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Letter 110

Rabi' al-Thani 29, 1330

I. Shi'ah Faith is Sequentially Derived from the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt

1) All those endowed with wisdom and discretion know by necessity that the derivation of the roots and branches of the Shi'ah imamite faith is from their forefathers and ancestors ending with the purified progeny. Their views, therefore, are conducive to those of the Imams of the purified progeny in the roots and branches of the faith, as well as all deductions arrived at from studying the Book and the Sunnah, or in any matter related to them or to all branches of theological science.

They do not rely in their understanding of the latter except upon such progeny, and they refer to none other than them. They worship Allah, the Exalted, and seek nearness to Him, Praised be He, through the faith of the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, without seeing any deviation therefrom, nor desiring any substitute. This has been the policy of their good ancestors since the time of the Commander of the Faithful, al-Hasan, al-Husayn, and the nine Imams from the progeny of al-Husayn (as) till our time.

Those who have learned the roots and branches of the faith from Ahl al-Bayt are quite a few reliable Shi'ahs, and the number of those who learned from the latter is much larger. The number of those known for piety, verification and correction is more than sequential. They have narrated all this to those who succeeded them through *tawatur*, and after them it was thus narrated to others, and so on. This has been the case with each and every generation, till it reached us as clear as mid-day sun, without any cloud obstructing it.¹

We now, in understanding the roots and branches, are followers of the Imams from the progeny of the Messenger (S). We have quoted our forefathers who all quote them. This has been the case in all generations till the time of the Naqis, 'Askaris, Rizas, Jawads, Kazims, Sadiqs, 'Abidins, Baqirs, both grandsons of the Prophet (S), peace be upon all of them, and finally the Commander of the Faithful (as),

not counting Shi'ah ancestors who kept company with the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (as), learning the religious injunctions from them, quoting them while discussing Islamic knowledge.

There is no room here to count all of them and read their roll call. Suffices you what the pens of their renowned scholars have written of interesting works a list of which does not fit in this narration. They derived all that from the light of the Imams of guidance, the progeny of Muhammad, peace be upon him and them, quoting it from their own oceans of knowledge, hearing it directly from them. They are the scribes of their knowledge and wisdom.

Their works were authored during the life-time of those purified ones, and such works became references for all Shi'ahs who succeeded them. Through them, the superiority of the sect of Ahl al-Bayt manifested itself over all other Islamic sects.

We do not know any follower of the four Sunni Imams, for example, who authored a book during the life-time of their Imams. Rather, people authored works in abundance dealing with their faith after those Imams had left this world, when it was decided that *taqlid* should be confined to their sects alone.

During their life-time, they were just like any other contemporary jurist or traditionist, not enjoying any distinction over others of their class; therefore, nobody among their contemporaries was interested in exerting an effort to record their speeches like that exerted by Shi'ahs in recording the statements of the Infallible Imams (as). Ever since the inception of the Shi'ah sect, nobody was permitted to refer in the religious matters to anyone other than their Imams.

For this reason, such an effort was unavoidable, and they became the sole source of religious scholarship. A great deal of effort and resources were spent in recording their verbal statements, and many exhausted their resources in doing so in a manner that is unmatched so that they might preserve the knowledge which, according to such sect, is the only one accepted by Allah.

The books authored during the life-time of Imam al-Sadiq (as) alone numbered four hundred dealing with four hundred different topics containing the religious verdicts [*fatawa*] issued by al-Sadiq (as) during his life-time. The disciples of al-Sadiq (as) have written many, many times this number, as you will hear in detail shortly, Insha-Allah.

As regarding the four Sunni imams, nobody looks at them in the eyes Shi'ahs look at the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt. Nay; they did not even have followers during their own life-time! They did not live to enjoy the status given to them after they had died, as stated by Ibn Khaldūn al-'Arabi in a chapter he dedicated to the science of *fiqh* in his famous Introduction, and it is a fact admitted by many of their renowned scholars. In spite of all this, we do not doubt that their followers followed anyone other than them, for theirs are, indeed, the views of the followers of those Imams, the ones held reliable in dealing with their affairs by every generation.

They recorded them in their books because their followers knew their sects best, just as Shi'ahs best

know the sect of their Imams, those who worship Allah accordingly, believing that it is the only way to seek nearness to Him.

II. Advancement of Shi'ahs in Recording Knowledge During the Sahabah's Epoch

2) Researchers unhesitatingly accept the fact that Shi'ahs were *the* pioneers in recording the branches of knowledge, more so than anyone else. As a matter of fact, nobody in the first century of Islam besides 'Ali (as) and those endowed with the gift of knowledge among his Shi'ahs did so. The reason for this could be attributed to the differences of opinion among the companions in permitting or forbidding the writing of knowledge.

According to al-'Asqalani in his Introduction to *Fath al-Malik al-'Ali Bisihhati Babil 'Ilm 'Ali*, and according to others, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab and a few others disliked the idea for fear hadith might be mixed with the Book, versus the permission granted by 'Ali (as), and after him al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as), grandson of the Prophet (S), and a group of other companions, to such writing.

During that time, Ibn Jurayh authored in Mecca the first book dealing with the legacies in which he quotes Mujahid and 'Ata'. Al-Ghazali says that it is the first book authored in Islam. The truth of the matter is that it is the first book authored by a non-Shi'ah in Islam. After it, Mu'ammarr ibn Rashid, of San'a, Yemen, wrote his, then Malik authored his *Mawti'*.

The Introduction of *Fath al-Malik al-'Ali Bisihhati Babil 'Ilm 'Ali* states that al-Rabi' ibn Sabih was the first to compile information, and that he lived at the sunset of the time of the tabi'in.

Anyhow, the consensus of opinion is that Sunnis did not author a single book during the first Islamic century.

As regarding 'Ali and his Shi'ahs, these spent a great deal of effort and time to attain that end during the first century of Islam. The first writing of the Commander of the Faithful was the Book of Allah, the Exalted, the Praiseworthy. Having finished the rituals pertaining to the preparation for the departure of the Prophet (S) from this world, 'Ali (as) decided not to dress except to either say the prayers or compile the Qur'an.

He, therefore, compiled it arranged in the order of its revelation. He pointed out its general and specific meanings, absolute and restrictive, perfect and those that seem to be alike, revocation and what revokes it, emphasis and relaxation, injunctions and instructions, pointing out the occasions which necessitated the revelation of its perfect verses, explaining what might be confusing to other people.

Ibn Sirin used to always say: "If you are lucky enough to obtain that book, then you will find in it abundant knowledge." This is cited by Ibn Hajar in his *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*, and by many other

renowned writers. Several companions who could read took pains to compile the Holy Qur'an, but they could not compile it in the order of its revelation, nor could they mark it the way explained above, leaving 'Ali's compilation more than just a compilation – rather an exegesis.

Having finished working on the Book of the Dear One, he authored a book which he dedicated to the Mistress of the Women of Mankind. It came to be known to her purified sons as "Mushaf Fatima," Fatima's book, which contained axioms, pieces of wisdom and counsel, morals, historical events and unique occurrences, written as a solace for her after being bereaved by the loss of her father the Prophet (S). After that, he authored a book dealing with blood monies which he titled *Al-Sahifa*.

It is referred to by Ibn Sa'd at the end of his work titled *Al-Jami'* giving the credit of authorship to the Commander of the Faithful. Both al-Bukhari and Muslim mention this work and quote it in several places of their Sahih. Among their narrative is what they have quoted from al-A'mash from Ibrahim al-Taymi who quotes his father saying: "Ali (as), may Allah be pleased with him, told me once: 'We have no book for you to read, besides Allah's Book, other than this *Sahifa*.'

Then he brought it to me. It contained matters related to wounds and camel teeth. Also among its contents is a statement reading: 'Medina is a sanctuary from dawn to Thaur; anyone who desecrates it, or shelters a desecrator, will incur the curse of Allah, the angels, and man.'" This is the wording of al-Bukhari in his section dealing with the sins of those who disown their mawali, in his chapter on ordinances, page 111, Vol. 4, of his *Sahih*, and it is referred to in the chapter on Medina's sanctity, when the pilgrimage is discussed on page 523, Vol. 1, of Muslim's *Sahih*.

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal repeatedly refers to the narrative regarding this Sahifa in his *musnad*. He quotes 'Ali (as) on page 100, Vol. 1, of his *Musnad*, transmitted by Tariq ibn Shihab who says: "I have witnessed 'Ali, peace be upon him, telling people from the pulpit: 'By Allah! We have nothing to recite for you other than the Book of Allah the Exalted, and this Sahifa,' which he was attaching to his sword, 'I have learned its contents from the Messenger of Allah.'"

Quoting 'Abdul-Malik, al-Saffar narrates: "Abu Ja'far asked to have 'Ali's book brought to him, and his son Ja'far brought something bulky shaped like a thigh. Among its contents was a sentence reading: 'If a man dies, his women will not inherit any of his estates.' Abu Ja'far said: 'This, by Allah, is the hand writing of 'Ali (as) and the dictation of the Messenger of Allah (S)!'"

A group of Shi'ahs who were contemporary to the Imam (as) followed in the footsteps of the Commander of the Faithful (as) and authored a number of books. Among those authors were: Salman al-Farisi and Abu Tharr al-Ghifari, as stated by Ibn Shahr 'shub who says: "The first to author in Islam is 'Ali ibn Abu Talib (as), then Salman al-Farisi, then Abu Tharr."

Among the latter is Abu Rafi', freed slave of the Messenger of Allah (S), and treasurer of *baytul-mal* [state treasury] during the rule of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him. He was among the elite of his followers who sought his guidance.

He wrote a book dealing with traditions, ordinances and other matters which he compiled mostly from 'Ali's hadith. It enjoyed a prestigious status among our ancestors who used it as a source of quotations and narrations. Among them is 'Ali ibn Abu Rafi' who, according to his biography in *Isaba*, was born during the life-time of the Prophet (S) who named him 'Ali.

He authored a book on the science of *fiqh* according to the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt who, peace be upon them, used to cherish that book and refer their Shi'ahs to it. Musa ibn 'Abdullah ibn al-Hasan has said: "A man inquired about *tashahhud* from my father. My father told me to fetch the book written by Abu Rafi'. He took it and dictated to us from it."

The author of *Rawdat al-Jannat* concludes his discussion by stating that the latter was the first book dealing with *fiqh* written by Shi'ahs, but he, may Allah have mercy on him, has certainly erred. Among them is 'Ubaydullah ibn Abu Rafi', a scribe and a follower of 'Ali (as), who learned from the Prophet (S) and narrated to Ja'far his (S) saying: "Your form and manners are similar to mine." This is quoted by a group of scholars including Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad*.

Ibn Hajar has mentioned it in Part 1 of his *Isaba* under the heading "Ubaydullah ibn Aslam." The name of the father of Rabi' is Aslam. This 'Ubaydullah authored a book dealing with the sahaba who fought the Battle of Siffin on 'Ali's side, from which Ibn Hajar quotes extensively in his own *Isaba*; [2](#) so, you may refer to it. Also among them is Rabi'ah ibn Sam' who wrote a book dealing with *zakat* on cattle herds derived from the hadith of the Prophet (S) which is narrated by 'Ali (as).

They include 'Abdullah ibn al-Hurr al-Farisi who narrates a glitter of ahadith all reported by 'Ali (as) from the Messenger of Allah (S). And among them is al-Asbagh ibn Nabatah, a friend and disciple of the Commander of the Faithful (as) who quotes the Imam's instructive epistle to Malik al-Ashtar and his will to his son Muhammad. Both are recorded by our fellows in their authentic books of traditions directly from him. Among them is Salim ibn Qays al-Hilali, a companion of 'Ali (as), who quotes his hadith and that of Salman.

He wrote a book dealing with imamate which is mentioned by Imam Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Nu'mani in his book *Al-Ghayba*, saying: "Nobody among all Shi'ah scholars and narrators of the hadith of the Imams disputes the fact that the book written by Salim ibn Qays al-Hilali is a major bibliography of works dealing with *usul* [basics of jurisprudence] narrated by scholars and traditionists from Ahl al-Bayt, and one of the pioneers in its subject-matter. It is one of the major sources to which Shi'ahs refer and upon which they rely."

Our fellows have also recorded the names and works of those of the same caliber among their good ancestors who authored books, in addition to the indices and biographies to whose authors everyone is referred.

III. Their Authors Contemporary to the Tabi'in and the Latter's Followers

3) As regarding the authors among our ancestors who belong to the second generation, i.e. that of the tabi'in, this Letter falls short of elaborating on them, and the best to do in getting to know them, their works and sources in detail, is to refer to the bibliographies and biographies compiled by our scholars.³

Upon that class did the light of Ahl al-Bayt (as) brightly shine, whereas it was earlier obstructed by the clouds of the oppression of oppressors. The calamity of the Taff disclosed the enemies of the progeny of Muhammad (S), and made them lose face before the wise. It also drew attention to the atrocities meted to Ahl al-Bayt (as) since losing the Messenger of Allah (S). Their horrible implications forced people to look for the reasons and obligated them to research the causes. Thus did they come to know the seeds and roots of the calamity.

Those among them who were blessed with a conscience rose to protect the status of Ahl al-Bayt (as) and support them [both Imams], for the human nature is made to assist the wronged and dislike wrongdoing. Muslims, in the aftermath of that catastrophic incident, entered a new era in which they rushed to support Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn Zaynul-'?bidin (as), refer to him in their quest for answers regarding the roots and branches of the faith, and to all Islamic sciences derived from the Book and the Sunnah.

After his death, they started referring to his son Imam Abu Ja'far al-Baqir (as). Followers of both Imams, i.e. Zaynul-'?bidin and al-Baqir (as), among ancient Imamis, wrote innumerable books, but those scholars whose names and biographies were recorded in biography books were about four thousand heroes, and their works numbered approximately ten thousand⁴ or more which are narrated by our friends in every generation quoting them from reliable sources. A group among the elite of those heroes won the honour of serving them, while the rest served Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon all of them, and luck had it that a large number of them reached their ultimate objective of attaining authentic knowledge.

Among the latter is Abu Sa'id Aban ibn Taghlib ibn Rabah al-Jariri, the famous reciter of the Qur'an, the traditionist, lexicographer, and linguist who was one of the most reliable among scholars. He was contemporary to three Imams from whom he transmitted a great deal of knowledge and a large number of traditions.

Suffices you the fact that he narrates from al-Sadiq (as) alone thirty thousand ahadith, as stated by al-Mirza Muhammad in his biography of Aban in his work *Manhaj al-Maqal* wherein he quotes Aban ibn 'Uthman citing al-Sadiq, peace be upon him. He enjoyed their respect and high esteem. Al-Baqir, peace be upon him, said to him, while they were both at the sacred city of Medina, "Take your place at the mosque, and issue your verdicts to people, for I love people to observe a man of my own Shi'ahs like you." Al-Sadiq (as), peace be upon him, said to him once: "Debate with the people of Medina, for I love to see men like you among my narrators and friends." Whenever he came to Medina, people came to him

in large numbers and arranged for him to sit where the Prophet (S) used to sit. Al-Sadiq (as) said to Salim ibn Abu Habbah: "Visit Aban ibn Taghlib, for he has learned a large number of ahadith from me, and whatever he narrates to you, you should narrate, too."

He, peace be upon him, has said to Aban ibn 'Uthman: "Aban ibn Taghlib has narrated thirty thousand ahadith from me; so, quote the same from him." Whenever Aban ibn Taghlib visited al-Sadiq (as), the Imam would hug him, shake his hand, and order a couch to be given to him to lean on, and he would lend him his full attention. When the news of his death was brought to him, he, peace be upon him, said: "By Allah! My heart is aching because of the death of Aban." He died in 141 A.H. Aban has narrated traditions from Anas ibn Malik, al-A'mash, Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir, Sammak ibn Harb, Ibrahim al-Nakh'i, Fudayl ibn 'Umar, and al-Hakam. He is relied upon by Muslim and all authors of the four books of traditions, as we explained while discussing him in Letter No. 16.

Aban is not harmed by al-Bukhari's reluctance to rely on his authority, for his solace is that the man does not rely on the authority of the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (as) such as al-Sadiq, al-Kazim, al-Rida, al-Jawad, al-Taqi, and al-Hasan al-'Askari al-Zaki, peace be upon all of them, either. Bukhari does not consider these men reliable; nay, he even does not rely on the authority of the elder grandson of the Prophet (S) and the master of the young of paradise! On the other hand, he relies on men like Marwan ibn al-Hakam, 'Umran ibn Hattan, 'Ikremah al-Barbari and their likes; so, we are Allah's, and to Him is our return.

Aban has written very interesting books. One of them is *Tafsir Gharib al-Qur'an* [exegesis of what is unusual in the Qur'an], whose contents are mostly Arabic verses of poetry cited to testify to the truth contained in the Perfect Revelation.

Later, 'Abdul-Rahman ibn Muhammad al-Azdi al-Kufi combined the contents of Aban's book with those of Muhammad ibn al-Sa'ib al-Kalbi and Ibn Rawaq 'Atiyah ibn al-Harith and published them in one volume, highlighting the views in which they differed among themselves as well as those they agreed upon.

He once quotes Aban independently, and once he quotes what agrees with 'Abdul-Rahman's views. Our friends have quoted both books through various reliable sources. Aban has authored a book dealing with moral excellences, and one dealing with the Battle of Siffin, and he has authored one of the major reference books on which the Imamites rely in their derivation of jurisdic injunctions. All his books have been reported with reference to his authorship thereof. Their details are in bibliography books.

Among them is Abu Hamzah al-Thamali ibn Dinar, a trustworthy authority and a dignitary among our ancestors. He derived his knowledge from three Imams: al-Sadiq (as), al-Baqir, and Zaynul-'Abidin, peace be upon them. He remained in close contact with them, and won their respect. Al-Sadiq (as), peace be upon him, lauded him saying: "In his age, Abu Hamzah is like Luqman in his own time." He has written a book on the exegesis of the Qur'an, and I noticed imam al-Tibrisi quoting him in his *tafsir* titled

Mujma'ul Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an.⁵ He has also written a book on rare ahadith, another on asceticism, and a dissertation on rights⁶ narrated from Imam Zaynul-'?bidin 'Ali ibn al-Husayn from whom he narrates his own invocation recited at early dawn which shines brighter than the sun and the moon. He also narrates from Anas and al-Sha'bi. He in turn is quoted by Waki', Abu Na'im, and a group of their class who are our own friends, and from others, as we stated in his biography in Letter No. 16.

There are other valiant men who did not live to meet Imam Zaynul-'?bidin, but they won the honour of serving both al-Baqirs, peace be upon them.

Among these are: Abul-Qasim Bard ibn Mu'awiyah al-'Ajli, Abu Basir al-Asghar Layth ibn Murad al-Bakhtari al-Muradi, Abul Hassan Zararah ibn 'Ayan, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn Rabah al-Küfi al-Ta'ifi al-Thaqafi, and many other standards of guidance and lighthouses that shone in the dark. To elaborate on them is not possible here.

As regarding these four men, they have, indeed, achieved a special status and won the coveted prize and a lofty station. When Imam al-Sadiq (as), peace be upon him, mentioned them once, he said: "I find nobody who kept our name alive like Zararah, Abu Basir Layth, Muhammad ibn Muslim, and Burayd; without them, nobody would have learned as much."

Then he added: "These are the custodians of the faith who were trusted by my father to safeguard what Allah has decreed as permissible or forbidden. They are the ones who are foremost in seeking our company in this life, and they will be the foremost in joining us in the Hereafter."

"Once, he, peace be upon him, recited: "Convey the glad tidings to those who pray for attaining Our Paradise (Qur'an, 22:34),"

and he followed his recitation by naming these four persons, adding, in a lengthy statement lauding them, "My father is said to have trusted them to safeguard Allah's permissible and forbidden matters, and they were the custodians of his knowledge; today, they are my faithful confidants and the true friends of my father; they are the stars of my Shi'ahs alive or dead; through them does Allah dispel every innovation.

They protect this religion from the lies of the innovators, and the interpretations of the extremists," in addition to other eminent statements he made in which he credited them for their contributions, honour, dignity, and true service in a way which we cannot describe. In spite of all this, they were charged by the enemies of Ahl al-Bayt (as) with every possible false charge, as we have explained in our work *Mukhtasar al-Kalam fi Mu'allifi al-Shi'ah min Sadr al-Islam*.

This does not undermine their lofty status and great significance in the eyes of Allah, His Messenger, and the believers. Those who envied the Prophet (S)s only increased the loftiness of those Prophets' status, without affecting their canons other than their promotion thereof among those who recognize and follow the truth, making them acceptable to those endowed with wisdom.

During the lifetime of al-Sadiq (as), peace be upon him, knowledge was disseminated like never before, and the Shi'ahs of his forefathers (as) rushed to him from far and wide. He approached them with a pleasant countenance, making them feel at home, sparing no effort to educate them and acquaint them with the secrets of knowledge, the particulars of wisdom, and the nature of matters, as admitted by Abul-Fath al-Shahristani in his book *Al-Milal wal Nihal*.

When he mentions al-Sadiq (as), he comments: "He was a man very much informed of the religion, endowed with perfect manners in wisdom, extreme renunciation of this world, and a complete abstinence from temptations." ⁷ He has also said of him: "He stayed in Medina for some time instructing the Shi'ahs belonging to his faith, lavishing the secrets of knowledge upon those who were loyal to him.

Then he went to Iraq and stayed there for a period of time during which he did not publicly criticize nor covet authority... Whoever drowns in the oceans of knowledge never desires to see the shore, and whoever ascends to the peak of reality never fears descending," up to the end of his statement; "And truth makes itself manifest to the fair minded, and to the obstinant."

A large number of the companions of al-Sadiq (as) achieved ultimate wisdom, and they became leaders to righteousness, lanterns in the dark, oceans of knowledge, stars of guidance. Among those whose names and biographies are stated in biography books are four thousand men from Iraq, Hijaz, Iran, and Syria. They are authors of works very well known by Imamite scholars. Among them are the four hundred books of basics of jurisprudence mentioned above which deal with four hundred subjects, all written during the time and derived from the verdicts of al-Sadiq (as).

They were rendered indispensable for both theoretical and practical knowledge, so much so that a group of the nation's scholars and emissaries of the Imams summarized their contents in special books to facilitate their comprehension by students and make them more accessible. The best among such compilations are the four books which are the major sources for the Imamites in referring to the roots and branches of their faith.

They have been referring to them since the first century of Islam, and these are: *Al-Kafi*, *Al-Tahthib*, *Al-Istibsar*, and *Man la Yahdaruhul Faqih*. All are sequentially narrated, and the authenticity of their contents is never doubted. *Al-Kafi* is the oldest among them, the greatest, the best, and the most authentic. It contains sixteen thousand one hundred and ninety-nine ahadith which include all what now exists in the six *sahih* books [al-Sihah al-sitta of the Sunnis], as admitted by al-Shahid in his *Al-Thikra*, and by many other renowned scholars.

Husham ibn al-Hakam, one of the companions of al-Sadiq (as) and al-Kazim (as), authored several books ninety-nine of which became quite famous. They are narrated by our friends who quote him, and their details exist in our book *Mukhtasar al-Kalam fi Muallifi al-Shi'ah min Sadr al-Islam*. They all are very interesting books, dazzling in the clarity of their contents and the glitter of their arguments. They deal with both roots and branches of the faith, and with *tawhid* and rational philosophy; they rebut the

atheists, heretics, pantheists, predestinarians, determinists, and those who are extremist in their beliefs regarding Ali (as) and Ahl al-Bayt (as). They also rebut the Kharijites and Nasibis, those who denied that a will [by the Prophet] was made regarding Ali (as), those who obstructed his way to attain the caliphate, and those who preached that someone else should be elected as caliph before Ali (as), in addition to other topics.

In the second century, Husham was the most knowledgeable person in the science of speech, divine wisdom, and all rational and deductive sciences. He was distinguished in *fiqh* and hadith, surpassing everyone else in tafsr and all other sciences and arts. He is the one who discussed the concept of imamate and cultivated the sect through observation.

He quotes al-Sadiq (as) and al-Kazim, and he enjoys a special status in their eyes which cannot be described. He won such praise from them that elevated his status to high heaven. He was first a Jehmi, then he met al-Sadiq (as) and came to see the light of guidance through him, so, he joined his party, then he followed al-Kazim and surpassed all the disciples of both Imams. Those who desire to put out Allah's light, out of envy of Ahl al-Bayt (as), and out of malice, accused him of saying that the Almighty has a physical form, and of other serious charges. We are most knowledgeable of his sect.

We have within our reach reports of his life-style and norm of speech. He has written works defending our sect as referred to above; so, nothing of his speech can be known to others and not to us, since he is among our ancestors and descendants, while his critics are far from his sect and taste. What al-Shahristani has quoted in his *Al-Milal wal-Nihal* of Husham's speech does not imply his belief in a physical form for Allah. Let me quote for you what he has quoted him:

"Husham ibn al-Hakam has studied *usūl* in depth. We must not forget his arguments with the Mu'tazilites, for the man is above what his opponent charges, and beneath what similitude he strikes, for he argued with al-'Allaf saying: 'You claim that the Creator is the One Who knows, and His knowledge is His own essence; so, He then becomes a knowledgeable person who is different from the world [His creation]; why then don't you say that He has a form unlike all other forms?'"

It is no secret that this statement, if true, proves only that he opposes al-'Allaf's views. Not everyone who argues about something is a believer therein, since it is possible that his purpose is to test al-'Allaf's beliefs and sift his knowledge, as al-Shahristani suggests, saying: "The man is above what his opponent accuses him and beneath what similitude he strikes." If we suppose that it is proved that Husham believes as such, this could be before his going back to the true guidance [through Imam al-Sadiq (as)].

You have come to know that he used to believe like the Jehmis, then he saw the light of guidance through Muhammad's progeny (as), and became an Imam of those who followed their Imams. Nobody among our ancestors has found any proof of what the opponent attributes to him, yet we find some traces of what they have attributed to Zararah ibn 'Ayan, Muhammad ibn Muslim, Mu'min al-Taq, and their peers. This comes in spite of the fact that we spared no effort to research the accusation and found

its bases nothing more than injustice and animosity, intrigue and false allegation; "Do not think that Allah is unmindful of what the oppressors do."

As regarding what al-Shahristani has alleged of Husham's belief in Ali (as) as Allah, this is a joke that causes even a bereaved woman whose child has just died to burst in laughter. Husham is above such nonsense and superstition. Husham's statements dealing with *tawhid* call for the glorification of Allah above being reduced to a physical form of any nature, and His sublimity above what the ignorant allege.

His statements dealing with imamate and *wisayat* reflect his preference of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, over Ali (as). He declares that Ali (as) is just a member of the Prophet's nation and a subject, his vicegerent and successor, and that he is a servant of Allah who has been wronged and overcome and was unable to secure what is rightfully his, being forced to succumb to the power of his opponents, continuously afraid about his safety, having neither supporter nor helper; so, how can al-Shahristani say: "Husham ibn al-Hakam has studied *usūl* in depth.

We must not forget his arguments with the Mu'tazilites, for the man is above what his opponent charges, and beneath what similitude he strikes, for he argued with al-'Allaf saying: 'You claim that the Creator is the One Who knows, and His knowledge is His own essence; so, He then becomes a knowledgeable person Who is different from the world [His creation]; why then don't you say that He has a form unlike all other forms?'"

He then attributes to Ali (as) the allegation that he is Allah Almighty! Isn't this a clear self-contradiction? Is it proper for Husham, in spite of his abundant knowledge and contributions, that such nonsense is attributed to him? Certainly not. But these people have insisted on piling charges out of their own envy and animosity towards Ahl al-Bayt (as) and those who follow their views; so, we are Allah's, and unto Him is our return.

Authorship flourished during the lifetime of Imams al-Kazim, al-Rida, al-Jawad, al-Hadi, al-Hasan al-Zaki al-'Askari, peace be upon them, in a way that was never preceded, and traditionists quoting them and other Imams spread far and wide throughout the land, trying their best reasoning to attain knowledge, in pursuit of it and of its secrets, enumerating its issues, verifying its facts, saving no effort to record the arts and collect particles of knowledge.

Al-Muhaqqiq, in his *Al-Mu'tabar*, says: "Among the students of al-Jawad, peace be upon him, were virtuous men like al-Husayn ibn Sa'id and his brother al-Hasan, and also Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Nasr al-Bazanti, Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Barqi, Shathan, Abul-Fadl al-'Ami, Ayyub ibn Nüh, Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Gsa and others whose list is quite lengthy... Their books till today are in current circulation among the companions reflecting their abundant knowledge."

Suffices you the fact that al-Barqi's books outnumber a hundred, and al-Bazanti has authored his renowned work titled *Jami' al Bazanti*, while al-Husayn ibn Sa'id has written thirty books. It is not possible in such a Letter to count what has been written by the students of the six Imams who

descended from Imam al-Sadiq (as), peace be upon them, but I refer you to the available biographies and bibliographies; so, read about the biography of Muhammad ibn Sinan, 'Ali ibn Mahziyar, al-Hasan ibn Mahbüb, al-Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn Sam'ah, Safwan ibn Yahya, 'Ali ibn Yaqtin, 'Ali ibn Fadal, 'Abdul-Rahman ibn Najran, al-Fadl ibn Shathan (who authored two hundred books), Muhammad ibn Mas'üd al-'Ayyashi (who wrote more than two hundred titles), Muhammad ibn 'Umayr, Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'gsa (who quoted one hundred companions of al-Sadiq (as), peace be upon him), Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Mahbüb, Talhah ibn Talhah ibn Zayd, 'Ammar ibn Müsa al-Sabati, 'Ali ibn al-Nu'man, al-Husayn ibn 'Abdullah, Ahmad ibn 'Abdullah ibn Mahran who is better known as Ibn Khaniba, Sadjah ibn al-Munthir al-Qummi, 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Ali al-Halabi who brought his book to al-Sadiq (as), peace be upon him, to edit and verify, which he appreciated and said: "Do you see these folks having a book like this one?!" Add to them Abu 'Amr the physician, 'Abdullah ibn Sa'id who brought his book to Abul-Hasan al-Rida, peace be upon him, for the same purpose, and «nus ibn 'Abdul-Rahman who brought his book to Imam Abu Muhammad al-Hasan al-Zaki al-'Askari, peace be upon him.

Anyone who researches the biographies of the followers of the progeny of Muhammad, peace be upon him and them, and researches those who kept company with the nine Imams from the descendants of al-Husayn, counting their works contemporary to their respective Imams and reviewed by those they quoted, disseminating the hadith of Muhammad's progeny in every branch and root of religion..., will come across thousands of such men.

Then if he gets acquainted with these sciences in every class as handed down from the time of the nine Infallible Imams (as) till our time, he will certainly be convinced then that the sect of these Imams is *mutawatir* (consecutively reported), dispelling any doubt he might have about the fact that our worship of the Almighty Allah in the roots and branches of the faith is derived from the Messenger's Household. Nobody doubts this fact except one who is arrogant and prejudiced or dumb ignorant; so, praise be to Allah Who has guided us to this, for without His guidance, we would not have been thus guided; Wassalam.

Sincerely,

Sh

- [1.](#) Al-Huda, the Iraqi magazine, quoted this Letter and published it in series in its first and second volumes in a column signed by the humble author.
- [2.](#) Refer to the biography of Jubayr ibn al-Habab ibn al-Munthir in Part One of Al-Isabah.
- [3.](#) Such as al-Najashi's Index, Shaykh Abu 'Ali's Muntahal Maqal fi Ahwalir Rijal, Mirza Muhammad's Minhajul Maqal fi Tahqiqi Ahwalir Rijal, and many other books dealing with this branch of knowledge, and they are quite few.
- [4.](#) Indicated so by many masters of the art such as Shaykh al-Baha'i in his Wajiza, and many other renowned personalities.
- [5.](#) Refer to al-Tibrisi's Mujma'Bayan fi Tafsiril Qur'an in the section dealing with the exegesis of the verse reading: "Say: 'I do not ask you for any reward for it other than being kind to my kin'" in Sürat al-Shüra, and you will find him quoting Abu Hamzah's own tafsir.
- [6.](#) Our fellows have reported all of Abu Hamzah's books, giving him credit for the narration, and the details are in their books. Our dignitary-authority Sayyid Sadr ad-Din al-Müsawi has abridged Risalat al-Huqüq and published it in order to

be memorized by heart by Muslim youths, and he has done a very good job; may Allah enable the Muslims to enjoy the fruits of his concern and the magnitude of his effort.

7. He does so when he mentions the Baqiriyya and Ja'fariyya among Shi'ah sects in his book Al-Milal wal-Nihal.

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