CRITICISM AND ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK "RELIGION IN THE PROGRESS OF PERFECTION" part 3

Iman Noorbakhshi

Islamic researcher

Jan 2022

***Abstract**: This article is a criticism and analysis of the book "Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shiite Islam" by Dr. Hossein Modarresi Tabatabai. The main focal point of the discussion is as follows: Criticisms of the type of interpretation by the book's author from traditional and historical texts, relying on part of an occurrence and generalizing it as a view of most of the Shia society, the book of al-Kaafi and the authenticity of its traditions, characteristics of the infallible Imams (a.s.), especially the documentary texts on their Imamat,and doubts about the leadership (Imamate) of certain Imams after the martyrdom of some of the Imams (a.s.).*

***Keywords**: Characteristics of Imamat,documentary texts on Imamat, Kaafi (book), credibility, Shi'a, history, "**Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shiite Islam**"(book) / Modarresi TabatabaiSeyyed Hossein*

Introduction

In issues 18, 19, and 21, it was mentioned that this discourse is a summarized report of critique and analysis sessions of the book "**Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shiite Islam**" (written by Dr.Seyyed Hossein Modarresi Tabatabai, Tehran, Kavir, 1387), presented by the esteemed researcher Mr. Hassan Taaromi.

Previously, the critique and analysis of the preface of the first section and a portion of the second section were discussed. Now, another portion of the second section and a portion of the third section of the book are being discussed.

We always hope that a fair and constructive spirit of criticism will expand in the academic realm, and with the publication of this discourse, we can play a role in this expansion. With such hope, we invite educated readers to deeply consider the content of this writing.

Continuing the analysis of the second section, in past discussions, we discussed the critique of the concept of exaggeration (Ghuluw) and deputation (Tafweez) in the second section of the book. First, we addressed the author's definition of exaggeration and deputation, and then we talked about the history of exaggeration and deputation and some individuals who had been accused of leading the exaggeration and deputation movement among the companions of the Imams (a.s.). We concluded that the author's judgment about certain individuals like Mufazzal Ibn Umar or Muhammad Ibn Sinan is not very precise, and the maximum judgment that can be made about them is that there is a difference of opinion among the scholars of narrators. We also showed that the author's perspective on those whom he introduced as prominent figures of the moderate Shiite movement, such as Abdullah Ibn Abi Ya'fur or Abaan Ibn Taghlib - suggesting that they either didn't believe in textual evidence (Nass) or

infallibility or considered the Imams (a.s.) merely as knowledgeable righteous scholars - is not accurate. Now, we will continue our discussion. On page 75 of the book, in footnote number 2, the author mentions a passage from the book "Haqā'iq al-Īmān".

He quotes, based on the belief that many companions of the Imams considered them as righteous scholars and not infallible, attributing this view to Shahid Thani (the Second Martyr). It should be noted that this book was attributed to Shahid Thani; however, recently, based on new manuscripts that have been found, it has become known that this book belongs to one of the contemporary scholars of Shahid Thani, not himself. Nonetheless, a discussion is raised in this book about the conditions of faith and whether an individual must believe in the principles of beliefs generally or in a detailed manner. In this book, a detailed discussion is presented on topics such as the infallibility of the Imams (a.s.) and whether the belief in their infallibility is a detailed requirement of the faith. It is mentioned there that some companions of the Imams (a.s.) did not believe in the infallibility. The point to be noted is that these individuals did not know that this matter was from the principles and essentials and did not pay attention to its necessity. As we mentioned before, the matters of belief were not in such a way that they would be clear and systematic for all the companions of the Imams from the very beginning, and many of them gradually fell into error.

On page 76, a group named "Ya'furiyya" is mentioned, stating that these individuals, unlike the deniers of Imamate (Ghulaat), did not consider the Imams (a.s.) as disbelievers. In our narrations, there are statements to the effect that if someone believes that the individuals who seized Imamate and Caliphate had faith, there is no share of faith for him.[1] The source they cite in the footnote from the book "Al-Maqaalaatwa al-Firaq" by Sa'd

Ibn Abdullah Ash'ari and "Firaq al-Shi'a" by Naubakhti, refers to a group of Kaysaniyya supporters who during the time of the Abbasids believed in the continuation of Imamate in the descendants of Abbas and said: "They went to extremes" (Ghuluw) and they said, "If someone does not believe in their Imamate, he is a disbeliever." It is unclear on what basis they considered this group as part of the Shia. If some people were believers in the Imamate of the descendants of Abbas and considered their opponents as disbelievers,can we consider them among the exaggerators (Ghulaat) of the Shia and say that there was a group against them who did not hold such beliefs?

In another section, on page 77 onwards, the author refers to the disputes among the Shia and between the two groups of moderates and exaggerators during the time of the Imams, and how sometimes these disagreements led to verbal attacks between the two groups. The idea that there were differences of opinion among the companions of the Imams and the Shia in some matters of belief is accurate. But was this difference of opinion to the extent that it led to conflicts and the creation of different sects? Usually, when there was a difference of opinion between two companions regarding a doctrinal issue, they would refer to the Imams, and the Imams would provide them with an answer. And when they received the Imam's response, they would set aside the disagreement on that matter. The sources they refer to include three narrations from the book "Kaafi." Let's examine them:

First, the reference in footnote 5 on page 77 refers to a narration from "Kaafi," Volume 8, page 78. However, only the reference is provided, and the text of the hadith is not included. In the text of the narration, we read that one of the companions of Imam Sadeq(a.s.) named Muyassir said: "I went to

Imam (a.s.). He asked me, '*How are your companions?*' I said, 'May I be your sacrifice! We are better than the Jews, Christians, Magians, and those who associate others with Allah.'" Imam (a.s.) said, '*By Allah, not two of you will enter the Fire together; and, by Allah, not even one of you.*' (Kaafi, vol. 8, p. 78)"

Based on the word "أصحابك" (your companions), the author interprets that the narrator regarded another group of Shia as exaggerators (Ghulat). Therefore, he considered them worse than Jews and Christians. First, the Imam's response either implies his agreement or shows that the Imam endorsed him. Moreover, in the sources of narrators, this individual has been verified, and there is no indication that he was an exaggerator. A more accurate interpretation of this narration is that "أصحابك" (your companions) refers to a group who sat beside this person and apparently were opponents of the Ahl al-Bayt. The Imam (a.s.) then reassures him and provided him with comfort and expressed the virtues of being a Shia to him. The continuation of the narration reinforces this interpretation. Because in the continuation, the Imam (a.s.), while referring to a Quranic verse, counts that group among the people of hell. Therefore, it's not possible to consider the group mentioned in the narration as Shia. Second, the reference in the same footnote to another narration from "Kaafi," vol. 8, p. 225, where a person speaks to Imam Baqir (a.s.), saying, "Some of our companions are in conflict with their opponents." The Imam (a.s.) responds, "*Disengage from them; avoidance is better*." This clearly shows that the opponents in this context are non-Shia individuals, and the Imam (a.s.) advises not to engage with them. The continuation of the narration in this case also strengthens this interpretation.

Third, in the same footnote, it refers to another narration from "Kaafi," vol. 8, p. 223, which refers to conflicts and disagreements

among the Shia. Apparently, from the context of the narration, it indicates the incident involving Abu al-Khattab. Abu al-Khattab was one of the companions of Imam Sadeq (a.s.), who later fell into exaggeration, and the Imam (a.s.) disowned and cursed him. A person says to the Imam (a.s.) that the Shia have clashed with each other. The Imams say that they wanted to write a book on this matter to resolve the differences, but there are challenges they don't want to undertake this task, as it might lead to more conflicts, and it's better to address the issue through advice and moderation.

Now, based on these narrations, it's not possible to accurately describe the author's depiction of the conflicts and disagreements among the Shia. According to the author's perspective, a group of Shia believed that the knowledge of the Imams was derived from the legacy of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and that the Imams (a.s.) deduced issues and branches using those principles. But since they are infallible, they don't make mistakes in their deductions and derivations. (Page 79 of the book) Here, we don't intend to examine this viewpoint, but the question arises whether, in any case:

Can we accept the attribute of infallibility for the Imams? Is this attribute not human according to the mentioned author? What is the difference between this attribute and other attributes of the Imams? If there is no rational or religious prohibition for accepting these attributes and it doesn't lead to deifying them, why can't we accept it? Furthermore, it should be noted that some virtues of the Imams have gradually been accepted. Initially, due to sensitivity to extremism, some did not accept it, but gradually realized that these virtues are not extremism. Generally, as repeatedly stated, the respected author in his book has not presented any criteria for accepting or rejecting historical narrations. It's unclear on what basis he has included certain narrations

from Shia books as historical reports in his book, while rejecting others. This inconsistency in judgment about the contents of the book makes it difficult to understand their perspective. On page 81, the author states that from now on, the authorized individuals have made remarkable efforts to insert their narrations into Shia books and attributed virtues to the Imams. He has not specified on what basis the authorized individuals engaged in such actions, and nobody understood it.

Meanwhile, historical reports indicate that scholars in Qom had a strong sensitivity towards exaggerators and authorized narrations. For instance, figures like Muhammad Ibn Isa al-Ash'ari expelled several narrators from Qom, and Shaikh Saduq excluded certain individuals, such as Sahl Ibn Ziyad, from his list of reliable narrators due to their association with exaggeration. In this context, how can they claim that many narrations of the exaggerators made their way into Shia books without anyone noticing them? They have also referenced Ibn al-Ghazaairi's statement about Mufazzal Ibn Umar, who has been accused of introducing many narrations of the exaggerators in his name (page 81, footnote 3). Can it be that they are ignoring this fact?

Can it be concluded that all the existing narrations attributed to Mufazzal are exaggerationist narrations?

Then, on page 96, footnote 1, they refer to two narrations from Zuraarah and cite a sentence from those two narrations which suggests that there were so many fabrications by the exaggerators that a scholar like Zuraarah intended to burn down all Shia transmitted reports. It's worth noting that the first narration is from Basaser al-Darajaat. Zuraarah visits Imam Baqir (a.s.), and the Imam (a.s.) asks him if he possesses any Shia traditions. Zuraarah responds, 'I have a great deal of them; I have even

contemplated setting them on fire and burning them.' The Imam (a.s.) asks him which issues make him consider doing this. Then, the Imam (a.s.) refers to the angels' questioningof the creation of Adam: **'Will You place therein one who will cause corruption and shed blood**?' (Behaar al-Anwar, vol. 25, p. 282).

Regarding this narration, it should be noted, firstly, that when Zuraarah asked this question, he was in the early stages of embracing Shiism. We know that Zuraarah became a Shia during Imam Baqir's time, and it was during his youth. Secondly, the Imam's response indirectly refers to the angels' objection during Adam's creation. In essence, Imamis telling Zuraarahthat he hasn't understood these matters correctly, his knowledge is insufficient, and he has rushed to judgment. Unfortunately, the author didn't include the second part of the narration in his work. Our point is that if he accepts this narration as authentic, he should include the entire narration; otherwise, he cannot merely cite and rely on a part of it.

In the same footnote (page 96, footnote 1), he mentions another narration where Zuraarah tells Imam Baqir (a.s.) that some of the Shia traditions are more astonishing than the Israeli traditions. The Imam (a.s.) asks him which traditions, and then says, '*Perhaps you intend to mention the occultation*.' I (Zuraarah) said 'Yes'. He said: *Then affirm it, for it is true*.' (Rijaalal-Kashi, p. 157). An important point in this narration is that the matter of occultation and the existence of a hidden Imam was a significant issue for Zuraarah, and he couldn't accept it easily.

It is interesting that in both narrations, the Imams (a.s.) inform Zuraarah of their thoughts without waiting for his response, implying that both indirectly indicate the Imam's knowledge of the unseen. Therefore, if these two narrations are to be used as references, they should be considered in their entirety.

The author claims that based on the narration *'Bring us down from Lordship, then say about us whatever you like*', the Mufawwezah fabricated virtues of the Imams as much as they could. (Page 81) It is worth noting that this narration is found in various forms in different books and is highly credible in terms of its chain of transmission. In Shaikh Saduq's book Khisaal, it is mentioned as one of the four hundred religious points that Amir al-Mu'minin received from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.): '*Beware of exaggeration about us. Say, 'We are servants who are obeyed,' and say regarding our virtues whatever you wish.*' (Khisaalof Shaikh Saduq, p. 61) In other books, the same theme is conveyed in different wordings. In another narration, it is mentioned at the end of the statement: '*For, you will not reach the hidden aspects about us*.' (Mustadrak-o-Safinah al-Behaar, vol. 7, p. 52) This narration indicates that you shouldn't attribute to us an elevated status that surpasses our nature. However, whatever you say about our virtues doesn't exceed that.

Nonetheless, the author contends that the Mufawwezah introduced these narrations into Shia books to the extent they could, without anyone noticing. (Page 81) However, he doesn't provide any evidence or source for this claim. As mentioned before, the sensitivity of scholars in Qom and the compilers of the biographical books suggests that they were very meticulous and sensitive about this matter. If reference to these narrations is to be made, it is important to consider the context of their entirety and the scholarly discussions surrounding them.

The author presents two narrations attributed to Zuraarah, demonstrating the opposite perspective, and indicating that Zuraarah himself was not aware of these matters when he was first guided.

On page 97 of the book, the author mentions: 'The guilty party is

limited to ordinary Shia followers and the moderate followers. We previously mentioned that the terminology of extremist (ghaali) and non-extremist (ghayr ghali) Shia is not precise, and the Imams (a.s.) considered those who advocated extremism as being outside the realm of Shia beliefs. The narration goes: *'The extremists return to us, and we do not accept them. The moderates join us, and we accept them*.' When the narrator inquires about the reason, the Imam (a.s.) responds: *'Because the extremists are accustomed to neglecting prayers, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage; thus, they cannot Abaandon their habits and never return to obeying Allah. But the moderate ones, when they learn and obey, are excused*.' (Al-Amaaliof Shaikh al-Tusi, p. 650)

It isn't clear from the narration that the term 'moderate' refers to those who are non-extremists. Rather, the last sentence indicates that 'moderate' refers to someone who had doubts about the Imamat of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.). When the truth becomes evident to them, they obey. The reason is that due to the behaviours of extremists, they were not willing to accept any of the positions and virtues of the Imams (a.s.). On page 100, the author explains that some of the conditions of Imamat were initially not among the beliefs of Shia and gradually became incorporated into their beliefs. He refers to the book 'Awaael al-Maqaalat' of Shaikh Mufid. He also mentions the differences between scholars in Qom and the scholars of Baghdad, highlighting that the superhuman abilities and knowledge of the unseen of the Imams (a.s.) were not accepted by the Shia theologians and scholars of Qom. Many scholars in Qom considered these matters to be fabricated by the extremists.

It should be clarified that Shaikh Mufid, in this book, describes the attributes of the Imams without necessarily deeming all these attributes as essential qualities of Imamat; rather, he views Imamat as a divine appointment. The author

believes that making mistakes based on textual references is not acceptable. This means that to recognize the Imam, one should not necessarily seek miraculous actions from him. Shaikh Mufid in the same context mentions that many of these attributes do not contradict reason, and the Imam can possess these characteristics. Authentic narrations confirm this. In that same place, Shaikh Mufid quotes three different opinions about the knowledge of the Imams and whether they base their rulings on hidden knowledge or apparent evidence. Then he says: Accepting any of these three opinions is not against reason, and there are valid reports affirming each viewpoint.

The origin of this statement is that Shaikh Mufid does not prefer any of the quoted opinions. Among these statements, the belief that the scholars of Qom rejected these concepts because they didn't hold those beliefs is incorrect. The reason some of the scholars of Qom have disregarded certain virtues and statements about the Imams is due to the authenticity of the narrations. They used to put aside any narration associated with a narrator who was unreliable in the chain. As we mentioned, Shaikh Saduq, based on his teacher Ibnal-Walid, excluded certain narrations from individuals accused of extremism in his book "Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih," whereas he does mention the "Ziyaarat-o-Jaameah Kabirah" in the same book, the contents of which are much higher than some narrations of the virtues of the Imams. If Shaikh Saduq and the scholars of Qom did not believe in unseen knowledge, they wouldn't have included this Ziyarat in their books.

Another point is that it's possible for concepts to gradually become accepted and proven. If a knowledgeable scholar from earlier generations, for instance, weakens the status of a companion of the Imams, it doesn't provide a reason for later individuals to blindly follow

his view. Conversely, it's possible for later scholars to come across evidence that demonstrates the authenticity of that person's stance. For example, the author quotes IbnQubba Raazi on page 283, stating that he didn't believe in unseen knowledge. IbnQubba Raazi explains that “in my view, the righteous Imams are knowledgeable about the Book and the Sunnah, and they are not necessarily possessed of unseen knowledge. They weren't aware of everything attributed to them.” IbnQubba was originally a Mu'tazilite theologian who later leaned towards Shi'ism. It's not reasonable to expect him to hold the same beliefs we do today. Just as a scholar of the stature of Ibn Aqeel Ammaani believed in analogy. Similarly, if a scholar wasn't affirming a particular matter, it doesn't necessarily mean he deemed that matter invalid. For example, great scholars like Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi interpreted the concept of "Badaa" (change in destiny) differently and didn't find the related narrations.

In the concluding part of the second section of the book, the author presents a judgment about the hadiths in the book "Kaafi." He quotes some eminent scholars, including the author of "Muntaqal-Juman," who states that numerous weak hadiths are present in this book, and more than nine thousand of its hadiths are weak and unreliable. (Page 21:1:1) To analyse this statement, it's important to understand scholars' views about the book "Kaafi" and then determine the meaning of this statement.

As we know, ShaikhKulayni compiled the book "Kaafi" over twenty years upon the request of one of his friends. The primary source of this book was the library of Ali Ibn Abraham Qummi's father. Ali Ibn Abraham Qummi's father migrated from Kufa to Qom and brought many books of the companions of the Imams with him. Most of the hadiths in "Kaafi" are transmitted from four hundred sources, and ShaikhKulayni organized and

compiled the contents according to his own preferences.

In the introduction of his book, Kulayni explicitly states that he selected the hadiths from a vast collection he had access to. This means he didn't narrate every single narration he came across from any source that reached him. He says, "I have attempted to select the authentic works from the truthful accounts of the truthful ones." All biographers and narrators have written about this book that it's among the most authentic and reliable books. Najaashi mentions about Kulayni, "He was the most reliable and established in hadith." Some great scholars like Muhaqqiq al-Nuri have stated that the entire book is reliable.

Agha Bozorg Tehrani, in the book "Al-Zareeah," states that "Kaafi" is considered the most important of the four major Shia hadith collections. The question arises: Why, despite the presence of weak hadiths in "Kaafi," have such interpretations been considered authentic? The reason lies in the fact that the definition of "weak" among earlier and later scholars differs.

Shaikh Yusuf Bahrani, an expert in hadith, who considers all the hadiths in the four major books as authentic, mentions in his book "Luluah al-Bahrain" that, according to later scholars, only 5072 hadiths are considered authentic in "Kaafi" and says"in the terminology of the recent scholars”. Allama Majlisi, in his commentary on the "Kaafi" (Mira'at al-'Uqul), declares that his judgment about the weakness or authenticity of hadiths is based on the terminology of later scholars. In other words, what is considered authentic differs between earlier scholars and later scholars. "Authentic" carries one meaning among early scholars and another among later ones.

The term "early scholars" refers to those who lived before the 8th century and before Ibn Tawus al-Hilli. According to them, an

authentic hadith is one for which we have confidence in its issuance and truth based on indications and evidence. For example, a person might be known to be a liar, but based on indications, we realize that the narration attributed to an infallible has indeed originated from them. The son of Shahid al-Thaani has also provided this explanation in his book "Muntaqa al-Juman."

However, starting from the time of Ibn Tawus al-Hilli, hadiths were categorized and divided into four categories: authentic, good, reliable, and weak. An authentic hadith is one where no jarh (discrediting) has occurred in the chain of narrators, and it reaches an infallible source without any interruption. This is like the condition set by Bukhari for a hadith to be considered authentic.

So, in the methodology of later scholars, they no longer paid attention to indications and focused only on the conditions of the narrator of the hadith and the reports about them. Kulayni himself was an expert in narrators and had a book on the science of narrators. He included narrations in "Kaafi" that he deemed authentic based on indications, meaning he was confident that those narrations came from infallibles. It's possible that some of the narrators of "Kaafi" who were regarded as reliable in the 14th century might not meet the standards of narrators today. We are not familiar with it; therefore, based on the approach of the later scholars, that narration will be considered weak. The main point is that "weak" is distinct from "unreliable" in the terminology of the later scholars. Meaning, in the terminology of the later scholars, a weak narration doesn't necessarily mean an unreliable narration. Thus, at times, they issue religious rulings based on those narrations they consider weak.

The reason some unidentified individuals are present in certain sections of al-Kaafi is that many of these narrations are not actual reports, but rather permissions

from a book. For example, there might have been an individual who collected various books and copied from them. However, this person may not have been a scholar himself. Someone like Muhammad Ibn Musa al-Kumaytani, about whom no reports exist in the biographical dictionaries. Kulayni purchased some versions of books from compilers of traditions and companions of the Imams, with indications that suggest these individuals did not fabricate those versions. It's possible that a narrator didn't hold certain beliefs, for example, they might have been from the Waaqefiyyah faction, but they did not fabricate teachings in narrations related to jurisprudence. In the case of legal narrations, one can rely on a narration in which the narrator is known to be Waaqefi or from the Fathiyya sect, as there is no evidence indicating that the narrator fabricated that specific narration.[2] Hence, the judgment presented by the respected author of al-Kaafi is not precise, and it would have been better if they had clarified the distinction between the approaches of the early and later scholars regarding the critique and verification of narrations and narrators.

Reviewing Part Three

In Part Three, the author of the book delves into the historical events that occurred after the time of Imam Sadeq(a.s.) up to the beginning of the Major Occultation. In general, his emphasis is on certain untold aspects of the history of Imamate and deviations within the Shia community, as well as how the Imamite movement was managed during this period. Likethe previous sections, he presents some statements that require further explanation in this regard.

Explaining further, we critique and analyse. In the beginning of this section, on page 112, footnote 4 states that by "Shi'a Imamiyya," he means the supporters of the transfer of Imamate from father to son. His reference is to the book of Shaikh Mufid (Majaalis al-

Mufid, vol. 2, p. 88). As we discussed in previous sections, we clarified that the criterion for Imamate in Shi'a is belief in textual designation (Nass), not personal preference. All Shi'a scholars from the past until now have based their arguments on this premise. The legitimacy of Imamate has no connection to the transfer of Imamate from father to son. Narrations mentioning that Imamate will be in the descendants of a certain Imam or that Imamate will not gather between two brothers have all been examples of patterns for textual designations (Nass), aiming to establish a consistent model of textual designation.

The late Sharif Murtada, in his book "Al-Fusul al-Mukhtaarah," page 296, quotes Shaikh Mufid saying: "Regarding the meaning of being labelled as Imamiyya, ShaikhMufid (may Allah help him) said, 'The Imamiyya are those who affirm the obligation of Imamate, infallibility, and the necessity of textual designation (Nass).'" In other words, infallibility and textual designation are the main characteristics that identify an Imam. As previously mentioned, the necessity of infallibility leads to the necessity of textual designation. Therefore, the issue of Imamate is not about the father-son relationship; rather, it is about textual designation, as also indicated by Shaikh Mufid.

In footnote on page 113, he mentions the origin of the term "Raafidha." It should be noted that this term was first used by Muawiya to refer to Shi'a. After the Battle of Jamal, when some individuals sought refuge with Muawiya, he wrote letters to his governor in Basra, Amr Ibn al-As, inviting him to collaborate. In this letter, he wrote: "Marwan Ibn al-Hakam has come to us with the Raafidhafrom the people of Basra..." (Waq’ah Siffeen, p. 34).

On page 116, footnote 2 refers to a group that emerged after the time of Imam Sadeq(a.s.) and declared their beliefs during the

occultation of their Imam, earning the epithet "Naawoosiyyah."

Indeed, the author himself expresses doubts about the existence of such a group, AbaanIbn Usman al-Bajali and historians in relation to its origin. Additionally, page 115 of the book conveys this uncertainty. The author lists certain individuals who were accused of being associated with this movement, with the most significant being Usman. Sa'd Ibn Tarif Iskaaf is essentially the only one accused of instigating this movement and isn't considered a major figure. However, AbaanIbn 'Usman al-Bajali was one of the six primary jurists among the companions of Imam Sadeq (a.s.), well-known as the companions of consensus. Abaan was renowned as a historian and litterateur, with some narrations even being attributed to him by Ya'qubi. In his biographical account, it's stated: "And he was among the Naawoosiyyah." This narration is reported by Ali Ibn Hasan Ibn Fazal. Late Shushtarī argues in a footnote that this phrase was certainly an error made by a copyist. It's not surprising that there's significant variation and discrepancies in the copies of Kitab al-Kashi since al-Kashi was in Khorasan while his son brought the book to Baghdad. His version of the book greatly differs from al-Najaashi's because al-Najaashi himself resided in Baghdad, a scholarly centre. In his biography, al-Najaashi doesn't mention his Nawoosiyyah affiliation, which seems unlikely considering someone as meticulous as al-Najaashi would overlook such an important matter.

Additionally, al-Najaashi mentions that he narrated from Imam Kazim (a.s.), so someone from the Naawoosiyyah group, who didn't believe in Imamate after Imam Sadeq (a.s.), couldn't possibly have narrated from him. Furthermore, Shaikh Mufid expressed doubts about the existence of a group named Naawoosiyyah and said, "No distinguished scholar or book mentions them..." (Al-Fusul al-Mukhtaarah, p. 38). If AbaanIbn

'Usman had such affiliations, his name and works would have been mentioned here. Therefore, including his name among the Naawoosiyyah group with such certainty is incorrect. In this section, he makes a reference to the Isma'iliyyahmovement, and the belief held by some that Isma'il, the elder son of Imam Sadeq (a.s.), would be the next Imam after him, but they faced challenges in this belief. (He lived and passed awayduring the lifetime of Imam Sadeq (a.s.). p. 119, 121)

The important point to consider is that there is no textual evidence regarding the Imamate of Isma'il, and only the interpretations and expectations of some individuals led to this belief. The only narration that has come down to us states: *'What Allah initiated was initiated as in the case of Isma'il, my son*.' (Kamal al-Din, Saduq, p. 69). However, this narration has also been reported in another form: *'What Allah initiated was initiated as in the case of Isma'il, my father*.' (Tawhid Saduq, p. 336). This implies that the original context of this statement might have been Imam Sadeq (a.s.) referring to Isma'il, the son of Prophet Abraham (a.s.). The author claims that the concept of 'Badaa" (change in destiny) originated from here and was propounded by Shia theologians. However, firstly, the concept of 'Badaa" was a matter of theological belief even before Imam Sadeq (a.s.). The author himself acknowledges that the Kaysaniyya group also believed in 'Badaa". Does the shared belief between Shia and the Kaysaniyya imply that it's invalid or fabricated? Can the mere fact of this shared belief lead to the conclusion that Shias adopted it from the Kaysaniyya and introduced the concept of 'Badaa" into their beliefs? Furthermore, it's worth noting that the concept of 'Badaa" was articulated by the Imams (a.s.) themselves, not theologians, and it was ***not***introduced solely to address the issue of the change in the Imamate of Isma'il. As for the mentioned narration, even if it's accurate, it doesn't explicitly state

"*Isma'il was meant to be an Imam andwe also initially announced this, but later retracted it when we became regretful, and Imamate was transferred to his brother*." Because there is no textual evidence at all regarding Isma'il's Imamate.

Moreover, the respected author asserts that after the passing of Imam Sadeq (a.s.), most Shi'as considered Abdullah Aftah as the Imam. On this matter, Nawbakhti states in his book: 'They examined Abdullah with permissible and forbidden questions, but found no knowledge in him... Therefore, the majority of the Aftahiyya [followers of Abdullah Aftah] turned away from recognizing his Imamate—except for a few—and returned to accepting the Imamate of Musa bin Ja'far (a.s.).' (Firaq al-Shi'a, Nawbakhti, p. 87). Nawbakhti explicitly states that most of them reverted to accepting the Imamate of Imam Kazim (a.s.). The reason was clear since Mansur Dawaniqi had ordered the execution of anyone who recognized Ja'far bin Muhammad (a.s.) as the appointed successor (*wasi*).

It is true that in the testament of Imam Sadeq (a.s.), he had mentioned the names of five individuals as his successors: including the names of Mansur Dawaniqi and Abdullah Aftah. Seventy days later, Abdullah Aftah passed away, and the majority of the Aftahiyya sect except for a few returned [to the mainstream]. Even regarding individuals like Hasan bin Ali bin Fazal, it's mentioned that towards the end of his life, he returned from the Fathi sect. On page 131, the author refers to a narration about the Imamate of Imam Hadi (a.s.) in such a way that a reader might assume that the only existing source is the narration from Khairaan, the servant. However, that's not the case. The late Shaikh Mufid, in his book "al-Irshad," discusses the matter of textual evidence for the Imamate of Imam Hadi (a.s.). He states that there are many reports and narrations on this matter, and the Shia consensus

supports his Imamate. Additionally, the narration he refers to has been weakened. For instance, Ayatollah Khu'i in his book "Rijal" has weakened this narration under the name of Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Isa. Nevertheless, the proclamation of their Imamate wasn't solely based on the report from Khairaan, the servant. Another issue he has raised concerns the succession of Imam Hadi (a.s.) and that there were reports about the succession of Sayyid Muhammad, his son. The late Shaikh Tusi, in his book "Ghaybah," has discussed this matter. He has cited a narration that states: 'From Abu Hashim al-Ja'fari, who said: I was with Abu al-Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) at the time of his son Abu Ja'far's (a.s.) death, and he had indicated and pointed towards him. I was pondering in my own thoughts and said: This is like the story of my father Abraham and the story of Isma'il. Then Abu al-Hasan turned to me and said: Yes, O Abu Hashim, Allah initiated in my father Ja'far and designated in his place Abu Muhammad, just as Allah initiated in Isma'il after being pointed towards him by Abu Abdillah. He appointed him, and it's as you have heard, even if the deniers dislike it. Abu Muhammad, my son, is the successor after me. He has what you will need, and the means of Imamate are with him, and praise be to Allah.' (Al-Ghaybah ofShaikh Tusi, p. 87). Following this narration, Shaikh Tusi states that Shia believers held the belief that after Imam Hadi (a.s.), Sayyid Muhammad would be the Imam: 'Its meaning is clear from Allah, and His order is for his brother, al-Hasan.'

While doubts and uncertainty persisted about his Imamate, a group of Shia believed that the matter of leadership was in Muhammad [al-Taqi]'s (a.s.) favour as the elder son, just as another group believed that the matter was in Isma'il bin Ja'far's favour over Musa [al-Kadhim] (a.s.). However, when Muhammad passed away, it became evident from the divine matter concerning him that he wasn't designated as an Imam, just as it became evident with Isma'il in a

similar manner. It doesn't mean that there was an initial designation followed by a change.

Multiple narrations are found in this context where the same individuals have reported that Imam Hadi (a.s.) did not nominate his son, Sayyid Muhammad, as his successor; rather, Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), also known as Abu Muhammad, was designated as his successor. For example: "From Ali bin Umar al-Nawfali, he said: I was in the presence of Abu al-Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) at his home. Abu Ja'far passed by, and I asked him: Is this our leader? He replied: *No, your leader is al-Hasan*." (Al-Ghaybahof Shaikh Tusi, p. 198). In other words, the indication and nomination of Imam Askari (a.s.) was before the passing of Sayyid Muhammad.

This Shia belief and assumption was that Sayyid Muhammad was intended to be their successor, not that Imam Hadi (a.s.) held this view and later changed it. Regarding the era of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), the author mentions several issues together. On page 137, he discusses doubts that some had about letters attributed to him and whether these letters were written in his handwriting or that of Usman bin Saeed. Some have raised doubts about his Imamate and his biography, and consequently, have distanced themselves from Shia beliefs.

We explain that the matter of whether a few individuals doubted or departed from Shia during the time of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) is not an issue for making a general negation or affirmation. Writing letters to the Imam and sending signatures on their behalf was a communicative mechanism between the Imam and the Shia community that emerged around the time of Imam Kazim. Casting doubt on one letter doesn't provide grounds for generalizing it to the entire Shia community.

On page 139, he mentions one of the representatives of the Imam who lived near his residence. This individual used to commit heinous sins. This person is Is'haaq bin Muhammad Nakh'i, who is the narrator of that incident himself. He says in his narration, "I intended to commit a sin, but before I could do it, the Imam rebuked me, and even for this reason, he expelled me." Many commentators of Kitab al-Kaafi have weakened this narration, attributing its transmission to this reason: that Kulayni wanted to convey a story of the Imam's miraculous knowledge. However, the narration itself, based on its accepted authenticity, demonstrates the Imam's knowledge of the unseen.

On page 142, he mentions that Imam Hadi (a.s.) gave a book to his Shia, which was later discovered to be the book "Yawmwal-Laylah" by IbnKhanbah. It's important to note that this practice was not limited to Imam Hasan al-Askari's (a.s.) time; rather, even other Imams (a.s.) sometimes gave books from certain disciples, which contained compilations of their traditions, to their other companions and encouraged them to study. For example, one of Imam Sadeq's (a.s.) unnamed disciples, Abdullah bin Ali Halabi, wrote a book about legal rulings and presented it to him. The Imam then gave this book to his other Shias for them to act upon (Rijal Najaashi, p. 231).

On page 153, the author refers to Imam Hasan al-Askari's (a.s.) will in which he introduced his mother as his successor. Shaikh Tusi explains this matter, saying that someone might question why, if Abu Muhammad had a son, he wouldn't mention him in his will. The answer is that the birth of that son was kept hidden to protect his life, as the Abbasid caliph intended to kill him.

Another reason for this action was for the Imam to demonstrate the falsity of Jafar's claim, so that Shias would realize that he wasn't the Imam. This was because Jafar had lodged a

complaint against the Imam before a judge to claim a portion of the inheritance according to Sunni jurisprudence, while in Shia jurisprudence, until the time when the rightful heir's birth is concealed for their safety, they do not have a share in the inheritance.

From the first category, brothersand sisters of our own are alive. This incident shows that Jafar's claim is baseless.

As we mentioned before, one of the methodological flaws in this book is that the author sometimes exaggerates minor issues and generalizes them to the entire Shia community. Sometimes, he relies on weak reports and mistakenly considers them as solid evidence. For instance, on page 139, he mentions that the trusted and respected treasurer was stealing the Imam's treasury. The individual he's referring to is Urwah bin Yahya Daylami. This individual was associated with the Imam Hadi (a.s.) and was accused of unethical practices. However, his interpretation that "Amin and Mamduh" refers to a letter, as cited in Rijal Kashshi, p. 576, is incorrect. The letter was written in 260 A.H., after the time when he deviated from the Shia community. Therefore, it cannot possibly refer to the same person. Late Shushtari in his footnotes states that this was clearly a copying error and the word "Daylami" should be replaced with "Saman," meaning a seller of oil, which refers to Usman bin SaeedKashshi.

On pages 149 to 151, the author discusses Jafar's claim and the issue of succession after Imam Askari (a.s.). He writes that the transfer of Imamate from one brother to another, except in the case of Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Hussain (a.s.), was not possible based on reports, mainly those opposing the Fathiyya belief regarding the legitimacy of Imamate of Abdullah bin Jafar. He claims that these reports about the inability to have two brothers as Imams were

issued during the Fathiyya movement and opposed their beliefs. However, if we refer to narrative sources, we can see that these types of reports date back to before the Fathiyya movement, during the time of Imam Baqir and Imam Sadeq(a.s.) (GhaybahShaikh Tusi, p. 222).

The author writes on pages 151 and 152 that according to the statement of Usman bin Saeed, the reason for the disappearance of that noble person (Imam Mahdi) was that if he appeared, he would be martyred by the agents of the government. In the footnote on the same page, he adds, "Therefore, their text replaces the Imam's text, and it is this text that has been transmitted repeatedly." This statement of his is completely incorrect, firstly because the text regarding the Imamate of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) has reached us from previous Imams, and in their narratives, it is mentioned that the birth of Imam Mahdi will be hidden to preserve his life. Thus, Usman bin Saeed is not the only transmitter of this matter. Another point is that the text of these individuals has not replaced the text of the Imam, since Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) has spoken to various individuals, apart from Usman bin Saeed, about the Imamate of his son. Therefore, these individuals have transmitted the Imam's text rather than substituting it with their own. On page 159, the author writes that the majority of Shia believed in the Imamate of Jafar, while in their reliable sources, it is stated "a multitude of people." These two interpretations are quite different. In fact, the books from the period of Minor Occultation indicate that the greatest challenge for Shia scholars and theologians and their interaction with the Zaidis and Mu'tazilites was the issue. If truly the followers of Jafar were so numerous that they formed a separate group, traces of them would remain until the time of Shaikh Mufid. However, we see that Shaikh Mufid writes in his book that today, there is hardly a significant group of Jafar's followers left. The author provides a detailed report on the children of Jafar and their

geographical dispersion on pages 163 to 167. The fact that the descendants of Jafar have continued until today, and many of them are devoted Shia, like the Naqvi Sayyids in India, is not the topic of discussion. The main point is that today there is no separate religious group or sect apart from Shia who necessarily believes in the Imamate of Jafar.

---

[1]it is mentioned in "Kaafi" vol.1, p. 373, Hadith 4 and "Behaar al-Anwaar" vol. 25, p.112, Hadith 1.

[1]For more in-depth information in this area, refer to Safinat issue #2, special section about Al-Kaafi), and issues #18 to #20 (Special Al-Kaafi) (Editor)