict control of Imam and torture and harassment of those in contact with Imam would lead the contact of

Imam with his Shi'ite to be at a minimum. This very matter would lead to adverse consequences; although with Imam's wisdom, those consequences were kept at a minimum, but not completely eliminated.

1.2 Suppression

In that period, Shi'ites were completely suppressed by Abbasid Caliphs. Mutawakkil's offences against Shi'ites varied from the network of the troops of Sha-kiriyyah to destroying Imam Husayn's (A.S) shrine. To suppress Shi'ites even more, Mutawakkil commanded the governor of Egypt to exile Talibiyu-n to Iraq. The governor of Egypt did so; then in 236 A.H. Mutawakkil drove them out to Medina where earlier 'Alawi-s (the descendents of Imam Ali) were exiled.[26]

Mutawakkil also warned residents of Hija-z not to make any contact with 'Alawi-s or support them financially. Many of them were punished very severely because of disobeying his command. As Isfaha-ni- wrote, in this way, Mutawakkil treated 'Alawi-s very aggressively in Medina, whereby 'Alawi-s were completely segregated from others and deprived of the very basic means of subsistence.

1.3 Dismissal from posts

According to Mas'u-di-, Mutawakkil dismissed Isha-q b. Ibra-hi-m, the governor of Samarra and Sirwa-n in Jabal province, from his post because of being a Shi'ite.[27] Many other people also lost their positions because of similar reasons.[28] & [29]

1.4 Withholding financial aids

Mutawakkil confiscated Fadak estates which belonged to the descendants of Lady Fatimah. According to Sayyid ibn Tawu-s' writings, the income of Fadak was more than 24,000 dinars at that time. Mutawakkil gave it to his friend, 'Abdullah b. 'Umar Bezya-r.[30] And as mentioned before, he warned Hija-z residents not to make any contact with 'Alawi-s nor support them financially.

Abu al-Faraj Isfaha-ni- wrote: “Mutawakkil put severe financial pressures on 'Alawi-s and officially banned giving any kind of aid to them. He severely punished the offenders.”[31]

2. Social Status and the Influence of Shi'ite leadership

Despite all obstacles put by the government in their way, spiritual influence of Shi'ite Imams (A.S) increased every day. The influence was to such an extent that even extended to Caliphs' courts. Many people were greatly attracted to Imams (A.S); even some ministers and commanders wholeheartedly did believe that the Imams (A.S) were just and right, and knew them as deserving the Caliphate, although they concealed their belief. In this section some

examples of Imam Ha-di- (A.S) and Imam 'Askari-'s (A.S) social status will be mentioned.

A) Imam Ha-di-'s (A.S) authority

Here we will mention his influence in the court, among 'Alawi-s, people of the Book, Medina residents and the Shi'ites.

1. In the Court

Mutawakkil was suffering from a painful abscess. He was very ill and was dying from pain but nobody ever dared to perform a surgery on it. Mutawakkil's mother (Shuja-') made a vow that if her son recovered from the illness, she would send a great deal of money to Imam Ha-di- (A.S). Fath b. Kha-qa-n - a nobleman very close to him[32] - suggested to Mutawakkil to send someone to Abu al-Hassan al-Ha-di- (A.S) and to ask him about the cure for this illness; for he (A.S) may know the cure for it and give an advice.

Mutawakkil ordered: "Send somebody to him (A.S)" Then his messenger went and came back with an instruction which cured Mutawakkil.[33] Also Mutawakkil called Imam (A.S) by Yahya b. Harthamah to Samarra because of slanders against Imam (A.S) in Medina. Imam (A.S) set out for Samarra accompanied by his family. Yahya himself rendered the service to Imam (A.S) and became impressed by Imam's piety.

The caravan travelled through desert and arrived in Baghdad. Ya'qu-bi- said that as soon as Imam (A.S.) arrived in "Ya-siri-yih", I-sha-q b. I-bra-hi-m the governor of Bagdad met Imam (A.S.). When he saw the eagerness and interest of people toward Imam (A.S), he invited him to stay in Baghdad that night.[34]

Yahya told Baghdad's governor the story. Baghdad's governor said: "This man is the Prophet's son while you know Mutawakkil's deviation from the Prophet's family; so if you tell him a wrong word about Imam Ha-di- (A.S); he will kill Imam (A.S) and on the day of Judgment, the Prophet (p.b.w.h) will be your enemy…"

Yahya answered: "Swear by God, neither did I see anything in him (A.S) but the good, nor anything I disliked…" then they left Baghdad and set out for Samarra. As soon as they arrived, Yahya reached Wasi-f Turki- who was a high ranking official in the government and informed him of Imam's (A.S) arrival. Wasi-f also warned him of telling things that would cause any danger to Imam (A.S) and told him: "O' Yahya! Swear by God, if ever slightest danger faces Imam (A.S), you will be the only person responsible for it…"

Yahya was surprised by the similarity of Isha-q and Wasi-f's concern about guarding Imam (A.S) and his health.[35] Imam's (A.S) popularity was to the extent that upon his arrival in Mutawakkil's court, all courtiers and security guards would stand up before him, involuntarily

open the doors immediately without any delay or question and draw aside the curtains. Once Imam (A.S) was invited to a banquet which was held for a Caliph's son's birthday celebration. When Imam (A.S) entered the party, everyone fell silent treating him out of respect…[36]

2. Among 'Alawi-s and others

Muhammad b Hassan Ashtar 'Alawi- said: “With my father, some of 'Abbasids, Ta-libi-s (descendants of Abu Talib, the father of Imam Ali), some of the army officers and some other people were standing in the doorway of Mutawakkil's palace and suddenly Abu al-Hassan Imam Ha-di- (A.S) came and wanted to enter the palace.

All the people who were in attendance got down their mounts and show[ed] him great respect until he (A.S) entered the palace. One person got angry about such homage and tribute and began to complain that: “To whom does all this acknowledgement and courtliness belong? Why do we have to pay this young man this much respect? He is neither higher than us in rank nor older in age! Swear by God, we will not rise for him or come off our mounts at the time of his coming out…”

Abu Ha-shim Ja'fari- answered him that: “Swear by God, you will respect him (A.S) in the humblest manner!” After some moments, Imam (A.S) came out of palace. The sound of acclamation echoed and all people stood up, showing respect to Imam (A.S); Abu Ha-shim addressed people: “Were not you who decided not to respect his holiness?”

They answered: “Swear by God, we could not control our emotions and involuntarily came off our mounts to respect him (A.S).”[37]

Descendants of the Prophet (p.b.w.h) and noblemen were harmonious in respecting Imam (A.S) and all of them had accepted his leadership and preeminence. Zayd b. Mu-sa b. Ja'far was among these 'Alawi-s known as Zayd al-Na-r who was Imam's (A.S) uncle and was so old and long-lived.

Once when visiting Imam (A.S), he came to the doorway of the Imam's (A.S.) house and wanted 'Amr b. Faraj who was the doorway guard to ask entrance permission from Imam (A.S) for him. Imam (A.S) granted the permission and Zayd came in and sat politely and respectfully before Imam (A.S) who was sitting in the upper part of (assembly) room and doing so, he acknowledged Imam's (A.S) supremacy and leadership.

Another day, Zayd came to see Imam (A.S) but Imam (A.S) was not present in the room and Zayd sat in the upper part of the room; after a few moments, Imam (A.S) entered; as soon as Zayd saw Imam (A.S), he rose from his place and offered the same seat to Imam (A.S) while

he himself sat politely in front of Imam (A.S). This happened when Imam (A.S) was so young and Zayd was an elderly man; but Zayd's action was considered as his acknowledgement of Imam's (A.S) leadership and supremacy and it was similar to how all people acknowledged Imam's (A.S) leadership.[38]

3. Among Medina's residents

When people of Medina found out about the mission of Mutawakkil's executive agent, Yahya b. Harthamah, who wanted to take Imam (A.S) to Samarra, they began to cry and weep in such a way that Yahya said: “I had never seen or heard like that, and that was so that I had to calm them down and that did not take effect until I swore by God that no harm would ever come to him.[39]

4. Among People of the Book

Imam's (A.S) authority was not limited to Shi'ites; it included people of the Book as well. They greatly respected Imam (A.S), and when having trouble and difficulty, they used to seek help from him. They even gave him presents.

Hibatallah b. Abi- Mansu-r said: “Once Yusuf b. Ya'qu-b who was Christian and of my father's friends, came to our home in Baghdad. My father asked him the reason for coming. Yusuf said: “Mutawakkil 'Abba-si- has summoned me, but I do not know why. So I have insured myself for one hundred dinars and have come to give them to 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Ali Rida-.”[40]

5. Among Samarra Shi'ites

Mutawakkil would always prevent people from visiting Imam Ha-di- (A.S). Once Imam (A.S) was in Mutawakkil's palace, and numerous people were behind the door. The narrator said that: “I asked them why they were gathering there. They answered that: “We are waiting for our lord to see him and salute him and then we will go.” I asked them if they knew him. They answered: “Yes! We all know him”.[41]

B) Imam 'Askari-'s (A.S) authority

In this part, we will have a short review about Imam 'Askari-'s social status in the court, among caliphs and ministers, to people of the Book, religious leaders, Shi'ites and others.

1. Among Caliphs

Some of that period's caliphs like Mu'tamid would seek recourse to Imam 'Askari- (A.S) when they were in considerable need; and they would ask him for prayer.[42] They would also ask

him for help in crises and at key points. For once Mu'tamid ordered to free Imam 'Askari- (A.S) from prison temporarily to stand against deviants' perversities and to resolve all doubts and incredulities they had casted on people. Mu'tamid addressed Imam (A.S) and said: “Save your father's religion”!

Another time, he addressed Ja'far, Imam 'Askari-'s (A.S) brother, when Ja'far asked Mu'tamid to grant him his brother's position; Mu'tamid answered: “Your brother's position was not in our hand, that it was from Allah; and despite our determined attempts in lowering your brother's status, his authority would rise increasingly because of his knowledge and religious practices.”[43]

2. Among Ministers

'Ubayd b. Kha-qa-n was one of the ministers in Abbasid's caliphate who was concurrent with Imam (A.S). He said that: “If none of Abbasid caliphs is anymore caliph, then no one out of the Hashemite deserves caliphate but him (Imam Hassan 'Askari- (A.S)). It is only this man who deservs caliphate because of his knowledge, virtue, guidance, self-possession, piety, religious practice and good morals. His father also like him was noble, generous, knowledgeable and well-meaning.[44]

Ahmad b. 'Ubaydillah b. Kha-qa-n who was Na-sibi- (anti-Ahlul Bayt), described Imam 'Askari-'s (A.S) social status and authority like this: “In Samarra, I saw nobody among 'Alawis like Hassan b. 'Ali- b. Muhammad al-Rida (A.S) in conduct, virtue, magnanimity, generosity, being respected by the family, the caliph and all Ha-shimi-s. Not only these people, but also all ministers, secretaries, commanders of army and others considered Imam (A.S) superior to all great ones.”[45]

He himself said that: “Anyone among the Hashemite, commanders, secretaries, judges, jurisprudents and other people would consider Imam (A.S) at the highest point of greatness, grandeur and superiority, when I asked them about him (Imam Hassan 'Askari- (A.S)); They knew him (A.S) superior to all the relatives, nobles and all others and they would all say that: “He (A.S) is the leader of Shi'ites” and he (A.S) was of great nobility and position before me because everyone would speak of him as benevolent and widely regarded him as great.”[46]

3. Among Commanders

One of the commanders and generals got off his mount as soon as he saw Imam 'Askari- (A.S) and showed him respect. Imam (A.S) addressed him and stated: “Return to your place.” He returned while he was showing Imam respect.[47]

4. Before Mutawakkil's doctor

Bakhti-shu-' - Mutawakkil's personal doctor - was one of the most distinguished doctors of his time. He told one of his pupils to perform phlebotomy for Imam (A.S). He told him: “Ibn al-Rida (Imam Askari) has asked me to send someone to perform phlebotomy for him; I chose you to go, you must know that he (A.S) is the most knowledgeable person living under the sun. So, do not ever neglect his orders or complain”.[48]

5. Among religious scholars

Imam (A.S) had an absolutely outstanding status among his contemporaneous religious scholars. Ja-hiz was among great writers of that period living in Basra. He met Imam (A.S) when he was a young man of 22 years old, and passed away five years before Imam's (A.S) martyrdom. He said about Imam (A.S): “It has never happened for any of Arab or non-Arab ancestries except Ta-libiya-n that all of whom become scholars, virtuous, pious, brave, generous, pure, of a noble nature and some of whom become the Prophet's successor and some others became the nominees of his successors; whose names from fathers to their sons are: Hasan b. 'Ali b. Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Mu-sa- b. Ja'far b. Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Husayn b. 'Ali”.[49]

6. Among People of the Book

Some of the nobles and scholars of the Book acknowledged Imam's (A.S) superiority and high status in a way Imam would state about some of them: “Praise be to Allah that made Christians more aware about our right than some Muslims.”[50]

From among them, some became Muslims, such as Anu-sh Nasra-ni- and the monk of 'A-qu-l monastery.[51]

7. Among common people

People would rush to meet Imam (A.S) from everywhere, and on the very day that Imam was supposed to come to the court, numerous Imam's devotees gathered with tearful eyes on Imam's route to meet him, in a way that the way would get blocked and no one could pass through. The sound of lament and wailing could be heard from everywhere but once Imam (A.S) came out of the door, silence would reign everywhere and everyone would be stunned by his supreme majesty and pave the way for him and stand there waiting for his return.[52]

Sheikh Sadu-q quoted from Ahmad b. 'Ubaydillah b. Kha-qa-n - the caliph's deputy in Qom - who was a Na-sibi- and anti-Shi'ite that he said: “At the time of Imam 'Askari-'s martyrdom, the whole bazaar (marketplace) closed and the Hashemite, all military men, secretaries, other

people and my father ('Ubaydillah b. Kha-qa-n - Mu'tamid Abba-si-'s minister) attended the Imam's funeral. That day, considering the crowd, and the number of people wailing, was like a shot of the Day of Judgment."

8. Among Shi'ites

Abu Ha-shim Ja'fari- who was among the faithful companions of Imam 'Askari- (A.S) and Imam Ha-di- (A.S) had poems about Imam 'Askari- which described his supreme status among Shi'ites very well. Translation of some of those poems is the following: "God granted him - Imam 'Askari- - all miracles of Imamate as He had earlier granted Moses the miracles of splitting the sea, white hand and the stick.

God did not grant any miracles to the Prophets unless He granted Imams the same; and if you doubt about it, you may go and seek for the proof and evidence."[53]

Conclusion

Intellectual, political and social status of Shi'ites and their leadership in the time of the Imam Hadi (A.S) and Imam Askari (A.S) had special characteristics.

Shi'ite hadiths were compiled and maters of hadith and religious scholars were trained to resolve crises and troublesome events. Among Imams' efforts in that period were protecting Islam from being robbed by deviants, their proper positioning and elucidations, answering intellectual and jurisprudential questions and enabling Shi'ites to be prepared for entrance into the age of occultation of the Twelfth Imam (A.S).

In political aspect, the Shi'ite leadership was brought to Samarra from Medina forcibly and taken under strict control. Imam Hadi and Imam Askari began to develop and reinforce the deputies' network following the policy of taqi-yah.

Among their other measures were their support for some 'Alawi-s' uprisings, preserving Shi'ites and allowing some of them to assume some positions in the government in order to help the poor and the oppressed.

From the social aspect, Shi'ites were in poverty, under pressure, suppression of beliefs and deprivation. And although Shi'ite leadership were besieged and restricted from making any contact with Shi'ites and other people, they had great influence among all classes of society, from Shi'ites and common people to religious scholars, nobles, people of the Scriptures, commanders and ministers.

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Notes:

[1] Al-Ka-fi-, Vol. 5, pp. 111 & 112; Biha-r Al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, pp. 86 & 87.

[2] Muhammad b. Ma'ruf Hilali- said: “I went Hirah to Ja'far b. Sadiq [Imam Sadiq] (A.S.). I could not reach him because of the many people around him, until the fourth day he saw me and took me beside himself. He went on pilgrimage to Imam Ali's shrine after people went

away, while I was his companion and heard what he stated. (Dr. Gorji, Ta-ri-kh Fiqh wa Fuqaha-', p. 115, quoted from Rija-l Naja-shi). Hasan b. 'Ali b. Ziya-d and Sha' told Ibn 'I-sa: "I saw 900 Sheikhs in this mosque (Ku-fah Mosque), all of whom would say: 'Haddathani Ja'far b. Muhammad [Imam Ja'far Sadiq]'".

Hafiz Abu al-'Abba-s b. Uqdah Hamida-ni- Ku-fi- (died 333 A.H) has written a book about the names of whom had quoted from Imam Sa-diq (A.S) and has introduced 4000 persons.

During the time of Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq, (A.S), hadithes spread so much among Shi-'ites that had never spread before in any period or religion. (ref. Fadli, 'Abdul Ha-di-, pp. 203 & 204) This period is called the period of spreading knowledge of 'Aal-e Muhammad (A.S). (Ibid., p. 95

[3] To know the number and the names of 'Askari-ya-n's (A.S) pupils and companions ref. Ta-ri-kh al-Tashri-' al-Isla-mi-.

Sheikh Tu-si- counts the number of Imam Ha-di-'s (A.S) pupils in different fields as 185; among whom are distinguished people such as: Fadl b. Sha-dha-n, Husayn b. Sa'id Ahwazi, Ayub b. Nuh, Abu 'Ali Hasan b. Ra-shid, Hasan b. 'Ali Na-sir Kabi-r, 'Abdul 'Azi-m Hasani, 'Utma-n b. Sa'id Ahwazi, some of whom have definitive works and publications in different fields of Islamic sciences. (Al-Rija-l, Sheikh Tu-si-, pp. 409 - 429) and also ref. Haya-t al-Ima-m al-Ha-di-, pp. 170 - 230.

Some researchers have counted the number of Imam 'Askari-'s (A.S) pupils and transmitters of his Hadiths up to 213; ref. Haya-t al-Ima-m al-'Askari-, pp. 345 - 413.

The author of A'ya-n al-Shi-'ah also says: "Different sciences and knowledge acquired from Imam 'Askari- (A.S) have filled papers of books." A'ya-n al-Shi-'ah, Vol. 1, p. 40.

[4] Haya-t al-Ima-m al-'Askari-, pp. 287-295.

[5] Tawhi-d, p. 224.

[6] Haya-t al-Ima-m al-'Askari-, p.316.

[7] Ibid. p.324.

[8] Ibid. p.325.

[9] Ibid. p.324.

[10] Al-Ghaybah, Sheikh al-Tu-si-, p. 139 (cited in Ta-ri-kh Siyasi- Gheybat-e Imam-e Dava-zdahom, p.78); Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, p.251; Mana-qib, Vol. 4, p.432; Dala-il al-Imamah, p.226.

[11] Al-Irsha-d, p. 333; Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, p. 200; Ithba-t al-Wasiyyah, p. 225 (cited in Ta-ri-kh Siyasi- Gheybat-e Emam-e Dava-zdahom, p.83).

[12] Imam (A.S) himself stated: "They brought me from Medina to Samarra forcibly." (Biha-r

al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, p. 129).

[13] Muruj al-Dhahab, Vol. 4, p. 93; Al-Irsha-d, Vol. 2, p. 303.

[14] Dr. Ja-sim Hussain wrote that: “Imamate [deputies'] network let its followers to work inside Abbasid Caliphate's government; therefore, Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Bazi, Ahmad b. Hamzah b. Qommi- took prominent positions in ministry. (Rija-l Naja-shi-, p.254) Nooh b. Darra-j first became Baghdad's judge and then Ku-fah's judge and he concealed his faith during his working life because his relatives were among Imam Java-d's (A.S) officials. (Rija-l Naja-shi-, pp. 80 - 98) Some of the other Shi'ites like Husayn b. 'Abdullah Neishabu-ri- became Si-sta-n's governor and Hakam b. 'Ulya- As'adi- was elected as the governor of Bahrain. Both these people paid Khums (the one fifth tax) to Imam Java-d (A.S) that suggested their allegiance to the Ninth Imam (A.S) (Al-Ka-fi-, Vol. 5, p. 111); (Al-Istibsa-r, Vol. 2, p. 58); Ta-ri-kh Siya-si- Gheybat-e Ema-m-e Dava-zdahom, p. 79.

[15] Ref. Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, pp. 140, 254, 269, 270 and 298.

[16] Ref. Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, pp. 259, 304; also ref. Haya-t al-Ima-m al-'Askari-, pp. 261- 266.

[17] Ref. Ta-ri-kh Siya-si- Gheybat-e Ema-m-e Dava-zdahom, pp. 85 - 89; Many historians like Isfaha-ni- say that 'Alawwia-n's uprisings in 250 - 251 A.H began in Kufah, Tabarista-n, Rey, Qazvi-n, Egypt and Hija-z. It is possible that these uprisings had been led by one group or more precisely, one leader…. Despite the Zaydi frontier of the uprising, many devoted Shi'a-s were involved. The leader of the insurgents was Yahya b. 'Umar who was assassinated (250 A.H.) while he was praised by Abu al-Qa-sim Ja'fari-, Imam Ha-di-'s (A.S) deputy and gained his favor. (Tabari-, Vol. 3, p. 1522)

Additionally, Mas'u-di- said that Ali b. Mu-sa- b. Isma-'i-l b. Mu-sa- al-Ka-dhim joined in the Rey's uprising but the caliph arrested him. Because this person was the grandchild of Isma-'i-l b. Mu-sa- al-Ka-dhim and served as an envoy of Twelvers in Egypt, it seems highly likely that his uprising was for Twelvers' support (Muru-j al-Zahab, Vol. 7, p. 404). In addition, relevant information about secret activities of Twelvers and their role in the uprising is mentioned by Tabari-. Government officials considered the uprising to be by Zaydis rather than Twelvers. Mas'u-di- also said that 'Abba-si- spies discovered some correspondence between the leader of the uprising in Tabarestan called Hasan b. Zayd and his nephew, Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Khalaf al-'Ata-r. Both of them were devotees of Imam Ha-di- (A.S) (Tabari-, Vol. 3, pp. 1362, 1383; Ikhtia-r, p. 68). The Twelvers denied anyone among 'Alawis who claimed to be the promised Mahdi (A.S), but they used to support some 'Alawis' uprisings who were loyal to them. We can conclude that Imams (A.S) planned two ways to reach their goals. First they

developed scientific, cultural and religious activities among people without their explicit engagement in political affairs. Next, they covertly supported some of the uprisings of their devotees in the hope that they could gain the power.

[18] Wasa-'il al-Shi-'a, Vol. 11, p. 160.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid. p. 464.

[21] Nahj al-Bala-ghah, Sermon 3 (known as Shaqshaqiyyah).

[22] Wasa-il al-Shi-'a-, Vol. 11, p. 466 (quoted from Ibn Idri-s, Sara-'ir); Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, p. 181.

[23] Al-'Ihtija-j, Vol. 2, p. 266 (quoted from Haya-t al-Ima-m al-'Askari-, p.240).

[24] Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, p. 269. (quoted from Haya-t al-Ima-m al-'Askari-, p. 237).

[25] Ithba-t al-Wasiyyah, p. 243. (quoted from Haya-t al-Ima-m al-'Askari-, p.238).

[26] Refer to Haya-t al-Ima-m al-'Askari-, pp. 223 - 232. Among those cities are: Ku-fa, Baghdad, Neysha-bu-r, Qom, A-beh, Mada-in, Khura-sa-n, Yemen, Rey, A-zarba-yja-n, Samarra, Jurja-n, Basra and tens of other cities. (Ibid.).

[27] Kendi-, Wula-tu Misr, p. 177 (cited in Ta-ri-kh Siya-si- Gheybat-e Ema-m-e Dava-zdahom, pp. 83 & 849.

[28] Refer to Al-Ka-fi-, Vol. 1, p. 500.

[29] Mana-qib, Vol. 4, p. 411; Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, p. 127.

[30] Sayyid b. Ta-wu-s, Kashf al-Muhajjah, p. 124.

[31] Maqa-til al-Ta-libiyyin, p. 599 (cited in Hayat al-Ima-m al-Ha-di- (A.S), trans. by Sayyid Hasan Isla-mi-, p. 326.)

[32] Muruj al-Dhahab, Vol. 4, p. 86; cf. Al-Fihrist, pp. 116 - 117.

[33] Al-Ka-fi-, Vol. 1, p. 499; Al-Irsha-d, Vol. 2, p. 302.

[34] Ta-ri-kh Ya'qu-bi-, Vol. 3, p. 209 (quoted from: Haya-t al-Ima-m al-Ha-di-, trans. by Sayyid Hasan Isla-mi-, p. 326.)

[35] Mir'a-t al-Zama-n, Vol. 9, p. 553; Ibn Jawzi-, Tadhkirat al-Khawa-ss, p. 359 (quoted from: Haya-t al-Ima-m al-Ha-di-, trans. by Sayyid Hasan Isla-mi-, p. 263); Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, p. 203.

[36] A'la-m al-Wara-, p. 346; Mana-qib, Vol. 4, p. 407; Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 5, p. 182.

[37] Mana-qib, Vol. 4, p. 407; A'la-m al-Wara-, p. 343; Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, p. 137.

[38] Ma'a-thir al-Kubara-, Vol. 3, p. 94 (Haya-t al-Ima-m al-Ha-di-, trans. by Sayyid Hasan Isla-mi-, pp. 25 & 26.).

[39] Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, p. 207; Tadhkirat al-Khawa-ss, p. 22 (quoted from Biha-r al-

Anwa-r, Vol. 50, p. 201).

[40] Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, pp 144 & 145; the rest of the story is: “My father encouraged him. After a while, he left Baghdad and set out for Samarra. Some days later Yusuf came back to our home happily. My father asked him about what had happened. He said: “It was the first time I have been in Samarra and I would like to give my present to Ibn al-Rida- (Imam Ha-di-) before going to Mutawakkil. But I found out that Mutawakkil did not let him go out of home and he was always at home. I wondered what to do. If I asked for his address, I would cause myself more trouble. For a while I was looking for a solution before a thought crossed my mind. I got on my animal and let him go wherever he wanted. He passed quarters and markets (bazaars) one after another, until he stopped in front of a house and refused to go farther. I felt that house was Imam's, so I wanted my slave to ask whose house was that. The slave asked and told me it was Ibn al-Rida-'s. “O' My God! Swear by God, It is an obvious sign!” I thought to myself. Suddenly a black slave came out of the house and asked me: “Are you Yusuf b. Ya'qu-b?” I said: “Yes”. He told me to get off the animal and I did. Then he guided me through a corridor into the house. I thought to myself he called me by my name, while nobody knew me in that town, so I considered it as another sign. Soon after, the slave came back and said: “Give me those one hundred dinars that you have hidden inside your sleeve.” I gave them to him and thought to myself that it was the third sign. He took them to Imam (A.S), then he came back and let me go in. I went in and saw Imam (A.S) was sitting alone. He gave me an affectionate look and said: “Is not it the time to come to the right way and become guided?” I said: “O' My lord! I saw enough obvious signs and proofs to be guided.” But Imam (A.S) said: “Alas! You will not submit to Islam, but your son will soon submit to Islam and will become Shi-'ite. O' Yusuf! Some people think that our love and friendship is not beneficial for ones like you. Swear by God, they are telling lies. Go on to see Mutawakkil and be sure your wish will be fulfilled. Hibatallah added: “After Yusuf passed away, I met his son. He was a Muslim and a real faithful Shi-'ite. He told me that his father had died as a Christian, but he [Yusuf's son] converted to Islam and became one of the real friends of the Prophet's household. He would always say that: “I am the good tiding of my patron - 'Ali al-Ha-di- (A.S)”.

[41] Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 5, p. 148.

[42] Mana-qib, Vol. 4, p. 430; Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, p. 309; Al-Irsha-d, p. 324.

[43] Kama-l al-Di-n wa Tama-m al-Ni'mah, p. 479.

[44] Kama-l al-Di-n wa Tama-m al-Ni'mah, p. 41; Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, p. 327 (quoted from Kama-l al-Di-n wa Tama-m al-Ni'mah) To know more about his talk to Ja'far, Imam 'Askari-'s brother in paying respect to Imam (A.S) see cf. Kama-l al-Di-n wa Tama-m al-

Ni'mah, p. 44; Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, p. 329.

[45] Kama-l al-Di-n wa Tama-m al-Ni'mah, p. 42; Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, p. 327.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Madi-nat al-Ma'a-jiz, p. 570 (cited in Haya-t al-Ima-m al-'Askari-, p. 97).

[48] Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 5, p. 261 (cited in Al-Khara-'ij, Vol. 1, p. 422).

[49] A-tha-r Ja-hiz, p. 235 (cited in Al-Haya-t al-Siya-siyah li-'l-Ima-m al-Ri-da-, p. 403).

[50] Safı-nat al-Biha-r, Vol. 1, p. 260 (cited in Hilyat al-'Abra-r, Vol. 2, p. 268 (cited in Haya-t al-Ima-m al-'Askari-, p. 98).

[51] Biha-r al-Anwa-r, Vol. 50, p. 261 (cited in Ibid.) To know more about these two occurrences and Imam's meeting with them refer to above mentioned sources.

[52] Tu-si-, Al-Ghaybah, p. 128; Dala-'il al-Ima-mah, p. 226.

[53] A'la-m al-Wara-, p. 372 (cited in Haya-t al-Ima-m al-'Askari-, trans. by Sayyid Hasan Isla-mi-, p. 64).