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Chapter 2: Founding the School

On Al-Shahid Al-Awwal's reaching his middle age, he became a matchless scholastic dignitary, attracting toward him lovers of knowledge, guiding the hearts of the astray, being a lightening torch and an illuminative beacon leading toward the straight hard path. He turned to be a great Faqih, Mutakallim, a knowledgeable Muhaddith (traditionist), and an eminent literary man, being so influential and magnanimous whose fame was widely known.

His most apparent cultural service, after returning from migration land of Iraq, specifically from Hillah, was establishing a jurisprudential (Fiqhi) school at his brith-place in Jizzin, that excelled all other schools in Jabal Amil.

The emergence of this great school constituted a turning point through the history of Jabal Amil, which produced a large number of Ulama, intellectuals and professors spreading all over the cities of the Islamic world.

The disintegration of the Abbasid State, emergence of the Buwayhid Dynasty in Iraq and Iran, beside the coming to power of the Hamdanis in Halab and Fatimids in Egypt, have all prompted the activation of the cultural and political pace by the Shi'ah, who suffered various forms of persecution and repression, throughout a long era.

The greatest share and contribution in all this belonged to Jabal Amil, owing to the fact that Jizzin school was at the vanguard of the cultural movement at that period of time.

The People's Support

It is infeasible to specify the period spent by Al-Shahid in Jizzin after his return, as after founding the school he made several trips to Palestine and Damascus. But it can be said that he spent many years of his life at Jizzin, embarking on compiling books, educating his disciples, and taking care of people, endeavouring to solve their problems.

Thus he became the centre of attraction of people from far and near, with his house turning to be shelter

for all, particularly the Shi'ah who believed him to be their saviour, when being inflicted with tribulations of life, therefore he was called with the epithet the Shi'ah Shelter.

Educating the Disciples

Al-Shahid's professorship character has come to light so early, when he started to teach Al-Allamah Al Hilli's AlQawaid, with Al-Tahdhib, and Ilal Al-Sharai, beside other books on Figh, Usul and Hadith.

Al-Shahid's lessons were not restricted within Hillah or Jizzin at his private school, but his numerous and long travels he made from time to time, constituted a mobile school moving between Egypt, Hijaz, Syria, Palestine and beside other Islamic countries.

"Throughout that period Al-Shahid could produce a large number of scholars, who finished their learning under him. We can refer to some of his disciples, at the head of whom are: Al Sayyid Abu Talib Ahmad Ibn Qasim Ibn Zuhrah Al-Husayni, AlShaykh Jamal Al-Din Ahmad Ibn Al-Najjar the author of Hashiyah Ala Qawaid Al-Allamah Al-Hilli; Al-Shaykh Jamal Al-Din Abu Mansur Hasan his son, that Al-Shahid certificated with his two brothers; Al-Shaykh Radi Al-Din Abu Al-Qasim Ali Ibn Al-Shahid (Al-Awsat); and Al-Shaykh Radi Al-Din Abu Talib Mubammad, who was his eldest son, and was certificated by Al-Shahid twice.2

He has also cared for educating his daughter Fatimah, who was known later with the title "Sitt Al-Mashayikh". She was an ideal educated believing girl, turning to be a centre of public veneration, and on her death, seventy mujtahids took part at her funeral procession.

Among his disciples also is Al-Shaykh Sharaf Al-Din Abu Abd Allah Miqdad Ibn Abd Allah who died in 826 H. He was counted among the great Fuqaha, having several Fiqhi compilations. We can refer also to Al-Sayyid Badr Al-Din Hasan Ibn Ayyub, who was called Ibn Najm Al-Din Al-Araji AlHusayni.

He was considered the most eminent and honourable disciple of Al-Shahid; and Al-Shaykh Shams Muhammad Ibn Al Ali Al-Karaki. His high status can be explicitly realized through the kind reception and good hospitality rendered to him by Al-Shahid on his returning from performing pilgrimage to Allah's Sanctuary, with tender poetry.

Among Al-Shahid's disciples also in Al-Shaykh Zayn Al-Din Abu Al-Hasan Ali, known with the name "Ibn Al-Khazin",3 who deserved Al-Shahid's applause while getting the license (Ijazah) from him.

In this order the names of Al-Shahid's disciples, among the reputed Ulama and dignitaries, go on to include thirty-two great scholars, as reported by Al-Muhagqiq Rida Shams Al-Din4 in his book.

His Works and Compilations

"Look at Al-Shahid's travels as they are
A succour for every teacher and Instructor. 5"

In spite of his relatively short life, Al-Shahid Al-Awwal has left behind numerous valuable works on different knowledge fields, as Fiqh, Usul and Kalam beside other fields, till his name was yoked with the Ja'fari school, that wherever one of them is mentioned the other is remembered.

He occupied the first rank in Shi'a Fiqh, that could attain its resurgence under his hand. Beside these fields of knowledge, he had full command over other sciences like philosophy, logic, arithmetic, geometry, ethics, history, beside literature and poetry.

The style in which he was presenting his thoughts and opinions was so elegant and fascinating, indicating his good command of styles of Kalam. And, after passage of long centuries, his books are still taught as curricula in the theological schools. His works are extant nowadays in the form of manuscripts, with some others being lost.

But those books and works available today can alone form a huge library, and a voluminous encydopedia replete with miscellaneous fields of knowledge.

His Works on Kalam

Ilm Al-Kalam constitutes a broad foundation at the theological schools, due to its firm connection with the Islamic doctrines, like Tawhid (monotheism), "Adl (Justice), Nubuwwah (prophethood), Imamah (Imamate), and Ma'ad (resurrection), which altogether constitute a basis for a solid cornerstone for building the Islamic character.

Hence it is incumbent upon every Muslim to believe in these doctrines, out of mental and instinctive evidences, the sensitive circle within which all forms of blind imitation and pursuance be inundated.

In the past the Ulama used to combine between Kalam and philosophy under the framework of one science, despite their wide and extensive scope. But at present some kind of specialization commenced to exist, under whose umbrella profound and various branches and fields of knowledge were formed.

Al-Shahid Al-Awwal was among those personages attaining the climax of specialization in the fields of Kalam and philosophy. He was regarded a first-class professor, owing to the fact that he has learned philosophy and Kalam under a competent professor, that is Qutb Al-Din Al-Razi.

It is noteworthy to tell here that Al-Razi has learnt this science under Al-Allamah Al-Hilli, who in turn was the disciple of AlMuhaqqiq Al-Tusi, the great scholar of Fiqh and Kalam. Hence it can be said that Al-Shahid Al-Awwal was the meeting-point of the philosophical and Kalami thoughts once more,

through the aforementioned two mediums.

Among his works on kaliim are the following:

- 1. Al-Maqalah Al-taklifiyyah: A treatise on Aqa'id (doctrines) and Kalam. He completed its compiling on Saturday, the eleventh of Jumada Al-Ula 769 H. Al-Shaykh Zayn Al-Din Yunus Al-Bayyadi has exposed it, calling it Al-Risala11 AlYunusiyyah Fi Sharh Al-Taklifiyyah Al-Shahidiyyah.
- 2. Al-Masai1 Al- Arbainiyyah: It contains forty researches about doctrines and Kalam, that were not published in a separate book but included within another book called: "Mukhtasar Tarikh Al-Shi'ah Fi Lebanon" by Al-Shaykh Ahmad Arif AlDin. There is a manuscript for the book with the handwriting of the late Al-Samawi, calling it: "Jadhwat Al-Salam Fi Masai1 Al Kalam."
- 3. Al- Aqidah: An abridged treatise on the Islamic doctrines.

His Works on Hadith

Hadith is counted a rich source for all Islamic fields of knowledge, and a hard course for which hearts and minds are desiring. This immense bulk of narrations is considered a cultural treasure for whoever needing it, and a shelter for the astray who has lost the straight path ... leading toward bliss and salvation.

Through the traditions of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) and Ahl Al-Bayt Imams (a.s), the Ulama can quench themselves from the Qur'an's fountains that are effusing science and knowledge.

The Shi'a Fiqh is but a quintessence of the Infallibles' traditions reaching us throughout centuries, conveying with them the echo of those sweet words reiterated by the scholars and knowledge-seekers. The phrases "Al-Sadiq said" and "Al-Baqir said" are still resounding throughout years and days implying in within that great thought, rich sciences and huge treasures.

Al-Shahid Al-Awwal is considered one of the greatest Shi'ah traditionists, embarking on propagating and reporting the traditions of the Masumun (a.s), the fact that was testified by the licenses he got, and those he granted to the others.

He used to report his narrations from Al-Imam Ja'far AlSadiq (a.s) through a hundred chains, all related to his teacher Fakhr Al-Muhaqqiqin.6

Among his works on Hadith are the following:

1. Arba'una Hadithan: which contains forty tradi1ions ascribed to the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h), most of which being on rituals (lbadat). Al-Shahid completed its compilation on the 18th Dhu Al-Hijjah 782 H., and it was published in Iran with the book Glaybat Al-Nu'mani in 1318 H. Sh.7

The Ulama have attached great importance to the compilation of books dealing with the Prophet's traditions, transmitted from Al-Imam Al-Rida, through his fathers, from the Prophet (p.b.u.h), that he said: "From among my followers, one who shall preserve and protect my forty Hadith, so that my people may be benefited from them, God Almighty will treat him on the Day of Resurrection with great men of wisdom and learning (Jurisprudence)."8

- 2. Arba'una Hadithan: It is another book unlike the previous one, or it may be the 2nd volume of that book. It contains only one Hadith with forty investigations about it. It was published in Iran in 1314 H.Sh.
- 3. Ikhtisar Al-Ja'fariyyat Al-Ash'athiyyat and Al-Ja'fariyyat of the old books, which are ascribed to Muhammad Ibn AlAsh'ath and Ja'far Ibn Muhammad Al-Sadiq (a.s), so they were called with their names. They contain one thousand traditions, abbreviated into three hundred ones only by Al-Shahid. A copy of the book is found in Tehran at Al-Shaykh Diya Al-Din Al Nuri9 Library.
- 4. Mazar Al-Shahid: It is called also Muntakhab Al-Ziyarat, the manuscript of which is at Al-Sayyid Al-Tustari Library in Najaf. It was translated into Persian under the title: Murad AlMurid Li Mazar Al-Shahid, which was translated by Al-Shaykh Ali Al-Karbala'i. 10
- 5. Al-Durar Al-bahirah Min Al-Asdaf Al-Tahirah: Which contains aphorisms reported from the Prophet (p.b.u.h), through his Household (a.s). A copy of it is at Al-Tabatabai Library in Tehran.11
- 6. Majmuat Al-ljazat: in which Al-Shahid collected the licenses he got from the earlier Ulama.
- 7. Majmuat Al-Shahid: It is in three big volumes, about which Aqa Buzurg Al-Tehrani said in Musaffa Al-Magal: "AlShahid Al-Awwal has authored three collections of numerous benefits."

In Al-Dhariah he said: "They are three collections from which he reports in the first volume of Al-Bihar, treatises of various Ulama. He completed its compilation at Hillah in 776 H. The second volume is an abridgement of Al-Ja'farjyyat 12

His Poetical Works

Literature constituted a remarkable aspect at the character of Al-Shahid Al-Awwal, who was a writer, a poet and a litterateur. His writings are distinguished with meaningfulness, simplicity and explicitness, devoid of the crookedness of complexity and vagueness, the fact making his words simple and his expressions impressive, free from all forms of rhyming and affectation which were common at that time.

Despite his being unprolific in the field of poetry, but his poems were so tender, illustrative and expressive.

In one of his soliloguys he said:

The misfortune of Your poor bondman is so great

In being unable to afford for dowry of houris, (God's) friends enjoyed Your company in darkness, Through sleeplessness, humbleness and yearning, You banished me alone from knocking Your door; Have they preceded me due to greatness of my sins? Haven't they sinned to deserve Your mercy? Or they sinned but being pardoned other than me? If my Lord, no place near You is there, For the sinners, where is my good faith then? He also said: Sufism being not only confined in staff and rosary, Nay, not even poverty is dreaming of that honour, Even if by going and coming in a patched dress, Under which hide offences of insolence and luxury, Or by showing abstinence in the world while you are, Indulged in it like the dog's indulgence in the carrions.

These are samples of his poems that explicitly indicate AlShahid's good command of poetry, and his ability in subduing the words and vocabulary into elevated expressions and impressive illustrations.

He has a collection of poems (Diwan) containing twenty poems, under the heading: Shi'r Al-Shahid Al-Awwl. 13

In this respect, he has written Sharh Qasidat Al-Shahfini on the praise of Amir Al-Mu'minin Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s), for which Al-Shahfini showed his admiration and praised him.

Al-Shahid and Usul Al-Fiqh

The principles (Al-Usul) occupy a broad and important position in the theological schools, due to their vital role in establishing jurisprudence (Fiqh) upon a solid foundation, as deriving the legal ruling from its source is regarded a sensitive essential job. Al-Shahid was one of the lofty vertexes in Ilm Al Usul, whose works indicating his deep-rooted profundity in this field.

There is a book authored by him in this respect called: Jami Al-Bayn Min Fawaid Al-Sharhayn, the expositins which were compiled by his two teachers, the brothers Al-Sayyid Imad Al-Din and Al-Sayyid Diya Al-Din. Each one of them has written a sharh on the book Tahdhib Furuq Al-wusull Ila Ilm Al-Usul, by their maternal uncle Al-Allamah Al-Hilli. Beside Fawa id Al-Sharhayn, Al-Shahid has added more advantages to them.

His Works on Figh

Figh comes at the foremost of religious sciences because of the significant and essential role it plays in the life of the individual and society. Through it one can recognize and distinguish Halal (lawful) from Haram (unlawful), recommendable (Mustahabb) and reprehensible (Makruh), and the permissible deeds, the fact leading to determine the culture of the Muslim society, specifying its behaviourism and way of life.

Figh organizes all man's affairs from birth till death, administering all political, economic, social and ethical aspects of life. Its importance lies in its being a representative for the Divine precepts attaining Allah's pleasure.

Hence, the inferential Figh was set up through great efforts exerted by specialist Ulama, whose works have produced their fruits in the form of practical treatises, exposing for the Muslim individual and society, all the limits of Halal and Haram beside the permissible acts.

Al-Shahid Al-Awwal is counted the greatest of the Fuqaha of the Imami school, and even he was in himself an advanced Fiqhi school, that managed to push forward the Shia Fiqh by wide steps. Thus he became a true inheritor of Ale Muhammad sciences and knowledge.

The following are some of his works in this field:

- 1. Al-Alfiyyah: It is a Fiqhi treatise consisting of a thousand obligations in the Salat (prayers), the reason why it was called Al-Alfiyyah. It consists of an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion, with many expositions (Shuruh) written about it. In his book Al-Dhari'ah, 14 Al-Shaykh Aqa Buzurg Al-Tehrani has cited thirty-one sharhs, among which we can refer to that of Al Shahid Al-Thani under the title Al-Maqasid Al-Aliyyah. It was composed in verses by Al-Shaykh Hasan Ibn Rashid Al-Hilli in 653 lines, and also by Al-Shaykh Ali Ibn Abel Al-Samad AlHarithi, the uncle of Al-Shaykh Al-Bahai, and others.
- 2. Al-Nafliyyah: It is a treatise authored by Al-Shahid Al-Awwal, after Al-Alfiyyah, containing three thousand supererogatory prayers. Many expositions were written about it, among which is the one written by Al-Shahid Al-Thani under the title: Al-Fawaid Al-Malakiyyah. 15
- 3. Al-Qawa'id Al-Kulliyyah Al-Usulliyyah Wa Al-Fariyyah: It contains three hundred Flqhi principles from which legal rulings are derived, beside highly important researches. Several Shuruh about it were written by a number of Ulama and Fuqaha. 16
- 4. Dhikra Al-Shi'ah Fi Ahkam Al-Shariah: It contains researches about Taharrah (purity) and Salat (prayer). Its compilation was completed on the 21st of Safar 784 H. The first volume of the book was published in Iran one century ago, 17 whereas its other volumes are still found in the form of manuscripts. Many commentaries and margines (Hawashi) were written about the book.

- 5. Al-Durus Al-Shar'iyyah Fi Fiqh Al-Imamiyyah: It is an extremely significant book, containing a large number of the Babs of Fiqh, ranging from Taharah up to rahn (mortgage). AlShahid ended its first volume on the eighteenth of Rabi AlAwwal 784 H., being martyred then before compiling the rest of volumes. Many commentaries about the book were written by the Ulama. 18
- 6. Ghayat Al-Murad Fi Sharh Nukat Al-Irshad: It is actually a commentary, and the text is compiled by Al-Allamah Al-Hilli, covering the subjects of purity up to faith (Iman). It was completed by Al-Shahid on the 15th of Dhu Al-Hijjah 757 H. It might have been the first book authored by Al-Shahid. 19
- 7. Al-Bayan: It includes researches about Taharah, Salat (prayer), zakat (alms-due) and Khums (one-fifth), beside the first of the four Arkan (elements) of Sawm (fasting), regarding those things which are to be abstained from.
- 8. Khulasat Al-Itibar Fi Al-Hajj Aa Al-Itimar. It is a short treatise about rituals of Hajj (pilgrimage), reported by Al Allarnah Al-Amini in Madain Al-Jawahir.20
- 9. Al-Baqiyat Al-Salihat: It is an abridged exposition about the four Hymns (Tasabih) in prayer. 21
- 10. Hashiyah Ala Al-Dhikra: He authored first the book AlDhikra, then he wrote a Hashiyah on it. It is considered by Muhammad Rida Shams Al-Din as one of Al-Shahid's lost books.22
- 11. Abkam Al- Amwat It is a treatise about the dead, from will (Wasjyyah) up to 'visiting the graves.
- 12. Jawaz Ibda Al-Safar Fi Shahr Ramardan: It is a treatise containing an investigation about the issue of travelling during the Month of Ramadan, which he initiated with the following statement: "Its permission is apparent, when reviewing the beliefs of all the Ulama throughout all eras and countries, despite our unanimous belief in its reprehension. But we have twenty ways for this, the first which is the main one being adherence to the Almighty's saying:

"...and (for) him who is sick among you ...,,"23

13. Masa'il Ibn Makki, which is arranged according to the sections of Figh. He finished its compilation in the same year he passed away, i.e. 786 H., and it may be his last work.24

Al-Lum'ah Al-Dimashqiyyah, His Best Work

Al-Lum'ah Al-Dhimashqiyyah is the most famous work ever compiled by Al-Shahid, being a complete course on the Imamiyyah Fiqh, in which he has abridged its rulings and questions.

It was written by Al-Shahid in reply to a letter sent to him by the Governor of Khurasan, Ali Ibn Mu'ayyad, 25 asking AlShahid to come to their city to be the high religious authority (Marji) for the Shi'ah there.

But the then political circumstances would not allow Al Shahid any opportunity to depart Damascus. Therefore, he made an apology for him sending him, instead of his going, a Fiqhi treatise concising in it all the principles of Fiqh, to be a reference for the Shi'ah of Khurasan, to find solutions for the legal questions they were facing.

He compiled this treatise within one week, depending only upon one Fiqhi reference, being Al-Mukhtasar Al-nafi of Al Muhaqqiq Al-Hilli, the fact indicating the extent of his full knowledge of the issues of Fiqh. Then he handed it over to AlShaykh Shams Al-Din Muhammad Al-Awi, 26 the vizier of Ali Ibn Mu'ayyad, urging him to urgently present it to the King of Khurasan.

Al- Awi was so concerned about the treatise that he never permitted anyone to reproduce it, except a few of the knowledge-seekers, showing his extreme reservation. He has written it during extremely sensitive circumstances, as he was under severe surveillance by the authorities, exerting himself to finish it so urgently.

Al-Lum'ah was characterized with excellent expressions and orderliness of its Babs (sections), as Al-Shahid was never sufficed with Fiqhi expressions common at his time, due to his being an eminent litterateur and elegant poet. That is why Al- Lum'ah came to be so smooth in language and fluent in words, being free from all kinds of feigning in expression or simulating rhetoric euphemisms.

Further, we can find in this book an explicit development in utilizing and identifying the Fiqhi idioms, in an unparalleled way that was never followed by any of the earlier Ulama, at the level of Muhaqqiq and Allamah.

The book is to be considered a pride not only for the Shi'a and Islamic thought, but also for the humane thought and whatever the humanity accomplished in this respect. Many commentaries were written about the book, the most wellknown of which can be: Al-Rawdah Al-Bahjyyah Fi Sharh AlLum'ah Al-Dimashqjyyah, by Al-Shahid Al-Thani.27

His Other Works

Al-Shahid Al-Awwal has left for us other works on different topics, some of which were written in reply to questions put forth by his disciples, like:

- 1. Jawabat Al-Fadil Al-Miqdad: It consists of twenty-seven questions put forth by Al-Fadil Al-Miqdad Ibn Abd Allah AlSiyuri, who was a disciple of Al-Shahid. Its manuscript is at the Radawi Treasury in Mashhad.28
- 2. Jawabat Masai'l Al- Atrawr. It contains all the answers given by Al-Shahid for the inquiries put forth by his disciple AlSayyid Badr Al-Din Al-Hasan Ibn Ayyub Ibn Najm Al-Din Al Atrawi 29 Al-Amili.

When the trace leads to the owner, then Al-Shahid's valuable works on various sciences of his era,

indicate the capacity of his awareness and profundity of his thinking, especially when taking into consideration his short age and far long travels.

- 1. Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. II, p. 34.
- 2. Al-Dhari'ah, vol. I, p. 284.
- 3. Rawdat Al-Jannat, p. 8.
- 4. He is one of Al-Shahid's grandsons.
- 5. Op. Cit.,p. 57.
- 6. Rawdat Al-Jannat, vol. VII, p. 6.
- 7. The Iranians adopt the solar date of the Prophet's Emigration (Hijrah). (Translator)
- 8. Al-Dhari'ah, vol. I, p. 427.
- 9. Op. Cit., p. 64.
- 10. Op. Cit., p. 65.
- 11. Al-Dhari'ah, vol, VIII, p. 90.
- 12. Op. Cit,p. 67.
- 13. Op. Cit,p. 65.
- 14. Al- Dhari'ah, vol. II,pp. 296, 297.
- 15. Op. Cit., p. 61.
- 16. Ibid.
- 17. Ibid.
- 18. Al- Dhari'ah, vol. VIII, p. 145.
- 19. Op. Cit, p. 63
- 20. Al-Dl1ari'ab, vol. VII, p. 214.
- 21. Ibid, Vol. III, p. 12.
- 22. Op. Cit,p. 69.
- 23. Al- Dhari'ah, Vol. V, p. 241.
- 24. Op. Cit., p. 68
- 25. He is the last king of the Sarbidaran Dynasty, that ruled over Khurasan during the period 738–783 H.
- 26. Belonging to the Village of Awah, which is located between Qum and Savah.
- 27. He is the Martyr Zayn Al-Din Al-Jub'i Al-Amili.
- 28. Al- Dhari'ah, vol. V, p. 212.
- 29. Belonging to the Village of Atra in Jabal Amil.

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