

## **Between Politics and Knowledge<sup>1</sup> From Early Shiite Discourse in Medina to Today's Shi'ism**

*Abdolmajeed Moballeghi<sup>2</sup>*

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Research Article



### **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate, firstly, how the Shiite political discourse appeared in the city of Kufa and in the land of Karbala during the era of the first three Imams of Shi'a and, secondly, how, after that, a new knowledge-based discourse emerged in Medina and it could, relying on theoretical potential of the two disciplines of theology and jurisprudence, promote the Shi'a "religious identity" and its "group stability". Finally, in the conclusion, a chain of constructive relations is discussed that helped the discourse of Shi'a to identify and stabilize itself as the most and first important minority within Islam. The paper consists of an introduction, two central parts and a final section.

### **Keywords**

Shi'a, Discourse, Politics, Knowledge, Intizār, Taqīya, 'Iṣmah.

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2. Assistant Professor, Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, Tehran, Iran (a.moballeghi@ihcs.ac.ir)

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## Introduction

One way to understand contemporary Shi'ism is via approaching its discursive roots in the eras of the Imams (from the 7th to the 10th centuries) mainly in the city of Medina. This approach provides us with a chance to distinguish a chain of contingencies led to the emergence of the historical Shi'ism. Even more, through a precise historical discursive analysis, one may distinguish nature of some hidden dynamism that historically shaped current circumstances in Najaf and Qom.

This paper will examine two early Shiite central discourses in the era of the Imams: first Shi'a discourse (from the era of Imam Ali to the revenge movements after the tragedy of Ashura) and second Shi'a discourse (mostly in the era of Imam Sajjad and Sadiqain (Imams Baqir and Sadiq)). The first discourse, at least symbolically, can be linked to the city of Kufa and the land of Karbala, while the second discourse is associated with the jurisprudential role of the city of Medina as the discourse was formed mainly during the Sadiqain's era. The former represented intrinsic Shiite orientation to politics, and the latter represented a historical attempt to identify Shi'a, based on its attention to "a special theological and jurisprudential knowledge".

The methodology used in this paper is discourse. As a well-known member of postmodern methodologies' family, it helped the paper to explain how the elements of a specific discourse are tied together in a way that, historically speaking, it has produced a precise piece of meaning inside the whole discourse. This methodology, as Michel Foucault's works show, also aims at discovering the archeological roots and genealogical background of different discourses. Using discourse methodology, hopefully, enables the study to take a step toward explaining relations between power and knowledge within different forms of the Shiite discourses.

### From Kufa to Karbala: A discourse for political change

The roots of a historical Shi'ism that led to the victory of the Islamic republic of Iran (founded in 1979) goes back to a discursive order in the early Shi'a history. This can be termed the "political discourse from the era of Imam Ali to the revenge movements after Ashura tragedy". This section of the paper explains this discourse in early Shi'a.

The three first Shi'a Imams (Imam Ali, Imam Hasan and Imam Hussein) attempted to take part in politics. It means their presence in the public sphere was not limited to directing the community of Shiites but all people in the growing Islamic empire after the death of the Prophet. Each of the three first Imams pursued this goal in accordance with the circumstances of their times.

Imam Ali established a government that had a reformist approach and tried to change some previous jurisprudential and political procedures under the three first caliphates before himself (Ibn Abil-Ḥadīd, vol. 11, p. 14: 1404 A.H).<sup>1</sup> Imam Hasan signed a peace treaty with Mu'awiya under special conditions and on specific terms (Ibn a'thm kūfī, Vol. 4, p. 290: 1411 A.H),<sup>2</sup> including the transfer of power from Mu'awiya to Ahlul-Bayt after his death. And Imam Hussein fought Yazid, son of Mu'awiya after it became clear that, in opposition to the previous peace treaty, the Umayyah government is going to continue (Ibn A'tham Kufi, Vol. 4, p. 339:

١. «وكان يحمل فاطمة عليها السلام ليلا على حمار وابناها بين يدي الحمار، وهو عليه السلام يسوقه فيطرق بيوت الأنصار وغيرهم، ويسألهم النصر والمعونة، أجابه أربعون رجلا فبايعهم على الموت وأمرهم أن يصبحوا بكرة محلقي رؤوسهم ومعهم سلاحهم فأصبح لم يوافه منهم إلا أربعة الزبير والمقداد وأبو ذر وسلمان ثم أتاهم من الليل فناشدهم فقالوا نصبحك غدوة فما جاءه منهم إلا أربعة وكذلك في الليلة الثالثة».

٢. «فقدم عبد الله بن [نوفل بن] الحارث على معاوية، فخبّره بمقالة الحسن. فقال له معاوية: سل ما أحببت! فقال له: أمرني أن أشترط عليك شروطا، فقال معاوية: وما هذه الشروط؟ فقال: إنه مسلم إليك هذا الأمر على أن له ولاية الأمر من بعدك، وله في كل سنة خمسة آلاف ألف درهم من بيت المال، وله خراج دارابجرد من أرض فارس، والناس كلهم آمنون بعضهم من بعض. فقال معاوية: قد فعلت ذلك».

1411 A.H).<sup>1</sup> This war led to Imam Hussein's martyrdom in Karbala.

In all three of these approaches, Shi'i interests were pursued politically and in connection with the idea of changing the entire society. Indeed, political activism can be seen in these three periods of Imamate and it formed the common ground for the behavior of the first three imams. In all of them, one faces a situation associated with political change at the macro level of the society. Also, in all, Imams themselves are located at the center of different political forms of activism (A reformative government with the aim of changing the previous practices, signing a peace treaty to control the illegitimate power, and the brave and selfless uprising leads). These two features (focal role of Imams and political activism) formed the most important pillars of the first Shiite discourse.

The tragedy of Karbala shows the most serious meaning of the presence of these two and represents the peak of this approach. During it, the concept of imamate, as the central and nodal point of being Shi'a, was targeted.

What happened in Karbala led to the suppression of the Shi'a political activism in its worst possible way. Accordingly, Karbala should be seen as the boiling point for Shi'a. Obviously, no response could be expected from the Shiites except the desire for revenge on Shi'a enemies and in practice, various revenge movements took place, and different groups of Shiites formed rebellions (Ibn Kathīr, Vol. 8, p. 272: 1407 A.H), (Ibn Sa'd, Vol. 6, p. 241: 1410 A.H), (Ibn Jowzi, Vol. 6, p. 60: 1412 A.H),

١. «قال الحسين من خير لامة محمد! يزيد الخمر الفجور! فقال معاوية: مهلا أبا عبد الله! فإنك لو ذكرت عنده لما ذكر منك إلا حسنا، فقال الحسين: إن علم مني ما أعلمه منه أنا فليقل فيما أقول فيه، فقال له معاوية: أبا عبد الله! انصرف إلى أهلك راشدا واتق الله في نفسك واحذر أهل الشام أن يسمعوا منك ما قد سمعته فإنهم أعداؤك وأعداء أهلك».

(Dhahabī, Vol. 5, p. 48: 1987).<sup>1</sup> However, these movements did not receive a strict support by Imam Sajjad, Imam Hussein's son and the next Imam in Shi'a. (Mas'udī, Vol. 3, p. 74: 1363 A.P), (Balādhurī, Vol. 6, p. 454, 1974), (Dhahabī, Vol. 6, p. 436: 1987), (Beyhqī, Vol. 7, p. 248: 1405 A.H), (Ṭabarī, Vol.11, p. 630: 1967). The turbulent nature of the events at this time caused, despite the lack or limited support of the present Imam, a series of revengeful activities formed in the heart of political movements relying on the power of the sword. In fact, since the concept of revenge was very serious in the minds of the Shiites, Imam Sajjad's desire to avoid political activism did not seem to be enough to prevent some part of the community.

Some Shiite movements, whose primary purpose was revenge, quickly emerged. These movements tried to overthrow Yazid's caliphate; a great and far-reaching goal that the forces and strength of these movements were not enough to achieve. For this reason, it can be claimed that the strong desire for revenge was itself an existential threat to Shi'a. It was quite possible that efforts by Shiite movements to eliminate its enemies had a reversal effect and, as a result of the spread of struggles, this could concentrate more waves of violence on the community of Shiites. Meanwhile, it should also be taken into account that before Karbala incident, Shi'a did not yet have a strong structure and was not organized as a specific minority. Neither its jurisprudence was separated from Sunnis, nor was its theological fundamentals capable enough to form a distinct line of differences with the majority of population in the Islamic world. The consequence of this situation was that Imam Sajjad's control over the Shiite group

١. «ما ذنبنا نترك أقواما قتلوا حسينا يمشون في الدنيا أحياء آمنين، بئس ناصر و آل محمد إني إذا كذاب كما سميتوني أنتم، فاني بالله أستعين عليهم، فالحمد لله الذي جعلني سيفا أضر بهم، و رمحا أظعنهم، و طالب و ترهم، و قائما بحقهم، و إنه كان حقا على الله أن يقتل من قتلهم، و أن يذل من جهل حقهم، فسموهم ثم اتبعوهم حتى تقتلوهم، فإنه لا يسع لي الطعام و الشراب حتى أظهر الأرض منهم، و أنفى من في المصر منهم».

was limited and difficult, unlike what happened in the later Imams' time.

Considering what happened, it is conceivable to understand why Karbala played a central role in the Shiite developments and, accordingly, the early Shiite history should be divided into before and after that tragedy. Indeed, Karbala was a turning point for a transfer from the first to the second Shi'a discourse. With the formation of the second discourse in the city of Medina, new conditions for the Shiites emerged. The next section is dedicated to explain this discourse.

### **Medina: A discourse for self-identification**

In this section of paper, we make an effort to illustrate another main mode of Shiite discourse - which is rooted in Imam Sajjad's era and reaches its fullest development during the "Sadiqain era", (namely the mid-8th century and the leadership of Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq).

This time was not only important for the Shiites, but also for the whole Muslim caliphate. It was the time of a great political change from the Umayyad caliphate (661-750) to the Abbasid caliphate (750-1258). Politics at this period of time was harsh, unstable and rapidly changing. The hardness of time for the Shiites was even more serious than others. Specifically, a strong tendency between the Abbasids to use a chain of Shiite slogans for overthrowing the Umayyads (Ibn Khaldūn, Vol. 3, p. 218: 1988)<sup>1</sup> made the political environment dangerous and risky for followers of Sadiqain.

Shiite discourse during the Sadiqain's era, mostly concentrated in the city of Medina, reacted to this situation. Based on studying different layers of their reactions, one can identify hidden aspects of this discourse and detect its central historical feature: directing the

١. « لقول داود بن عليّ (عم الخليفة العباسي) على منبر الكوفة يوم بوع السفّاح: يا أهل الكوفة إنه لم يقم فيكم إمام بعد رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم إلا عليّ بن أبي طالب و هذا القائم فيكم يعني السفّاح »

growing desire for political activism in Shi'a after Karbala in favor of intra-group concentration rather than an outside-oriented approach. This approach was realized in a discursive articulation that made it possible to transfer Shi'a from a political identity-based group of minority to a religious identity-based one.

Indeed, Shiite discourse in Medina was able to organize this historical transition based on the establishment and expansion of the special new form of Shiite knowledge. This knowledge contained both theological and jurisprudential concepts. It stabilized Shiites' independent identity as a minority inside the religion of Islam. It empowered Shi'a discourse to articulate itself as an important part of Islam and survive up to now. This theological and jurisprudential aspect of knowledge was not in opposition to the Shi'a political attitudes in its previous phase, but rather gave them a new and refreshed meaning. The goal was to keep the political activism in "the minds of Shiites" alive in a way not leading to a dangerous struggle in the "real world" outside the minds.

The Shi'a discourse in Medina provided a sort of Shi'a theology and jurisprudence by which the meaning of being Shi'a was redefined and reformulated. To do this, it introduced several important concepts like Taqīya (Simulation), 'Iṣmah (Infallibility), and Intizar (Waiting). The special articulation of these concepts together and around the central and crucial concept of Imamate formed a chain of implications and thoughts within the framework of this discourse that functioned in this way. In contrast to the last efforts of the previous discourse of Shi'a, focused on a sort of activism as a reaction to the tragedy of Karbala, the Shi'a discourse in Medina was not leading Shi'a toward "the final battle between good and evil"; rather, it led Shi'a toward a kind of preparation and readiness for this final battle 'in the minds of Shiites'. In other words, this discourse did not focus on practical and

actual steps towards realizing the ultimate promised struggle; rather, it focused on systematic thinking and speaking about it. Being engaged in such thinking and speaking on a daily basis, and not acting accordingly, enabled Shi'a to justify and strengthen its identity as a religious minority with some special radical aims to change the situation (without being really involved in a physical and real activism to make these desired changes happening in the real world outside the minds). Thus, it put this sect in a position of gradual stabilization and self-identification. The result was political quietism, or the act of withdrawal from political affairs, in Medina and during the Sadiqain era: a doctrine that reduced the practical struggle of the Shiites with the Sunnis and, at the same time, increased the group's mental resistance to the Sunnis.

An important question arises here: How did the Shi'a discourse in Medina succeed in forming this two-lawyer policy and then persuading its followers to adhere to it? - the followers who, because of the tragedy of Karbala, were keen on real revenge, and not on mental focus on the problem. The answer lies in the important concepts used by Shi'a discourse of Sadiqain in Medina: *Taqīya* (pretending denial of religious belief and practice), *'Iṣmah* (infallibility of Imams) and *Intiāẓr* (waiting for the last Imam as the Promised Savior).

Before examining these three concepts, it is essential to pay attention to their position in the Shi'a discourse of Medina. These concepts were articulated around the central concept of Imamate. In this way, they formed the Shiite understanding of the world within a special orbit of meanings. By participating in an articulation with the central concept of Imamate, they created a unique arrangement that resulted in a unique approach in Medina: political quietism of Shi'a at the time of presence of Imams. It can also be defined as practical



withdrawal from political affairs along with mental and ideological preparation for political intervention. To understand this, it is needed to explain the implications and meanings of these three concepts in the Shiite Medina discourse.

### 1. Intizār

Intizār means waiting for a promised last Imam from the Prophet's Ahlul-Bayt who is expected to bring justice to the world. According to some hadiths from the Prophet, the name of this great Imam is Mahdi; a man who will raise the flag of Islam again and will be able to bring back finally the religion of Islam into its right direction. The concept of Intizār was formulated within the discourse of Medina in a special way. The tragedy of Karbala had made political activism popular and widespread in Shi'a. The concept of Intizār played a vital role in guiding and channeling this strong tendency in Shi'ism towards a more subjective and mental approach, rather than an objective and actual one (Majlisī, Vol. 83, p. 62: 1403 A.H.)<sup>1</sup>.

According to several hadiths, the advent of Imam Mahdi will lead to the final defeat of enemies of Shi'a, and after that "He will fill the earth with fairness and justice as it was filled with oppression and injustice" (Sheikh Ṣadūq -Ibn Bābiwayh-, p. 516: 1363 A.P.)<sup>2</sup>. Also according to

١. «... و أنجز لوليك و ابن نبيك الداعي إليك يا ذنك و أمينك في خلقك و عينك في عبادك و حجتك على خلقك عليه صلواتك و بركاتك و عده اللهم أيده بنصرك و انصر عبدك و قو أصحابه و صبرهم و افتح لهم من كدك شلطاناً نصيراً و عجل فرجه و أمكنه من أعدائك و أعداء رسولك يا أرحم الراحمين - قلت أ ليس قد دعوت لنفسك جعلت فداك قال دعوت لنور آل محمد و سائقهم و المنتقم بأمر الله من أعدائهم قلت متى يكون خروجه جعلني الله فداك قال إذا شاء من له الخلق و الأمر...».

٢. «يا على بن محمد السمري اعظم الله اجرا خوانك فيك، فانك ميت ما بينك و بين سته ايام، فاجمع امرك و لاتوص الى احد فيقوم مقامك بعد وفاتك، فقد وقعت الغيبه الثانيه فلا ظهور الا بعد اذن الله تعالى ذكره، و ذلك بعد طول الامد و قسوه القلوب و امتلاء الارض جوراً. و سيأتي شيعتي من يدعي المشاهده، الا فمن ادعى المشاهده قبل خروج السفيناني و الصيحه فهو كذاب مفتر، ولا حول و لا قول الا بالله العلي العلي العظيم».

some other hadiths, beginning of the era of "Mahdi" is expected at any moment (Nu'mānī, p. 201: 1422 A.H).<sup>1</sup>

Based on a significant number of these hadiths that were presented by the Imams during the Sadiqain era, a special understanding of Intizār was formed. Therefore, the important religious duty of the Shiites was defined to stay ready on a daily basis for that great moment. In this way, this religious task, which had a mental aspect, replaced external possible acts to fight against Shiite enemies. In other words, the Shiites, based on commitment to the concept of Intizār, accepted, in practice, the necessity of withdrawal from political struggles, while mentally and spiritually, to keeping themselves ready and prepared for the return of the last hidden Imam.

## 2. Taqīya

Another important concept in the Shi'a discourse during the Sadiqain era in Medina was Taqīya. Taqīya can be defined as purposefully lying or misrepresenting your beliefs when your life is at risk. Imams not only asked their followers to practice in accordance with the doctrine of Taqīya, but also strongly condemned those followers who do not respect it. Through this coherent approach by the Imams after the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, 'Taqīya became an important part of Shi'a (Kuleynī, Vol. 2, p. 217: 1388 A.P).<sup>2</sup> It helped Shi'a to survive as a minority under pressure in its most difficult time.

١. «عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام، قال: قال: قلت له عليه السلام: أوصني؟ فقال: أوصيك بتقوى الله، وأن تلزم بيتك وتقعدي في دهماء هؤلاء الناس وإياك والخوارج منا فإنهم ليسوا على شيء ولا إلى شيء، واعلم أن لبني أمية ملكا لا يستطيع الناس أن تردعه، وأن لأهل الحق دولة إذا جاءت ولاها الله لمن يشاء منا أهل البيت، فمن أدركها منكم كان عندنا في السنام الأعلى، وإن قبضه الله قبل ذلك خار له، واعلم أنه لا تقوم عصاة تدفع ضيما أو تعز ديننا إلا صرعتهم المنية والبلية حتى تقوم عصاة شهدوا بدرا مع رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله) لا يوارى قتلهم، ولا يرفع صريعهم، ولا يداوي جريحهم. قلت: من هم؟ قال: الملائكة.

٢. «عن أبي عبد الله في قول الله عز وجل أولئك يؤتوا أجرهم مرتين بما صبروا قال بما صبروا على التقية ويدرؤن بالحسنه السيئة قال الحسنه التقية و السيئة الإذاعة».

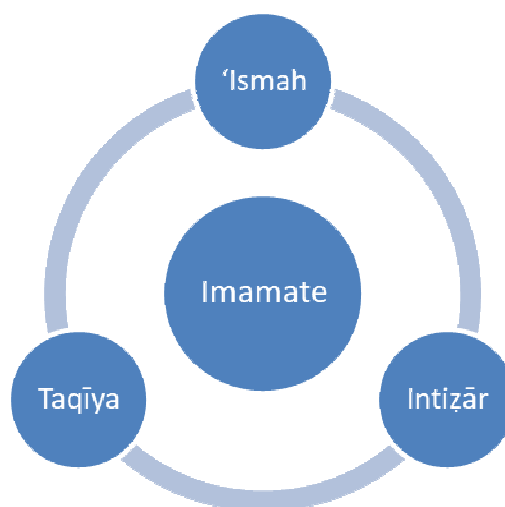
Here is a significant question about the possibility of approaching Taqīya in Shi'a. One can ask how Shi'a discourse in Medina could use Taqīya as a tool to protect the community. The question is related to the point that Taqīya can be seen as the acceptance of duplicity which appeared to be incompatible with a believer's righteousness and "taqwā" (i.e. piety). The answer is that within the Shi'a discourse in this politically hazardous time, mentality had gained more importance than the real and external positions. In fact, for Shiites of the era of Sadiqain, mental loyalty was considered to be an internal belief rather than an external behavior. For them, more than anything else, it was vital to believe by heart. It meant this belief in so many occasions, particularly in dangerous situations, would not come to practice. This mental "faith" ensured Shi'a to survive, while the believers were supposed to systematically keep a safe distance with those dangerous actions in the real world that could possibly create a difficult situation for the group as a whole. Therefore, Taqīya, like Intizār, reinforced the desire for political quietism and subjectivism in Shi'a instead of political activism and objectivism.

### 3. 'Iṣmah

There is a question to be asked: how did the Imams succeed in persuading their followers to think in one way and act in a different way? The answer can be found in referring to function of another important concept in this discourse: 'Iṣmah or Infallibility of Imams.

'Iṣmah is the immunity of Imams from committing sin or doing wrong actions. Based on the Shi'a doctrine of 'Iṣmah, whatever Imams do or ask their followers to do is, and should be seen, absolutely, unconditionally and unquestionably correct. Therefore, both hadiths and practices of infallible Imams are considered as sources with the highest possible and imaginable level of an ultimate credit. As the doctrine of 'Iṣmah describes, this holistic credit is

needed for conveying the messages of God and “protecting the religion” on the face of earth. Due to the infallibility of Imams, it was considered absolutely essential for all their Shiite followers to obey them without doubts about the validity of these teachings (Ḥurr ‘Āmilī, Vol. 27, p. 62: 1414 A.H).<sup>1</sup> This concept played an important role in shaping the Shi'a discourse as it stabilized Imam's centrality and supremacy in the structure of the Shi'a pyramid and led to the unconditional acceptance of their policies as sacred and religious duties of their followers.



The three mentioned concepts (Intizār, Taqīya and ‘Ismah) gave a special meaning to Imamate. This process realized within theoretical disciplines of Shiite jurisprudence and theology. More specifically, the Shiite theology, or ‘Im al-Kalām, that provided a theoretical and philosophical context for approaching these concepts (Sharīf Murtiḍa -‘Alam

١. «عن أبي الحسن الرضا عليه السلام، قال: سمعته يقول: قال علي بن الحسين عليه السلام: على الأئمة من الفرض ما ليس على شيعتهم، وعلى شيعتنا ما ليس علينا، أمرهم الله عز وجل أن يسألونا، قال: ﴿فَأَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ فأمرهم أن يسألونا، وليس علينا الجواب، إن شئنا أجبنا، وإن شئنا أمسكنا».

al-Hudā-, Vol. 1, p. 289: 1410 A.H), (Majlisī, Vol. 10, p. 451: 1403 A.H)<sup>1</sup> and the Shiite jurisprudence, or 'Ilm al-Fiqh, that created a religious and ritual mechanism, led to the implementation of these concepts in the Shiite lifestyle (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, Vol. 27, p. 62: 1414 A.H).<sup>2</sup> In other word, jurisprudential mechanisms and theological contexts developed a special Shi'i language within which three important concepts of Taqīya, 'Iṣmah and Intizār helped Shi'a discourse, as a group of minority, to overcome a chain of crises in the critical transition time from the era of Umayyads to the era of Abbasids.

In surface, this language avoided to be about politics, but it was deeply political in its institution. It tried to find a new battleground for fighting Shiite enemies. This new battleground was in the minds of the Shiites instead of the physical battlefields in which man can only use his sword (Sheikh Ṣadūq -Ibn Bābweyh-, Vol. 2, p. 467: 1966).<sup>3</sup> In this way, the Shiites, in the most difficult time, found a unique advantage for survival and even development: the continuous strengthening of their identity as components of a coherent group of minority in a situation

١. «و ترتيبه أن حاجة الناس إلى الإمام إذا وجبت بالعقل لم يخل من وجهين، إما أن يكون ثبت وجوبها لارتفاع العصمة عنهم وجواز فعل القبيح منهم، أو لغير ذلك، فإن كان لغيره لم يمتنع أن تثبت حاجتهم إلى الإمام مع عصمة كل واحد منهم... فلم يبق إلا القول بعصمة الإمام، وانتهاء الأمر في الرئاسة والإمامة إلى معصوم لا يجوز عليه فعل القبيح».

«و قال السيد المرتضى رضي الله عنه و حضر الشيخ أبو عبد الله آدم الله عزه بمسجد الكوفة فاجتمع إليه من أهلها وغيرهم أكثر من خمسمائة إنسان فابتدر له رجل من الزيدية أراد الفتنة و الشناعة فقال بأي شيء استجزت إنكار إمامة زيد بن علي فقال له الشيخ إنك قد ظننت علي ظنا باطلا و قولي في زيد لا يخالفني عليه أحد من الزيدية فلا يجب أن يتصور مذهبي في ذلك بالخلاف فقال له الرجل و ما مذهبك في إمامة زيد بن علي فقال له الشيخ أنا أثبت من إمامة زيد عليه السلام ما تثبته الزيدية و أنفي عنه من ذلك ما تنفيه فأقول إن زيدا رحمة الله عليه كان إماما في العلم و الزهد و الأمر بالمعروف و النهي عن المنكر و أنفي عنه الإمامة الموجبة لصاحبها العصمة و النص و المعجز و هذا ما لا يخالفني عليه أحد من الزيدية حيثما قدمت فلم يتمالك جميع من حضر من الزيدية أن شكروه و دعوا له و بطلت حيلة الرجل فيما أراد من التشيع و الفتنة».

٢. «عن الرضا عليه السلام علينا إلقاء الاصول و عليكم بالتفريع».

٣. «والمؤمن مجاهد لأنه يجاهد أعداء الله تعالى في دولة الباطل بالتيقنة وفي دولة الحق بالسيف».

where others were engaged in harsh and physical conflicts.

In this framework, one can see how the Shiite knowledge, that emerged in the city of Medina and during the time of Sadiqain, raised via an articulation of these notions together and with the centrality of the notion of Imamate as its nodal point. This special knowledge not only gave this group a theological and jurisprudential distinctiveness, but more or less established its position in the Islamic society of that time as a distinct minority. In fact, with the spread of theological and jurisprudential achievements of the Shiites during the time of Sadiqain in Medina, a more stable identity of the Shi'a was formed in the society, and it became possible for it to continue as a religious group with its special distinctiveness.

The emergence of this central discourse in Shi'a was due to the continued presence of Shi'i Imams in the city of Medina and the formation of a special Shiite jurisprudential school in that city. The advent of the city of Medina as a cradle for Shi'i knowledge in the era of the Imams was related to the capabilities of this city in the field of Hadith and its related knowledge too. The Medina Hadith School, as a significant tradition in the early centuries of Islam, was representing a chain of continuous efforts almost from the time of the Prophet of Islam until the second and third centuries of Islam. The Shiites used this thriving hadith atmosphere to grow their independent identity under the authority of the Sadiqain and other Imams in Medina and to form Shi'a as a separate school of thought along with other schools in that city. In this way, Medina during the Sadiqain's era found vital importance in relation to the establishment of a new basement for Shi'a.

### **The presence of Shi'a discourses in our time**

The distinguishing characteristic of Shi'a in Medina during the Sadiqain's era was in its more quietist approach toward politics and its

requirements while the distinguishing characteristic of Shi'a in Kufa and Karbala during the era of first three imams was its approach to creating a massive political change across the Muslim world. According to this, the first Shi'a was political-based and the second one was based on knowledge. In other words, politics was the mechanism of social transformation in the first Shiite discourse, while knowledge was the mechanism for expanding intra-group identity in the second Shi'a discourse.

Shi'a could, via Sadiqain's era, provide some sort of religious knowledge basis that led to the promotion of its possibilities for continuity and stability. Indeed, from a historical viewpoint, Shi'a was mainly influenced by the Sadiqain knowledge-based discourse of Medina.

Today's seminary of Najaf can be described as a result of the development of that discourse. However, during the supremacy of Sadiqain discourse, the potential for a more political discourse was always possible. The success of Islamic revolution, in an important sense of the word, demonstrates the fullest realization of Shiite resistance to the Sadiqain discourse of Medina. The city of Qom is a definitive representative of this type of jurisprudential approach in contemporary Shi'a

It is interesting that Najaf's discourse regarding the post-Sadiqain atmosphere, with these history-making efforts, reaches its historical end and paves the way for Qom's approach in its systematic attention to the establishment of a religious government.

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