CRITICISM AND ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK "RELIGION IN THE PROGRESS OF PERFECTION" part 2

Iman Noorbakhshi

Islamic researcher

Jan 2022

*Abstract: The book "**Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shiite Islam**" has been written by Dr. Hossein Modaressi Tabatabaei based on two aims: 1. Introduction of Shiite Islam as belief trend in Islam for Western and non-Muslim readers. 2. Recognizing the progress and consolidation of Shi'ismin the first three Islamic centuries.The first section of the book "Rights and Responsibilities" includes a brief glance at the Shiite history from the beginning of the minor occultation of which a major portion has been analysed in this criticism.*

Keywords: *Book "**Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shiite Islam**" – Criticism and Analysis – Shiism – Shiite history – Imamate – Caliphate – Occultation of Imam-e-Asr (a.s.)*

Introduction

The author writes that "*after Imam Sadiq (a.s.)'s refusal to participate in the rebellion against the Bani Umayyah (Umayyads), gradually, there was a change in the way of thinking of the Shiites towards the position of Imamate i.e., an Imam is merely the most knowledgeable person in the family of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his duty is simply to convey the permissible and the prohibited (divine laws), the exegesis of the Holy Quran and explain the beliefs. Earlier, the emphasis was on the political role of the Imam but now, it evolved to his religious and scientific positions*."

The fact that the Shias consider that the duty of an Imam is to convey religious knowledge is correct. But to aver that forming a just government is not from the duties of an Imam iserroneous. Traditions indicate that the Imams (a.s.) were the rightful candidates to form a government, considered the government of the caliphs as illegal, and considered rulership as one of the positions of Imamate. For example, when a person came to Imam Baqer (a.s.) and said that the government has asked him to become the chieftain of my nation because I am a famous person in my city, Imam (a.s.) replied to him, "*Don't accept it because they will have irreligious expectations from you and this government is illegitimate*." (Rejaal al-Kashi, Oqbah Ibn Basheer al-Asadi, pp. 203, 204, Entry 358)

Another person said, "I had taken a pledge that I will fight the holy war. Now, what should I do?" Imam (a.s.) replied to him, "*Don't go to the holy war with them. But since guarding the Islamic frontiers is obligatory, go and guard the frontiers.*"

When Imam Baqer (a.s.) was asked about Ameerul Momineen's (a.s.) marriage to Khawlah Hanafiyyah, he (a.s.) clearly stated that Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) did not consider the government of the caliphs as legitimate, took the permission of Khawlah's brother, and did not behave with her like a prisoner. Such questions show that their government – according to the Shias – was not lawful.

On the same lines, the author claims: "*The concept of infallibility, which was suggested by Hisham Ibn Hakam for the first time, played its part and helped in accepting the aforementioned view*."

Firstly, the author did not determine that on what basis he claims that Hisham was the first person to suggest this view.Does he mean that the concept of infallibility was not present among the previous Imams (a.s.) and the Shias did not believe in it? Perhaps, the author is indicating at the statement of Muhammad Ibn Abi Umair that "nobody has enlightened me and elaborated for me the concept of infallibility like Hisham did". (Amaali-e-Saduq (r.a.), Majlis 92, Hadis 5). No doubt, Hisham Ibn Hakam had a special role in compiling theological issues, but it does not mean that he is the first person to initiate this concept because therewere companions prior to Hisham who believed in the concept of infallibility. Moreover, several traditions have been received from the Imams (a.s.), which clearly show that Hisham was not the first person to have initiated this concept. Incidentally, if we pay attention, we will see that even the discussion of the necessity of a divine proof has been discoursedbased on infallibility. In the sense that the people accepted that religion should be taken from a source free from all mistakes and errors, and since one cannot find this source himself, he must depend on divine texts for the same. Therefore, the necessity of infallibility is prior

to the discussion of the essentiality of divine texts. For example, in Kafi, vol. 1, p. 188, H. 15, The Chapter on the Necessity of Imams' (a.s.) Obedience, the narration of Mansoor Ibn Haazim explicitly states this fact.He says to the Imam (a.s.) that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was Allah's proof upon His creatures. This being the proof is meaningful only when he (s.a.w.a.) only speaks the truth. Otherwise, if the divine proof is committing mistakes, his being a proof becomes meaningless. Thereafter, he says that since there is a disagreement and discord among the Muslims regarding the interpretation of the Holy Quran, there should be someone who does not commit any error in this interpretation and explains the Holy Quran and beliefs correctly. He continues that the Imams (a.s.) after the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) are divine proofs upon the creatures and their obedience is obligatory. The understanding of someone like Mansoor Ibn Hazim was that religion, beliefs, and the commentary of the Holy Quran should be learnt from the right source so that the obedience of this source is obligatory upon the people.

Or in Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 23, p. 42, Chapter about the Necessity of Divine Proof, he narrates traditions from the infallible Imams (a.s.) that show that just as the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to speak the truth and there was no scope of any error or mistake from him (s.a.w.a.), the Imams (a.s.) were also the same. For example, vol. 23, p. 42, H. 83:

قَالَ عَلِيٌّ ع لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَ مِنَّا الْهُدَاةُ أَمْ مِنْ غَيْرِنَا قَالَ لَا بَلْ مِنَّا الْهُدَاةُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ بِنَا اسْتَنْقَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ ضَلَالَةِ الشِّرْكِ وبِنَا يَسْتَنْقِذُهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ ضَلَالَةِ الْفِتْنَةِ وبِنَا يُصْبِحُونَ إِخْوَاناً بَعْدَ الضَّلَالَةِ

Ali (a.s.) asked the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), "Are the guides from us or other than us?" He (s.a.w.a.) replied, "No, the guides are from us till the Day of

Judgment. Through us, Allah will liberate them from the deviation of polytheism and through us, Allah will liberate them from the deviation of mischief, and through us, they will become brothers after deviation."

In this tradition, guidance is meaningful only if the Imam is infallible. Or, in the following tradition narrated by Imam Reza (a.s.) on the authority of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي سَيِّدِي عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُوسَى الرِّضَا ع عَنْ آبَائِهِ عَنْ عَلِيٍّ ع عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ص أَنَّهُ قَالَ مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَنْظُرَ إِلَى الْقَضِيبِ الْيَاقُوتِ الْأَحْمَرِ الَّذِي غَرَسَهُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ بِيَدِهِ ويَكُونَ مُتَمَسِّكاً بِهِ فَلْيَتَوَلَّ عَلِيّاً والْأَئِمَّةَ مِنْ وُلْدِهِ فَإِنَّهُمْ خِيَرَةُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وجَلَّوصَفْوَتُهُوهُمُ الْمَعْصُومُونَ مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ وخَطِيئَةٍ

"*Whoever desires to look at the red ruby branch which Allah – Mighty and Majestic be He – planted with His hand, and wants to fasten unto it, he must accept the mastership of Ali (a.s.) and the Imams from his progeny. For surely, they are the chosen ones of Allah – Mighty and Majestic be He – and His selected ones and they are the infallible ones from every sin and mistake.*"

(Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 25, p. 193, H. 2 narrating from Oyoon-o-Akhbaar al-Reza (a.s.))

In this narration, infallibility has been mentioned in no uncertain terms. In another narration, Imam Sajjad (a.s.) says:

عَنْ مُوسَى بْنِ جَعْفَرٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ ع قَالَ الْإِمَامُ مِنَّا لَا يَكُونُ إِلَّا مَعْصُوماً ولَيْسَتِ الْعِصْمَةُ فِي ظَاهِرِ الْخِلْقَةِ فَيُعْرَفَ بِهَا فَلِذَلِكَ لَا يَكُونُ إِلَّا مَنْصُوصاً

"*The Imam from us will not be but infallible. Infallibility is not in apparent creation by which a person will be known. Hence, he must be known through a divine text.*"

(Behaar al-Anwar, vol. 25, p. 194, H. 5 narrating from Ma'ani al-Akhbaar)

In the above narration, Imam (a.s.) clearly states that infallibility is not something that can be known from the apparent. Thus, none can introduce an infallible Imam except through divine texts. The purpose of bringing this tradition is to prove that the discussion of infallibility did exist before and was not something new initiated by Hisham Ibn Hakam.

Some of the companions of the Imams (a.s.) believed in consensus in infallibility per se. Hence, Husain Ibn Saeed Ahwazi (r.a.), who was a contemporary of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) and among the teachers of Kulaini (r.a.), says that there is no disagreement among us that the Imams (a.s.) are infallible.

لا خلاف بين علمائنا في أنهم ع
معصومون من كل قبيح مطلقا

"There is no disagreement among our scholars that they (a.s.) were infallible from every evil in all absoluteness." (Kitab al-Zohd, p. 73)

Even if a few earlier scholars did not believe in the infallibility of the Imams (a.s.), he could not have made the claimof unanimity with such conviction.One can also derive infallibility from Hadis-e-Saqalain. Some scholars of the Ahle Tasannun by clinging on to this tradition, consider the whole Muslim nation as infallible in the sense that till the Muslims fasten unto the Saqalain, they will be protected from deviation and aberration. For example, Suyuti in one of his works, says in the preface:

"All praise is for Allah Who has promised infallibility from deviation to this nation of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) as long as they fasten unto His Book."Thus, the concept of infallibility existed from the time of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Another point which the author has indicated at in his book is that *gradually, the Shias started replacing the political status of their*

Imams (a.s.) with their scientific positions and started recognizing him as someone from whom religious knowledge is acquired.

But the fact is that the Imams (a.s.) indicated at their scientific and knowledge position and superiority right from day one. A famous tradition, which has come in various wordings, Shaikh Saduq (r.a.) has reported on the authority of Asbagh Ibn Nubaatah in the book of Tauheed that on the very first day of his caliphate, Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) delivered a sermon and then, pointing towards his chest, said, "…*O people! Ask me before you lose me. This is the treasure-chest of knowledge…. This is what the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) has fed to me, a thorough feeding...*" (Tauheed, p. 305)

In other words, this is the knowledge which the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) has fed to me, drop by drop or grain by grain. He intended to state that my method of working is different when compared to the caliphs/rulers before me.Therefore, the Imams (a.s.) drew the attention of their companions towards their scientific superiority right from the beginning.

The author claims that a tradition was transmitted by word of mouth in the time of Imam Kazim (a.s.) that the seventh Imam will be the Qaem of the progeny of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.). After his imprisonment and martyrdom, a group of people believed that he was in occultation, claimed that he would reappear and fill the earth with justice and equity. Therefore, the phenomenon of the Waaqefiyyah occurred and for a long time, the Shias were occupied with this issue. The author alleges that the main reason the emergence of Waaqefiyyah were the traditions about Imam Kazim (a.s.) being the Qaem.

It should be noted that during the time of Imam Kazim (a.s.),the

Shia society had expanded considerably. Hence, the trend of appointing deputies commenced. Its main reason was the security and suffocating conditions by the Bani Abbas despots,and it was necessary that such deputies be appointed to solve the questions and financial problems of the Shias.Incidentally, it should also be noted that those who were appointed as deputies were ***not***only for financial reasons; rather, they even had a knowledge status and the Imams (a.s.) considered them as reliable vis-à-vis their knowledge.

After Imam Kazim (a.s.) went to prison, differences arose among the deputies leading to the problem of Waaqeifyyah. Many traditions have been reported citing financial interests as the main motive for the emergence of the Waaqefiyyah and since a lot of wealth had been accumulated by them and they were not ready to hand it over to Imam Reza (a.s.), they invented the theory of Imam Kazim (a.s.) being alive and in occultation. In the third section, the author also reports this phenomenon and affirms its veracity.

One of the doubts of the Waaqefiyyah which was extensively propagated was that when Imam Reza (a.s.) had attained Imamate, he did not have a son. The Waaqefiyyah, by misusing this issue, led a misinformation campaign that Imam Reza (a.s.) is not the rightful Imam. But after the birth of Imam Jawad (a.s.), many of those who had switched on to the Waaqefiyyah creed, reverted and almost became normal Shias. The content of the following narration conveys this point quite convincingly:

4- عِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ مَالِكِ بْنِ أَشْيَمَ عَنِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ بَشَّارٍ قَالَ كَتَبَ ابْنُ قِيَامَا إِلَى أَبِي الْحَسَنِ ع كِتَاباً يَقُولُ فِيهِ كَيْفَ تَكُونُ إِمَاماً وَ لَيْسَ لَكَ وَلَدٌ فَأَجَابَهُ أَبُو الْحَسَنِ الرِّضَا ع شِبْهَ الْمُغْضَبِ وَ مَا عَلَّمَكَ أَنَّهُ لَا يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَ اللَّهِ لَا

تَمْضِي الْأَيَّامُ وَ اللَّيَالِي حَتَّى يَرْزُقَنِيَ اللَّهُ وَلَداً ذَكَراً يَفْرُقُ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْحَقِّ وَ الْبَاطِلِ

Ibn Qiyaamaa wrote to Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Reza (a.s.) in a letter, “How can you be an Imam when you don’t even have a son?” Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Reza (a.s.) replied to him angrily, “*And who told you that I will not have a son? By Allah! Days and nights will not pass till Allah grants me a male son, through whom He will distinguish between truth and falsehood.*”

(Kafi, vol.1, p. 320, H. 4)

Ibn Qiyaamaa al-Waaseti was one of the leaders of the Waaqefiyyah. The response of Imam (a.s.) is also very interesting that *Allah will grant me a male son, through whom He will distinguish between truth and falsehood.*

Or, the tradition of Kafi, in which Imam al-Reza (a.s.) declares,

9- عَنْهُ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ عَنْ أَبِي يَحْيَى الصَّنْعَانِيِّ قَالَ كُنْتُ عِنْدَ أَبِي الْحَسَنِ الرِّضَا ع فَجِيءَ بِابْنِهِ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ ع وَ هُوَ صَغِيرٌ فَقَالَ هَذَا الْمَوْلُودُ الَّذِي لَمْ يُولَدْ مَوْلُودٌ أَعْظَمُ بَرَكَةً عَلَى شِيعَتِنَا مِنْهُ

Abu Yahya al-San’aani reports, “I was with Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Reza (a.s.) when his son Abu Ja’far (a.s.) was brought to him while he was small. He (a.s.) said, “*No child has been born who is more blessed for our Shias than him.*”

(Kafi, vol. 1, p. 321, H. 9)

This tradition shows that with the birth of Imam Jawad (a.s.), the Waaqefiyyah movement was substantially weakened.

Shaikh Toosi (r.a.) has brought a chapter in his book “Al-Ghaibah” in the rejection of the Waaqefiyyah, wherein he has brought all traditions relied upon by the Waaqefiyyah, analyzed and criticized them. Those interested may refer to it. In a couple of traditions relied upon by the author, the following expression is used:

"Surely, Allah advances what He wills and postpones what He wills."

This expression shows that if at all it was destined for Imam Kazim (a.s.) to bring about a revolution, then change has taken place in this destiny and postponed. (Al-Usul al-Sittah Ashar, The Book of Muhammad Ibn al-Muthanna al-Hadhrami, p. 91). In the book of Rejaal of Ibn Dawood, the number of those who believed in the Waaqefiyyah movement is said to be sixty-six people, which is significantly less than the students of Imam (a.s.). Therefore, by relying on a handful of traditions, one cannot claim that most people were inclined to the Waaqefiyyah movement or that many people waited for the reappearance of Imam Kazim (a.s.) or did not believe in his death.

In his book, "**Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shiite Islam**", for topics like Imamate, occultation, Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), etc., the author has relied upon sources like al-Mahaasin of Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Khalid Barqi, al-Kafi of Shaikh Kulaini, al-Ghaibah of Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim Nomani, Ikhteyaar Marefah al-Rejaal of Shaikh Toosi, etc. and narrated traditions from them.

The Meaning and Concept of Exaggeration (غلو)

In the second section, the author has proceeded to discuss the current of exaggeration (غلو) and delegation (تفويض) among the Shias. He begins the second part with these sentences: "*In the (Quranic) verses, it has been emphasized immensely that the divine Prophets were ordinary mortals. They lived like other ordinary people and died*." About the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), the Holy Quran underlines that "*he was an ordinary person…yet…despite such emphasis, the thought that the Holy Prophet is an extraordinary mortal took off*

immediately after his death." After discussing the history of the movement of exaggeration, he concludes that *most of the miracles, extraordinary feats and lofty positions reported about the Imams (a.s.) were the fabrications of the exaggerators*.

The question which the author has not answered is "What is the criterion for an action being ordinary or extraordinary? Is every extraordinary act or incredible feat regarded as exaggeration?" For example, if a man possesses abundant knowledge or has exceptional memory or has extraordinary physical prowess, will he be considered superhuman?

In the Holy Quran, several extraordinary and miraculous instances are attributed to the Divine Prophets (a.s.). For example,

- Prophet Eesa (a.s.) was born without a father and talked to the people while he was a just-born infant in the cradle.
- Prophet Yahya (a.s.) claimed Prophethood while still a toddler.
- Prophets Dawood and Sulaiman (a.s.) conversed with the animals and birds.
- Prophet Eesa (a.s.) cured the ill and gave life to the dead.
- Prophet Yusuf (a.s.) restored the sight of his father through a piece of cloth.
- Prophet Sulaiman (a.s.) made natural forces like wind subservient to him.

These are just a few examples from the several astonishing and unbelievable feats attributed to the divine Prophets (a.s.).

Of course, such incredible and amazing feats are not limited to the divine Prophets (a.s.). Even non-Prophets were graced by the Almighty with such miraculous and

unbelievable powers as mentioned in the Holy Quran. For example,

- Descent of heavenly foods for Hazrat Maryam (s.a.),
- Janab Sarah, the wife of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), conversed with the angels,
- Incredible physical strength of Hazrat Zulqarnain (a.s.),
- Bringing the throne of Queen Bilqees from Yemen to Israel beforeProphet Sulaiman(a.s.) in a second or twoby Asif Ibn Barkhiyaa, the vizier of Prophet Sulaiman (a.s.),
- The companions of the Cave sleeping for more than three hundred years and waking up after that.

So, just because we come across an action which cannot be performed by normal human beings, do we have the right to say that these are the fabrications of the exaggerators?

The author proceeds to define "*exaggeration*" as follows: "*It is the belief that someone has not died and conceals himself from the people, like the Kaisaniyyah made this claim for the first time about Muhammad Ibn Hanafiyyah.Such a claim was considered as* ***exaggeration****by the majority Muslims, and their partisans were called as* ***exaggerators****. This was their first belief.*"

The point that should be deliberated upon over here is that we should be able to distinguish between a person who is considered as immortal and can never die and someone who is presently alive and not dead. Even the concept of occultation is different from immortality and everlastingness.Such a distinction has not been brought out by the respected author.

The author underlines the specific characteristics of ***exaggeration***:*To belief that some*

people have infinite knowledge, knowledge of the unseen, and infinite power over the universe.

Before proceeding to analyse the author's definition of exaggeration and its conclusions, first we will elaborate the concept of exaggeration, what is the concept of exaggeration, and why did the Imams (a.s.) curse the exaggerators? Literally, exaggeration means to cross the limits and raise to certain levels. In the book al-Zeenah, which has also been cited in this book,Abu Haatim Raazi defines exaggeration thus: "Exaggeration means to exceed limits of any nature whatsoever and in beliefs, it implies ascribingsome attributes to someone who is not eligible for the same. For example, we consider someone as a Prophet who is not a Prophet, or we call someone as God who is not God."

In the Holy Quran, the word "exaggeration" has been used twice (Surah Nisaa (4): Verse 171 and Surah Maaedah (5): Verse 77) and in both these verses, in which the addressees are the Christians, exaggeration means to consider a creature as God. One of the reasons that Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) has been likened to Prophet Eesa (a.s.) in some traditions is because of this very reason.

Terminologically, ***exaggeration*** and ***exaggerators*** are used in different meanings by the Shias and the Ahle Tasannun. The latter use it for the followers of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.). For example, in his book al-Kaisaniyyah fi al-Tarikh wa al-Adab, Dr. Wadaad Qaazi says, "In the first century, the term Shias was used for two groups: A group that considered Ali as prior to Usman, and the second group was the followers of Abdullah Ibn Saba and considered him as the immediate successor and caliph of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). The second group indulged in exaggeration concerning Ali (a.s.)."

In Meezaan al-Etedaal, Zahabi writes about Abaan Ibn Taghlib, “In the first century, anyone who considered Ali (a.s.) as prior to Usman and disassociated himself from Talhah, Zubair and Moaviyah, were labelled as Shia Exaggerators. In our time (i.e., 7th century Hijri), anyone who believes Moaviyah, Talhah and Zubair to be infidels, and disassociates himself from the Shaikhain, is called as Shia Exaggerators.” (Meezan al-Etedaal, Zahabi, vol. 1 p. 5).

The term “Shia Exaggerator” is used by the Ahle Tasannun but in the Shia parlance, exaggeration and exaggerators are different and distinct from Shiism. Thus, in the lexicon of the Ahle Tasannun, anybody who believes in the succession of Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) is an exaggerator, not necessarily who ascribes divinity to him or his ascension to the sky.

Among the Shias, different currents were recognized as “**exaggerators**”, who were excommunicated by the Shias. That is, in Shia terminology, we cannot have anyone who is a Shia and an exaggerator at the same time. Abu Haatim Raazi, who was an Ismaili Shia, in his book al-Zeenah, writes, “The first person to talk about exaggeration was Abdullah Ibn Saba who believed in the occultation and divinity of Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.).”

Among the Shias, exaggeration is mostly synonymous with the belief in the divinity of the Imams (a.s.) or that God has incarnated in their bodies. Shaikh Sadooq (r.a.) in his book al-Eteqaadaat considers beliefs like immortality of the Imams (a.s.), everlastingness, incarnation, and transmigration as classic examples of exaggeration. On this pretext, the exaggerators were either abrogating some of the legislations or altering them.The common factor being the divinity of the Imams (a.s.) and

sometimes, the Prophethood of one of them. The emphasis of the Imams (a.s.) on separating the exaggerators from the Shias was for this very reason.

Another document which the author has used is by relying on the poem of Ismail Himyari, a famous poet during the era of Imam Sadeq (a.s.). Initially, he believed in the Imamate of Muhammad Ibn Hanafiyyah but later became a Shia with the blessings of Imam Sadeq (a.s.). His brief biography has come in the book "Kamaaluddeen" of Shaikh Sadooq (r.a.). In the poem in which he talks about the backdrop of his becoming a Shia, he says, كُنْتُ أَقُولُ بِالْغُلُوِّ وَ أَعْتَقِدُ غَيْبَةَ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ ابْنِ الْحَنَفِيَّة... "*Ibelieved in exaggeration and had faith in the occultation of Muhammad Ibn Hanafiyyah….*"The author has misused this sentence and says that exaggeration implies in believing someone's immortality. While, in his book al-Kaisaaniyyah fi al-Tarikh wa al-Adab, Wadaad Qazi reports that at the time of death of Muhammad Ibn Hanafiyyah, the Kaisaaniyyah claimed, "…**people thought he had died**…" that is, the same mistake which the Christians committed about Prophet Eesa (a.s.), the Muslims have done by thinking that Muhammad Ibn Hanafiyyah has died, while the fact was that he had not died and they had erred. Incidentally, Wadaad Qazi does not accept that Sayed Himyari had become a Shiah and does not attribute this poem to him. Therefore, based on one disputed statement, one cannot conclude that **exaggeration** means to believe in someone's immortality.

By paying attention to the meaning of exaggeration, it should be said that the author has erred in explaining the meaning of exaggeration, in the sense that merely believing that someone is alive and is in occultation cannot be construed as exaggeration. Rather, exaggeration is understood as

believing in everlastingness, incarnation, or divinity of an individual like the Kaisaaniyyah thought that their Imams (a.s.) were like God. Moreover, another work which the exaggerators did was to legislate and alter laws, which led to them becoming permissible.

The Meaning and Concept of Delegation (تفويض)

Regarding the meaning of ***delegation***, the author has derivedthe definition of ***delegation***from some traditional texts and the books of Mufawwezah. The objection raised against the author is that he has not clarified a clear approach for criticizing the Shia texts or a specific criterion for the correctness or falsityof a concept and reliance upon it, or (for criticising) a tradition.Moreover, in some instances, he has referred to some books as Shia sources which can certainly not be counted among Shia books, like the book of Hidaayah al-Kubra of Husain Ibn Hamdaan al-Khusaibi or Kitab al-Haft attributed to Mufazzal Ibn Umar.

The meaning of Delegation which the author has shown is that *Allah has delegated all the affairs of creation, sustenance, death, and life, to the Imams (a.s.) and whatever transpires in the universe is with their intention.In addition, they can repeal any law and can permit the prohibited and vice-versa. They are aware of everything, can speak all human languages and know the languages of the animals.*

Here, the definition of delegation as shown by the author, one part of it is right while he has mixed the other part with some other issues. For us to know as to who the Mufawwezah were, their definition of Delegation, the reason for Imams' (a.s.) opposition to them, etc., we must refer to Shia sources. In his book, Tas'heeh al-Eteqaad, Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.) has introduced the Delegators and related their beliefs as follows: "Mufawwezah implied

those who were close to the exaggerators, specially vis-à-vis their making things permissible. But their difference with the exaggerators was that they considered the Imams (a.s.) as created but Allah has handed to them all the affairs of the creatures including but not limited to creation and sustenance." (Tas'heeh al-Eteqaad, pp. 133-135).

Allamah Majlisi (r.a.), in Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 25, has mentioned a few meanings of delegation and says, "If the meaning of delegation is that Allah has created them and then delegated all the affairs of creation and sustenance to them, then this is clear disbelief and opposed to the intellect as well as the narrations…But if the meaning of delegation was in religious matters and legislations, then there can be two interpretations for that: First, they make things permissible and prohibited as per their whims and fancies, then this too is against intellect and narrations as it has been recorded that sometimes, when a questioner asked the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) a question, he (s.a.w.a.) would make him wait for a few days till he received the revelation about it. But in some issues from the divine laws and limitations like the number of units of prayers and recommended prayers, method of distribution of inheritance, etc., Allah the Almighty had given the powers to His Prophet (s.a.w.a.), endorsed them, and made them acceptable. It is in this meaning that it is said that Allah had handed over the affairs of His religion to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the verse, وَ ما آتاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَ ما نَهاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا "**Whatever the Prophet gives you, take it and from whatever he restrains you, abstain from it.**" (Surah Hashr(59): Verse 7). Another meaning of delegation that has come is that the affair of guidance and training of the creatures is in their hands, the people should refer to them to know the divine laws, and as they have said,

نَحْنُ الْمُحِلُّونَ لِحَلَالِهِ وَ الْمُحَرِّمُونَ لِحَرَامِهِ‘*We are the ones who allow His permissible and proscribeHis prohibited*.’This meaning is compatible with intellect as well as narration.”(Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 25)

Hence, if it has come in the traditions that the affairs of religion have been delegated to the Imams (a.s.), it implies that guidance has been delegated to them (a.s.). It certainly does not mean that they can abrogate any divine command as per their whim or alter the permissible and the prohibited of Allah as per their desire. Therefore, considering the above-mentioned definitions, the definition of ***delegation*** by the author is flawed.As indicated in the discussion of exaggeration, possessing extraordinary powers and knowledge does not necessarily imply being superhuman and is neither exaggeration nor delegation. Rather, the fundamental cause of the rejection of the exaggerators and the delegators was that they believed in the Imams (a.s.) possessing divine attributes and considered their perfections independent of Allah. They deemed the divine laws as permissible and considered non-compliance of these laws and divine worship as acceptable. Due to these reasons, the infallible Imams (a.s.) cursed them.

After defining exaggeration and delegation, the author proceeds to introduce the leaders of Mufawwezah. *The first person he introduces as the leader of the Mufawwezah is Mufazzal Ibn Umar. He introduces Mufazzal Ibn Umar as a partisan of Abu al-Khattaab, the notorious exaggerator and described him as the first person to have such beliefs*.

Regarding Mufazzal, both praise and condemnation have come in traditions. Najjaashi and Ibn Ghazaaeri have accused him of exaggeration and said that the exaggerators were given great

importance in his books. But Shaikh Mufeed and Shaikh Tusi have considered him as reliable and among the special companions of Imam Sadeq (a.s.). Shaikh Sadooq (r.a.), who was very sensitive about the exaggerators, has narrated a few traditions from him in his book "Man Laa Yahzohoru al-Faqeeh", and as per Sadooq's own elaboration, all the narrators of this book are reliable and authentic. Traditions narrated by Kashi about Mufazzal are both in praise as well as condemnation, although all the traditions of condemnation, except three, are regarded as weak. On analysing all the traditions that have come about him, one cannot judge about him easily with certainty. Traditions show that he was in touch with the followers of Abu al-Khattaab, but the kind of this relation is not very clear. In the book of Kashi, a tradition has been recorded that some companions complained to Imam Sadeq (a.s.) about the exaggerators and the followers of Abu al-Khattaab and requested him to introduce someone to them whom they can refer to for knowing the religious laws. Imam (a.s.) replied to them, قد أقمت عليكم المفضل اسمعوا منه و أقبلوا عنه"*I have appointed Mufazzal for you. Listen to him and accept from him.*"(Rejaal al-Kashi, p. 327, Entry No. 592). Here, Imam Sadeq (a.s.) introduces Mufazzal to counter the followers of Abu al-Khattaab (i.e., the exaggerators).

Of course, here the tradition that is worth paying attention to has come in Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 24, p. 286, under the Chapter captioned "*they (a.s.) are the prayers and the poor-rate*", and which has also been indicated at in the book of Kashi, Imam Sadeq (a.s.) wrote a letter to Mufazzal, in which he (a.s.) has talked about some of the beliefs of the exaggerators and their differences with the view of the Imams (a.s.). From the premises of this narration, it can be understood

that Imam (a.s.) has written this letter to it in response to his questions. From the contents of this letter and all the other narrations, it can be derived that Mufazzal had some sort of interaction with some of the exaggerators so that he could guide them to the right path. Hence, it is possible that some have mistaken him to be from among the exaggerators.

From another perspective too one can criticise the author regarding the presence of the works of Mufawwezah among the Shia books of traditions. Let us assume that Mufazzal is recognized as the leader of the Khattaabiyyah movement. Among the narrators of the Shias as well as the Ahle Tasannun, he has been introduced both as a teacher as well as a student. For example, from whom does a narrator narrate his traditions or from which manuscript, he has recorded his narrations. The index of Najjaashi indicates that in those times tremendous precision was laid on as to which book from which chain of narrators its chain of narrators is reliable. It was not so that everybody could copy from any book, add to its contents, and such distortion would go unnoticed. Regarding Mufazzal, Najjaashi himself writes, his books have been tampered with but whether these additions entered the Shia books of traditions is debatable.

One of the books attributed to Mufazzal and relied upon by the author is al-Haft. This book was recorded and distributed by the Ismailis, was recently researched by one of the Ismaili writers, who has stated in no uncertain terms in the preface of his research that this book was not written by Mufazzal; rather, it was written by one of the Ismailis. Moreover, the contents of this book have not been used in the Shia books of traditions.

By paying attention to these points, one cannot say with certainty that Mufazzal was an exaggerator,

and one cannot regard him as the head of the Mufawwezah movement. Incidentally, some scholars of Rejaal have said that the exaggerators have tampered with Mufazzal's book and he himself has not fabricated any traditions. From example, we have traditions from Imam Sadeq (a.s.) about Abu al-Khattaab or Moghirah Ibn Saeed that he has tampered with the books of Imam's (a.s.) companions and fabricated traditions but such statements have not come from the infallible Imams (a.s.) about Mufazzal.

If we analyse the traditions narrated by Mufazzal, especially in the Kitab al-Hujjah of al-Kafi, none of the concepts narrated in it show that he believed in Tafweez. For example, if we refer to the book of Rejaal of Marhoom Ayatollah Khoie, he has brought an index of the traditions narrated from each narrator of the Four Books (*Kotob-e-Arba'ah*). If we glance through the topics of these narrations and analyse their contents, not a single narration has come specifically and directly from Mufazzal on this subject in any of these Four Books about a concept that is clearly talking about delegation (if we take in consideration creation and sustenance as the pillars of tafweez).

After introducing Mufazzal Ibn Umar as the founder of the Mufawwezah sect, the author proceeds to present Muhammad Ibn Senaan Zaaheri as his successor. He was from the companions of Imam Reza (a.s.). Some of the Rejaali scholars like Shaikh Mufeed and Shaikh Toosi have endorsed his reliability. In his biography, it has been mentioned that he was inclined towards the exaggerators, but he did not go towards them and was steadfast on his religion. Due to this, some scholars of Rejaal like IbnGhazaaeri and Najjaashi have attributed exaggeration to him. In Rejaal al-Kashi, it has been recorded on the authority of Safwaan Ibn

Yahya that “We reprimanded him till he remained steadfast with us.” Unfortunately, the author Hossein Modarresi has not brought this statement in the footnote. It clearly states that Mufazzal was inclined towards the exaggerators, but we did not allow him, and he remained steadfast.There is absolutely no context to assert that this statement was added later. Another point that we should emphasize over here is that in the same book of al-Kashi it has come that Muhammad Ibn Senaan used to say in the mosque, “If anyone wants to ask complex questions about beliefs, he should come to me, and if someone wants to ask questions about jurisprudence and the permissible and the prohibited, he should go to Safwaan Ibn Yahya. In that period, most of the efforts of the Imams (a.s.) was exerted in transferring the pure beliefs and divine laws to the people. Complex questions about beliefs were not something that were narrated in lanes and markets to all and sundry.The Imams (a.s.) said such complex beliefs to the likes of Jabir Ibn Yazid Jofi, Mufazzal Ibn Umar, Muhammad Ibn Senaan, Kumail Ibn Ziyaad, etc. who were their confidantes. It was not allowed to relate all confidential issues of cognition to everybody. Anyways, even if we consider him (Muhammad Ibn Senaan) from the exaggerators, there is no document to establish that he was the successor of Mufazzal or had administrative connections. Simply because there is some similarity in the traditions narrated by Mufazzal and Muhammad Ibn Senaan, one cannot claim that they were connected to each other. Moreover, nowhere has it been indicated that Muhammad Ibn Senaan was the head or the leader of the exaggerators in his time.

As for Muhammad Ibn Naseer al-Numairi, who is touted as the successor of Mufazzal and Muhammad Ibn Senaan by the author, is the one who falsely

claimed to be representative of Imam-e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), thereafter, he declared Prophethood for himself, and was cursed and falsified by Imam (a.s.) himself. He was notorious for his transgressions and violating the laws of Shariah, and was the founder of the Nusairiyyah sect. But in none of the books of Rejaal or history it has come, in the smallest narration, that he was connected to Mufazzal or Muhammad Ibn Senaan. God knows from where the author has introduced him as the successor of these two people, while nobody has claimed violation and permissibility of divine laws about Mufazzal and Muhammad Ibn Senaan. Not a single narration from him has been recorded in Shia reliable book of traditions.

The author then proceeds to declare Husain Ibn Hamedaan Khusaibi as his successor and considers his book al-Hidaayah al-Kubra to be among the most important sources of the Mufawwezah sect. According to Najjaashi and Ibn Ghazaaeri, he was among the exaggerators and apparently, cooperated with the Abbaside despots. Nevertheless, there is not a single reference about his connection with Muhammad Ibn Nusair. Although Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) has brought some narrations from his book in Behaar al-Anwaar, yet his book was not considered valuable, and no tradition has been recorded from it in early Shia sources. The point worth paying attention to is that the leaders of the exaggerators and the Mufawwezah were removed from Shiism and our Imams (a.s.) deemed them to be polytheists. Therefore, they cannot be considered as a part of the Shia society. Not a single narration which substantiates the administrative connection of these four persons is available and the claim of the author is merely based on conjecture and speculation.

Another point is that from the analysis of the books of Rejaal like Najjaashi and Ibn Ghazaaeri,it becomes clear that in the fourth century, there was intense sensitivity about the rise of the Mufawwezah.For example, some of the scholars from Qom like Sa'd Ibn Abdillah al-Ash'ari and Muhammad Ibn Eesa were very harsh about it so much that they even externed from Qom the traditionalists who were not sufficiently careful in the narration of traditions. This strictness and harshness reached to such limits that Shaikh Sadooq (r.a.) also considered those who rejected the forgetfulness of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) (*sahw al-Nabi*) as exaggerators. Despite this strictness, it cannot be simply claimed that most of the concepts of the Mufawwezah and the exaggerators easily made their way into Shia books,and nobody was attentive to them in those times.

Let me point to another aspect about the issue of the forgetfulness of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.): Traditions have been narrated which Sadooq (r.a.) has brought in his books bearing the content that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) suffered forgetfulness in his prayers.In his explanation of this tradition, Shaikh Sadooq (r.a.) says, "We don't believe that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to forget. Rather, we believe that sometimes, Allah used to make him forget some trivial issues, not the conveyance of divine laws, so that the people don't ascribe divinity to him. Shaikh Sadooq (r.a.) says that the sign of the exaggerators is that they accuse the scholars of Qom of deficiency in beliefs (*taqseer*). That is, since we believe in the forgetfulness of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), they allege that we are *muqassir*. Shaikh Mufeed (r.a.) has waded into this issue in detail. He says that the sign of exaggeration is that we see what exaggeration isand who speaks things blended with exaggeration, and not that anyone

who accuses the teachers of Qom of *taqseer* becomes an exaggerator.

The respected author mentions the names of a few people accused of exaggeration, a few of whom were *certainly not* from the exaggerators. But about them, there is no consensus among the scholars of Rejaal, and one cannot judge them to be exaggerators with certainty. Let us indicate towards a few examples: Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Sayyaari is from those on whose authority Kulaini has brought traditions.Some of the traditions pertaining to the distortion in the Holy Quran has been narrated from him. We must also pay attention to this important point that people like Kulaini and Sadooq were also scholars of Rejaal and had books on this subject. It was not the case that they would relate the traditions from anybody and everybody. Incidentally, Najjaashi also says about him,

أخبرنا الحسين بن عبيد الله قال حدثنا
أحمد بن محمد بن يحيى وأخبرنا أبو عبد الله
القزويني قال حدثنا أحمد بن محمد بن يحيى، عن
أبيه قال حدثنا السياري، إلا ما كان من غلو
وتخليط

(Rejaal al-Najjaashi, p. 80)

Which means that we have also narrated from Sayyaari except that which was exaggeration and *tafweez*. This shows that adornment of the sources of traditions was prevalent and coincidentally due to the widespread sensitivity, many of the traditions from Imams (a.s.) were not recorded. Shaikh Sadooq (r.a.) himself in one of the chapters of his book Tauheed says,

والأخبار التي رويت في هذا المعنى .
وأخرجها مشايخنا رضي الله عنهم في مصنفاتهم
عندي صحيحة وإنما تركت إيرادها في هذا
الباب خشية أن يقرأها جاهل بمعانيها فيكذب بها
فيكفر بالله عز وجلوهو لا يعلم.

"According to me, all the traditions narrated about this concept and recorded by our teachers (r.a.) in their books are authentic. But I have not brought them over here in this chapter fearing that if a person who

is ignorant about their meanings reads them, he will deny them and thereby deny Allah – Mighty and Majestic be He – due to his ignorance.”

(Tauheed, p. 119, Chapter concerning what has come about the dreams).

Another example is Jafar Ibn Muhammad Ibn Maalik, who is considered weak by Najjaashi and Ibn Ghazaaeri. But Najjaashi himself says,

ولا أدري كيف روى عنه شيخنا النبيل الثقة أبو علي بن همام،وشيخنا الجليل الثقة أبو غالب الزراري رحمهما الله،

“I don’t know (i.e., I am surprised) how our noble teacher, the reliable Abu Ali Ibn Hammaam and our majestic teacher, the reliable, Abu Ghaalib Zaraari (may Allah have mercy on them both) have narrated from him.”

This sentence shows that there were differing views about this person,and everybody did not consider him to be weak.

About Dawood Ibn Kaseer Raqqi, Kashi says in his Rejaal,

قال أبو عمرو يذكر الغلاة أنه من أركانهم،وقد يروي عنه المناكير من الغلو، وينسب إليهم، ولم أسمع أحدا من مشايخ العصابة يطعن فيه،

“Abu Amr says, ‘The exaggerators have mentioned that he is from their pillars while the deniers of exaggeration have narrated from and have attributed to him. I have not heard any teacher of the (Shia) sect criticizing him…”

(Ikhteyaar-o-Marefah al-Rejaal, Shaikh Toosi (r.a.), p. 408, Entry 765)

Concerning Abu Baseer, a concept from the saying of Ali Ibn Hasan Fazzaal has been narrated from the book of Kashi. Ali Ibn Hasan Fazzaal was belonged to the Fathiyyah sect but was reliable. He had a book about Rejaalbut now this

book is not available. Some statements have been narrated from him in the Rejaal of Kashi but those have been not found in any other book. From among these concepts is the following statement:

فسألته هل يتهم بالغلو فقال أما الغلو
فلا، لم يتهم،ولكن كان مخلطا.

"Muhammad Ibn Masood says, 'I asked Ali Ibn Hasan Fazzaal, 'Was Abu Baseer accused of being an exaggerator?' He replied, 'As for exaggeration, no. He was not accused of it. But he did have mixed beliefs."

(Ikhteyaar-o-Marefah al-Rejaal, Shaikh Toosi (r.a.), p. 173, Entry 296)

Kashi himself, in another place says that there is consensus about (the reliability of) Abu Baseer. It should be noted that in the books of Rejaal, two persons with the agnomen Abu Baseer have been recorded, Abu Baseer Muraadi and Abu Baseer Asadi, and there is a disagreement as to which Abu Baseer are these traditions talking about. This disagreement is so important that the scholars of Rejaal have written quite a few articles on this subject. Apparently, this view of Kashi is about Abu Baseer Muraadi. About Abu Baseer Asadi, Najjaashi says, "He was reliable and an important personality."

Anyways, our aim was to establish that we cannot easily judge about the people whose names are mentioned by the author.At the most we can say that there areconflicting views about them.

After introducing the Mufawwezah movement, the author proceeds to present *the Moderate movement among the companions of the Imams (a.s.), who considered the Imams (a.s.) as righteous scholars only, nothing more. He introduces Abdullah Ibn Abi Yaafoor and Abaan Ibn Taghlib as the pioneers of this group.*

In the previous part, we talked about the tradition about the differences between Ibn Abi Yaafoor and Mualla Ibn Khunais vis-à-vis the positions of Imams (a.s.) and we proved that the conclusion derived by the author from that tradition is flawed. In one place, Dr. Modarresi says that an indicator for Tafweez is that the Imams (a.s.) had the authority to legislate i.e., they could make permissible and prohibited whatever they wanted. But in the book of Kashi, a tradition from Abdullah Ibn Abi Yaafoor which is completely at odds with his (author's) definition of Tafweez and his introduction of Ibn Abi Yaafoor's beliefs.

462- حمدويه، قال حدثنا محمد بن الحسين، عن الحكم بن مسكين الثقفي، قال حدثني أبو حمزة معقل العجلي، عن عبد الله بن أبي يعفور، قال قلت لأبي عبد الله (ع) و الله لو فلقت رمانة بنصفين، فقلت هذا حرام و هذا حلال، لشهدت أن الذي قلت حلال حلال و أن الذي قلت حرام حرام ، فقال رحمك الله رحمك الله.

Here, Abdullah Ibn Abi Yaafoor, who as per the author is a forerunner of the Moderate movement, reports, "I said to Abu Abdillah (al-Sadeq) (a.s.), 'By Allah! If you split a pomegranate into two and said that half of it is permissible and half of it is prohibited, I will certainly bear witness that what you said is permissible is permissible and what you said is prohibited is prohibited'. Imam (a.s.) replied (in approval), '*May Allah have mercy on you'.*" (Ikhteyaar-o-Marefat al-Rejaal, Shaikh Toosi (r.a.), p. 249, Entry 462)

What Abdullah means to say over here is that whatever you say, is permissible and whatever you say, is prohibited. Thus, the conclusions the author has derived that Abdullah Ibn Abi Yaafoor did not believe in infallibility of the Imams (a.s.) or that their appointment was through divine texts, is completely baseless.

For further familiarizing the readers with the views of Abdullah Ibn Abi Yaafoor, the author has relied upon some traditions, which ironically contradict the conclusions of the author about the beliefs of Abdullah Ibn Abi Yaafoor:

5- مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَحْيَى عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ عَنِ ابْنِ مَحْبُوبٍ عَنِ الْعَلَاءِ بْنِ رَزِينٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي يَعْفُورٍ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع قَالَ لَا يَمُوتُ الْإِمَامُ حَتَّى يَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَكُونُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ فَيُوصِيَ إِلَيْهِ

Abdullah Ibn Abi Yaafoor reports on the authority of Imam Sadeq (a.s.), "*An Imam does not die till he knows who the Imam is after him so that he may will unto him.*"

(Kafi, vol. 1, p. 277)

113- ير، [بصائر الدرجات] مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْحُسَيْنِ عَنِ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ مَحْبُوبٍ عَنِ الْعَلَاءِ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي يَعْفُورٍ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع قَالَ كَانَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ ع عَالِمَ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ وَ الْعِلْمُ يُتَوَارَثُ وَ لَيْسَ يَمْضِي مِنَّا أَحَدٌ حَتَّى يَرَى مِنْ وُلْدِهِ مَنْ يَعْلَمُ عِلْمَهُ وَ لَا تَبْقَى الْأَرْضُ يَوْماً بِغَيْرِ إِمَامٍ مِنَّا تَفْزَعُ إِلَيْهِ الْأُمَّةُ قُلْتُ يَكُونُ إِمَامَانِ قَالَ لَا إِلَّا وَ أَحَدُهُمَا صَامِتٌ لَا يَتَكَلَّمُ حَتَّى يَمْضِيَ الْأَوَّلُ

Abdullah Ibn Abi Yaafoor reports that Imam Sadeq (a.s.) said, "*Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) was the Imam of this nation and the knowledge was passed in inheritance. None of us dies till he sees from his children the one who knows his knowledge. The earth cannot survive one day without an Imam from us in whom the nation seeks refuge.*"

I asked, "Can there be two Imams?"

He (a.s.) replied, "*No but that one of them will be silent and will not die till the first one dies.*"

(Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 23, p. 53)

As we can see that these traditions by no means convey that Abdullah Ibn Abi Yaafoor considered the Imams (a.s.) as mere scholars. In fact, they show that he regarded the Imams (a.s.) as those whose obedience is obligatory and in whom the nation seeks refuge. He

also believed that the earth can never be devoid of an Imam. He narrates another tradition from Kashi and claims that it has been fabricated by the exaggerators against Ibn Abi Yaafoor.Imam Sadeq (a.s.) asked one of his companions whether he participated in the funeral of Abdullah Ibn Abi Yaafoor. He replied in the affirmative and said that there was a huge crowd in the funeral. Imam (a.s.) retorted, أما إنك سترى فيها من مرجئة الشيعة كثيرا. "*Surely, you have seen a lot of the Murjeah Shiah in it.*" ((Ikhteyaar-o-Marefat al-Rejaal, Shaikh Toosi (r.a.), p. 247, Entry 458)

We have already explained the term Murjeah earlier. We said that in those times and in the parlance of the Imams (a.s.), the word Murjeah was used for those who believed that the caliphate of Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) was postponed (*irjaa*) and considered Abu Bakr and Umar as prior to him.Here, Imam (a.s.) says that many of the participants in the funeral belonged to this group, and not that whoever participated in this funeral procession is a Murjeah Shiah. The author alleges that those who were against Ibn Abi Yaafoor have fabricated this tradition. Firstly, what has this narration got to do with Abdullah Ibn Abi Yaafoor? Can one ascribe Murjeah to him on this basis? Secondly, on what basis has the author concluded that the exaggerators have fabricated this tradition?

The author also considers Abaan Ibn Taghlib among the pioneers of the Moderate movement. Abaan Ibn Taghlib was a prominent jurist and was among Imam Sadeq's (a.s.) favourite companions. He was highly revered by the Shia scholars. The author reports a statement from Abaan and by relying on it, concludes that he considered Imams (a.s.) as merely righteous scholars. The story goes like this that in the gathering of Abaan, a youth came

and asked him as to how many companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) were martyred on the side of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) in the battles of Jamal and Siffeen. Abaan counter-questioned him, “Do you intend to know the excellence of Ali (a.s.) through those who followed him?” He said, “Yes, it is like that.” Abaan retorted, “But we consider their merit on account of their following Ali (a.s.).”Thereafter, Abaan adds, “A Shia is the one who followed Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) after the martyrdom of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Today also, Shiasare those who follow Jafar Ibn Muhammad (a.s.)” (Rejaal of Najjaashi, p. 12)

From this saying, the author concludes that *Abaan did not accept all the characteristics of the Imams (a.s.) discussed in Shia beliefs like the knowledge of the unseen and infallibility.*

But the fact is that one cannot understand the beliefs of a person merely by seeing one tradition. Several traditions have been recorded on the authority of Abaan Ibn Taghlib which incidentally refute this conclusion of the author.

We will cite one example over here:

10- حدثنا أحمد بن محمد عن الحسين بن سعيد عن فضالة بن أيوب عن أبي المعزى عن محمد بن سالم عن أبان بن تغلب قال سمعت أبا عبد الله ع يقول قال رسول الله ص من أراد أن يحيا حياتي و يموت ميتتي و يدخل جنة ربي جنة عدن غرسها ربي بيده فليتول علي بن أبي طالب و ليتول وليه و ليعاد عدوه و ليسلم الأوصياء من بعده فإنهم عترتي من لحمي و دمي أعطاهم الله فهمي و علمي إلى الله أشكو من أمتي المنكرين لفضلهم و القاطعين صلتي

Abaan Ibn Taghlib reports, “I heard Imam Abu Abdillah (al-Sadeq) (a.s.) say that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said, “*Whoever intends to live my life and die my death and enter the garden of my Lord, the garden of Eden, which my Lord has planted with His hand, then*

he must accept the mastership of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), befriend his friend, be enemy with his enemy, and submit to the successors after him. Surely, they are my progeny, from my flesh and my blood. Allah has granted them my understanding and my knowledge. I will complain to Allah against my nation, those who denied their (a.s.) excellences and broke relations with them (a.s.) ..."

(Basaaer al-Darajaat, Marhoom Saffaar, p. 50)

Another testimony cited by the author is about *Fazl Ibn Shaazaan Neshaapoori*. *He claims that Fazl considered the Imam(a.s.) as an ordinary person, who was aware of the divine laws and the true exegesis of the Holy Quran was with him.*Authentic traditions in his (Fazl's) praise have come from Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) which show his great esteem and majesty. The narration relied upon by the author has come in the book Oyoon-o-Akhbaar al-Reza (a.s.), vol. 2, p. 20, H. 44 that Fazl Ibn Shaazaan has reported vide Muhammad Ibn Ismaaeel from Imam Reza (a.s.): الأئمة ...*the* "إنهم علماء صادقون مفهمون محدثون. *Imams, they are the scholars, the truthful ones, those who were made to understand (by Allah), the ones with whom the angels spoke…*"

This tradition indicates that the Imams (a.s.) were those who were made to understand by Allah Himself and the ones with whom the angels spoke and has been indicated at in the Holy Quran. For examples, Hazrat Maryam (s.a.) and Saarah, the wife of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), were *muhaddas*. That is, they heard the voice of the angels and were conversing with them.In the traditions of the Imams (a.s.), this condition is also called as "*nukt*" and "*noqr*". Therefore, with this tradition, it can certainly not be concluded that Fazl Ibn Shaazaan believed the Imams (a.s.) to be a mere righteous scholar.

An objection which is raised against the author in several parts of the book is that he has not determined any criterion and standard for the acceptance or rejection of historical traditions, and simply based on the conclusions that he wants to draw, and which suits him, he makes the traditions that he likes as the standard. Sometimes, he concludes from some of the traditions in such a way that by referring to the original content, the reader realizes that his conclusion was completely flawed and incorrect. Occasionally, he reports some contents and conveniently omits others, which changes the concept and meaning in their entirety.