A review over w. Madelung's essay on Imam Javad mentioned in The Encyclopedia of Islam new edition

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***Abstract**: the present study is an answer to the claims which are made by W.Madelung in an article in a book " The Encyclopedia of Islam new edition" about Imam Javad.*

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Imam Javad (A.S) was born in Ramadan or Rajab of 195 (lunar year) in Medina. There are many different sayings about the color of his skin, but it is not proper to assume imam as a black colored person (as Madelung assumed). Imam's marriage with "Omul-Fazl" was because of Ma'amoon insistence. Madelung claimed that the marriage was in imam's absence and their married life began on 215 (lunar year), but according to famous traditions, this marriage happened in 204 (lunar year) and with imam's presence. And according to historical evidences, imam started his married life with Omul-Fazl before 215.

According to trustable sayings, the duration of imam's imamate was seventeen years. Although many problems were made because of imam's young age, very soon imam Reza's clear explanation about imam Javad's imamate and questions which were asked by Shia –for examining imam- made his imamate acceptable. At the end, according to the trustable sayings, imam was martyred by the command of Mootasem and by Omul-Fazl. He was buried near his grandfather in Kazemein.

Although Sheikh Mofid expressed that he is uninformed of imam's martyrdom, there are some references before and after him (like Ayyashi and Ebne Babewey) which asserted imam's martyrdom.

General overview

Shia imams because of their great effect on the Islamic world, are the center of historian's tradition narrators. Sometimes they expressed their biography and their words (sometimes in length and sometimes in short).

Madelung is from those Orientalists who translated and gave the biography of Ahlul-bayt (A.S). He wrote an essay about imam Javad (A.S). In his essay, he explained about three axis of imam's life:

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1. Imam's personal information. (date and place of birth, father's and mother's name, the color of his skin and date and quality of his death);

2. Imam's marriage

3. People's disagreement on his imamate after imam Reza's martyrdom.

Madelung has not explained about other aspects of imam's life. In some few cases in which he explained about other aspects, dispute and hesitation can be seen. In this essay, we attempt to study and criticize these three axis and explain some of imam's words from Sunnite references.

Individual characteristics of imam Javad

Imam Abu Jafar Muhammad Ebn Ali Ebn Mosa (A.S) is the ninth imam of shia who believed in twelve imams. Many references say that he was born on fifteen, seventeen or nineteen of Ramadan in 195 in Medina.[1] Abu Jaafar Tabari also narrated from imam Askari (A.S) that imam Javad (A.S) was born on the eve of Friday on fifteenth of Ramadan in 195 in Medina[2]. Some other references know his birthday on Rajab of the same year[3].seyyed Ebn Tavoos in Eghbal Alaamal wrote that imam Javad (A.S) was born on tenth of Rajab[4]. It was better that Madelung regarded the probability of imam's birth on Rajab. He believed that imam was born in a place near Medina which named Sorayya, but there is no sign of this claim in historical references and just they said imam was born in Medina.

[1]- Mohamad Ebn Yaghoob Koleyni, Osool Kafi, vol.2,p.412.

[2]- Mohamad Ebn Noman (Sheikh Mofid), Dalayel Alemamah, p.383.

[3] -Mohamad Ebn Hasan Toosi, Mesbah Almojtahed, p.557, according to Ebn Ayyash.

[4]- Ali Ebn Muses Ebn Tavoos, Eghbal Alaamal, vol.3,p.227.

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About Sorayya Ebn Shahr Ashoob wrote:

When Imam Riza (A.S) passed away Hasan Ebn Rashed, Ali Ebn Mahziar and many other people came to Medina and asked about Imam's successor. Medina's people answered them that you should go to Sorraya. Sorayya is a village which is three miles far from Medina. imam Mosa Ebn Jafar (A.S) has established this village…[1] .

Some other traditions denoted on imam Reza's settlement in Sorayya. Any way, it is not improbable that imam Javad's birth was in Sorayya. If his birth was in Sorayya, it is right to say that imam was born in Medina. Imam Javad (A.S) was the only child of the family. According to Masoodi, imam Riza (A.S) said: (the exalted God) has bestowed me just one child, and in did he will be my heir[2]. Imam's mother's was a maid named "Sabike" who was from Nobeh. Some people said that her name was "Kheyzaran". It is said that she was of Mariah family who was the Prophet's spouse[3]. Ebn Shahr Ashoob pointed out that imam's mother's name was "Dorrah Al-Marisyyah"[4] and after a while imam Reza (A.S) named her Khoizaran. Some people say that her name was "Reyhaneh" and her title was "Ommul-Hassan"[5].

According to traditions when imam Javad (A.S) was born, it was the eve of Friday. And imam Reza (A.S) said to his companions that a child was born to me and he is like Moses Ebn Emran (A.S) who was sea splitter. The mother who gave birth to this child had been set to be pure and indeed his mother was created pure and chaste. Then he said: my parents will be sacrificed to the martyr (imam Javad (A.S)) for whom

[1]- Mohamad Ebn Ali Ebn Shahr Ashoob, Managheb Ale Abi Taleb, vol.4 p.382.

[2] - Ali Ebn Hosein Masoody, Ethbat Al Vasyyah, p.183.

[3] - Mohamad Ebn Yaghoob Koleyni, Osool Kafi, vol.2, p.413.

[4] - Marisyyah is related to "Marisah" which is a huge island in Nobah (Yaghoot Hamavi, Moojam Alboldan, p.138.

[5] - Mohamad Ebn Ali Ebn Shahr Ashoob, Managheb Ale Abi Taleb, vol.4,p. 379.

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inhabitants of the heavens weep; he will be killed because of rage (and hatred); the God's rage will be upon his murderer. It is soon that God may torture him by mundane and also heavenly tortures[1].

Some of imam Javad's titles are: Montajab, Mortaza[2], Mokhtar, Motevakkel Zaki, Ghane, Ebn Alreza, (and the most famous of all) Taghi and Javad or Javad Al-aemmah. Zahabi said that he was a person who is known by generosity and because of this he was named Javad. "Abu Jafar" or Abu-jafar sani and "Abuali" is also from his titles[3].

About imam Javad (A.S), it is said that he was white-skin. Imam Javad (A.S) was not black-skin as Madelung wrote in his essay. Maybe Madelung has got this idea from "Abi Daad" who was a clergy man of the "Mootasem" court. He said that one day he was very angry and he was coming back from the Mootasem's court. When they asked him about his anger, he said that I am angry because of this black colored person (i.e. Muhammad Ebn Ali Ebn Mosa); because Mootasem asked the opinion of Abi Daad and imam Javad (A.S) about a thief who has confessed to his sin. Firstly, Abi Daad and some other people said their opinion, but because of strong reasoning, Mootasem preferred imam Javad's opinion[4]. Therefore, Abi Daad became angry because of this humiliation and then said such words. This event is not a reason for imam to be black and be a reason for disagreement and criticism of Abbasian for imam's marriage with Omul-Fazl –Maamoon's daughter-. Abbasian's (a group of them which was not familiar with Mamoon's shrewd policy and hidden goals) disagreement was because they were scared that this marriage of Abbasi

[1] - Ali Ebn Hosein Ebn Masoodi, Ethbat AlVasiyyah, p. 183.

[2] -Mohamad Ebn Noman (Sheikh Mofid), Alershad , vol.2, p.295.

[3] - Mohamad Ebn Noman (Sheikh Mofid), Dalayel Alemamah, p.396.

[4] - Mohamad Ebn Masood Ebn Ayyash Samarghandi, Tafsir Ayyashi, vol.1, p.319, tradition 109.

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family and Alavi family would increase probability of transition of government from Abbasian to Alavian family. Anyway, imam's face had a special beauty; so that Sheikh Sadoogh (according to Abu-Salt) said:

(One day) a handsome man with curly hair came to me. He was the most similar person to imam Riza (A.S). So I asked him who are you? He answered that he is Mohamad Ebn Ali and the God's proof to you.

Imam Javad's (A.S) marriage with Omul-Fazl [1]

Mamoon insisted on the marriage of his daughter with imam. One of his goals was to keep away the accusation of imam Reza's murder and make Alavian calm, and strengthen his own government. Therefore, (according to Yaghoobi) when Maamoon entered Baghdad in 204, he said that I would like to be ancestors of a man who is from the Prophet's (A.S) and Ali Ebn Abi Taleb's (A.S) generation. And because of this he tried to marry off his daughter to imam Javad (A.S). When Abbasian heard this, they became sad because they were scared that caliphate goes out of the Abbasian. Therefore, they assembled in Baghdad around Mamoon and swore him to God not to do this action and do not return us to the past sadness!

Apparently, Maamoon evaded from accepting their request. When they asked him to wait for imam to grow to a young man and learn science and courtesy, he asked them to test imam. Abbasian send Yahya Ebn Aktham –the greatest scholar of that period- to test imam (A.S), but when he became helpless against imam, Mamoon said to Abbasian: did you know what you have denied? Imam set her dowry equal to the dowry of

[1]- the second axis of Madelung essay.

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his grandmother Fatemah (S.A) (five hundred dirham). Maamoon gave a party and asked him to ask a question from Yahya Ebn Aktham[1].

According to this famous tradition, imam Javad's (A.S) marriage was after imam Reza's (A.S) martyrdom and in Baghdad and apparently it was in 204; this marriage was done by the Maamoon request and not in his absence (not as Madelung said categorically). There is another tradition from Sheikh Sadoogh that this marriage happened when imam was in Medina and imam Riza (A.S) was in Khorasan. And in a day Maamoon married one of his daughters "Omme Habib" to imam Reza (A.S) and another daughter – Omul-Fazl - to imam Javad and he himself married "Booran" –Hasan Ebn Sahl'S daughter[2]. Anyway, according to Sheikh Mofid, in year 204 and after imam Reza's martyrdom in Baghdad, Maamoon gave his daughter to Imam Javad (A.S). Imam Javad (A.S) and Omul-Fazl returned to Medina and started their life. They stayed there until "Mootasem" has recalled imams to Baghdad in 220[3]. But according to Tabari, starting their life was on year 215. According to Tabari when Maamoon in 215 went out of "Medina Al-salam" (Baghdad) and reached to "Takrit", (imam) Mohamad Ebn Ali Ebn Mosa (A.S) went to him and visited him on the eve of Friday of Safar months. In this meeting, Maamoon commanded imam to start his life with his daughter Omul-Fazl. Maamoon asked them to live in the Amad Ebn Yoosof's house which was at the Dejlah shore. Imam stayed there until Hajj time and then he and his family went to Mecca, and after Hajj finished, they went back to Medina[4]. Apparently, this saying of Tabari is not right; because in addition to contradiction of this saying with what Tabari has said before, there are

[1] - Sheikh Mofid has narrated this tradition in detail in Alershad, vol.2,p. 288-281.

[2] - Mohamad Ebn Ali Ebn Babewey Ghomi (Sheikh Sadoogh), Oyoon Akhbar Alreza, vol.2,p.147.

[3] - Mohamad Ebn Noman (Sheikh Mofid), Al Ershad , vol.2, p.281, 289-288.

[4] - Mohamad Ebn Jarir Tabari, Tarikh Altabari, vol.5, p.181.

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some other proofs that rejected it. Sheikh Mofid said: when imam and Omul-Fazl were in Medina, Omul-Fazl wrote a letter to her father and complained him that Abu Jaffar has brought a maid servant. Then Maamoon answered her that I did not give you to him in order to make lawful things unlawful to him, from now on do not complaint to me about these things[1]. On the other hand, in the references, it is written that imam Ali Ebn Mohamad Ebn Ali Ebn Mosa's (imam Hadi's) mother was a maid servant whose name was Jamaneh[2] or Samaneh[3]. And imam Hadi (A.S) was born on 212[4], and according to some other traditions he was born on Rajab in 214, when imam Javad (A.S) was performing Hajj with Omul-Fazl[5].

Imam Javad's imamate[6]

After imam Reza's Martyrdom on Safar month in 203, imam Javad (A.S) who was at the age of seven[7] at that time became imam[8]. Imam's youngness caused many disagreements between imam's companions and people who claimed to be imam Reza's followers, and perhaps a group made imam's young age as an excuse to separate from shia. But Imam Riza before his demise explained it to people: For example:

1. Once Safvan Ebn Yahya went to imam Riza (A.S) and asked him: if an event happens to you then who is the next imam after you? Imam

[1] - Mohamad Ebn Nooman (Sheikh Mofid), AlErshad, p.288. Madelung has pointed out this tradition in his essay.

[2] - Ali Ebn Hosein Masoodi, Ethbat Alvasiyyah, p.193.

[3] - Mohamad Ebn yaaghoob Koleyni, Osool Kafi, vol.2, p.422, Rozah Alvaezin, p.246

[4] - same address.

[5]- Ali Ebn Hosein Masoodi, Ethbat Alvasiyyah, p.193.

[6] -the third axis of discussed topic in Madelung essay.

[7] - Ali Ebn Hosein Masoody, Moroj Alzahab, vol.3,p.464.

[8]- Mohamad Ebn Noman (Sheikh Mofid), Alershad, vol.2, p.247.

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Javad (A.S) was sitting in front of him. Imam Riza (A.S) pointed out to imam Javad (A.S). At this time, imam Javad was at the age of three. Safvan said: I be sacrifice to you, he is just three. Imam Reza (A.S) said: is there any problem? Jesus became the God's reason to the creatures when he was less than three[1].

2. Yahya Ebn Habib said that a group of people were around imam Riza (A.S). When they wanted to go out imam said: visit him (Abu Jaafar) and say hello to him and renew your promises to him… [2].

According to Nobakhti in Feragh Alshiah and Madelung in his essay, after imam Reza's martyrdom, his followers were divided in some groups:

A) One group accepted imam Javad's imamate;

B) One group believed that Ahmad Ebn Mosa Ebn Jafar is imam. They said his father imam Mosa Ebn Jafar (A.S) set him as imam after his brother imam Riza (A.S);

C) There is another group. Their name is "Moallefeh". They believed in imam Reza's imamate. When imam Riza passed away, they stopped to folow imam Javad and they became Vaghefi again;

D) There is another group named "Mohadethe"

E) The last group is a sect from Zeydiyeh. When Maamoon made homage to imam Riza, they believed in imam Riza's (A.S) imamate, but after imam Riza (A.S) they returned to their previous believes[3].

But people who believed in imam's imamate disagreed each other in the quality of imam's knowledge. Some of them said: imam is forced to be a learned man, and his knowledge is not inherited from his father; because

[1] - Mohamad Ebn Noman, (Sheikh Mofid) Alershad, vol 2. P.279,276.

[2] - the same address, p.280.

[3] - the same reference,p.86-85.

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when they took his father to Khorasan, he was about four. And when he gets to puberty, God will teach him the proper knowledge which is needed for imamate. Some other people said that before puberty, he is imam. And when he gets to puberty, he will obtain the necessary knowledge from reading his father's books not from the inspiration and revelation or hearing angels voice; because the revelation has been cut off.

The third group (whose way was right) said: it is possible that imam, in appearance, be an immature person; even one year old; because he is "Hojjatullah" and his power is from God. Being learned at this age, having revelation, having right dreams, hearing the angles and something like these things are feasible; just like Yahya Ebn Zakariya and Jesus Ebn Maryam who were Hojjatullah to people[1].

Also, it is noticeable that at first this group had a few members. Although for many people like "Yoones Ebn Abd Alrahman" the question of imam's knowledge at that young age was not answered, they believed in his imamate. There is a tradition which says:

After imam Riza's (A.S) martyrdom, Rayyan Ebn Salt, Safvan Ebn Yahya, Yoones Ebn Abd Alrahman and some other great shias were assembled in Abd Alrahman Ebn Hajjaj and they were mourning. Yoones Ebn Abd Alrahman said stop crying. Now, tell me to whom should we refer to ask our problems until Abu jaafar grow up? At this time Rayyan Ebn Salt became angry. He stood up and put his hands on the Yoones' throat and said: you show yourself as a believer to imam Javad (A.S), but it is apparent that you have doubt about his imamate in your heart and you hide your doubt. If he was imam on behalf of God, he is like a Sheikh, and if he was an old man but not on behalf of God, he is like other people. At this time, a group of people stood up and made Rayyan calm[2].

[1] - the same reference, p.90-89.

[2] - Mohamad Bagher Majlesi, Behar AlAnvar, vol.50, p.99.

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Also, some other sayings proved that shia asked questions from Imam in some ceremonies and they could make imam's imamate clear to themselves by seeing imam's knowledge[1]. Therefore, the existing crisis of the beginning of his imamate was finished very soon. It was appropriate that Madelung pointed out to this affair.

Imam Javad's (A.S) martyrdom

The short period of imam Javad's imamate which was seventeen or eighteen years was passed very fast in a special condition. After Maamoon, Mo'tasem became caliph. According to Nobakhti, Sheikh Mofid and others, Mo'tasem recalled imam to Baghdad in 220. Imam (A.S) entered Baghdad two days before Moharram and he passed away at the end of Zighaedeh of this year. At the time of martyrdom, he was about 25[2]. There is no disagreement about imam's death year, but there is a disagreement about the exact date of his death. Some say it was on the fifth[3] and some other say that it was on the sixsth of Zolhajjah[4].

Imam Javad's (A.S) words

From imam Javad's (A.S) words:

1. "The justice day for the oppressor is harder than the oppression day for the oppressed[5]".

2. "Human's beauty appears in what he says and his perfection appears in his wisdom[1]".

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[1]-Mohamad Bagher Majlesi, Behar Alanvar, vol.50, p.99, 100.

[2] -Mohamad Ebn Noman (Sheikh Mofid), Alershad, vol.2, p. 295.

[3] Mohamad Ebn Noman (Sheikh Mofid), Dalayel Alemamah, p.395.

[4] - Mohamad Ebn Yaghoob Koleyni, Osool Kafi, vol.2, p.421.

[5] - Ali Ebn Mohamad Ebn Sabbagh Maleki, Alfosool Almohemah, vol.2, p. 1055.

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3. "Prophet (A.S) said to imam Ali (A.S): O' Ali, a person who wants God's blessing never becomes desperate and helpless and a person who consults before taking an action never regrets[2]".

4. "A person who choose a friend in the God's way indeed bought a house in the heaven[3]".

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