



A Glimpse at the Major Shi‘a Seminaries and Qum Seminary

Authors(s): Rasoul Imani Khoshkhu

Publisher(s): Ahlul Bayt World Assembly (Tawhid Journal)

www.alhassanain.org/english

Notice:

This version is published on behalf of www.alhassanain.org/english
The composing errors are not corrected.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| A Glimpse at the Major Shi'a Seminaries | 6 |
| A Glimpse at the Major Shi'a Seminaries, Part 1 | 7 |
| Abstract | 7 |
| Introduction | 7 |
| 1. Islamic Seminary of Basra | 9 |
| 2. The Islamic Seminary of Baghdad | 10 |
| The Islamic Seminary of Baghdad and The Four Books of the Shi'a | 12 |
| 3. Islamic Seminary of Najaf | 13 |
| The Time of Recession | 14 |
| Flourishing Once Again | 14 |
| Graduates of the Islamic Seminary of Najaf | 15 |
| Jurisprudence in the Najaf Seminary | 16 |
| Philosophy in the Seminary of Najaf | 17 |
| Notes | 17 |
| A Glimpse at the Major Shi'a Seminaries, Part 2 | 20 |
| Abstract | 20 |
| The Islamic Seminary of Hillah | 20 |
| The revival of ijtihad in the Islamic Seminary of Hillah | 20 |
| The great scholars of the Hillah Seminary | 21 |
| The Islamic Seminary of Kazemayn..... | 22 |
| The Islamic Seminary of Samarra | 24 |
| The Islamic seminary of Karbala | 25 |
| Notes | 28 |
| A Glimpse at the Major Shi'a Seminaries, Part 3 | 32 |
| Abstract | 32 |
| 5. The Islamic Seminary of Jabal Aamel | 32 |
| 6. The Islamic Seminary of Isfahan | 36 |
| 7. The Islamic Seminary of Mashhad..... | 39 |
| Notes | 41 |
| The History of the Islamic Seminaries of Qum | 44 |
| The History of the Islamic Seminaries of Qum, Part 1 | 45 |
| Abstract | 45 |
| History of Qum | 45 |
| Qum in the hadiths | 46 |
| The arrival of Lady Ma'sumah to Qum | 47 |
| The history of the Islamic seminaries of Qum | 48 |
| The First Era | 48 |
| The Second Era | 49 |
| The Third Era | 50 |
| The Fourth Era | 51 |
| The Fifth Era | 53 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Notes | 56 |
| The History of the Islamic Seminaries of Qum, Part 2 | 58 |
| Abstract | 58 |
| The Islamic seminaries of Qum after the Islamic Revolution..... | 58 |
| 3.Core Courses in the Qum seminaries | 59 |
| 3.1. Philosophy..... | 59 |
| 3.2. Islamic Theology (Kalam) | 61 |
| 3.3 Exegesis of the Qur'an (Tafseer) | 61 |
| 3.4. Jurisprudence (fiqh) | 62 |
| Propagation and Society | 63 |
| Notes | 64 |

A Glimpse at the Major Shi‘a Seminaries

A Glimpse at the Major Shi'a Seminaries, Part 1

Rasoul Imani Khoshkhu

Translated by Fatemeh Soltanmohammadi

Journal: Vol. 14, no. 1, Winter 2013

Abstract

The previous articles in this series touched upon the subjects of fiqh and usul of fiqh - with a glance into its history and sources - as well as Hadith studies, Qur'anic sciences, the Science of Exegesis, and the Science of Ethics. The next few parts give a glimpse into the historical origins of some of the most important religious seminaries in the Shi'a world. Islamic seminaries are the most affective institution in propagating the teachings of the Qur'an and the Ahlul Bayt, and have moreover triggered a unique culture in the scientific, social, and even political spheres. One significant role of seminaries was the rise of knowledgeable and pious Shi'a scholars who pursued ijtihad with the use of the Qur'an, sunna, and reason to respond to legislative needs and guide the Muslim community with their contemporary issues.

This part focuses primarily on the Islamic seminaries of Basra, Baghdad, and Najaf. The Seminary of Basra was known for its major role in the Science of Narration ('Ilm al-Hadith); the Seminary of Baghdad was recognized as the center of scholarly discussions as well as bringing about new advancements in principles of jurisprudence, theology, deductive reasoning (istidlal) and independent reasoning (ijtihad); and the Seminary of Najaf was one of the most important institutions of academics and ijtihad in the history of Shi'a academia.

Introduction

Throughout Shi'a history, Islamic seminaries have been the most stable and affective societal institutions. Three issues, that is, learning, developing and publishing authentic Islamic teachings that have been manifested through the Holy Book and the teachings of the Holy Prophet of Islam (s) and his rightful successors requires the establishment of an organized and systematic institution that pursues these goals. In pursuit of these goals and in response to this calling from the Almighty God:

"...But why should not there go forth a group from each of their sections to become learned in religion, and to warn their people when they return to them,... (9:122),"

a group of people have been steadfast against all hardships and have washed their hands of all worldly and materialistic affairs in the quest for gaining religious knowledge and spreading it. Initially they made great efforts to collect the sayings of the Infallibles, and with the formation of study circles, they pondered and reflected on them to gain access to - and comprehend - the underlying secrets of the Divine Book. Eventually, they taught and published their works as a form of invitation to the faith and through this, the first seminaries were established in various geographical locations.

In the Arabic language 'hawzah' means 'area', 'complex,' and 'central location', and in a more specific terminology amongst the Shi'a, it refers to

a center similar to a university for pursuing Islamic education, or for learning Islamic sciences. Having access to valuable teachings from the Prophet and his family, a unique culture has been left behind in the scientific, social, and even political fields.¹

During the time of the infallible Imams and specifically during the time of Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq, the first Islamic seminaries and study circles were organized under the supervision of the holy Imams. Over a thousand students from the Shi'a school of thought and other sects participated in the classes held by the two Imams. Soon afterwards, each student became prominent in various sciences, such as transmitted knowledge ('ulum naqli), intellectual knowledge ('ulum aqli), and natural sciences ('ulum tabi'i).

With the inception of the twelfth Imam's occultation, that which held the highest priority was gathering narrations and protecting the legacy that was left behind by the Infallible Imams for those seeking the pure teaching of Islam. For this reason, the study of prophetic narrations held a great value. Shi'a scholars traveled to various regions, and after hearing narrations from their original sources, they presented authentic collections of narration, the most significant of them being The Four Books of the Shi'a.

At the beginning of the major occultation, the twelfth Imam's priority was to assign a vicegerent with the three characteristics of being scholarly, righteous, and holding the guardianship of the Imams as his model. This brought a very critical and heavy responsibility to the attention of Shi'a scholars and seminaries; it led them to pursue ijtiḥād with the use of key religious sources - the Qur'an, Sunna, and reason - to respond to legislative (shar'i) needs and to guide the community (ummah) with the existing issues of their time. The rise of great scholars, who were prominent in their level knowledge and God-consciousness (taqwa), was an important operation of the seminaries during the time of occultation and throughout their history.

Now after the passing of almost fourteen centuries from the beginning of constructing the first seminaries, there currently exists various active institutions all over the Shi'a world. Throughout history, with the training of open-minded individuals who are aware of their time and have a broad and expanded understanding of the pure gnostic knowledge of the family of the Prophet, they have been able to satisfy the religious and scientific needs of the followers of Islam. They have also been able to introduce the Shi'a faith to the world as an authentic viewpoint in Islam and as one of the sects that holds remarkable views in various religious sciences such as jurisprudence (fiqh), philosophy (falsafah), theology (kalam), and exegesis (tafsir).

This section expounds on some of the most prominent Shi'a seminaries most influential in the growth of the Shi'a sect and in the training of the greatest Shi'a scholars.

Although citing the number of active scholar-training seminaries during the course of history is beyond the constraints of this paper, only some of the most well-known and influential of them will be mentioned. We refer those who are interested to research in this area to more comprehensive works.²

1. Islamic Seminary of Basra

The Islamic seminary of Basra is one of the oldest publication centers of Shi'a theology in Iraq and is cited as the major seminary in the science of Prophetic Narration (Ilm al-Hadith).

Basra is a city in Iraq built after the conquest of the Hira region during the Islamic era in the year 15 A.H. Up until the year 36 A.H. - the time when the Battle of the Camel took place - the people of this city were mainly Uthmani. However, after the Battle of the Camel and Imam Ali's victory in that war, the Imam appointed Ibn Abbas as the Governor of Basra and Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali as the city judge.

Due to the hard work of these two well-known figures of virtue and courtesy, and the people of Basra became more acquainted with the biography of Imam Ali that they started to lean towards Shi'ism. Ibn Abbas would spend all day at the main masjid teaching the Holy Qur'an, Islamic Jurisprudence (fiqh), and Islamic commandments (ahkam), and when he would leave Basra to see Imam Ali and to take part in the battles of the Imam, he would assign Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali as his deputy in Basra.³

After the martyrdom of Imam Ali, the devotion of the people of Basra to the Imams continued; they were eager to understand the presence of the Imams and convey their narrations. This devotion was a desire beyond explanation. It led the people to gather many companions (sahabi) and narrators (muhaddith) which then formed into the seminaries and centers for publishing narrations from the Prophet and the infallible Imams.

It was the formation of these institutes that led narrators from other cities to travel to Basra to hear narrations from the Prophet through his companions, and through this they created an educational atmosphere in the city.^{4 5}

The growth flow in Basra leaned towards the Shi'a sect in such a way that taking into consideration the number of narrators during the time of Imam Baqir, one could claim that during the second century Hijri calendar, Basra became a Shi'a-populated city.⁶

After the major occultation of the twelfth Imam, Basra continued to be the center where narrators gathered and where the devotees of the Infallibles traveled to and settled in pursuit of learning the Ahlul Bayt's message.

The Islamic seminary of Basra's outstanding status in the science of narration, its geographical location of being situated on the route to Mecca, and the path the pilgrims take to The Sacred House (Bayt al-Haram)⁷ was a great opportunity for Islamic scholars to enter the city and assist with issues regarding science and narration.

Moreover, books related to great Shi'a scholars refer to numerous scholars who resided in this city from the fourth to the eighth century Hijri.⁸ Some of the great narrators of the fourth century are: Abdul Aziz bin Yahya bin Saeed Basari, Muhammad bin Ibrahim Ishaq, Sharif Abu Talib Mudhaffar Basari, and Muhammad bin Omar bin Ali Basari, all of whom were teachers (mashayekh) of Shaykh Saduq in which he narrated hadith from. This movement continued in the next few centuries, although they did experience periods where the Islamic seminaries of Basra experienced relative declines in the branch of narration.

As a witness to this matter, we can look at Aghabozorg Tehrani's report. He was a narrator residing in Basra from the fourth to the eighth century Hijri. In the fifth century, he reports nine Shi'a students in Basra, where their numbers drop to five people in the sixth century and in the seventh century it falls once again to three people. In the eighth century he only reports two Shi'a students, and in the ninth century he does not mention any Shi'a scholar at all. However, in the tenth century he introduces an individual named Muhammad Tulani; in the eleventh century the number of scholars in this city reaches six people, which it seems to have relocated to Basra from other seminaries, such as Ahsa; and in the twelfth century Hijri, he recounts five Shi'a scholars, where some moved from Bahrain to Basra.⁹

2. The Islamic Seminary of Baghdad

The city of Baghdad - which was the center of caliphate during the rule of the Abbasids - was the most important center of gathering and interchange amongst the dominant sects of Islam; it was also the center where debates and the exchange of ideas amongst their great scholars in various topics - primarily in issues regarding theology - took place.

The presence of the Shi'a Imams in Baghdad and in Iraq, after Imam Sadiq, became a means for Shia scholars, jurists, theologians, and narrators to learn and train under the supervision of the infallible Imams. They later were able to debate with other religious scholars and use the intellectual environment of the city to defend the true Shi'a beliefs in various theological issues and to promote pure knowledge of the Ahl-ul-Bayt and the Prophet. The extent of academic work carried out by the Imamiah scholars was to such an extent that some researchers have recounted the number of students of Imam Kadhim and his narrators in Baghdad to reach over six hundred people.¹⁰

After the passing of the era of the Imams' presence and the approach of the minor occultation of Imam Mahdi, the city of Baghdad experienced a new dynamic time period, and that was due to the presence of The Four Deputies of the Imam, namely Uthman ibn Sa'id al-Asadi, Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Uthman, Abul Qasim Husayn ibn Ruh al-Nawbakhti, and Abul Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Samarri. With the use of religious dissimulation (taqiyya) and through direct guidance and instructions from the Imam, these pious and well-known scholars sought to protect the Shi'a entity and become the intellectual leader of the Shi'a people. By responding to the religious misconceptions and receiving religious taxes, they turned Baghdad into the biggest Shi'a center in the world.

Another period of academic growth of the city of Baghdad and the Islamic seminaries was simultaneous with the major occultation of the twelfth Imam. Some of the important events of this period were the political upheavals and the coming to power of the Shi'a Buyids (Al al-Buye)¹¹ in Iran and Iraq; with proving the grounds for theological discussions, it created change in the prevailing atmosphere upon the Shi'a seminaries after the time of Imam Askari, which were engaged in gathering narrations and were rigorous in reaching a surface level understanding.

It also provided the means for theological discussion revolving around ideological issues to be prepared for in the Islamic seminaries of Baghdad. It

was in such an atmosphere that great Shi'a personalities such as Shaykh Mufid, Sayyid Radi, and Sharif Murtadha with reviving the intellect as a source in the acquisition of Islamic teachings, on one hand were to guide the Ja'fari Jurisprudence towards comparative and demonstrative jurisprudence (fiqh istidlali) and ijtihad; on the other hand, with addressing intellectual issues, they revised the Shi'a theological viewpoint in regards to ideological topics under scrutiny at the time. In what follows, we will consider the biographies of two great scholars of the seminary of Baghdad, namely Shaykh Mufid and Sayyid Murtadha.

Shaykh Mufid (336-413 A.H.) was one of the great scholars and prominent theologians of the fourth and fifth century Hijri. He taught renowned scholars such as Sayyid Murtadha, Sayyid Radi, and Shaykh Tusi. Ibn Imad Hanbali, a renowned Islamic historian, in regards to the events that took place in 413 A.H., writes: During these years Mufid passed away. He was one of the great Shi'a scholars who published many books and writings. He was also a leader of the people...¹²

Likewise, Ibn Abi Tayy states in The History of Shi'a, "Mufid was the greatest amongst the well-known Shi'a scholars and is their representative. He was wise in the fields of theology, jurisprudence, and mentoring debates and during the Buyid Dynasty he would debate the supporters of various vocations and beliefs with a certain aura of dignity and grandeur; he also assisted the less fortunate on multiple occasions. His humility and reverence was great, his prayers and fasts numerous; he wore clean and pleasant clothes; well-known people such as Azad-ud-Daulah Dilami - the governing authority of the Buyids - would visit Shaykh Mufid on numerous occasions. He lived for 76 years and wrote over two hundred books and dissertations (risalah). In the month of Ramadhan, year 413 A.H., he passed away and eighty thousand people participated in his funeral."¹³

In addition to bringing new advancements in principles of jurisprudence (usul) and theology, Shaykh Mufid also expanded in the area of jurisprudence and gave rise to deductive reasoning (istidlal) and ijtihad and with not being satisfied with just the external meaning of narrations. He benefited from thinking freely and having a systematic understanding and logical interpretation of the narrations. In the field of political jurisprudence (fiqh al-siyasi), through writing books and academic debates, Shaykh Mufid clarified the status of leadership (imamah) in political philosophy in Islam and the idea that the Shi'a Imams and their deputies must be the ones responsible for governing and leading the Islamic society. The books Awa'il al-Maqalat and Tashih I'tiqadat al-Imamiyyah in the science of theology, al-Muqni'yah in the field of jurisprudence, and the books al-Irshad, Fusul al-Mukhtarah, and al-Amali are amongst some of his works.

Abul Ghasem Ali bin Husayn Musawi, popularly known as, Sayyid Murtadha and entitled as, 'Allam al-Huda,' was another great Shi'a scholar of the Islamic seminaries in Baghdad, who was Shaykh Mufid¹⁴'s student and Shaykh Tusi's teacher. He was born in Rajab in 355 A.H. in Karkh area of Baghdad. Sayyid Murtadha's financial capabilities enabled him to arrange the seminarians' financial conditions while spending all of his time in lectures, discussions, and composing. He set a certain monthly wage for

every student in accordance with his academic activities and research, and set all the interests of a village that was under his management to provide paper for the scholars; he did so with an inalienable religious endowment (waqf).

Sayyid Murtadha had a unique accomplishment in the science of narration and rational sciences and in jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, theology, narration and exegesis, literature, poetry, and terminology. He owned written works, which include al-Masa'el al-Naseriyah in jurisprudence, al-Dhuri'ah fi Usul al-Fiqh, al-Shafi fi al-Imamah, al-Mukhalas fi Usul al-Deen, and al-Dhakhirah fi Ilm al-Kalam wa al-Intesar fi ma Anfardat bihi al-Imamiyah.

Another key action Sayyid Murtadha took to provide for the academic needs of those who travelled to Baghdad from various parts of the world and joined his seminary, was that he dedicated a part of his house that he was residing in for the students' classes and discussion circles, popularly known as, "Dar al-Ilm." He also left his personal library, which had over eighty thousand books that were bought with his personal funding, at the disposal of the seminarians.

The Islamic Seminary of Baghdad and The Four Books of the Shi'a

Amongst the feasible blessings of the Islamic seminaries of Baghdad was its role in writing and creating the Four Books of the Shi'a, namely: Kitab al-Kafi, Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih, Tahdhib al-Ahkam, and al-Istibsar. All of them replaced the valuable series, Usul al-Arba'ma'ah¹⁵ in gathering narrations from the Infallibles and it overcame the scholars' and mujtahids' need in methods of deducing Islamic commandments.

The collection al-Kafi was the deceased Muhammad bin Ya'qub Kulayni Razi's¹⁶ work, published in Baghdad after twenty years of research, examination, and traveling to various Shi'a populated cities while gathering authentic narrations. The late Kulayni who spent his earlier years in his birthplace - in the suburbs of Rey - initially moved to Qum to seek Islamic knowledge.

Afterwards, he travelled to the seminaries of Nishabur, Kufa, and Baghdad. Throughout these trips, along with meeting well-known Shi'a narrators and great narrators of the infallible imams, he gathered parts of the chapter of jurisprudence and narration. After migrating to Baghdad, he properly organized his work and wrote the collection, al-Kafi. al-Kafi is composed of two volumes: Usul al-Kafi (theology), five volumes of Furu al-Kafi (jurisprudence), and one volume of Rawdat al-Kafi (various topics). In total, it comprises 16,199 narrations which are from the Prophet and the infallible Imams.

The second book from The Four Books of the Shi'a is Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih, written as result of the efforts of the renowned scholar, Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Ali bin Babiwayh Qummi¹⁷, also known as Shaykh Saduq. Shaykh Saduq, who had a history of travelling and a residing at the seminary in Rey, Nishabur, Khorasan, and Bukhara, entered the Islamic seminary of Baghdad in 355 A.H. where he taught and trained the students. Shaykh Mufid is of those who participated in his lecture sessions. After some time, he traveled to Balkh, and there through the request of one of

Imam Kadhimi's children, he wrote a book on jurisprudence that clarified the religious duties (shar'i) of the Muslims in regards to jurisprudence and various religious laws. Similar to Razi's book on medicine, *Man la Yahduruhu al-Tabib*, he named his book on jurisprudence *Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih*.¹⁸

This book comprises 5,963 valuable narrations from the Imams. Even though - according to Shaykh Saduq's own statement - he essentially quoted the writers' opinions and rulings¹⁹, considering the credibility of the narrations, it is one of the most reliable books of narration and has been used as a source by scholars and mujtahids all throughout the history of Islamic jurisprudence.²⁰

Tahdhib al-Ahkam and *al-Istibsar* are the third and fourth books from the Four Books of Shi'a and have been written by Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Hasan bin Ali Tusi²¹ predominantly known as Shaykh Tusi. Shaykh Tusi migrated from Toos to Iraq in the year 408 A.H. when he was 23 years old. He participated in Shaykh Mufid's classes in Baghdad and after a short period of time reached the level of *ijtihad* and in that young age published the book *Tahdhib al-Ahkam* which was an explanation to Shaykh Mufid's book on jurisprudence. The book *Tahdhib* is comprised of 13,590 narrations which are presented in 23 jurisprudential books and 393 chapters.

Shaykh Tusi's second famous work is *al-Istibsar*, which was issued after *Tahdhib al-Ahkam*. In composing this book, he made use of the two biggest libraries at the time in Baghdad, meaning Sayyid Razi's library and Abu Nasr Shabur's library. In the introduction of *Tahdhib*, he mentioned the presence of resentment and the existing differences in the Shi'a narrations that triggered outrage from opposing parties; since he believed that resolving differences was crucial, he introduced this issue using a practical approach in *al-Istibsar*.²² It was through this that *al-Istibsar* became the first book of narrations that dealt with resolving differences in narrations.

In the mid-fifth century Hijri, the most unfortunate, bitter, and regrettable event in the history of Baghdadi seminaries occurred which resulted in the closing of the seminary. Tuqrul Bayk Saljuqi's attack on Baghdad and the seizing of the city in the year 447 A.H. led to not only the genocide of the Shi'a people, but also the burning of the biggest libraries in Baghdad such as the libraries of Sayyid Murtadha, Shaykh Tusi, Abu Nasr Shabur, Bahaud Dawla Dilami's vizier which in 381 A.H. in the Shi'a populated area of Karkh was built as The House of Wisdom (*Bayt al-Hikmah*). Afterwards, the great scholars of Baghdad, including Shaykh Tusi, moved to neighboring cities.

3. Islamic Seminary of Najaf

The seminary of Najaf is by far one of the most important institutions of academics and *ijtihad* in the history of academia and Shi'a culture and has played an undeniable role in leading political change in various historical turns throughout Shi'a history. For a long period of time, this seminary was amongst the most important Shi'a seminaries and because of its extensive history and the presence of well-known scholars, and it continued to be the center of focus and assembly of great scholars and virtuous figures.

According to historical reports, the basis for founding the seminary of Najaf was Shaykh al-Taifah Shaykh Tusi who relocated from the city of Baghdad in the year 448 A.H. to this city after the attack of the Saljuqs. Ibn Juzi writes in regards to the attacks made on Shaykh Tusi's house in Baghdad that a group of the Ahulul Sunnah attacked Abu Ja'far Tusi's house in Karkh and burnt his books, notebooks, his pulpit used when teaching, and other belongings.²³

Even though this city was the residence of several Shi'a scholars and narrators before Shaykh Tusi's relocation to Najaf, it was with his arrival and the constitution of the Islamic seminary that Najaf became the center of Shi'a jurisprudence and an institute for educating and training great Shi'a scholars. It became a focal point where seminarians and researchers in Islamic sciences turned to, and under the supervision of Shaykh Tusi, were able to train and teach students various religious sciences such as jurisprudence and theology.

After 12 years of his fruitful presence in Najaf, Shaykh al-Tusi passed away in Najaf in 460 A.H.. After him, the leadership of Shi'a and the management of the seminaries which he had founded were passed on to his son, Shaykh Abu Ali Tusi, and afterwards to his grandson Abu Nasr Muhammad bin Abi Ali al-Hasan bin Abi Ja'far Muhammad bin al- Hasan al-Tusi.

The Time of Recession

The seminary of Najaf experienced a recession and relative decline from the sixth until the ninth century Hijra. Some of its reasons could be related to the expansion of the Islamic seminary of Karbala and Hillah. The academic activities and group study circles executed by great scholars such as Ahmad bin Ali Najashi, Abi Hamza Tusi, Sayyid Fakhar Musawi Haeri, Ali bin Tawus, Shams-ud Din Muhammad bin Makki, (Shahid Awwal) and ibn Khazin Haeri in the seminary of Karbala were important in training students in religious studies. On another hand, with the spread of the House of Knowledge (buyut 'ilmiyyah) of Aal Idris, Aal Shaykh Waram, Aal Fahad, Aal Tawus in the city of Hillah, the Islamic seminaries of Najaf became increasingly marginalized.

Flourishing Once Again

The recession period of the Islamic seminary of Najaf continued until the ninth century Hijri. During this time, with the appearance of great figures such as Fadhil Miqdad²⁴ and Muqaddas Ardebili²⁵ it was rejuvenated and those who sought Islamic knowledge from other areas turned to this city. The features of this time period include the spread of the science of jurisprudence, comparative and demonstrative jurisprudence, and composing valuable books like Ma'alim al-Din a work of Hasan bin Zaid al-Din.²⁶

In this period along with jurisprudence and principles of jurisprudence, sciences like logic, Verses of Legislature (Ayat al-Ahkam), exegesis, theology, and biographical evaluation (rijal) started to spread and as a result, treasurable books were written in the fields.²⁷

The eleventh century Hijri can be viewed as the new era in the history of seminaries in Najaf. The growth and activities of scholars that were present in Najaf and were under the radar were theological discussion and the method of ijtihad, which were of the most pronounced features of the Najaf seminaries.

This continued until the migration of Waheed Behbahani from Iran to Iraq in the twelfth century and created a certain academic excitement in the seminary of Najaf. Of the renowned figures of this time is Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi Bahrul-Ulum,²⁸ a student of Waheed Behbahani and a splendid figure in the Shi'a world who had an extensive amount of knowledge and had travelled the different stages of a peripatetic journey towards God (saya wa sulook); he was indeed respected amongst the Shi'a scholars of that time.

Graduates of the Islamic Seminary of Najaf

Because of its historical background, its unique academic dynamic, and the presence of sessions run by the most well-known and sought after scholars, the seminaries of Najaf were fostered by great scholars throughout history, all of whom have shined in Shi'a academia and ijtihad. Indeed, they have been the source of blessing in terms of the expanding of the Shi'a seminaries in different areas. Through studying the biographies and profiles of the founders of Shi'a seminaries in various areas, as well as the socially and politically influential personalities in Shi'a history, it is clear that participating in the Najaf seminaries and making use of its academic and spiritual merits is a common factor amongst its participants. In what follows are a few spiritual and knowledgeable personalities whom were present in this seminary:

- Ibn Idris Hilli, the founder and leader of the Islamic seminary of Hillah;
- Mirza Shirazi, who issued boycotting the use of tobacco and the leader of the Islamic seminary of Samarra;
- Hajj Muhammad Ibrahim Kalbasi and Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Shafti the two leaders of the Islamic seminary of Isfahan;
- Hajj Shaykh Abdul Karim Haeri Yazdi, founder of the Islamic seminary of Qum,
- Mowla Ahmad bin Muhammad Ardebili, known as "Muqaddas Ardebili", a well-known scholar in the Shia world;
- Shaykh Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita', leader and great Shi'a authority (marja');
- Shaykh Muhammad Hasan Najafi, great jurist (faqih) and author of Jawahir al-Kalam;
- Shaykh A'adham Murtadha Ansari, the undisputable scholar in jurisprudence and the principles of jurisprudence;
- Mulla Muhammad Kadhim Khorasani, author of Kifayat al-Usul;
- Hajj Husayn Burujerdi, leader of the Islamic seminary of Qum,
- Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai, author of the Quranic exegesis al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an; and
- Allamah Sayyid Sharafiddin Amuli, author of al-Muraja'at.

Jurisprudence in the Najaf Seminary

Jurisprudence in the Najaf Seminary²⁹

Jurisprudence was amongst the sciences taught in Najaf and from its inception, the subject of focus amongst students via Shaykh Tusi. Until recent years, it was called the Science of Jurisprudence. Like other sciences, the science of jurisprudence underwent the process of development. After putting behind its introductory stages of narrated jurisprudence, it reached its highest level of accuracy - comparative and demonstrative jurisprudence - as well as the use of rules of deduction (istinbat) for extracting religious laws from firsthand sources.

Although the Najaf seminary undertook periods of excellence in recounting and reporting, as well as periods of decline in the science of jurisprudence, comparative and demonstrative jurisprudence, and ijtiḥād, after the decline with the presence of usulī scholars, it returned to its previous station in comparative jurisprudence³⁰ and the science of jurisprudence. The seminary was able to present the great and well-known scholars of the Shi'a world.

We owe the turning point in comparative jurisprudence and ijtiḥād in the Najaf seminaries to the hard work of the prominent scholar Shaykh Ansari.³¹ With his innovative outlook in the principles of ijtiḥād, he made great changes in the science of jurisprudence; and with reviving principles of jurisprudence and its foundation; he was able to use it for deducing various branches and religious laws. Through this method, he brought Shi'a laws to a whole new stage. From amongst his works are two books, Fara'id al-Usul (known as Articles in the Science of Jurisprudence) and Makasib (a legal manual of Islamic Commercial Law) which have been taught in the seminaries for years. Ansari's intellectual ideas in Shi'a law were then developed by his outstanding students, some of whom were Mirza Shirazi, Mirza Rushti, Ayatullah Kuh Kamari, and Akhund Khorasani. With introducing debatable topics in reasoning in the creation of new rules of fiqh and placing them in a new and innovated framework, Akhund Khorasani wrote Kafayatul al- Usul, which is used until this day as a seminary textbook.

The evolution and development of the science of jurisprudence after Akhund Khorasani continued through great intellectuals such as Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Isfahani, Ayatollah Agha Diya al-Din Iraqi and with Allamah Na'eni's insightful thinking and scrutiny, the depth of topics and content related to reasoning in new fiqh rules (usuli) increased and its status in Shi'a ijtiḥād and jurisprudence showed itself more than ever.

The composition of two very valuable books, with comprehensiveness regarding religious jurisprudential matter was another remarkable service of the Najaf Seminaries. One is Urwa al-Wuthqa by Ayatullah Sayyid Kadhīm Yazdī³² and the other Wasilah al-Nijat by Ayatullah Sayyid al-Hasan Isfahani.³³ With 3,260 jurisprudential issues, Urwa al-Wuthqa became a reference book in jurisprudence.

Prominent jurists used its methods in writing legal books, and its fundamental legal topics are discussed in advanced jurisprudential studies (dars al-kharij al-fiqh) to such a point that today many commentaries and

interpretations have been written on it. Moreover, Wasilah al-Nijat, which contained most of the Islamic legal issues necessary for Muslims at the time, because of the skillful text it became the foundation of many jurisprudential books afterwards and many of the collections of juridical edicts (risalah) are written as a form of commentary on it.

Currently, the Islamic seminaries of Najaf continue to shine and have introduced judicial personalities and supreme legal authorities (maraji') such as Ayatullah Sayyid Muhsin Hakim,³⁴ Ayatullah Sayyid Abul Ghasim Khoei,³⁵ and Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Sistani.³⁶

Philosophy in the Seminary of Najaf

The appearance of philosophy and the spread of philosophical ideology in the Islamic seminaries of Najaf - and Iraq in general - are due to the migration of great scholars from Iran. This was structured around Islamic philosophy from long before. Khajah Nasr al-Din Tusi's³⁷ trips to Baghdad between the years 662 to 672 A.H. and his meetings with Iraqi scholars set the grounds where intellectual ideas were spread in Iraq.³⁸

However, the widespread familiarization of the Najaf seminaries with philosophy was the migration of Akhund Mulla Husayngholi Hamedani to the holy Shi'a sites of Iraq, and his studies and instructions in the seminary of Karbala and Najaf. He himself benefited from Mulla Hadi Sabzevari's³⁹ classes in the seminary and made his own students familiar with Islamic philosophy, in which he found his perfect form in Mulla Sadra's Transcendent Theosophy (al-Hikmah al-Muta'liyah). He also promoted transmitted knowledge (ulum naqli) alongside intellectual knowledge (ulum aqli) and made efforts to spread it within the seminaries. Sayyid Jamal al-Din Asadabadi, Sayyid Abd al-Husayn Lari, and Sayyid Ahmad Karbala'ei have all been trained in the Najaf seminary.

Other philosophy teachers in Najaf include Agha Mirza Muhammad Baqir Istahbanati, Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Gharuri Isfahani, Agha Shaykh Ali Muhammad Najaf Abadi, Agha Sayyid Husayn Badkoobei, Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai, and Shaykh Murtadha Taleqani, Allamah Muhammad Taqi Ja'fari's teacher.

The next part of this series continues with information on the Islamic Seminary of Hillah - including its revival of ijtiḥad and its prominent scholars - and the Kadhimaḡn Seminary.

Notes

1. Shi'a Encyclopedia, under Bahaoddin Khorramshahi and others, vol. 6, p. 549.
2. Kabari, Sayyid Ali Reza, Shi'a Seminaries across the World.
3. Encyclopedia of Shi'a, vol. 6, p. 346-344.
4. For example, we can refer to Bukhari, the author of one of the six books of Sunni Islam, where in his memoir it mentions he would travel to various regions for long periods of time in search of narrations. On one of his trips he went to Basra, where during his fifteen-day stay he recorded over fifteen thousand narrations. Ibn Abi Ya'li, Layers of Hanbalis, vol. 1, p. 276.
5. Shi'a Seminaries across the World, p. 203.
6. Ibid, p. 203.
7. Hakim Mulla Sadra Shirazi, passed away in the city of Basra in the year 1050 when traveling bare foot on a trip to hajj for the seventh time. Mokhtari, Reza, Visage of Scholars (Simayeh Farzanehgan), p. 164.
8. Tehrani, Aghabozorg, al-Shia 'Alam Tabaqat, vol. 5, p. 83.

9. Shi'a Seminaries across the World, p. 205.
10. Atardi, Azizullah, Musnad of Imam al-Kadhim, vol. 3, p. 569.
11. Al-e Buye, Iranian Shi'a dynasty, attributed to Abushoja' who between the years 322-448 Qamari ruled a large part of Iran, Iraq, and the peninsula until the northern borders of Damascus. Sajjadi, Sadiq, "Al-e Buye", Islamic Encyclopedia, vol. 1, article 377.
12. Ibn 'Imad Hanbali, Shadhrat al-Dhahab fi Akhbar man Dhahaba, vol. 2, pp. 199-200.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibn Abu al-Hadid, in his description of the Peak of Eloquence (Nahjul Balagha), he quotes from Sayyid Abdul Karim bin Tawoos Fakhra Musawi, that one night in his sleep, Shaykh Mufid sees Hadhrat Zahra (as) who brought her two sons, Imam Hasan (as) and Imam Husayn (as), and said to teach them the science of jurisprudence (ilm-e fiqh) and Islamic commandments (ahkam). They day after, as usual, Shaykh Mufid was busy teaching at Buratha Mosque when he noticed a woman enter the mosque with the utmost dignity, holding the hand of two children. She came up to him and said, "I am Tahir Dhu al-Manaqib's wife and these two children (Sayyid Radi and Sayyid Murtadha) are my sons. I have come to you so that you may teach them the science of jurisprudence and Islamic commandments. And it was through this means that Shaykh Mufid enthusiastically accepted to teach and educate them, till those two brothers became the greatest minds and the most famous scholars of their time. Ibn Abu al-Hadid, Description of the Peak of Eloquence, vol. 1, p. 41.
15. Usul al-Arba'ma'ah is a series of 400 works which has been written by the companions of the infallibles in various fields such as, belief (itiqad), jurisprudence, exegesis, ethics and other. After the time of presence of the Imams, the authors of the Four Books started recording them in their books.
16. Died 329 A.H.
17. Died 381 A.H.
18. Shaykh Saduq, Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih, vol. 1, p. 2.
19. In the introduction to Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih, Shaykh Saduq writes: "I set my goal in writing this book, to narrate those set of sayings that I am certain of their authenticity in being from the infallibles (as) and to be able to give a ruling and judgment on them and I believe these narrations and this deed will act as evidence between me and my Almighty God." Ibid.
20. Sayyid Bahr al-Ulum writes the following in regards to the book Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih: "This book is one of the four books which based on its authenticity and popularity is excellent and distinguished and some of the great scholars prefer its narrations over the other four books. Some of the reasons why this work is preferred over others is because Shaykh Saduq was a hafiz and a recorder and that this work came after Shaykh Kulayni's book." Bahr al-Ulum, Sayyid Mahdi, al-Fawaed al-Rijaliyyah, Muktabaya al-Alamin al-Tusi wa Bahr al-Ulum, vol. 3, p.299-300.
21. 385-460 A.H.
22. Tusi, Muhammad bin Hasan, Tahdhib al-Ahkam, vol. 1, p. 2-3.
23. R.K. Faqih, Ali Asqar, Al-e Buyah, First Shia Dynasty, p. 472.
24. Date of death: 826 A.H.
25. Date of death: 993 A.H.
26. Shaykh Thani's son.
27. Islamic Shi'a Seminaries, p. 290.
28. 1155/1154-1212 A.H.
29. The book Shi'a Seminaries across the World was used extensively in writing this part.
30. The method deriving legal laws.
31. Born 1214 A.H. in Dezful; died 1281 A.H. in Najaf.
32. 1247-1338 A.H.
33. 1277-1365 A.H.
34. 1264-1390 A.H.
35. 1317-1413 A.H.
36. Born 1349 A.H.

37. 598-672 A.H.

38. Allamah Hilli was one of Khajah Nasr al-Din Tusi's students who participated in his philosophy classes and in return Khajah would participate in his jurisprudence classes. When getting his certification (ijazah) he says the following about his teacher to ibn Zuhra: Khajah Nasr al-Din Tusi was the most superior scholar of our time and had many compilations in intellectual and traditional sciences. He was the most noble of the people we have the honor of knowing, make God brighten his shrine. In his presence I read al-Hayat, Shafa-e ibn Sina, and tazkirehee dar hayat, which were that great scholars written works. Then after he parted this world and may God bless his soul. Murtazavipour, Akbar, The Biography of Iranian and World Mathematicians.

39. Of the most popular hakims and philosophers of the thirteenth century and of the commentators of Mull Sadra Shirazi's written works and idea and his most important work meaning his book Mandhumah is a summary of the book Asfar written Mulla Sadra.

A Glimpse at the Major Shi'a Seminaries, Part 2

Rasoul Imani Khoshkhu

Translated by Fatemeh Soltan Mohammadi

Journal: Vol. 14, no. 2, Summer 2013

Abstract

Part I of this series focused on the Islamic seminaries of Basra, known for its role in the science of Hadith; Baghdad, the center of advancements in jurisprudence, theology, and deductive reasoning; and Najaf, one of the most important institutions of academics and ijtiḥād in the history of Shi'a academia. This part presents information on the revival of ijtiḥād in the Seminary of Hillah and introduces its prominent scholars, such as Najib al-Din Muhammad Ja'far, Muḥaqqiq al-Hilli, Sayyid bin Tawus, and Allamah Hilli.

It also introduces the Seminary of Kazemayn where the renowned Shaykh Mufid studied; the Seminary of Samarra, where Shi'a theology was taught, along with alerting the Shi'a of their political responsibilities and providing them with a culture of supplication (dua) and pilgrimage (ziyara); and the Seminary of Karbala, where the highly proficient scholar Abdullah bin Ja'far Humayri the teacher of renowned scholars Ali bin Babiwayh and Muhammad bin Ya'qub Kulayni studied.

The Islamic Seminary of Hillah

The establishment of the Islamic seminary of Hillah is simultaneous with the establishment of the city of Hillah itself towards the end of the fifth century Hijri. Factors such as its large Shi'a population, its educated founders, the formation of a Shi'a government at its inception, and unstable political conditions in adjacent areas are reasons for its growth, and its Islamic seminaries were the leading Shi'a seminaries for three centuries¹.

After the downfall of the Khwarezmī Empire by the hands of the Mongols, Mongol ruler Hulagu Khan attacked Iraq in 551 AH to expand the empire and took over Baghdad. This event led to the decline of the Islamic seminaries of Baghdad and Najaf. The seminary of Hillah, which remained unharmed by the Mongols' attacks due to wise policies adopted by the scholars of the town, was revived and was able to introduce and provide the Shi'a world with renowned scholars.

This flourishing period thrived from the time Baghdad was attacked in the sixth century to the ninth century Hijri; afterwards, with the revival of the Najaf seminary, the seminary of Hillah faced a downturn. Although it was still considered to be one of the active seminaries of Iraq, it was not able to gain back the strength it had in the first period.

The revival of ijtiḥād in the Islamic Seminary of Hillah

One of the characteristics of the Hillah seminary was its dynamism and vitality and steadfastness against decline and emulation. This is unlike the seminary of Najaf in the period after Sheikh Tusi which was so heavily influenced by the great scholarship and spiritual characteristics of Sheikh Tusi that for several centuries, his views were adopted by successive scholars.

It was only due to innate talent and matchless courage of Muhammad ibn Idris² the author of al-Sara'ir that ideas of Sheikh Tusi were seriously challenged and criticised. After ibn Idris, his method of ijtiḥad was continued in the later centuries by other religious scholars of the seminary of Hillah and finally reached its peak towards the end of the eighth century through the hands of Allamah Hilli.

The great scholars of the Hillah Seminary

The following are some of the seminary's great scholars:

1. Najib al-Din Muhammad Ja'far, known as Ibn Nima³, Muḥaqqiq al-Hilli, Shaykh Sadid al-Din⁴, and Sayyid Ahmad bin Tawus and his brother, Radhi al-Din.

2. Ja'far bin Muhammad bin Ja'far bin Abu al-Baqā' Hibatullah, of Allamah Hilli's teachers.

3. Najm al-Din Ja'far bin Hasan bin Yahya, known as Muḥaqqiq al-Hilli⁵ was one of the renowned jurists of Hillah and Allamah Hilli's teacher where through writing books⁶, he helped with growth of science of usul and accelerated the movement of ijtiḥad in the Hillah seminary. He also took a great step in expanding jurisprudential texts with his Shara'i al-Islam fi Masa'il al-Halal wa al-Haram where he examines recounted sayings, their implications, and their effects.

For this reason, this book has been used in the seminaries up until the present years, and to this day, many commentaries and interpretations have been written on it, including Jawahir al-Kalam, an encyclopedia in Shi'a jurisprudence. Some of his other works include al-Mu'tabar fi Sharh al-Mukhtasar, which after Shaykh Tusi's al-Mabsut, is counted as the second comparative and demonstrative work on Shi'a jurisprudence.

4. Radi al-Din Ali bin Sa'd al-Din Musa, known as Sayyid bin Tawus⁷ was of the learned and pious jurists of Hillah where asceticism (zuhd) and worship (ibadah) were his recognizable characteristics.

Reaching a high level in mysticism as well as meeting the Twelfth Imam, were some of his greatest achievements which were verified by many contemporary scholars and scholars who came after him. Nonetheless, in addition to his level of spirituality, he had a great deal knowledge, even though his particular viewpoint in regards to sciences such as jurisprudence and theology⁸ set him apart from others, and although he had reached the level of ijtiḥad, he would not issue juristic rulings (fatwas).

On the other hand, he was proficient in the science of narration and the study of the stars (ilm al-nujum; astronomy). He authored a book on the lives of the astronomers called, "Faraj al-Mahmum fi Tarikh Ulama' al-Nujum."

5. Sayyid Jamal al-Din Ahmad bin Musa bin Tawus⁹. His popularity is mostly due to his efforts made in the field of prophetic narrations and biographical evaluation (rijal). His most important works in the field of biographical evaluation is the book Hal al-Ishkal fi Ma'rifi al-Rijal which contains the most important information about Shi'a rijal. He was the one who proposed classification of hadiths into four categories: authentic (sahih), approved (hasan), reliable (muwaththaq), and weak (da'if). This classification was welcomed by other scholars and is still used.

6. Hasan bin Yusuf bin Mutahhar Hilli, known as Allamah Hilli¹⁰ was a renowned Shi'a jurist and scholar; it was through him that Shi'a jurisprudence flourished.

Allamah Hilli was a prolific author in the fields of jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, philosophy, logics, biographical evaluation, Qur'anic exegesis, narration, the science of Arabic syntax (ilm al- nahw), supplications and other various books in which some believe its total to be over five hundred volumes¹¹.

His most important works are in the fields of jurisprudence¹², principles of jurisprudence¹³, theology¹⁴, biographical evaluation¹⁵, Qur'anic exegesis¹⁶, and philosophy and logic¹⁷.

One of Allamah's important initiatives was his positive response to the request of the Mongolian ruler, Uljeitu (Khodabandeh), and his migration to Iran and taking advantage of the political atmosphere to spread and present Shi'a Islam. After converting to Shi'ism, Uljeitu (Khodabandeh) summoned a large group of scholars from Hillah and Iraq, including Allamah Hilli and his son Fakhr al-Muhaqqiqin, to Iran and provided a school in Soltaniyyeh for Allamah to teach Islamic studies.

He also provided a traveling school (madrasah sayyarah), with the management and supervision of Allamah, in order that it could travel with the ruler to various areas for other areas to make use of his presence and valuable knowledge. The books Nahj al-Haq wa Kashf al-Sidq, Minhaj al-Kirama, and Kashf al-Yaqin fi Fadha'il Amir al- Mu'mineen were written upon Uljeitu's request.

Coexistence and heartfelt interactions with scholars of different Islamic sects, while standing firm in his principles and Shi'a beliefs was another important characteristic of the Allamah. This very act is what led scholars and students from other sects to gather in his traveling school¹⁸ which was instituted by Uljeitu (Sultan Muhammad Khodabandeh¹⁹) to study and teach.

Some scholars from the Sunni school of thought such as ibn Hajar Asqalani in Lisan al-Mizan²⁰ and Safdi Shafa'i in 'Ayan al-Asr and 'Awan al-Nasr have praised him. Safdi considers Allamah Hilli a sign (ayah) of God that no writer is capable of describing all his good attributes²¹.

The Islamic Seminary of Kazemayn

The city of Kazemayn is situated northwest and eight kilometres of Baghdad. After the completion of the city of Baghdad by Mansur Abbasi in the year 149 AH, he commanded a graveyard be built north of the city for him and his family. This graveyard was later known as the "Quraysh" graveyard or "the graveyard of Bani Hashim." After the martyrdom of Imam Kazem (a) and Imam Jawad (a), their holy bodies were buried in this very graveyard; and it was this event that led the Shi'as to travel to this city to visit these two Imams. Through building their homes, the first towards making the city of Kazemayn were taken.

After Baghdad was defeated by Mu'izz al-Dawla²² in 334 AH, the city of Kazemayn was rebuilt and reconstructed by him. He constructed a big courtyard around the holy shrines and built small chambers around the courtyard for Shi'a scholars and seminarians to reside in. On the eastern

side, he constructed a partition (maqsurah²³) for publicly-held classes and named it "madras²⁴."

One of his other initiatives was expanding Buratha Mosque and constructing an Islamic center beside it. Buratha is the name of a mosque with an ancient history²⁵ situated between Kazemayn and Baghdad. The training of great scholars like Shaykh Mufid took place there.

Another personality which played a role in the expansion and development of the academic environment in Kazemayn was al-Nasir Li Dinillah²⁶, an Abbasid Caliph.

Due to his services to the Shi'a faith and his kindness towards the Shi'a, in several historical records, some have claimed he was Shi'a²⁷. In 608 AH he commanded - just like the system in Baghdad - that academic discussions take place in the chambers in the holy shrine of Imam Musa al-Kazem (a) and it was during the same time that he ordered Masnad Ahmad bin Hanbal be taught by a Shi'a scholar named Safi al-Din Ma'bad bin Muhamamd Musawi. The first topic taught by him in this book and in this location was Masnad Abu Bakr and the event of Fadak²⁸.

Likewise his Shi'a vizier, Mu'ayid al-Din Qummi, made efforts in developing the infrastructure of Kazemayn, some of whom were building a school and 'House of the Qur'an' (Dar al-Qur'an) for Shi'a orphans and Alawites beside the tomb of Imam Musa bin Ja'far (as) to learn how to write and read the Qur'an²⁹.

Because of its close proximity to the Baghdad seminary, the Islamic seminary of Kazemayn was influenced by the scholars and great intellects of that city and greatly affected by the city of Baghdad's academic expansion and decline; nevertheless, in the recent centuries, many great scholars have resided in this city. Through teaching and training seminarians in their offices and homes across the city, they have made brighter the academic status of Kazemayn in comparison with other Shi'a seminaries. Some of the aforementioned cases are:

1- Residence of Sayyid Muhammad Ali Hibat al-Din Shahrastani; Bayt Sayyid Muhsin 'Araji³⁰;

2- Residence of Shaykh Ahmad Balaghi Kadhimi³¹ who Shaykh Muhammad Jawad Balaghi from Najaf is of this family;

3- Aal Mudhaffar who Shaykh Muhammad Hasa Mudhaffar, Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Mudhaffar, and Shaykh Muhammad Ridha are of this family;

4- Residence of Sayyid Haydar³² who Sayyid Mahdi Haydari, who is of the great academics and jurists of Iraq of the earlier centuries who called people to fight (jihad) against England, in the first world, is of this family;

5- Residence of Shaykh Abd al-Aziz Khalisi³³ who is related to Ali bin Madhahir the brother of Habib bin Madhahir and Ayatullah Shaykh Mahdi Khalisi, was considered and jurists during his time, is of this family;

6- Residence of Shibr who is a decedent of Sayyid Abdullah Shibr³⁴, a Shi'a scholar and owns many written works;

7- Residence of Sayyid Ismaeel Sadr³⁵;

8- Residence Shaykh Muhammad Hasan Aal Yasin³⁶ who is one of the residence in Najaf and Kadhimayn³⁷.

The Islamic Seminary of Samarra

The beginning of the growth and development of academia in the city of Samarra and its significance as one of the main academic centers in the Shi'a world is simultaneous with the arrival of Imam Hasan al-Askari to this city. Imam Hadi's twenty-year presence³⁸ in Samarra made it the center of attention amongst the Shi'as from all regions of the Islamic society.

Meanwhile, Imam Hadi, through adopting specific methods, personally meeting with specific confidants, and writing to his representatives and agents (wakil) who from four major regions in which Shi'as were gathered - Baghdad, Mada'in, and Kufa; Basrah and Ahwaz; Qum and Hamedan; and Hijaz and Yemen, he would respond to religious questions and issue Divine knowledge.

Other than containing guidelines to the Shi'as' political responsibilities and alerting them of the political situation of the society and rulers of the time, these correspondence contained ideological and theological questions and answers; as the Shi'a center held intellectual guidance and responding to the Shi'a people's ideological needs with importance.

For example, there was correspondence between Muhammad bin Ali Kashani and Imam Hadi in regards to the doctrine of Oneness [of God] (tawhid³⁹) and the Imam's response to a question regarding the topic of determinism (jabr) and full power (tafwidh)⁴⁰.

The school of Imam Hadi (maktab) held the following curriculum: 1) the study of the Qur'an 2) Shi'a theology 3) the culture of supplication (dua) and pilgrimage (ziyarah), and 4) holding a definitive stance against political and religious enemies⁴¹.

Given the incident of some type of Sufis during the time of Imam Ali al-Naqi, who drew people away from political participation and true worship, with issuing the culture of supplication and pilgrimage and with the genuine Shi'a gnosticism, the Imam fought oppression and identified the enemies, and reminded the people of the importance of loving the family of the Prophet (Ahl-ul Bayt⁴²).

After the martyrdom of Imam Ali al-Naqi in 254 AH, Imam Hasan al-Askari took on the imamate and leadership of the people (ummah). However, because of the extreme restrictions in the political atmosphere, the strengthening of the Mahdaviat, and monitoring the Imam's interactions and correspondence, his presence in Samarra was as influential as the time of his father in expanding Shi'a knowledge and divine understanding.

During the time of Imam al-Mahdi and the period of the minor occultation, since this city had made the Abbasid ruler sensitive towards it, the Imam's special deputies resided in the city of Baghdad; this very act made Baghdad the center of attention, making Samarra less central.

The revitalization and recentralization of the Islamic Seminary of Samarra is due to the very capable and distinguished jurist and soldier of his time, Mirza Muhammad Hasan Shirazi's⁴³ migration to Samarra.

Ayatullah al-Uzma Haj Mirza Muhammad Hasan Shirazi⁴⁴, who after the passing of Shaykh Ansari in 1281 AH, he took on the authority and leadership of the Shi'as. In 1287 AH, he was honored to go to Mecca for pilgrimage where he initially intended to live next to the Holy Prophet, but

after visiting the city of Najaf he decided to move to Samarra which during that time the population was predominantly Sunni. In Sha'ban of 1290 AH, he migrated to Samarra.

With Mirza Shirazi's migration to Samarra, after many years the Islamic seminary of this city once again returned to its academic status and became a center for teaching and training those seeking Islamic sciences and knowledge taught by the Ahlul-Bayt⁴⁵.

Allamah Muhaqqiq Shaykh Aghabozorg Tehrani, in his al-Dhari'ah, reports the number of Mirza Shirazi's students - who also did research in his seminary - to be over five hundred⁴⁶.

The method and format of Mirza Shirazi's teaching in Samarra, inspired by Shaykh Ansari's the method of ijtiḥād, made the spirit of research and academic criticism strengthen in his students and seminarians; and his calm composure in listening to the students' views and giving them courage to present their opinions and participate in debates and discussions, he presented a new method in educating and teaching seminaries, and this became a well-known method in the Seminary of Samarra⁴⁷.

One of the important achievements in Shi'a history where the seminary of Samarra and Mirza Shirazi himself played a role was in the termination of the agreement that would place all tobacco products at the disposal of British companies. This crucial measure taken was due to Mirza Shirazi's historical issue - otherwise known as the tobacco boycott⁴⁸ - which resulted in preventing the colonizers from getting their hands on Iran's national wealth and revealing the power and influence of the Shi'a jurists to the world.

Mirza Shirazi passed away in 1312 AH at the age of 82, and after being moved to the city of Najaf, he was buried in the holy shrine of Ali bin Abi Talib (as). The Islamic seminary of Samarra continued its academic progress; and with the guidance and management of some of Mirza's top students including Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi⁴⁹ and Sayyid Hasan Sadr⁵⁰, they continued to educate seminarians and publish the knowledge taught by the Ahlul-Bayt (s)⁵¹.

However, the seminary of Samarra's expansion, after the passing of Mirza Shirazi was short-lived, and after the migration of great scholars like Muhammad Taqi Shirazi and Sayyid Hasan Sadr to Karbala and Kadhimiyya, the Samarra seminary's period of decline arrived.

In the recent years, to revive the Islamic seminary of Samarra, the largest Islamic and academic center was constructed adjacent to the shrine of the two Imams (Askarayn) and in the remaining area of Mirza Shirazi's seminary under the supervision of the administration of religious leaders.

The Islamic seminary of Karbala

In 61 AH, the land of Karbala witnessed the innocent martyrdom of Imam Husayn - the grandson of Prophet Muhammad - along with his children and his loyal companions, as well as the burial of their holy bodies in this land filled with agonies (karb) and afflictions (bala'). With the grace of the Shi'as residing beside the holy shrine of the Imam, it became a place for narrating and publishing hadiths and cultivating and teaching their knowledge; thus, became one of the central seminaries in the Shi'a world.

One of the expert Shi'a narrators who resided in this city during the minor occultation and spent considerable time narrating traditions of the Ahlul Bayt is Abdullah bin Ja'far Humayri⁵².

A highly proficient narrator and scholar of Qum, he was the teacher of prominent intellectuals such as Ali bin Babiwayh, Muhammad bin Ya'qub Kulayni, and Muhammad bin Quluyyah. He traveled to Iraq to visit the holy shrines of Amir al-Mu'mineen and Aba Abdullah al-Husayn, and after staying in the city of Karbala for a time period, he returned back to Qum⁵³. He was also a prolific author; one of his works was Humayri's Qarb al-Isnad⁵⁴, a collection of 1,378 traditions from Imam Sadiq, Imam Kadhim, and Imam Rida.

During the major occultation, the Islamic seminary of Karbala witnessed great scholars who traveled to Karbala from neighboring cities such as Hillah and Najaf to teach. They include Ahmad Ali bin Ahmad bin Abbas Najashi (372-450 AH), author of a famous biographical evaluation book; Imad al-Din ibn Hamza Tusi⁵⁵; Sayyid Fakhar Muadd Haeri⁵⁶; Sayyid Abd al-Karim bin Tawus Fakhar Musawi⁵⁷; Shams al-Din Muhammad bin Makki, known as the First Shahid; and ibn Fahd Hilli⁵⁸.

One of the most important events in the history of Karbala Seminary was the debate between the Usulism and Akhbarism. The appearance of the Akhbarism movement and the dispute arisen between those for and against it was of the crucial events that took place in the history of Islamic Shi'a seminaries that greatly affected the Karbala seminary.

The rise of the Safavid Dynasty in Iran; entrusting important Islamic positions to narrators and Akhbari scholars; the domination of the Asharites and the People of Hadith (Ahl al-Hadith) on the Islamic seminaries of Mecca and Medina (haramayn) in Hejaz; the rebellion of the Kharijites in Bahrain; and the migration of Bahraini scholars to Iran and Iraq are the factors that caused the Akhbari movement to halt and trigger the Usuli movement to become the focus in the eleventh and twelfth century Hijri, the seminary of Karbala⁵⁹.

Shaykh Yusuf Bahrani⁶⁰ was among the Ahkbari scholars who went to Iran after the Kharijites' revolt in Bahrain in 1126 AH. He afterwards moved to Iraq, and finally resided in Karbala. He was the author of the valuable al-Nadhira fi Ahkam al-Itrah al-Tahira. Through building the grand mosque situated to the western courtyard of Aba Abdullah al-Husayn, and leading and teaching in it, he established his school of thought in Karbala - the Akhbari school - in which he was a representative of.

Shaykh Yusuf Bahrani's classes began in the Karbala seminary which had attracted many seminarians and had successfully taken hold of its intellectual atmosphere and the Usuli scholars' attention, where the moment they felt danger with regards to the obstruction of the principle of ijtihad, because of the growth of Ahkbari beliefs, they debated and ultimately publicly declared their disagreement with Shaykh Yusuf's Akhbari movement led by Wahid Behbahani.

Muhammad Baqir Isfahani, known as Wahid Behbahani⁶¹, was a progeny of Shaykh Mufid and the grandson the first Allamah Majlisi. After moving to Najaf and studying the rational and transmitted sciences

(ulumma'qulwamanqul) under the scholars of that seminary, he returned to Behbahan and wrote books⁶² rejecting Akhbarism.

In the year 1159 AH, he left Behbahan for Najaf, but afterwards thought the seminary lacked academic vigorousness necessary to be a well-rounded teacher. He later resided in Karbala and took on the headship of that seminary⁶³. He owned over seventy books and mentored students such as Allamah Bahral-Ulum, Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi Shahrستاني, Shaykh Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita', Mirza Qumi, and Mulla Mahdi Naraqī, in which after him, they took Usulism to its zenith and achieving the qualifications of ijtihad, they took on the juristic leadership of the region.

Shaykh Yusuf Bahrani's arrival to Karbala and his teaching of Ahkbari principles in the seminary where usuli jurist Wahid Behbahani led began a deep academic discussion that led to the public disagreement of the two instructors of the seminary. Even though at times these differences became very obvious⁶⁴, Yusuf Bahrani's calm reaction in face of Wahid Behbahani and his students' complaints and objections⁶⁵ led to a peaceful academic and friendly coexistence between the two views.

This was to the point that after Shaykh Yusuf Behbahani's demise in Karbala, there was a magnificent funeral and all the Islamic seminaries of Karbala and Najaf were closed and Wahid Behbahani himself did the prayer for his body.

The thirteenth century Hijri coincided with an important political and social initiative from the Karbala seminary, and that was the issue of a fatwa against the colonialist Britain by the second Mirza Shirazi. Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi⁶⁶, who was one of Mirza Muhammad Hasan Shirazi's⁶⁷ exceptional students in the city of Samarra, after his death in the year 1312 AH, for twenty-four years taught and mentored seminarians in Samarra. He then moved to Kadhimiya and then afterwards resided in Karbala. Muhammad Taqi Shirazi's last years in Karbala, which coincided with World War I, were the golden years of his fruitful life and a time where he played an influential role in major political and social changes.

In 1332 AH, England declared its hostility towards the Uthmani government and intended to seize Basra. Hearing the plea for help from the people of Basra, the scholars of Iraq rose to their defense, whom amongst them was Mirza Shirazi from the seminary of Karbala, and issued a fatwa declaring resistance against foreign aggression. This initiated a movement and revolution known as "The 1920 Iraqi Revolt," and concluded with Britain leaving Iraq.

After Iraq's independence, the second Mirza Shirazi, along with people such as Ayatullah Shaykh Mahdi Khalisi, Ayatullah Sayyid Mustafa Kashani, Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Ali Shahrستاني, Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Tabatabai Yazdi, and Mirza's own son Muhammad Ridha decided to take the Iraqi revolution towards an independent government ruled by a Muslim individual.

For this reason, in response to Britain's intent to impose one of its own agents for the presidency of Iraq, he issued his famous fatwa with the following text: "No Muslim has the right to choose a non-Muslim to govern and rule over the Muslim people⁶⁸."

Britain's resistance against accepting the popular demands of the Iraqi people and preventing them from deciding for their own future, which was at times accompanied with exiling the leaders of the movement⁶⁹, prompted Mirza Shirazi to issue a fatwa, allowing armed defense against British government forces:

Demanding your rights is obligatory on the Iraqi people and it obligatory upon them to observe peace and calmness in response to the people's request. In the event that Britain refuses to accept the people request, it is permissible for them to resort to defensive forces⁷⁰.

Though the demise of the second Mirza Shirazi in 1338 AH, the intensification of British interference, and the start of trend in exiling revolutionary leaders, dampened the revolution's passion and vigor, yet the Iraqi scholars' mighty resistance and specifically Mirza Shirazi's resistance against foreign influence, once again it showed the power and influences of Shi'a religious establishment (marja'iyah) in mobilizing people forces against the colonial domination of Islamic countries to the heads of colonialism and specifically the British government.

In the fourteenth century Hijri, the Islamic seminary of Karbala saw many outstanding personalities. One of the great scholars of this century, from Karbala, who was considered the patriarch of the Shirazis in this city, was the pious and learned scholar, Ayatullah Sayyid Mahdi Shirazi⁷¹.

He, who was one of Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi and Sayyid Muhammad Kadhim Tabatabai Yazdi's students, after travelling to and living in the cities Samarra, Kadhimiyya, and Najaf, he returned to Karbala and in 1366 AH after the passing of Ayatullah al-Udhma Haj Agha Husayn Qummi, the religious establishment of the Shi'a was passed on to him⁷².

Part III of this series will focus on the Seminaries of Jabal Amel, Isfahan, and Mashhad.

Notes

1. Jawadi, Qasim and Hasani, Sayyid Ali, "A Historical Analysis of the Islamic Seminary of Hillah" in the journal of Shi'a Studies, Number 21

2. Born 589 AH

3. Died 645 AH

4. Father of Allamah Hilli

5. 602-676 AH

6. Such as al-Ma'arij al-Usul and Nahj al-Wusul ila Ma'rifa Ilm Usul

7. 589-664 AH

8. Even though the Sayyid was certainly as mujtahid who considered jurisprudence to be the pathway for understanding Islamic legal laws (ahkam) and reviving the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh), but he did consider engagement in jurisprudence as much as needed sufficient. He also showed interest in contemplating theological issues and believed theology made the path more difficult for people. However, he wasn't absolutely against theology and at times allowed it. Jawadi, Qasim Jawadi and Sayyid Ali Hasani, ibid.

9. Died 673 AH

10. Died 826 AH

11. Sadr, Sayyid Hasan, Ta'sis al-Shi'a al-ulum al-Islam, pg. 27.

12. al-Mukhtalif al-Shi'ah fi Ahkam al-Shari'ah, Tadhkirah al-Fuqaha', Tabsira al-Muta'alimin fi Ahkam al-Din, and Qawa'id al-Ahkam fi Ma'rifa al-Halal wa al-Haram

13. Tahdhib al-Wusul ila Ilm al-Usul and Nihaya' al-Wusul ila Ilm al-Usul

14. Manahij al-Yaqin, Kashf al-Murad fi Sharh Tajrid al-'Itiqad, Anwar al-Malakut fi Sharh al- Yaqut, Minhaj al-Kiramah fi al-Imamah, and Nahj al-Haq wa Kashf al-Sidq

15. Khulasa al-Aqwal fi Ma'rifa al-Rijal and Kashf al-Maqal fi Ma'rifa al-Rijal

16. Nahj al-Iman fi Tafsir al-Qur'an and al-Qawl al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Kitab al- 'Aziz
17. al-Qawa'id wa al-Maqasid, al-Jawhar al-Nadhid, Idhah al-Maqasid, Nahj al-Irfan, Kashf al- Khafa min Kitab al-Shifa, and al-Isharat ila Ma 'ani al-Isharat
18. "Madrasah Sayyarah" was established by Sultan Khodabandeh after Allamah Hilli 's suggestion. Since the is was custom that the Mongol rulers would reside in Maragheh and Soltaniyyeh during the warm seasons and in Baghdad in the cold seasons, and because Sultan Khabandeh would take scholars with him on his travels and since he really like Allamah Hilli, he suggested that he join him. Rejecting this offer was not a good idea because it was possible the enemy and jealous crowd would falsely read into the matter and use it against the Allamah. On the other hand, the Allamah didn 't want to be completely under the ruler 's authority and fall behind form his own academic activities. For this reason he suggested the traveling school which was approved by the ruler and through this means Allamah was able to provide publications in Shia beliefs and understandings and train numerous students. Rabbani Golpaygani, Ali, Imamiah, Kayhan Andishah, number 54, 1373.
19. Uljaitu (659-695 Shamsi) was the eight ruler of the Ilkahnid Dynasty where after the death of Ghazan it was passed down to the Mongol Uljeitu in Iran. Uljeitu who was baptized as a Christian, with the name Nicholas, later on in his life converted to Buddhism and later accepted Islam, becoming a follower of Abu Hanifa 's school of thought and chose the Islamic name, Muhammad Khodabandeh, for himself. Afterwards he converted to Shia Islam and after debating with Allamah Hilli and Nidham al-Din Muraghe 'ee, he stayed firm in his belief. John Andrew Boyle, The Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 5, translation Hasan Anousheh, pg. 376.
20. Asqalani, ibn Hajar, Lisan al-Mizan, vol. 2, pg. 317.
21. Quoted from: Fadhli, Abd al-Hadi, Tarikh al-Tahsri ' al-Islami, pg. 363.:
 العلامة الحلبي رحمه الله عليه آية من آيات الله العلمية و شخصية فذة ، يعجز الكاتب عن احصاء فضائله ____ كان ريش الاخلاق ، حليماً ، قائماً ، بالعلوم حكيماً ، طار ذكره في القطار ، و اقتحم الناس اليه و تخرج به اقدام كثيرة
22. Mu'izz al-Dawla (died 356 AH) was of the most popular Buyid rulers who ministered the Abbasid Caliphate and was the commandership of the city of Baghdad. Abul Husayn, Ahmad.
23. "Maqsurah" is the name of an area in the mosque where initially during the time of the caliphs it was structured as a small room with a small opening to the outside and was situated towards the front of the mosque. The leader in prayer or the person delivering the sermon (khatib) would stand their due to security measures. Later on this area joined the indoor area of the mosque, overlooking the mosque 's verandah.
24. Faydh Qummi, Abbas, History of Kadhimaayn, pg. 76.
25. It has come in numerous narrations that the Prophet prayed in this holy site and it has been narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) that: We found out that Prophet Esa (Jesus) prayed at this place and in a narration from Amir al-Mu 'mineen it says: Should I tell you what other person prayed here? He said: Yes. The Imam said: Prophet Ibrahim Khalilullah (Abraham). Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 99, pg. 26, bab 3.
26. 575-622 AH
27. Murkhani, similar to Suyuti, Zehbi, and ibn Imad Hanbanli have emphasizes on him being Shia and other Sunni sources, if they haven't talked about his faith conversely haven't mentioned him in a good light. Even some of them go as far as to explicitly and implicitly talk bad about him while they say the opposite about other Abbasid caliphs which were Sunni. Ya'qubi, Muhammad Tahir, Shia Caliph al-Nasir Lidinullah, Majaleyyeh Tarikhdar Aeeneyeh Pajuhesh, number 28-29.
28. Sibti ibn Jawzi, Yusuf bin Qazghali, Mara al-Zaman fi Tarikh al- 'Ayan, pg. 556.
29. Ya'qubi, Muhammad Tahir, ibid.
30. Died 1227 AH
31. Died 1271
32. Died 1265
33. Died 1286
34. Died 1242

35. Died 1338

36. Died 1308

37. Shi'a Seminaries across the World, pg.230.

38. In historical references, there is a difference of opinion in regards to the number of years Imam Hadi (a) was exiled to Samarra. A group of them (ibn al-Sabbagh, al-Fusul al-Muhimmah, pg. 283) is referenced to that the time of exile was in the year 243 AH. According to this the timeframe in which the Imam (a) resided in Samarra till the time of his martyrdom will be around eleven years. But there are more sources (Tadhkirah al-Khawwas, pg. 322; Tarikh Baghdad, vol. 12, pg. 56; Manqib, vol. 4, pg. 401; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 50, pg. 206-207) have written the timeframe of the Imams stay to twenty or over twenty years. Bearing in mind that the time of martyrdom of the Imam, according to historians, was in the year 254 AH. The year he was exiled will be 234 AH. Cited from the site Imam Hadi at:

http://www.imamhadi.net/htm/far/imamhadi/aftabe_heayat_imamhadi_per.htm

39. Shaykh Saduq, al-Tawhid, pg. 101.

40. Harrani, Hasan bin Ali Shu'bah, Tuhf al-'Aqul, translation by Ahmad Jannati, Tehran, Intisharat Ilmiyyah Islamiyyah, 1363, pg. 468.

41. Shi'a Seminaries across the World, pg. 236.

42. A man named Muhammad bin Husayn says I was with Imam Ali al-Naqi (as) in the Prophet's Mosque (Masjid al-Nabi) when suddenly a group of Sufis entered the mosque and created a circle engaging in dhikr. The Imam said: don't pay attention to these frauds for they are the successors of Satan and destroyer of the religion's belief system. Their ascetics are for the comfort of their body and their night prayers (tahjud) and vigilance through the night is to fish the common people...at that moment, one of the Imam's companions said: "Wa in kana mu'tarifan bi-huquqikum? (and what if that person admits to your rights?). The Imam gave him a harsh stare and said: Abandon this sort of speech. Don't you know whoever knows our rights would not object to our orders. Hur 'Amili, al-Untha 'Ashriyah, p. 2. It has to be noted that Sufism has been used in different senses throughout the history. At that time, it was used sometimes for the people who did not have a balanced and comprehensive of understanding and practicing Islam.

43. Issuer of the Tobacco Boycott. Some of the important achievements in Shi'a history where the seminary of Samarra and Mirza Shirazi himself played a role in the termination of the agreement that would place all tobacco products at the disposal of British companies. This crucial measure taken was due to Mirza Shirazi's historical issue, otherwise known as the tobacco boycott, which resulted in preventing the colonizers from getting their hand on Iran's national wealth and showed the power and influence of Shi'a jurists to the world.

44. Born 1230 AH in Shiraz and died 1312 AH in Samarra.

45. Aqiqi Bakhshayeshi, Abd al-Rahim, Famous Shi'a Jurists, pg. 356-357.

46. Tehrani, Aghabozorg, al-Dhari'ah ila Tasanif al-Shi'a, vol. 4, pg. 367.

47. Jannati, Muhammad Ibrahim, Adawar Ijtihad, pg. 394-389.

48. The text of Mirza Shirazi's fatwa in regards to tobacco is the following: "In the name of Allah the Most Gracious the Most Merciful, From today and on, consumption of tobacco in any way would be considered as declaring war against the master and Imam of Time (as)." Danesh- Nameh Jahan-e Islam, under Ghulam Ali Haddad Adil's supervision.

49. 1270-1338 AH

50. 1272-1354 AH

51. Shi'a Seminaries Across the World, pg. 254.

52. 234-300 AH

53. Dawani, Ali, Islamic Figures, vol. 2, pg. 134.

54. Qarb al-Isnad is a collection of narrations which are comprised of narrations that have been narrated from the Imams with fewer transmitters. For this reason, the narrators of this book had to travel great distances to acquire these narrations, so that the narrations are given through a closer transmitter to the Imams.

55. He was of the Shi'a theological jurists, famous as "Sahib Wasilah," and of the great scholars of Tus. Because he came after Shaykh Tusi, who shares the same name, teknonym, origin, they would refer to him as Abu Ja'far Thani and Abu Ja'far Muta'akhar. He was contemporary to Shaykh Muntakhab al-Din and was one of ibn Shahr Ashub's teachers. Ibn

Hamza passed away in Karbala and was buried outside Najaf's city gates. His most important jurisprudential work is al-Wasilaila Nayl al-Fadhila.

56. Died 630 AH

57. Was of the jurists in Hillah who wrote a popular book called al-Hujjah Ali al-DhahibilaTakfir Abi Talib, on the topic of proving Abi Talib's faith.

58. Shi'a Seminaries across the World, pg. 258-262.

59. Ibid, pg. 262.

60. 1107-1186 AH

61. 1117-1205 AH

62. Some of his book rejecting Akhbarismare: Risalah Hujjiyyah Ijma', Risalah Qiyas, Risalah al-Ijtihad wa al-Akhbar.

63. Dawani, Ali, Wahid Behbahani, pg. 123.

64. After the debates and academic discussions Wahid Behbahani had with Yusuf Bahrani, which lasted for days, in conclusion Wahid Behbahani boycotted his school and along with prohibiting students from participating in his classes, he declared praying behind was null. Shia Seminaries across the World, pg. 265

65. It has been narrated that when Yusuf Bahrani was informed about Wahid Behbahani's disagreements with him and his boycott on his classes, in response to protesters who demanded his classes be cancelled, he said, "He follows his religious obligation and I follow my religious obligation." Considering, he would encourage his students to participate in Wahid Behbahani's classes.

66. 1258-1338 AH

67. The great Mirza

68. Famous Shia Jurists, pg. 285

69. Of the exiled scholars is Shaykh Muhammad Ridha, son of Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi, who was exiled to the Hengam Island, in the Persian Gulf.

70. Sadiqi Tehrani, Muhammad, A Look at the Iraqi Islamic Revolution of 1920 and the Role of Islamic Mujahid Scholars, pg. 56.

71. 1308-1380 AH

72. Simultaneous with the marja'iyah of Sayyid Mahdi Shirazi in Iraq, Ayatullah al-Udhma Sayyid Husayn Burujerdi (ra) held the overall marja'iyah of Shi'as.

A Glimpse at the Major Shi'a Seminaries, Part 3

Rasoul Imani Khoshkhu

Translated by Fatemeh Soltanmohammadi

Journal: Vol. 14, no. 3, Autumn 2013

Abstract

The previous articles in this series delved into the historical origins of some of the most important religious seminaries in the Shi'a world. Islamic seminaries are the most valuable institutions in promoting the instructions of the Qur'an and the Ahlul Bayt, and have generated a unique culture in the scientific, social, and political spheres. The seminaries allowed for pious Shi'a scholars who pursued ijthihad with the use of the Qur'an, Sunnah, and reason to respond to legislative needs and guide the Muslim community with their contemporary issues.

This part largely focuses on the Islamic Seminaries of Jabal Aamel, Isfahan, and Mashhad. Jabal Aamel saw hundreds of Shi'a scholars in the fields of hadith, jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, Qur'anic exegesis, theology, and ethics; Isfahan was the center of Shi'ism, and with their invitation of Shi'a scholars and jurists from Jabal Aamel established great academic schools beginning an academic and cultural movement by translating Shi'a texts to Farsi and writing books on Shi'a theology; and Mashhad, home to the eighth Shi'a Imam, Imam al-Ridha, was the starting point for the establishment of one of the greatest academic institutions in the Shi'a world.

5. The Islamic Seminary of Jabal Aamel

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

Thus, Shi'ism lasted in Jabal Aamel from the first century Hijri until the present day,³ and from amongst its Shi'as, great scholars have arisen and brightened the Shi'a world. Sheikh Hurr Aamili, in his *Amal al-Amil fi Ulama' Jabal Aamel*, mentions the name of hundreds of Shi'a scholars of Jabal Aamel and others have added more names.⁴

Among the great scholars of the fifth century Hijri in the Islamic seminary of Jabal Aamel are Sheikh Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Hibatullah Tarablusi, of Sheikh Tusi's students;⁵ Sheikh Abu al-Qassem Sa'd al-Din,⁶ known as ibn Buraj, was the chief of justice of Tripoli (Tarablus) and issued fatwas; Sheikh Abu al-Fadhl As'ad,⁷ Ahmad ibn abi Ruh Tarablusi; and Sheikh Najm al-Din Taman or Tuman,⁸ Ahmad Aamuli's son.

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

Shams al-Din Muhammad Makki Jabal Aamel,⁹ or Shahid Awwal, is a well-known Shi'a scholar.¹⁰ During his youth, he participated in the Islamic seminary of Hillah and Najaf, educating himself under great Shi'a jurists such as Fakhr al-Muhaqqiqin¹¹ and Sayyid Fakhr Musawi. In 755 AH, when he returned to his homeland - Jizzin - and founded a school in which he began instructing and mentoring seminarians and writing books.

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

I have heard from some of the great teachers that in one of the villages of Jabal Aamel during the time of Shahid Awwal seventy mujtahids were in attendance at his funeral. The number of scholars and writers in this region is almost one-fifth of the scholars and writers of other regions, though the geographical expanse of this region is one-hundredth of other countries.¹²

After returning to his country from Iraq, Shahid Awwal continued to travel to other Shi'a academic centers in Damascus, Egypt, Palestine, Mecca, Medina, and other cities. In addition to having complete mastery over Shi'a jurisprudence, he was proficient in Sunni jurisprudence and hadith, and by participating in their Islamic studies courses and holding academic debates with them, he became an assured marja' according to Sunni scholars. His expertise in their detailed rituals and religious issues was to such a point that he himself proclaimed, "I have permission to narrate works and hadith collections of almost forty scholars from Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, Damascus, Jerusalem (Bayt al-Muqaddas), and Maqam Khalil (in Palestine)."¹³

The longest amount of time the Martyr (Shahid) resided outside of Jizzin is during his stay in Damascus, and his longest period of education, teaching, and publishing was during that time. He was also a prolific author; one of his major works is his al-Lum'ah al-Dimashqiyyah, a work on jurisprudence written in a span of seven days after a request made by Sultan Ali ibn Mu'ayyad, the last Sarbadars leader in Khorasan in 766 AH.¹⁴ Along with its most important commentary by Shahid Thani,¹⁵ this book has been taught in the seminaries as a coursebook.

The social and political transformation in Damascus and the change of its ruler in 784 AH gave Shahid Awwal's enemies the opportunity to prepare false evidence against him.¹⁶ They eventually managed to imprison him and after receiving the verdict for his death sentence by the city judge, he was executed.

Another Islamic seminary of Jabal Aamel is the school of Jub' and Juba', the name of a region in southern Lebanon that has been the hub of many mujtahids' education throughout Shi'a history. Sayyid Muhsin Amin has mentioned 31 students, scholars, and clerics from Juba'.¹⁷ This seminary was founded by Sheikh Salih ibn Mushrif Aamili Juba'i of Shahid Thani's ancestors. We owe the emersion, expansion, and prosperity of Juba' school to Shahid Thani's ancestors.

Sheikh Zayn al-Din ibn Nur al-Din, known as Shahid Thani,¹⁸ is one of the most outstanding jurists and scholars of the tenth century Hijri. He was born in the village of Juba' and after his father's death, he migrated to neighboring cities to study at the age of fourteen. That which stands out in Shahid Thani's life is his travels to various parts of Muslim world and his conversations and companionship with Muslim scholars from other sects of Islam. Egypt, Damascus, Hijaz, Jerusalem, Iraq, and Istanbul are the areas Shahid Thani shortly resided in, and with teaching comparative jurisprudence, he drew the attention and found the respect of scholars from other sects.¹⁹

His most important works are the commentary of al-Lum'ah al-Dimishqiyyah of Shahid Awwal, called al-Rawdha al-Bahiyah; the commentary of Sharh al-Islam of Muhaqqiq Hilli, called Masalik al-Ifham; And Muniyah al-Murid fi Adab al-Mufid wa al-Mustafid, taught in the Islamic seminaries from long ago as a distinguished book in field of ethics (akhlaq).

This exceptional scholar was martyred in Constantinople by a scheming and revengeful group on one of his trips to the Kaaba in Mecca. After Shahid Thani's martyrdom, his children, grandchildren, and students continued leading the Islamic seminary of Juba'.²⁰

Other clerics of the school in Juba' are Sheikh Nur al-Din Ali,²¹ father and first teacher of Shahid Thani; Sheikh Jamal al-Din Abu Mansur Hasan,²² Shahid Thani's son, a learned scholar; Sayyid Muhammad ibn Ali Musa Juba'i, Shahid Thani's grandchild, the author of Madarik al-Ahkam; Sheikh Fakhr al-Din Muhammad, Shahid Thani's grandchild, author of Rawdha al-Khawatir; Sheikh Husayn, Abd al-Samad Juba'i's son and Sheikh Baha'i's father; Sheikh Ali, son of Zuhrah; Sheikh Muhyi al-Din Ahmad ibn Taj al-Din Maybusi Aamili; Sheikh Ibrahim Kaf'ami, of the notable Shi'a scholars²³ and son of Ali Juba'i, author of al-Misbah and al-Balad al-Amin.

Among the regions in Jabal Aamel, the village of Karak Nuh in Biqa'²⁴ of Lebanon, located near Baalbek, was an academic center. This seminary was renowned in the ninth and tenth century and experienced a period of great expansion in which many scholars arose from it and scores of them who migrated to Iran during the Safavid Dynasty.

This migration was an important event in the history of Jabal Aamel's seminary. During the tenth and eleventh century, due to the pressures imposed by the Uthmani government and several Sunnis, the Shi'as were forced to live in small cities and villages and established their Islamic seminaries in faraway areas.²⁵ In such a situation, with the establishment of the Shi'a Safavid Dynasty, a large group of scholars from Jabal Aamel²⁶ saw Iran as an appropriate location for publishing Shi'a ideology. Through

traveling to its cities and undertaking chief positions in the Safavid Empire, they played a critical role in institutionalizing the Shi'a faith in Iran.

The most prominent scholars of this period who migrated to Iran are Sheikh Nur al-Din Ali Abd al-Ali Karaki, known as Muhaqqiq Thani;²⁷ Sheikh Husayn ibn Abd al-Samad Juba'i,²⁸ father of Sheikh Bahai; and Sheikh Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Ali ibn Husayn Aamili, known as Sheikh Hurr Aamili.²⁹

The migration of Jabal Aamel scholars to Qum, Isfahan, and Najaf caused the Jabal Aamel seminary to lose its momentum, but the revival of the Islamic seminary of Lebanon is due to Sayyid Abd al-Husayn Sharaf al-Din,³⁰ a great jurist, experienced theologian, exceptional speaker, and a determined fighter who throughout his life worked hard to defend the Shi'a faith and debate and discuss with Muslim scholars.

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

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

Thus, he traveled to Egypt in 1329 AH to meet with Sheikh Salim al-Bishri Maliki at the Al-Azhar University. During this time, which lasted for six months, 112 letters regarding the topic of khilafah (caliphate) and wilayah (governate) were exchanged. All of the correspondence, which led to the acceptance of Shi'a claims in regards to the immediate caliphate of Amir al-Mu'minin by Sheikh Salim, have been gathered into a collection called al-Muraja'at, and according to some scholars is "an exquisite example of Shi'a Alawi logic in present day."³¹ He owns many books, many of which were burned by the French through the resistance and migration.

Indeed, the most influential religious personality in the current century which was the source of cultural and societal change in Lebanon and the revival of Shi'ism in the Lebanese social and political sphere was the great leader Imam Musa al-Sadr.³² After completing the beginner and higher level courses in the seminary in Qum, he moved to Najaf and attended the Najaf seminary, benefitting from renowned scholars, one of whom was the grand Ayatullah Sayyid Abu al-Qasim Khui. In 1958, with the advice of individuals such as Ayatollah Burujerdi, he moved to Lebanon, and while residing there and based on Sayyid Sharaf al-Din's will, he led the Shi'a society.

While implementing cultural and developmental programmes, communicating with people of other faiths and sects in Lebanon with respect, and interacting with and consulting heads of neighboring states,

Imam Musa al-Sadr took the Shi'a society out of its chaotic economical and societal situation, and with to the establishment of a Shi'a Supreme Council, he transformed the Shi'a from a forgotten group to one of the most active people in Lebanon.

Another factor that played an important role in the revival of the seminary of Lebanon was the migration of specific scholarly personalities from Najaf to Lebanon, such as Sheikh Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din³³ and Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadhlullah.³⁴ After completing their studies in Najaf, the two scholars made important scientific contributions in Lebanon after migrating there.

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

6. The Islamic Seminary of Isfahan

In 23 AH, Isfahan was conquered by 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second Muslim caliph. It held a unique political and commercial opportunity compared to other Iranian cities, such that it was the capital during the Buyid, Sajuqi, and Safavid era;³⁵ in the second half of the fourth century, Isfahan was the largest commercial city from Iraq to Khorasan.³⁶

In terms of academia, Isfahan was the center of establishing great academic schools and was the cradle of knowledge throughout various historical time periods. During Ale Kakuyeh's rule, when Abu Ja'far Ala' al-Dawla Kakuyeh (died 422 AH) was the commander of Isfahan, Ibn Sina went to Isfahan and spent the rest of his life teaching in a school credited to him, called Ala'i School. He managed doing so while taking part in other professions.

During the time of the Seljuq Empire and simultaneous with Khwaja Nizam al-Mulk's movement in founding schools, six schools have been reported in this city;³⁷ however, the construction of an Islamic Shi'a seminary in Isfahan relating to the uprising of the Safavid Dynasty followed the development of Shi'ism in this region.

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

Some of the scholars who traveled from the seminary in Jabal Aamel to Iran are Ali ibn Abd al-Aali Karki (870-940 AH), Kamal al-Din Darwish Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Aamili, Ali ibn Hilal al-Karki (died 993 AH), Husayn ibn Abd al-Samad al-Juba'i (918-948 AH), and Baha' al-Din Aamili (953-1030 AH).

The presence of outstanding Shi'a scholars in Iran, and more specifically in the Islamic seminary of Isfahan, was the start of an academic and cultural movement in terms of translating Shi'a texts to Farsi³⁸ and writing books on introducing and identifying Shi'a theological principles and the branches of Islamic commandments (ahkam). During this period, numerous publications were introduced. Today, they are of the most important text in Shi'a seminaries. Some include: *Wasa'il al-Shia ila Tahsil Masa'il al-Shari'ah*, written by Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Aamili (1033-1104 AH); *al-Wafi*, written by Faydh Kashani (1010-1090 AH); *Bihar al-Anwar*, written by Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (1037 AH); and the Farsi exegesis, *Minhaj al-Sadiqin*, by Fathullah ibn Shukrullah Kashani.

Along with the expansion of jurisprudence and hadith in the Islamic seminary of Isfahan during the Safavid era, we also see the rise of well-known Shi'a figures in philosophy and other intellectual sciences. As mentioned, the history of philosophy and wisdom in Isfahan date back to the fourth century during the many years Ibn Sina taught in Ala' al-Dawla school and to his determined student, Abu Abdullah Ma'sumi.³⁹

Nonetheless, the expansion of philosophy in the Isfahan seminary dates back to the tenth and eleventh century, during the time of Mirdamad,⁴⁰ Sheikh Bahai,⁴¹ and Mulla Sadra Shirazi⁴² who managed the seminary of Isfahan during the Safavid dynasty. Moreover, the status of Sheikh al-Islam in the Safavid government was occupied mostly by scholars who had tendencies towards Akhbarism, and it created dispute amongst them. The usuli and philosophical scholars could be looked at as one of the greatest challenges of the Islamic seminary of Isfahan in that period.⁴³ Some of the outcomes of this dispute include the migration of great scholars of philosophy, such as Mulla Sadra, to other cities which also led to a decline in the field of philosophy.

The Afghan attack on Isfahan ended the Safavid Dynasty 1135 AH and the reign of Zill al-Sultan, Arshad Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar's son, was followed by the destruction of a large number of Isfahan's historical monuments.⁴⁴ Moreover, the attack harmed the Islamic seminaries.

The Qajar Dynasty and its kings, who were known for disinterest in science and culture and were renowned for granting concessionary rights to foreigners in Iranian history, saw the presence of insightful and anti-colonialist scholars in the Shi'a seminaries as a barrier to their anti-religious and nationalistic motives. Throughout the Qajar dynasty, the Isfahan seminary saw many great minds who, while completely aware of colonialists and the Qajar kings' support for them, rose up to make known their destructive plans. During this time the name of the Najafi Isfahani family was most seen.

Hajj Sheikh Muhammad Baqir Najafi (died 1301 AH) is the son of the author of *Hidayah al-Mustarshidin* and grandson of Sheikh Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita'. After benefiting from scholars in Najaf such as Sheikh Muhammad Hasan Najafi, Sheikh Murtadha Ansari, and Sheikh Hasan Kashif al-Ghita', he reached higher academic levels, and in the year 1260 AH, he returned to Isfahan and became a religious leader who taught and published books in the seminary. His most celebrated book is *Sharh Hidayah al-Mustarshidin*,

where he has compared his father's opinions to that of Sheikh Ansari's on the topic of suspicion (dhan).⁴⁵ From amongst his children are Hajj Najafi and Hajj Agha Nurullah Najafi whom were some of the top scholars of Isfahan and heroic fighters during the Qajar period.

Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Isfahani, known as Agha Najafi (1262-1332 AH), was among the well-known scholars who returned to Isfahan and was situated at the head of the seminary after studying under instructors such as Mirza Shirazi and Allamah Kashif al-Ghita' in Iraq. Agha Najafi, along with being academically active while teaching, writing, and mentoring students, made great initiatives in the significant events which include participating in Mirza Shirazi's tobacco boycott, fighting tyrannical policies of Zill al-Sultan - the governor of Isfahan - and opposing the Babiyyay group in Isfahan.⁴⁶

Ayatullah Hajj Sheikh Lutfullah Safi Golpaygani states that the Grand Ayatullah Burujerdi used to frequently praise the deceased Agha Najafi and his brother Agha Sheikh Muhammad Ali Thiqat al-Islam. Ayatollah Burujerdi said that during the time of his study in Isfahan, there were ten thousand students in the seminary, and twice a month or sometimes once a month these two brothers used to distribute salaries to the students. When Thaqat al-Islam passed away, Agha Najafi himself would manage this large seminary and distribute salaries.⁴⁷

Another son of Muhammad Baqir Najafi is Ayatullah Mahdi Najafi Isfahani (1278-1346 AH), known as Hajj Agha Nurullah Najafi, who was a scholar in the constitutional revolution in Isfahan. After reaching the level of ijtihad, he moved from Iraq to his hometown, Isfahan, and started teaching and mentoring.

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

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

seminary and the schools under its management, which were over thirty in number.

Among the scholars who excelled at the head of the Isfahan seminary are Mulla Muhammad Taqi Majlisi (1003-1070 AH), father of Allamah Majlisi; Allamah Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (1037-1111 AH); Sayyid Ni'matullah Jaza'iri; Ayatullah Mirza Muhammad Ali Shah Abadi (1292-1369 AH); Ayatullah Mirza Ahmad Bayd Abadi (1279-1357 AH); Ayatullah Mujahid Sayyid Hasan Mudarris (1287-1357 AH); and Banu Mujtahideh Nusrat Amin (1308-1265 AH).⁴⁸

7. The Islamic Seminary of Mashhad

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

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

From the time study circles were created in the shrine until today, the Islamic seminary of Mashhad has experienced both expansion and decline depending on societal conditions. The attack by Sabuktigin, the Ghanznavid king, on Mashhad and on the Shrine of Imam Rida (a); the attack by the Oghuz Turks in the year 548 AH on Tus; the killing of people and great scholars; the Mongol attacks on Tus in the year 618 AH; and the mass killing on the people of Mashhad⁴⁹ were all unfortunate events throughout a couple centuries, and undoubtedly affected the Islamic seminary of that city. However, during these rough times, we witness great efforts made by scholars of this city and the production of valuable works in the Mashhad seminary such as Tabarsi's efforts made in Qur'anic exegesis and academia.

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

In the history of Mashhad seminaries, the eleventh century was the inception of its revival, the period of academic re-growth, and the restart of courses held by prominent instructors. In the second half of this century, in terms of the number of scholars and instructors, the Mashhad seminary became one of the leading Shi'a seminaries, attracting not only its residents, but international students as well. The renowned teacher, Mowlana Muhammad Baqir, known as Muhaqqiq Sabzawari (1017-1090 AH), author of two books in jurisprudence, *Dhakhirah* and *Kifayah*, who held a management position and was called Sheikh al-Islam, moved to Mashhad towards the end of his life. He reconstructed and taught in the old school called "Sami'iyyah," which was from then on called "Baqiriyyah," named after him.⁵⁰

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

Sheikh Hurr Aamili is known by one of his famous works, *Wasa'il al-Shia*, which comprises traditions from the infallibles in various jurisprudential topics, a book in which a mujtahid does not need in making decisions in Islamic law (*ijtihad*). At the age of forty, Sheikh Hurr Aamili went to Mashhad to visit the Imam Ridha's grave. After witnessing the condition of Mashhad, he felt the need to reside to defend Shi'ism. During his stay, the Sheikh spent his time teaching and writing; his books amount to over forty-four. When Sheikh Hurr was in Mashhad, his classes and discussions were held in the courtyard of Imam Ridha where his sessions were known as the most interesting during that time.⁵¹

In the first few decades of the fourteenth century, with the expansion of the Islamic seminaries of Najaf and Karbala, the migration of scholars, and the formation of the Islamic seminary of Qum, the expansion of the Mashhad seminary declined and advanced jurisprudence and principles of jurisprudence were rarely formed in it.⁵² However, even during this period, the seminary of Mashhad played a leading role in intellectual sciences and Arabic literature and where outstanding scholars were trained, such as Sheikh Abd al-Jawad Adib Nishaburi (died 1344 AH), instructor in literature; Mulla Muhammad Ali, known as "Hajji Fadhil" (died 1342 AH), instructor in jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, and philosophy; Mirza Askari Shahidi, known as "Agha Bozorg" (died 1355 AH), instructor in philosophy; and Sheikh Asadullah Yazdi (died 1342 AH), instructor in philosophy.

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

some affairs that once again brought the seminary's name to the forefront of active Shi'a seminaries in recent decades.

In 1331 AH, Hajj Agha Husayn Qummi moved from Najaf to Khorasan and taught higher level jurisprudence and principles of jurisprudence. He completed the higher level qualifications in Iraq and received permission for ijtihad from all his teachers in Najaf. He also obtained permission from the deceased Sayyid Murtadha Kashmiri to narrate hadiths. Because of the Mashhadi people's request to Ayatullah Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi (Mirza Dovvom) to send a God-conscious (taqwa) scholar and a learned and capable mujtahid for them, he put a stop to his forty years of education and moved to Mashhad to take on their leadership role.⁵³

Along with teaching and mentoring seminarians, this great scholar was not indifferent to the societal changes and the anti-religious initiatives made by the government as he readily stood up against Reza Khan's western mentality.⁵⁴ This event led to his deportation from Iran to Iraq in 1354-1314 AH. Additional scholars in the Islamic seminary of Mashhad, also a part of his anti-government oppositions included Hajj Mirza Muhammad Kafaee Khorasani, who was exiled to Yazd and Ayatullah Sayyid Yunus Ardebili, who was imprisoned for some time and then exiled to Ardebil.⁵⁵

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

The Islamic seminary of Mashhad played a crucial role in the national revolution against the imperial state of the Pahlavis and became a center of resistance against the idolatrous regime. Well-accomplished students, fighters, and speakers, like Shahid Sayyid Abd al-Karim Hasheminejad (1311-1360 Shamsi) and Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei, were trained, and they forced the tyrannical imperialist regime who suppressed, exiled, and tortured seminarian students and demolished the schools with the intention of controlling this seminary and its activities. As a result, the opposition was unsuccessful in reaching their goals, and this ended with the victory of the Islamic republic in 1357 Shamsi.

Notes

1. 23-35 AH
2. Hurr Aamili, Muhammad ibn Hasan, Amal al-Aamil, researcher Sayyid Ahmad Husayni, Qum Dar al-Kutub al-Islami, vol. 2, 1362, p. 13.
3. Travel writers like Nasir Khusraw, in the fourth century Hijri, and others after him have reported the presence of Shi'as in that land. R.K. Naisr Khusraw's Book of Travels, effort of Muhammad Dabir Siyaqi, p. 24.
4. Shi'a Seminaries across the World, p. 335.
5. Author of books like al-Zuhra fi Ahkam al-Hajj wa al-Umarah was al-Usatah Bayn al-Nafy wa al-Ithbat.
6. Died 481 AH
7. Before 520 AH
8. Approximately 728 AH

9. 734-786 AH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

17. Amin, Sayyid Muhsin, Khitat Jabal Aamel, p. 255.

18. 911-966 AH

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

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

21. Died 925 AH

22. 1011 AH

23. 905 AH

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

25. Shi'a Seminaries across the World, p. 341.

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

27. 870-940 AH

28. 918-984 AH

29. Born 1033 AH

30. 1290-1377 AH

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

32. Born in Qum in 1307 Shamsi

33. 1312-1379 Shamsi

34. 1354 AH -2010

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

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

37. Islamic Seminaries in History, pg. 455.

38. Of the scholars of this period, who translated numerous works from great Shi'a scholars, was Mawla Ali ibn Hasan Zawarahi. He is of the well-known figures in the tenth century Hijri who owns many books and translation including the exegesis Tarjumah al-Khawas; the translation and commentary of the Nahj al-Balaghah called Rawdhah al-Asrar;

the translation of Kashf al-Ghuma fi Marifa al-A'imah called Tarjumah al-Manaqib; the translation of Sheikh Saduq's Wasilah al-Nijah; the translation of Sayyid ibn Tawus' book, al-Tara'if fi Ma'rifa Madhahib al-Tawa'if; the translation of Fahad Hilli's book, Udah al-Da'i wa Nijah al-Sa'ee; the translation of Sheikh Tabarsi's book al-Ihtijaj, called Kashf al-Ihtijaj. Golizawarahi Qumshaei, Ghulam Ridha, "Tafsir Tarjumah al- Khawas" in the journal, "Aeeneyeh Pajuhesh," number 9, p. 39-47.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

46. Sufi Niaraki, Taqi, in Harim wa Wisal.

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

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

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

50. Shi'a Seminaries across the World, p. 357.

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

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

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

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

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

The History of the Islamic Seminaries of Qum

The History of the Islamic Seminaries of Qum, Part 1

Rasoul Imani Khoshku

Translated by Mohammad Javad Shomali

Journal: Vol. 14, no. 4, Winter 2014

Abstract

The preceding articles in this series explored the historical origins of important religious seminaries in the Shi'a world given its importance in promoting the instructions of the Qur'an and the Ahlul Bayt, and its role in engendering a unique culture in the scientific, social, and political spheres. The seminaries created knowledgeable and pious Shi'a scholars who pursued ijtihad with the use of the Qur'an, sunnah, and reason to respond to the needs of the Muslim community. The previous part focused on the Islamic Seminaries of Jabal Aamel, Isfahan, and Mashhad.

This article delves into the history of the Islamic seminaries of Qum. Using Islamic traditions and historical records, the significance of Qum according to the Ahlul Bayt will be stated, along with its link to Lady Ma'sumah's arrival to the city and its impact on the future of the seminaries' success.

Imam Ali said, "May God bestow His salutations on the people of Qum. They are the people of ruku' (bowing before God), sajdah (prostrating to God), salah (daily prayers) and fasting. They are wise jurist scholars. They are the religious who love the family of the Prophet, and they are the people of proper worship. May God grant them His mercy, salutations, and blessings¹."

History of Qum

Located 145 kilometres south of Tehran in the middle of the highway from Tehran to Isfahan, the holy city of Qum is one of the most important cities in the Islamic world. There have been many discussions regarding the history of Qum and its inception. Some historians believe that Qum had become a holy city given its many fire temples after being reformed religiously and architecturally by a ruler named Qubad during the Sassanid Era². Other historians believe Qum was made after Islam's dominance over Iran and from its beginning its entire population were Shi'a³.

In the year 23 AH, the last year of the life of Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second Muslim Caliph, Qum was conquered by the Muslims. The commander of the Muslim army in this defeat was Abu Musa Ash'ari who, having conquered Ahwaz, now had his eyes on Qum⁴.

The Bani Asad Arabs were among the first groups of Arabs to live in Jamkaran, Qum⁵. After the advent of Islam, many of the fire temples were demolished and mosques were built in their stead, one of them being the 'Atiq Mosque⁶. Only a fire temple, Mozdjan, remained until the end of the third century as it was located in a mountainous region and because many Maguses lived in the route that led to it⁷. According to some historians, the first mosque was built in the village of Jamkaran⁸. Some scholars believe the history of the Shi'a in Qum began after the 'Ash'arites moved to Qum in 83 AH.

Abdul-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn Ash'as was appointed by Hajjaj ibn Yusuf as the governor of Sajestan. He then rebelled against Hajjaj but was defeated and escaped. Among the companions of Abdul-Rahman there were seven children of Sa'd ibn Malik Ash'ary who were from the Tabe'in of Iraq. They came to Qum and made major efforts in spreading Shi'a culture. Abdullah ibn Sad Ashlar and his son, Musa, played a key role in these efforts⁹.

This happened during the Imamate of the last Imams and had a great impact on spread of Shi'as in Qum to the extent that, based on the narration of some scholars, at the time of Imam Hadi, Qum had become the most important center for the gatherings of the Shi'as in Iran. It is narrated that Muhammad ibn Dawud Qummi used to give the news regarding Qum to Imam Hadi¹⁰. Imam Hadi had said that the people of Qum were "forgiven by God" because they had visited the shrine of his grandfather, Imam Ridha¹¹.

Qum in the hadiths

Qum and its people have been praised in many hadiths; as when Imam Ali was asked what city is the safest place to be during wars and seditions, the Imam mentioned Qum. He also stated that the best of people in terms of lineage come from Qum, and it is the city in which Gabriel journeyed to¹².

In this regard, Imam Sadiq said, "Calamities are repelled from the people of Qum, and they are [God's] proof (hujjah) over other people¹³." The sixth Imam also said, "The soil of Qum is sacred, and its people are with us and we are with them¹⁴."

In Shi'a hadiths, Qum is referred to by expressions such as "The small Kufa", "The relying place of Qaim¹⁵ Aale Muhammad¹⁶," "The place of awaiting of Aale Muhammad," "The place of safety and comfort for believers," "A piece of the Bayt al Muqaddas," "The nest of Aale Muhammad" and "The shelter of the Fatemiyyun¹⁷."

Once, a group of people from the city of Rey gathered around Imam Sadiq in Medina. When they told the Imam they were from Rey, the Imam said, 'Greetings to our brothers from Qum.' They repeated that they are from Rey yet the Imam said the same again and this happened for a couple of times. Then the Imam said:

Truly for God there is a sanctuary and that is Mecca; and for the messenger there is a sanctuary and that is Medina; and for the Commander of the Faithful (Imam Ali) there is a sanctuary and that is Kufa and truly, there is a sanctuary for us and that is the land of Qum¹⁸.

In another hadith, Imam Sadiq said:

The soil of Qum is sacred. Its people are with us and we are with them. As long as they do not betray [us], anyone who has an evil intention towards them will be quickly punished and if they happen to betray [us], God will make oppressing rules dominant over them. However, they are the helpers of our Qa'im (Imam Mahdi) and the seekers of our right¹⁹.

Then Imam raised his head looking at the sky and said:

Oh God, protect them from any tribulation²⁰.

Imam Ridha, regarding Qum, said:

When calamity and sedition become widespread, go to Qum and its surrounding areas; for Qum is kept immune from calamities²¹.

The arrival of Lady Ma'sumah to Qum

Due to numerous hadiths about Qum's high status, even before Lady Ma'sumah's arrival in Qum many descendants of the Shi'a Imams including the descendants of Imam Husayn, Imam Hasan, and Imam Kazim had moved to Qum²². As a result, there are over four hundred tombs belonging to the descendants of the Shi'a Imams in Qum today. Imam Ridha also stopped at Qum during his journey to Khurasan. The house where he resided is now an Islamic seminary²³.

The arrival of Lady Ma'sumah, the daughter of Imam Kazim, marked the beginning of a new era in the history of Qum. After Lady Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet, and Lady Zaynab, the respected daughter of Imam Ali, Lady Ma'sumah holds a special status among all women. It was not long after Imam Ridha's migration from Medina to Khurasan in 200 AH due to Mamun's order that Lady Ma'sumah decided to visit her brother. According to some historians, she left Medina in 201 AH, and when her caravan reached Saaveh they changed their direction towards Qum due her illness.

Being received by Musa ibn Khazraj, they arrived in Qum, and after seventeen days, she passed away²⁴. Her place of worship during this short period, Bayt al-Noor (The House of Light) is now a place of visit in Qum.

The Shi'a Imams spoke about Lady Ma'sumah's high rank and had informed their followers of her arrival in Qum beforehand. Imam Sadiq had said:

Be aware that Qum is the small Kufa. Be aware that heaven has eight gates, three of which open to Qum. A lady from my descendants whose name is Fatima, the daughter of Musa, will be buried there and it is through her intercession that all my Shi'as will enter heaven²⁵.

It can be understood from this hadith that, like Kufa, Qum is the centre for spread of the knowledge of the household of the Prophet, while three of the eight gates of heaven open towards Qum. These three gates may refer to the three valuable privileges of Qum which are:

1. The shrine of Lady Ma'sumah in Qum and its remarkable influence of guiding people towards heaven;
2. The Islamic seminaries of Qum which have guided people for centuries and directed them towards heaven;
3. The holy mosque of Jamkaran and the central position of Qum after Mecca and Kufa as the foothold of Imam Mahdi.

In some hadiths the reward given for visiting the shrine of Lady Ma'sumah is said to be so much to the extent that the visitors of her holy shrine are promised heaven: Imam Ridha said, "Heaven is for whomever who visits Fatimah, the daughter of Musa ibn Ja'far, while acknowledging her rights²⁶."

Imam Jawad, the son of Imam Ridha, said: "Whoever visits my aunt in Qum will be granted [the pass to] heaven²⁷."

Considering what has been mentioned thus far, the history of the Shi'a and Shi'a culture in Qum goes back years before Lady Ma'sumah's arrival;

however, since her arrival in Qum and her burial there, Qum attracted Shi'a from all other cities. The scholars who visited her would sometimes prolong their stay; hence, a strong scholarly community consisting of devotees of the Shi'a school of thought was formed in Qum.

The history of the Islamic seminaries of Qum

Ayatullah Ha'eri Yazdi is generally considered as the founder of the Islamic seminaries of Qum, although these holy seminaries may have an older history. Through scrutinizing the hadiths it becomes clear that the Imams had informed people of great and glorious seminaries in Qum: "Soon Kufa will become empty of believers and, like a snake hiding in its shelter, knowledge will be retracted. And then it will appear in a city called Qum, and it will become the centre of knowledge and virtue²⁸."

The historical eras of the Qum seminaries are divided as follows:

The First Era

The first era of the Islamic seminaries of Qum goes back to the lifetime of the Shi'a Imams. The students of the Imams, with their knowledge and ability to propagate the Islam, chose Qum as the foothold of the Shi'a and were involved in spreading the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt. This period coincided with the arrival of Ash'arites in the second half of the first century and the first half of the second century during the lifetime of Imam Sadiq. It was at that time that the Ash'arites made remarkable efforts to spread Shi'a culture.

According to some hadiths it was from that period on that the scholars in Qum had interactions with the Shi'a scholars in Medina and received the attention from the Imams. For instance, it is narrated that once Umran ibn Abdullah Qummi went to visit Imam Sadiq. The Imam first received him warmly in front of the others and then quietly told him something. When he left the session the people asked the Imam about him and Imam replied, "He is the noble one in the group of nobles²⁹."

Isa ibn Abdullah Qummi, the brother of Umran ibn Abdullah, was also a noble. Imam Sadiq said about him, "He is one of us, alive or departed³⁰."

In the second half of the second and third century, Qum was the centre for compiling the Shi'a Imams' hadiths. Meanwhile, Kufa was no longer the first Shi'a base. Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Isa Qummi Ash'ari, a companion of Imam Sadiq, is one of the elites of that period³¹. He was one of the sons of Abdullah ibn Sa'd ibn Amer who had entered Qum along with his brothers³².

It was in the same period that narrators of hadiths (muhaddith) who were companions of Imam Jawad and Imam Hadi, namely Husayn ibn Saeed Ahwazi and his brother moved, first to Ahwaz and then to Qum. Among the books they have written, one of Saeed's works, Al-Zuhd, is available to us today³³.

Some of the great scholars of this era are: Adam ibn Abdullah Qummi, Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Ash'ari, Ibrahim ibn Hashim Qummi, Ahmad ibn Ishaq ibn Abdullah Ash'ari, Ismaeel ibn Sa'd Ash'ari, Husayn ibn Aban, and Husayn ibn Malik Qummi³⁴.

During this period, the main fields of knowledge that were common in the Islamic seminaries of Qum were jurisprudence and ethics, both communicated using the hadiths of the Ahlul Bayt.

The Second Era

This period includes the Minor Occultation and continues after that until the sixth century. During this period, the Islamic seminaries of Qum were very superior to other Shi'a seminaries in terms of quality and quantity; the narrators in Qum are said to have been two hundred thousand and important figures like Ahmad ibn Isa Ash'ari, Muhammad ibn Isa Ash'ari Qummi, Abdul Aziz ibn Muhtadi Qummi, Ali ibn Husayn ibn Babuyeh Qummi, Ibn Waleed Qummi, Muhammad ibn Hasan Furukh us-Saffar, Ibrahim ibn Hashim Qummi and Shaykh Saduq were among the scholars.

In the field of Hadith, the scholars of Qum would not trust all narrators; and narrators such as Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid Barqi were expelled from Qum for narrating weak hadiths³⁵. Qum reached its peak of magnitude and glory in the third and the fourth century. During this period the hadith-oriented school was the dominant school in Qum. The presence of narrators, who were influenced by the Islamic seminaries of Qum in the city of Rey, helped the Islamic Seminaries of Qum continue to exist in Rey as well. Great scholars in the field of hadith, such as Kulayni, were educated in the seminaries of both Qum and Rey³⁶.

An important point about the available hadith collections from the fourth century is that their authors have cited only the hadiths they believed to be authentic and representing the Shi'a faith. For example, Shaykh Kulayni clearly explains in the introduction of Al-Kafi that he compiled this book after being requested by someone who found it difficult to identify authentic hadiths in order to represent the authentic hadiths.

Al-Mahasin by Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Barqi and Basairud Darajat by Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Saffar Qummi, the famous Shi'a scholar in the field of hadith and also the companion of Imam Askari are some books of hadith in the third century available to us today.

It is during this era and in the Islamic seminaries of Qum that the four hundred principles of hadiths of Shi'a Imams³⁷ remaining from the companions of the Imams were classified in chapters by scholars of this field such as Kulayni and Shaykh Saduq. It is for this reason that the fourth century is considered as the period of completing of compilations of Shi'a hadiths. Furthermore, scholars of hadith also compiled books on hadiths of specific subjects: Ibn Babuyeh Qummi wrote Al-Imamah wal-Tabsarah Min al-Hayrah to remove the confusion of some Shi'as regarding the Imamate of Imam Mahdi.

Likewise, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Nu'mani compiled Al-Ghaybah on Imam Mahdi and Ali ibn Muhammad Khazzaz Qummi compiled Kifayat al-Athar to prove the Imamate of all Shi'a Imams.

Shaykh Saduq's treasured books written in this period are the most prominent Shi'a scholarly resources. Having access to the main hadith sources that remained from the companions of the Imams, and writing about three hundred books, Shaykh Saduq managed to compile and formulate

ideologies of Islam using his creativity. Such efforts demonstrate the dynamic nature of this field and its scholars.

Parallel to the development of the seminaries of Qum in the field of hadith, the theologians of the school of Baghdad also entered the field of hadith. The book *Amali*³⁸ by the students of Shaykh Mufid, Sayyed Murtadha, Shaykh Tusi, and compilations such as *Tahzib* and *Istibsar* by Shaykh Tusi reveals the passion these scholars had for compiling hadiths. The key and essential difference between the seminaries of Qum and Baghdad is the rational attitude of the scholars of the school of Baghdad whom, unlike the scholars of Qum, gave importance to reason in their study of hadiths.

This difference between the two schools led to theological disputes in different areas as the books *Tashihul-I-tighad* and *Risalat fi Sahv un-Nabi* were written to study and reject some of Shaykh Saduq's views³⁹.

In the fourth century, the seminaries of Rey flourished and this overshadowed the seminaries of Qum, since with the presence of figures like Shaykh Saduq in Rey, students of Islamic studies preferred Rey over Qum. However, hadith scholars had the tendency not to stay in a specific city for long, and by the means of their travels, in addition to spreading the hadiths of the Infallibles, they would learn hadiths from the teachers of other areas as well. Thus, the scholars of Qum and Rey had cultural interactions and this may be the reason why some scholars of this period are known by some historians of both Qum and Rey as the scholar of their own city.

Sa'd-e Salt, Athir al-Mulk, Sayyed Saeed 'Izzuddin Murtadha, Shamsuddin Murtadha, and Zahiruddin Abdul Aziz are the names of some of the schools in the Islamic seminaries of Qum during that period⁴⁰.

Therefore, the second period of the seminaries of Qum was formed by a large group of scholars in the field of hadith and jurisprudence; these scholars were students in the first period and the teachers of the scholars of the fifth century.

The Third Era

The period starting with the sixth century up until the ninth century is the third era of the seminaries of Qum. By and large, the Islamic seminaries of Qum experienced difficulties during this period. The inhabitants of Qum were massacred several times and the city was turned into ruins. However, for some time Qum was the capital of the Teymurid Dynasty. Of the numerous instances of genocide and demolition observed throughout the history of Qum, the Mongol's attack was the most devastating one, lasting until the Teymurid Dynasty. Perhaps the foundation of the Razawiyyah School is the only positive development during this period.

Yet, Shaykh Agha Bozorg Tehrani has named more than thirty of the scholars of the sixth century in his book, *Tabaqat-e A'lam al-Shi'a*. This number decreased to three in the seventh century⁴¹. Thus, the scientific recession of the seminaries of Qum started in the sixth century and it grew during the seventh and the eighth centuries due to the presence of the ruinous Mongol and Timurid dynasties. In the ninth century, the scholars of

Qum took shrewd measures in confronting the cultural recession and strengthening the scholarly foundations of the seminaries.

Qutb al-Din Rawandi (573 AH) was among the great scholars in jurisprudence and hadith who lived in this period and was buried in Qum. He lived in Qum part of his life and had a great impact on protecting the seminaries of Qum and upgrading their academic level by training students. Some of his works during this period are: Asbab al-Nuzul, Fiqh al-Qur'an, Jawahir al-Kalam, Sihah u Ahadith-i-Ashabina, and al-Niyyah fi Jami' al-'Ibadat.

In addition to Qutb al-Din Rawandi, Shaykh Muhammad ibn Hasan Tusi, the father of Khaje Nasir ud-Din Tusi, was another scholar who lived in Qum during this period. The hadiths he narrated were quoted by his son, Khaje Nasir⁴².

The Fourth Era

This era starts in the tenth century and continues until the thirteenth century coinciding with the Safavid, Afghan, Afsharid, Zand, and Qajar dynasties. It is during this period that intellectual sciences became part of the common sciences taught in the seminaries of Qum.

The first part of this period coincides with the Safavid dynasty. The Safavid kings had a strong interest in knowledge and scholars; hence, great scholars such as Allamah Majlisi and others were paid special attention by the rulers, generally titled "Shaykh ul-Islam"⁴³.

Such attention paid to the scholars in this period led to the migration of many Shi'a scholars of Jabal Aamel in Lebanon to Iran and this caused the spread of the intellectual approach in Shi'a jurisprudence as opposed to the Akhbari⁴⁴ attitude. During this era, the Islamic seminaries of Isfahan, supported by the Safavid rulers, became the most active seminary in the Shi'a world. Establishing new Shi'a schools in Isfahan and other cities of Iran such as Qum, Shiraz, Qazwin, and Mashhad, religious sciences and Shi'a teachings including rational sciences such as philosophy and theology began to progress.

Meanwhile, the Akhbari approach was also formed, and this put strong emphasis on understanding the literal meaning of hadiths and not tolerating any rational contemplation. When this attitude developed in the seminaries of Isfahan, not only did the scholars who were against this view leave the seminaries, but some scholars of the intellectual sciences were also expelled from this region. The famous philosopher Sadr al-Din Shirazi known as Mulla Sadra was among them.

The migration of Mulla Sadra who was originally from Shiraz, from Isfahan to Qum led to the recession of rational sciences in the seminaries of Isfahan, but it led to their flourishing in the seminaries of Qum. Through training students and by the means of his writings, he paved the way for the Usuli⁴⁵ attitude in the seminaries even though before this period the seminaries trained more Shi'a muhaddiths⁴⁶ than scholars of rational sciences.

Sadr al-Muta'allehin Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Shirazi (979 - 1050 AH) was one Shi'a philosopher and theologian who lived in this period. His stay in the seminaries of Qum was contemporary to his seclusion, when he

involved himself in compiling and writing books, training students, and contemplating on sciences rather than socializing.

As it was mentioned, in this period, the presence of theosophists led to the formation of the science of the principles of jurisprudence (usulul-fiqh). This which was in contrast with the Akhbari attitude, firstly claimed that the *thahir*⁴⁷ sentences of the Qur'an can be used without using the words of the Prophet and his successors, and secondly that using reason in analyse of the hadiths to understand the rulings is allowed, and is indeed necessary.

Philosophers such as Mulla Sadra paved the way for free thinking in the seminaries of Qum. Hence, Mirza Qummi (1151 - 1231 AH) after studying jurisprudence and its principles in Najaf and Karbala with great teachers such as Wahid Behbahani, decided to stay in Qum; as a result, he expanded the domain of usul to Qum. That was when having returned from Iraq, Mirza Qummi did not find the level of studies in the seminaries of Shiraz and Isfahan suitable for himself and thus chose the seminaries of Qum. There, he familiarized the students who loved the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt familiar with Shi'a jurisprudence and the foundations of *ijtihad*⁴⁸ in Shi'ism.

He thus became the religious authority for the Shi'as of his time. In writing and teaching the principles of *ijtihad*, he became known as "Muhaqqiq Qummi" ("The Researcher of Qum").

The book *Al- Qawanin al-Muhkamah fi 'Ilmil-Usul* is one of his most renowned works; until recent years it was still being taught in the seminaries. Due to his great efforts in launching an usul-oriented movement, he is known as the reviver of the science of usul. He trained students such as Sayyed Muhammad Baqir Hujjatul-Islam, Hajj Muhammad Ibrahim Kalbasi, Agha Muhammad Ali Hezar Jaribi, Agha Ahmad Kermanshahi, Sayyed Muhammad Mahdi Khansari, Sayyed Ali Khansari, Mirza Abu-Talib Qummi, Hajj Mulla Asadullah Borujerdi, and Hajj Mulla Muhammad Kazzazi.

By doing so he managed to expand the usul-oriented attitude from Qum to the seminaries of Isfahan, Qumshah, and Kermanshah. Through his innovations he triggered a dramatic evolution in the seminaries of Qum and after years of silence and recession he initiated the golden age of *ijtihad*.

Another newfound science meticulously taught and studied in the seminaries of Qum was the science of kalam or Usul al-Din; in other words, theology with a rational and philosophical method. Mulla Sadra himself had been engaged in theological subjects with a philosophical approach in his book *Al-Asfaar al-'Aqliyyah al-Arbi'ah*; however, his son-in-law, Mulla Abdurrazzaq Lahiji (1072 AH) known as Fayyaz, took more serious steps in developing this science. Lahiji was originally from the city of Lahijan in the province of Gilan.

Due to his migration to Qum in the early stages of his life⁴⁹ and a long residence there along with teaching in the Ma'sumah school of Qum, he received the title "Qummi."

Writing books such as *Shawariqul-Ilham*, *Sarmaye Iman*, and *Gowhar-e Murad* and discussing deep theological subjects in the seminaries of Qum, he introduced a new method in writing theological books.

Lahiji was exceptionally talented in theosophy, theology, mysticism, Sufism, logic, poetry and literature. The elites of philosophy and theosophy were astonished by his precision and high attention, saying, “In precision and research this man is one of the great scholars in philosophy and theosophy. He was a strong philosopher in Avicennism, a plenary theosophist in Illuminationism, and an outstanding figure in knowing the opinion of the theologians⁵⁰.” It has also been said about Lahiji that “Apart from his teacher Mulla Sadra, no one among recent scholars excels him⁵¹.”

After Fayyaz Lahiji, his son, Mirza Hasan Lahijy, and his student Qazi Saeed Qummi took the field of kalam forward with expanding discussions and publications on it.

During this period more schools were established such as Fayziyeh, Shadghuli, Dar ush-Shifa, Muminyah, and Sarutghi⁵².

Thus, during this period the seminaries of Qum flourished in academe with an expansion of different sciences such as philosophy, Islamic theology, logic, and principles of jurisprudence.

The Fifth Era

This period begins in the late thirteenth century and continues to the present day. The turning point was when Ayatullah Haeri entered Qum and resided in its seminaries. Throughout its ups and downs, the seminaries had continued to exist; however, they did not enjoy the benefits of an organised system. With the arrival of Ayatullah Haeri, the seminaries of Qum were revived to the extent that he was given the title “The Founder” (“Muasses”) of the seminaries.

Ayatullah Haeri was born in 1276 AH in a village called Mehrjerd in the province of Yazd, when almost everyone in the village thought that his father is not going to have any child. He pursued his primary education in Maktabkhane⁵³ in the city of Ardekan, where he spent his time learning the basics of the sciences, literature, and Qur’anic recitation. He then went to the seminaries of Yazd and resided in the school of Muhammad Taqi Khan. It was not long after his arrival that he was known among the scholars as an aspiring and gifted student of Islamic studies.

He went to Karbala at the age of 18 and although the seminaries of Samira were more active during that period, he spent two years in the neighbourhood of the shrine of Imam Husayn learning and engaging himself in self-building. During these two years, his talent and genius became known to other scholars, and especially to his teacher, Ayatullah Fazil Ardekani. He realised that the seminaries of Karbala were not enough for the growth and flourishing of Abdulkarim’s scientific innovations; hence, he sent Abdulkarim to Grand Mirza Shirazi⁵⁴.

Ayatullah Haeri was under the supervision of Ayatullah Mirza Shirazi, and soon he became one of the well-known scholars of that area. In 1333 AH, granting the request of Mirza Mahmud, the son of Hajj Agha Muhsin Araki, he moved to Arak. For more than eight years he administered the seminaries in Arak. The number of the students exceeded three hundred, making Arak the foothold of knowledge and research. In the month of Rajab in 1340 AH, the Ayatullah in the company of Ayatullah Sayyed Muhammad Taqi Khansari visited Qum. Some believe that in addition to his intention to

visit the shrine of Lady Ma'sumah in Qum, he was also encouraged to go to Qum due to the requests he received from its Qum.

It was late winter on the 22nd of Rajab 1330 AH⁵⁵ when Ayatullah Haeri accepted the invitation of the people of Qum and left Arak, accompanied by his son, Ayatullah Murteza Haeri, and Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Khansari. Qum, which had already been decorated for the Eid of Mab'ath⁵⁶, was prepared to welcome the Ayatullah. While he was still outside the city, crowds of people flocked to welcome him upon the news of his arrival. For the next few days, the Ayatullah participated in the celebrations of Mab'ath in different part of the city.

Soon after Mab'ath, the birth anniversary of Imam al-Zaman took place simultaneous with the Persian New Year at that time, and this encouraged many from neighbouring cities to journey to Qum to visit the Ayatullah. During the celebrations, the scholars who were familiar with Ayatullah Haeri during their stay in Samira and Najaf spoke of his knowledge and spiritual qualities, thus encouraging the crowds to keep him in Qum.

Before Ayatullah Haeri's arrival, Ayatullah Shaykh Muhammad Taqi Bafqi Yazdi migrated from Najaf to Qum. He prepared the grounds for the foundation of the seminaries of Qum with the cooperation of great scholars such as Ayatullah Hajj Shaykh Abulqasim Kabir Qummi, Ayatullah Hajj Shaykh Mahdi, and Ayatullah Hajj Muhammad Arbab. In their discussions, they decided that to have a scholar from a city other than Qum, a person who is highly knowledgeable and pious, and can supervise the seminaries to revive religious sciences. Thus, after successfully convincing Ayatullah Haeri, he decided to reside in Qum.

The fourteenth century the first year of the foundation of the seminaries of Qum, coincided with the year some scholars were exiled from Iraq to Iran. Ayatullah Sayyed Abulhasan Esfahani, Ayatullah Mirza Husayn Naini, Ayatullah Sayyed Ali Shahrestani, Ayatullah Sayyed Abdulhusayn Hujjat Karbalai, Ayatullah Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Esfehani Gharawi and Ayatullah Shaykh Mahdi Khalesi were among the great scholars who along with their students were forced to leave Iraq for Iran and hence resided in the seminaries of Qum.

Ayatullah Haeri settled in Qum in 1340 AH (1301 SH) and this laid the foundation of the seminaries. These schools gradually blossomed and found their place among the greatest seminaries of the Shi'a world. For this reason, he was known as "The Founding Ayatullah." Had it not been for his presence, not only would have been no signs left of the seminaries, but also the same would have happened to the monotheistic religions.

The most fundamental step the Ayatullah took after funding the seminaries was to renovate the schools. He encouraged discussion circles and deep critical thinking; he also enhanced the instructors' teaching methods and applied the curriculum used in Najaf after his thirty years of teaching experience. These positive changes ended the tragic period of the Qum seminaries that had worsened after Mirzaye Qummi. The Ayatullah's most innovative action choosing a group of scholars whose responsibility was to evaluate the student's academic level, a necessary method applied in today's educational systems.

The initiation of the seminaries coincided with the inception of Reza Pahlavi's sovereignty. The conflicts between the government and the scholars intensified and government restrictions on the seminaries led to the fall of the seminaries and a decrease in the number of its students. According to the statistics, the number of the schools and their students in Iran in the year 1304 SAH were 282 and 5984. After the sixteen years, that is, in the year 1320 SAH towards the end of reign of King Reza Pahlavi this decreased to 207 schools and 784 students.

Despite this, in this period, the Ayatullah made many efforts to organize all affairs of the seminaries. Perhaps it was his non-political attitude that kept the seminaries of Qum less vulnerable to the restrictions planned by Reza Pahlavi's reign. He was very patient with regards to the political events that occurred in the beginning of Reza Shah's period and with respect to the controversial policy that banned the wearing of the hijab in Iran. He struggled to protect the newfound Islamic seminaries, as he used to say, "I find protecting the seminaries more important."

However, he did confront Reza Shah numerous times regarding the Shah's policies. After that policy was issued and after the massacre of people by the Pahlavi regime in the Gowharshad Mosque in Mashhad, the Ayatullah grieved until his death⁵⁷.

Ayatullah Haeri passed away in 1355 AH at the age of 84. After him, Ayatullah Sayyed Muhammad Hujjat, Ayatullah Sadr, and Ayatullah Khansari administered the seminaries.

In 1363 AH, Ayatullah Burujerdi directed the Qum seminaries. Though he was invited by Ayatullah Haeri to reside in Qum before, he preferred to avoid social positions and kindly turned down the invitation. It was only by the end of 1363 AH and during the presidency of the three Marje's: Ayatullahs Khansari, Hujjat, and Sadr that he resided in Qum and directed the seminaries.

In addition to having mastered Islamic sciences such as jurisprudence (fiqh), principles of jurisprudence (usul al-fiqh), rijal⁵⁸, hadith, philosophy, and theology, Ayatullah Burujerdi taught different subjects including philosophy before his arrival to Qum. During his stay in Qum, he taught usul for six years and taught fiqh for the rest of his life.

With the arrival of Ayatullah Borujerdi in Qum, the seminaries of Qum under his supervision flourished and in a very short time undertook major changes. Seminaries, libraries, lessons and discussions, journals and different Islamic sciences progressed on a deeper and higher level. During his administration, the number of the scholars in Qum increased to more than six thousand. His activities also extended to the Islamic world outside Iranian borders. Building the mosque in Tripoli of Lebanon and Imam Ali Mosque in Hamburg, Germany are some of his accomplishments.

Ayatullah Khomeini was one of the Shi'a marje's who became the foremost marja' of his time after Ayatullah Burujerdi. He had a great impact on the seminaries of Qum and the social-political movements and transitions of the time. In his classes, he discussed the scope of jurisprudence and expanded it to include political jurisprudence. Using strong arguments, he introduced the idea of an Islamic government based on governance of the

jurist (wilayatulfaqih). Along with teaching, Imam Khomeini pursued his political activities against the Pahlavi regime.

One of the most important ones was his speech on the 13th of Khordad in 1342 SAH that led to the famous revolt on the 15th of Khordad, an uprising that finally resulted in the victory of the Islamic revolution on the 22nd of Bahman of 1357 SAH. The seminaries of Qum paid an enormous expense for this victory; one of these events was which the Savak⁵⁹ attacked Feyziyeh, one of the seminary schools and killed all its scholars and students.

Finally, when the Pahlavi regime found Imam Khomeini a serious threat to their rule, they exiled him to Turkey, then Iraq, and finally to France.

Ayatullah Sayyed Shahab ud-Din Husayni Mar'ashy Najafi was among the great scholars who came to Qum through Ayatullah Haeri's request to teach. Ayatullah Sayyed Muhammad Reza Golpaygani and Ayatullah Shaykh Muhammad Ali Araki were among the two great leaders and maraje up until the Islamic Revolution⁶⁰.

Notes

1. Majlesi, Muhammad Baqir, Bihar al-Anwar, Volume 57, Page 217
2. Qummi, Hasan ibn Muhammad, Tarikh-e-Qum, page 24
3. Al-Hamawy, Yaqut, Mu'jam ul-Buldan, volume 5, page 396
4. Qummi, Hasan ibn Muhammad, Tarikh-e-Qum, page 295; Ahmad ibn Yahya Balazary, Futuh ul- Buldan, page 304, 305
5. Ibid. page 38
6. Ibid. page 37
7. Ibid. page 89
8. Ibid. page 38
9. Al-Hamawy, Yaqut, Mu'jamul-Buldan, volume 4, page 397-398; Sam'any, Abdul Karim ibn Muhammad, al-Ansab, volume 10, page 485
10. Ja'farian, Rasul, Hayat-e-Fekri wa Siasy-e-emaman-e-shii, page 530 and 531
11. Shaykh Saduq, 'Uyun Akhbar ur-Reza, volume 2, page 260
12. Hamedany, Ahmad ibn Muhammad, al-Buldan, page 531
13. Majlesi, Muhammad Baqir, Bihar al-Anwar, Volume 57, Page 262
14. Ibid. Volume 57, Page 218
15. One of the titles of Imam Mahdi meaning "He who arises"
16. The household of the prophet
17. Ibid. Volume 57, Page 211-228
18. Ibid. Volume 57, Page 216
19. Majlesi, Muhammad Baqir, Bihar al-Anwar, Volume 57, Page 218 and 219
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid. Volume 57, Page 218 and 214
22. Qummi, Hasan ibn Muhammad, Tarikh-e Qum, Page 207-240
23. Ibn Tawus, Sayyed Abdul Karim, Farhatul-Guza, Page 105
24. Qummi, Hasan ibn Muhammad, Tarikh-e Qum, Page 213
25. Majlesi, Muhammad Baqir, Bihar al-Anwar, Volume 57, Page 228
26. Ibid. Volume 48 ,Page 317
27. Ibid. Volume 48, Page 316
28. Ibid. Volume 57, Page 213
29. Kashy, Muhammad ibn Umar, Rijal-e Kashy, page 333
30. Ibid. page 332
31. Shaykh Tusy, Rijal-e Tusy, Page 373
32. Alame Hely, Hasan ibn Yusuf, Izahul-Ishtibah, Page 99 and 100
33. Musawi Khoyi, Sayyed Abul Qasim, Mu'jam Rijalil-Hadith, Volume 6, Page 266
34. Sayyed Kabayery, Sayyed Ali Reza, Howze Haye Elmiyye Shi'e Dar Gostare-ye Jahan, page 365

35. Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid Barqi who was originally from Kufa was a trusted narrator himself but he used to narrate from unreliable narrators. He wrote a lot of books the most well-known of which is Al-Mahasin. Barqi was expelled from Qum by Ahmad ibn 'Isa Ash'ary because he would narrate from unreliable narrators. However, after some time he was returned to Qum. He died in the year 275 AH. Refer to: Najjashy, Ahmad ibn Ali, Rijal al-Najjashy, page 76 and 77 and Musawy Khoyi, Sayyed Abulqasim, Mu'jam Rijalil-Hadith, Volume 3, Page 49-61
36. For more information refer to: Jabbary, Muhammad Reza, Maktab-e Hadithi-ye Qum, Page 107- 115 and Muaddab, Sayyed Reza, Tarikh-e Hadith, Page 119 and 120 and Ma'aref, Majid, Tarikh-e-Umumi-e Hadith, page 328
37. Principles of jurisprudence (usul) are the texts which were compiled by the early Shi'a scholars. Most of the authors of these texts were those who had heard the hadith from one of the Imams, in particular, from Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq, writing them down in notebooks. Out of these texts compiled the popular ones were four-hundred in number by different authors.
38. The books by the name of Amali, as it can be understood from its name, are notes taken by the students in the courses.
39. Refer to: Jabbary, Muhammad Reza, Maktab-e Hadithi Qum, page 434 - 438 and Muaddab, Sayyed Reza, Tarikh-e Hadith, Page 122 and 123
40. Sayyed Kabayery, Sayyed Ali Reza, Howze Haye Elmiyye Shi'e Dar Gostare-ye Jahan, page 370
41. Agha Bozorg-e Tehrani, Muhammad Hasan, Tabaghat-e A'lam-e Shi'a, Volume 2, Page 225 and 226 and Volume 3, Page 136
42. Agha Bozorg-e Tehrani, Muhammad Hasan, Tabaghat-e A'lam-e Shi'a, Volume 3, Page 371 - 373
43. "Shaykh ul-Islam" is a title of superior authority in the issues of Islam given to those scholars who acquired deep knowledge of Islam.
44. Akhbaryun believe in a very literal understanding of the sources leaving little or no room for rational thought and interpretation.
45. Usuli attitude is on the other side of the spectrum in contrast to the Akhbary attitude and it believes in the usage of reasoning in having a sound understanding of the hadiths.
46. A scholar in the field of hadith who believe hadiths should be narrated and taken literally and rational interpretation is not needed.
47. Those sentences, the meaning of which is obvious or clear, without any assistance from the context (qarinah) although there is a slight possibility of another meaning.
48. The act of getting the rulings of Islam from the sources, Qur'an and hadiths
49. Bigdely, Azar, Atashkadeye Azar, Page 167
50. Ashtyani, Sayyed Jalal ud-Din, Muntakhabatyaz Athaare Hukamay-e Iran, Volume 1, Page 299
51. Ibid. Volume 1, Page 324
52. Refer to: Sayyed Kabayery, Sayyed Ali Reza, Howze Haye Elmiyye Shi'e Dar Gostare-ye Jahan, page 373 - 383
53. Before formation of schools in their current form, students would go to places called Maktab Khane where they would learn Qur'an and literature from their teacher.
54. A marja' is the religious authority who people refer to for their jurisprudential questions.
55. 1300 according to Solar Hijri Calendar
56. Muslims celebrate this day as the anniversary of the day Prophet Muhammad was appointed by God as a Prophet.
57. Please refer to Abbas Zadeh, Sa'eed, Negahban-e Bidar, Page 67
58. The study of the reporters of hadith
59. The Pahlavi's Organization of Intelligence and National Security.
60. Sayyed Kabayery, Sayyed Ali Reza, Howze Haye Elmiyye Shi'e Dar Gostare-ye Jahan, pages 383- 408

The History of the Islamic Seminaries of Qum, Part 2

Rasoul Imani Khoshku

Translated by Mohammad Javad Shomali

Journal: Vol. 15, no. 1, Spring 2014

Abstract

The former articles in this series explored the historical origins of the main religious seminaries in the Shi'a world, and its role in bring about a unique culture in the scientific, social, and political spheres. The seminaries created well-educated and pious Shi'a scholars who pursued ijtiḥād with the use of the Qur'an, Sunnah, and reason to respond to the needs of the Muslim community. The previous article delved into the history of the Islamic seminaries of Qum.

Using Islamic traditions and historical records, the significance of Qum according to the Ahlul Bayt was explained, along with its link to Lady Ma'sumah's arrival to the city and its impact on the future of the seminaries' success. This article continues with the seminaries of Qum after the Islamic Revolution, including an explanation of the core courses offered in philosophy, exegesis, theology, and jurisprudence.

The Islamic seminaries of Qum after the Islamic Revolution

Before the Islamic revolution in 1979, the government was a constant obstacle in the seminaries' progress with the ongoing propaganda against seminarians to discourage people from admissions¹. Seeing that the Islamic revolution in Iran was the result of the seminaries' progress supported by the people, after the revolution the seminaries became popular among people. The leadership of Imam Khomeini further strengthened this.

Numerous clerics moved to different parts of the country on various occasions to spread seminary teachings to encourage the youth to study Islamic sciences. The impressive growth of the Qum seminaries both in terms of quantity and quality were due to the abovementioned activities. The seminary scholars were not preoccupied with fighting against the Pahlavi regime any longer, and so they continued to engage in academic accomplishments with focused minds. Moreover, several new majors were offered in various fields of study.

The Qum seminaries expanded across the country and throughout the world. Today, most cities in Iran have seminaries directed under the Qum seminaries.

Although studying religion is a right for all Muslims, before the revolution in Iran seminaries were only opened to men. However, after the revolution, seminaries for women were also founded not only in Qum, but in cities across the country.

Those interested in learning religious studies have also come to Qum from across the world, and this is considered one of the greatest blessings of the Islamic Revolution. Nowadays, many foreign students residing in Qum are seminarians and eventually return to their countries to convey the message of Islam, particularly Shi'ism. The seminaries of Qum invited both men and women from foreign countries, and both are provided with the same facilities.

Moreover, although at first glance university and seminary studies did not have much in common, shrewd measures were taken for seminary studies to find a way into the universities. After the Islamic Revolution, some modules on Islamic studies were integrated in the national curriculum for undergraduate programmes and, as a result, more seminarians started teaching in universities and this paved the way further for cooperation between the two institutions. Ayatullah Mutahhari and Ayatullah Mufatteh also played a major role in this. On the other hand, it was made possible for the students of the seminaries who were interested in studying in the university to do so.

Today, many great teachers from the seminaries are present in the universities and along with teaching certain religious studies are the messengers of the valuable Shi'a teachings in these academic centres.

For a more profound understanding of the educational dimensions of the seminaries of Qum, the following provides a brief review of some of the available educational fields.

3. Core Courses in the Qum seminaries

3.1. Philosophy

Philosophy is one of the most fundamental sciences on which all sciences depend. Religious sciences are related to God and the universe, and these discussions depend on accepting certain realities in existence which are only studied and proven in philosophy. The philosophical method is an intellectual one, and, in the Shi'a understanding, the intellect ('aql) is one of the sources for understanding Islam.

Philosophy in the Islamic world has a very long history. During the era of the Abbasids, there was a great interest in Greek works among the intellectuals, all of which were translated. Despite this interest and huge translation works, it was with the efforts of philosophers such as Farabi, Avicenna, and Suhrewardi in the next centuries that Islamic philosophy really developed^{2, 3}.

During the history of Islamic philosophy, three main doctrines were present: Avicennism (Mash-shaa'), Illuminationism (Ishraq), and the transcendent theosophy (al-Hikmah al-Muta'liyyah). The Avicennism that was in debt to the ancient Greek school of thought was dominant for years. Farabi, Avicenna, and Ibn Rushd were the most famous scholars of this doctrine.

In the sixth century, Shahab al-Din Suhrewardi developed the philosophy of Illuminationism (Ishraq) which was followed later by many followers. This continued until the eleventh century when Mulla Sadra founded the transcendent theosophy (al-Hikmah al-Muta'liyah) which is the philosophy which is currently studied. Of course, due to the deep rational and philosophical content in the Shi'a Imams' sermons and narrations, the Shi'a Islamic seminaries tended towards philosophy earlier and more than the rest of Muslim world.

Philosophy in the Islamic seminaries of Iran goes back to the arrival of Mulla Sadra (979-1050 AH) in Kahak, a village 30 kilometers outside Qum. As mentioned, philosophy in Qum began in the fourth era as a result of

Mulla Sadra's migration. Fayz Kashani and Fayyaz Lahiji were among his students. And philosophy continued to exist with the efforts of Qadhi Saeed Qummi. Establishing the philosophical method of transcendent theosophy and expressing innovative theories about existence and reality, Mulla Sadra painted a new perspective in discovering the realities of the universe, such as his theory of substantial motion (al-Harakat al-Jawhariyyah).

In the recent period, philosophy in the seminaries of Qum witnessed great scholars who had an important effect on the philosophical and political thinking of the Islamic world similar to previous periods when philosophers such Mulla Sadra and his students played a major role in the Safavid Era. Ayatullah Sayyid Abul hasan Rafi'I Qazwini (1310-1395 AH) was among the pioneers of the philosophical movement in the seminaries.

He had studied intellectual sciences such as logic and philosophy in the seminaries of Tehran from Ayatullahs Abdunnabi al-Nuri, Hakim Mirza Muhsen Kermanshahy, Fazel Tehrani, and Mirza Mahmoud Qummi. He came to Qum at the time of Ayatullah Haeri where he taught rational sciences. Amongst his most talented students was Ayatullah Khomeini. Ayatullah Khomeini was known for his attention towards several dimensions of the Islamic sciences, especially that of philosophy. Various philosophical, jurisprudential, ethical, and mystical topics that played a role in his philosophical-political thinking were coherently taught in his lessons.

Due to his efforts, the theory of 'The Governance of the Jurist' (WilayatulFaqih) was established and found followers in the seminaries. After expanding from the seminaries of Qum to the Islamic revolution, it led to the establishment of the Islamic government.

Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i was another philosophical figure who greatly promoted Mulla Sadra's theories. He taught Asfaar⁴ and Shifaa⁵ and wrote Bidayat al-Hikmah and Nihayat al-Hikmah. Tabataba'i wrote tens of books, treatises, and commentaries on divine philosophy. His important role was his innovative method of discussing theories on divine philosophy and his counter-arguments against the philosophy of dialectic materialism. He discussed and responded to issues brought up in the materialistic school of thought in his Usul-e-Falsafeva Raveshe Realism.

This book was then published in different parts of the Islamic world with an additional commentary of his student, Ayatullah Murtadha Mutahhari.

Ayatullah Mutahhari was a follower of the philosophical doctrine of his two great teachers, Ayatullah Khomeini and Allamah Tabataba'i. He wrote about and taught comparative philosophy, cautioned people about Marxism, and promoted Islamic thinking to seminary and university students, as well as the laymen. Mutahhari's specialty was his ability to explain and analyse philosophical problems and render it easy for all to understand. Other renowned philosophy professors in the seminaries were Ayatullah Abdullah Jawadi Amuli, Ayatullah Hasan Hasanzadeh Amuli, and Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi.

Among the various branches of philosophy, political philosophy was also developed during this period; previous eras did not include this field. In this period, Islamic political thought was discussed and its initial principles were

compiled. The theory of 'The Governance of the Jurist' was introduced in a thorough and comprehensive manner, and the critical study of western philosophical schools of thought became available.

In this period, the principles of Islamic beliefs and the Islamic political philosophy were drawn from the scriptures and made available to everyone⁶.

In the present period, philosophy has become one of the main fields of study in the seminaries; many books have been written on the subject, such as *Usul-e Falsafewa Rawesh-e-Realism* (Principles of Philosophy and Method of Realism), *Bidayat al-Hikmah* (The Beginning of Philosophy), and *Nihayat al-Hikmah* (The End of Philosophy) by Allamah Tabataba'i, *Harakatwa Zaman* (Motion and Time) by Ayatullah Mutahhari, *Rahighe Makhtum* by Ayatullah Javadi Amuli and *Amuzesh-e-Falsafe* by Ayatullah Misbah Yazdi.

3.2. Islamic Theology (Kalam)

Theology, as was explained earlier, deals with verifying religious beliefs and is responsible for responding to questions raised against Islam. Islamic theologians primarily benefit from two sources: intellect and tradition⁷.

In the seminaries of Qum, the narrators of the hadiths reported and explained the theological teachings of the Imams. Theology in Qum had a distinctive nature and had adopted a special method in delivering those topics and issues. Hadith compilations such as *Al-Kafi*, *'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, *Al-Ghaybah*, and *Kifayatul-Asar* include theological discussions with the authors' views expressed using a tradition-based (naqli) method.

In later periods, especially in the fourth period, the rational approach was common in the field of theology as depicted by the works of Mulla Sadra and Abd al-Razzaq Lahiji, the most dominant scholar in the field of theology during this period (1072 AH). Moreover, he adopted a mystical approach in his writings and explained the various results it would bring versus the philosophical or the theological (Kalami) approach.

Mirza Hasan Lahiji and Qadi Saeed Qummi were among the famous theology scholars of the Qum seminaries after Mirza Lahiji. In this period, valued books such as *Gowhar-e Murad*, *Shawareq al-Ilham*, and *Sarmaye-ye Iman* by Mulla Lahiji, *Sham' al-Yaqin fi Ma'rifatil-Haqqwal-Yaqin* by Mirza Hasan Lahiji and *Kelid-e Behesht* by Qadi Saeed Qummi were released.

Currently, discussions of theology have an impressive growth among students of religious studies. Sub-branches of Islamic theology such as *Imamate*⁸ and *Mahdawiyyat*⁹ have their own text books. Allamah Tabataba'i, Ayatullah Misbah Yazdi, and Ayatullah Subhani are the most prominent scholars of Islamic theology during this period, each having written numerous books on its branches.

3.3 Exegesis of the Qur'an (Tafseer)

Muslims believe the Qur'an to be God's words revealed to the heart of Prophet Muhammad who then accurately recited the verses to the people. The study of Quranic exegesis (tafseer), which began during the Prophet's lifetime, deals with understanding the inner and apparent meaning of the Qur'an. In Shi'ism, although the real interpreters of the Qur'an are the

infallible Imams, it is possible to acquire a deep understanding of the verses using their hadiths. For this reason, from the early centuries until now, Shi'a scholars, especially those from Qum, have written books specifically on Qur'anic exegesis:

Third century: Tafsir-e Qummi by Ali ibn Ibrahim Qummi;

Fourth century: Though there were many books on exegesis by Shaykh Saduq, his father Ibn Babuyeh Qummi, and his teacher Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Waleed¹⁰, they are unavailable today;

Sixth century: Rawzul-Jinan by Abul Fatih Razi;

Twelfth century: Kanzud-Daqaiqwa Bahr ul-Gharaib by Muhammad Reza Qummi Mashhadi, where he expounds on the verses of the Qur'an using the Imams' narrations.

After the Islamic revolution, exegesis developed more with numerous books written on it, including a variety of topics as explained in the following:

A. Sequential exegesis of the Qur'an: From the early days of exegesis, most exegetists (mufasssir) began explaining the Qur'an from the first until the last chapter. Such examples include Tafseer al-Mizan by Allameh Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai, one of the most renowned exegesis books using this method; Tafseer Nemuneh, the work of a group of scholars from the Qum seminaries under the supervision of Ayatullah Makarim Shirazi, also translated to many languages; and Tasneem by Ayatullah Javadi Amuli.

B. Thematic exegesis of the Qur'an: A new technique in the seminaries, the exegetist, with a particular subject in mind, reads through the verses, collects the subject-related ones, and by analysing those verses, draws conclusions related to the subject. Manshoor-e Javeed by Ayatullah Subhani, Ma'arif-e Qur'an by Ayatullah Misbah Yazdi, and Payam-e Qur'an by Ayatullah Makarim Shirazi are some primary examples.

C. Qur'anic sciences (Ulume Qur'ani): In recent centuries, researchers studied the Qur'an with an outward view of its verses, called Qur'anic Science (Ulume Qur'ani). Topics such as the Qur'an's history of the revelation, the names and titles, various types of revelation, definite and indefinite verses (muhkam wa mutashabih), abrogated and abrogating verses (nasikh wa mansukh), and Meccan and Medinan chapters are discussed in this field. Al-Tamheed by Ayatollah Ma'refat is one of the more renowned books on this subject.

3.4. Jurisprudence (fiqh)

The predominant subject taught in the seminaries of Qum was jurisprudence, or the practical laws of religion, also closely related to the field of Principles of Jurisprudence (Usule Fiqh). While usule fiqh establishes the necessary principles needed for deriving rulings of religion from the sources, fiqh delves into the sources and use the principles established in usul to derive the practical legislative laws.

The Ash'arids in Qum reported the hadiths of the Imams about jurisprudence. The teachers of the second era of the seminaries published numerous books in the field of jurisprudence. Several examples include Al-Mahasi by Muhammad ibn Khalid Barqi (275 AH), a man who lived during

the lifetime of Imams; al-Nawadir by Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Isa Ash'ari Qummi; the five volume (out of eight) al-Kafi by the late Kulayni devoted narrations related to jurisprudence; Shaykh Saduq's Man La Yahthuruhul Faqih (or "he who does not have access to a jurist") and other books on jurisprudence, such as al-Muqni¹¹.

Furthermore, even scholars who have not written on jurisprudence prioritized it in their discussions. In the third era, although the seminaries underwent an overall recession, there are available works written on jurisprudence, such as Fiqhul-Qur'an by Saeed ibn Abdullah Qutbud-Din Rawandi (573 AH) who left Kashan to reside in Qum.

In the recent periods, Mirza Qummi (1151-1231 AH) made enormous efforts to develop this field. The founder of the seminaries of Qum, Ayatullah Haeri, also a mujtahid¹², invited many of the renowned Grand Ayatollahs to come to Iran from Iraq for jurisprudential discussions. Ayatullah Burujerdi, Ayatullah Khomeini, Ayatullah Mar'ashi Najafi, Ayatullah Golpaygani, and Ayatullah Araki are among the great jurists of the recent centuries.

Numerous books and pamphlets have been written since then. Tahrirul-Wasilah by Ayatullah Khomeini is one of the most outstanding works in this field in the recent years. Jurisprudential discussions have become the most important topics in various seminaries across the Islamic world, especially that of the Qum seminaries, where hundreds of sessions on jurisprudence are held every day.

Propagation and Society

The Qum seminaries have never known themselves as an institute separate from people. This institute knows itself as the inheritor of the prophets; like the prophets, they have been involved in propagating the religion of God by spreading divine knowledge through education, and rebelled against oppression from the heads of state.

Since its formation, the seminaries propagated the teachings of the prophets as their mission. Today, students of Islamic studies travel to different parts of Iran and the world on special occasions such as the month of Ramadan, the first ten days of Muharram, and the last ten days of Safar to disseminate the teachings of Islam. Their primary goal is to guide people through lectures, public sessions, and private consultations. However, guiding people is not limited to special occasions; the scholars of the seminaries also maintain their contact with the people through various means.

Today one of the important sections of the seminaries deals with propagation. Those qualified to propagate travel to many countries, cities (including within Iran), and remote villages throughout the year.

The seminaries are also responsive to the domestic and foreign changes that occur in the society and the world. Their most important activity in this regard is their role in the Islamic revolution of Iran in the year 1357 S.A.H. In 1342 SH, under the direction of Ayatullah Khomeini the leader of the seminaries of Qum, the people of Iran rose up against the oppression of the Pahlavi regime. In that time and after the exile of Reza Pahlavi who promoted anti-Islamic policies, such as banning women from wearing hijab,

his son Muhammad Reza Pahlavi took his place and pursued the same objectives.

Ayatollah Khomeini believed that being silent towards the anti-Islamic activities of the government was not permissible. With his famous speech in the Fayziyyah School of Qum, he opened a new chapter in the history of Iran. Other scholars in the country, along with the people of Qum, announced their support for him and endured much difficulty doing so. This epochal uprising was eventually spread from Qum to cities across the country, and all of these movements were under the leadership of the scholars of the seminaries, many of whom were imprisoned, exiled, or lost their lives as a result. This lasted for fifteen years until 1357 SH, when the uprising of the masses and scholars became victorious.

After the Islamic revolution, the seminaries of Qum remained active in various social fields; due to the invading attack of the Ba'th regime of Iraq against Iran, many scholars hastened to the battlegrounds to participate in the battle imposed on Iran to defend their country. Their presence was heart-warming for other battalions, and among them many were martyred.

The awareness of the seminaries of Qum with respect to the national and foreign developments and changes, and the seminarians' firm stand against the oppression and injustice had always been a source of comfort and inspiration for the masses.

Notes

1. Refer to: Misbah Yazdi, Muhammad Taqi, Mabahesi Darbare-ye Hoze, p.s 44-47
2. Refer to: Tabatabai, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn, al-Mizan, volume 5, p. s 279 and 280
3. Refer to: Tabatabai, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn, Shi'a dar Islam, p. 92
4. This refers to Sadr al-Din Shirazi's monumental 4-part, 9-volume Al-Hikmat al-Muta'aliyahfi'l-Asfar al-Aqliyyah al-Arba'ah ("The Transcendent Wisdom in the Four Intellectual Journeys").
5. This refers to Avicenna's Kitab al-Shifa (The Book of Healing). This book is on science, logic and philosophy and not medicine.
6. Sayyid Kabayeri, Sayyid Ali-Reza, Howze Haye Elmiyye Shi'i Dar Gostare-ye Jahan, pp. 408-412
7. The Qur'an and the sayings of the 14 Infallibles
8. The study of issues related to the imamate of the infallible Imams
9. The study of issues about the saviour, Imam Mahdi
10. Refer to Najjashi, Ahmad ibn Ali, Rijal al-Najjashi, pp. 281, 383, and 391
11. Refer to Najjashi, Ahmad ibn Ali, Rijal al-Najjashi, p. 391
12. A mujtahid is a scholar who is qualified to derive laws of the religious from the sources.

www.alhassanain.org/english