

Preface

In the Name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful

A Brief Biography of the Author

The author is the venerable Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Ali bin al-Hasan bin Babawahy commonly known as Sadooq. He was among the Shia scholars of the 4th century Hijri. He was also the chief of the clan, a minaret of truth and religion, a leader of his time and in general such a personality that no praise is sufficient to do justice with his actual status.

The whole Muslim community is unanimous about his leadership and lofty status. He was born through the prayers of the Imam of the time (a.t.f.s.) and a written certificate was also issued by the Holy Imams (a.s.) in his favor: "He is a very righteous and blessed jurisprudent."

After this holy testimony whatever may be said or written about him will definitely be less than what befits his position. His bounties have surrounded all and his writings and books have benefited the scholars as well as laymen. Each and every example of his knowledge and action testifies to his lofty stature and greatness.

And one who undertakes a deep study of biographical books will conclude that Shaykh Sadooq, on the basis of his merits and intellectual excellence was the leader of all those who succeeded him. He is the standard bearer of jurisprudence; he is the leader of tradition scholars, the Imam of hadith narrators and a master of scholastic theology.

All the qualities of excellence in knowledge, perfection of intellect, goodness of understanding, a remarkable memory and sharp perception had gathered in his person. He traveled far from the place of his birth in order to collect traditions from the narrators of traditions and he stayed with them to obtain the narrated reports from them. Among the places he traveled to included Astarabad, Gurgan, Nishapur, Marawalruz, Samarqand, Farghana, Balkh, Hamadan, Baghdad, Faid, Mecca and Medina.

It should be remembered that travel has many benefits. It is the best way of perfecting the intellect and

developing knowledge. In addition to this it also includes spread of knowledge, propagation of religion and dispersal of facts. And if there had not been such great personalities in this community, who first acquired knowledge and then undertook to spread it among others, a great many people would have remained ignorant and mired in misguidance and deviation from religion.

And if the traveling personalities are intelligent and hardworking, they would obtain from the scholars of other areas such points of knowledge and recognition that they cannot gain from the scholars of their own areas. They would also succeed in learning many things that they have not learnt from their teachers. In the same way the people of the places to which they travel would also learn from him things that they could not learn from the local scholars.

Many debates take place between the traveling scholar and intelligentsia of those places resulting in clearing many misunderstandings and clarification of doubts. There are many other benefits that accrue from the journey of religious interaction. Thus the Almighty Allah says:

فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ

Why should not then a company from every party from among them go forth that they may apply themselves to obtain understanding in religion, and that they may warn their people when they come back to them that they may be cautious?¹

The venerable Shaykh Sadooq was an expert in this field who attained priority among all in such a way that no one could claim to have got even one-tenth of what he achieved. Actually he used to take lightly the difficulties of his journeys and did not accord much importance to the discomfort he had to face. He traveled through arid deserts; battle ravaged areas, traversed deserts and crossed mountains. He passed through foreign lands and alien cities at a time when a traveler was susceptible to so many perils and the modes of travel were beyond description.

Let us go through some details of his travel in order to gain a clearer picture:

The author was born in the Iranian town of Qom. He attended classes of scholars and gained knowledge from the learned of Qom. Thereafter upon the insistence of the people of Rayy he shifted there for some time. Then he visited the holy mausoleum of Imam Reza (a.s.) and returned again to Rayy.

On his return journey from Nishapur he was surrounded by the elders of Nishapur and the scholars stood before him in rows. They benefited from the light of his wisdom and gained from his expertise in religious sciences. In the same way, the author also profited by the knowledge of great scholars of Nishapur like Abu Ali Husain bin Ahmad Baihaqi. He also heard traditions from Abdul Wahid bin Muhammad bin Abdewas Nishapuri, Abu Mansur Ahmad bin Ibrahim Ibne Bakar al-Khauri, Abu Saeed Al-Muallim Muhammad bin Al-Fadl bin Muhammad bin Ishaq Nishapuri, Abu Tayyib Husain bin Ahmad bin Muhammad Razi, Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab Sajazi and Abu Nasr Ahmad bin

Ishaq Husain bin Ahmad bin Ubaid.

During his stay in Nishapur, people visited him in groups. In his interaction with these people, Shaykh Sadooq surmised that most of them harbored doubts about the Twelfth Imam (a.t.f.s.) and were confused in this regard. They did not acknowledge the evidences in this matter. So he focused all his efforts in bringing them to the right path and removing their misconceptions through his knowledge and scholarly expertise. He undertook this mission in such a dedicated way that very soon he earned the title of the greatest scholar of Khorasan.

After that he headed for Marawalruz. At this place he heard traditions from a group of scholars, including Abul Husain Muhammad bin Ali bin Shah Faqih and Abu Yusuf Rafe bin Abdullah bin Abdul Malik. Later he turned his attention to Baghdad where he was accorded a warm welcome and the elders of the Imamiyah sect heard traditions from him.

He in turn heard traditions from a group of scholars in Baghdad that included personalities like Hasan bin Yahya Alawi Husaini, well-known as Ibne Abi Tahir, Ibrahim bin Harun Haisati, Ali bin Thabit Dawalaibi and Muhammad bin Umar al-Hafiz. Shaykh Sadooq visited Baghdad twice, once in 352 A.H. and again in 355 A.H.

On his return from the Holy House of Kaaba when he reached the city of Faid, Abu Ali Ahmad bin Abi Ja'far Baihaqi narrated traditions to him. After this, he entered Kufa and heard traditions from the Kufan scholars including Muhammad bin Bukran Naqqash, Ahmad bin Ibrahim bin Harun Qazi Fami in the Kufa mosque, Hasan bin Muhammad bin Saeed Hashmi Kufi Abul Hasan Ali bin Isa Mujawar in Kufa mosque, Abul Qasim Hasan bin Muhammad al-Sikri Mudakkar, Abu Zar Yahya bin Zaid bin al-Abbas Bazzaz and Abul Hasan Ali bin al-Husain bin Sufyan bin Yaqoob al-Hamadani in their residences.

The next town on agenda was Hamadan where he heard traditions from Qasim bin Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abdwiya as-Siraj, Fadl bin al-Abbas Kindi and Muhammad bin al-Fadl bin Zainuya Jallab Hamadani. Then he journeyed to Balkh and noted own traditional reports from local scholars of that area that included Husain bin Muhammad Ashai ar-Razi al-Adl, Husain bin Ahmad Astarabadi, Hasan bin Ali bin Muhammad bin Ali bin Umar Attar, Hakim Abu Hamid Ahmad bin al-Husain bin Ali, Ubaidullah bin Ahmad al-Faqih, Tahir bin Muhammad bin Yunus bin Haiwa al-Faqih and Abul Hasan Muhammad bin Saeed Samarqandi al-Faqih.

The next place of his visit was Ilaq. In Ilaq he was related traditions by Muhammad bin Amr bin Ali bin Abdullah Basri, Muhammad bin al-Hasan bin Ibrahim al-Kharqi al-Katib, Abu Muhammad Bakr bin Ali bin Muhammad bin al-Fadl Ash-Shashi al-Hakim and Abul Hasan Ali bin Abdullah Ibne Ahmad Aswari.

During his stay there he was paid a visit by Sharifuddin Abu Abdullah, popularly known as Ibne Numa who requested him to compile a book of Islamic laws. Shaykh Sadooq accepted his advice and wrote his excellent book titled Man Laa Yahzarul Faqih. From Ilaq the Shaykh went to Samarqand and paid audience to traditions narrated by Abu Muhammad Abdus bin Ali bin al-Abbas al-Juzjani, and Abu Asad

Abdus Samad bin Abdush Shaheed al-Ansari. During his visit to Farghana he heard narrations from Tameem bin Abdullah al-Qarashi Abu Ahmad Muhammad bin Ja'far al-Bandaar ash-Shafei al-Farghani, Ismail bin Mansur bin Ahmad al-Qasar and Abu Ahmad Muhammad bin Abu Abdullah ash-Shafei.

All this was for the sake of remaining close to the Book of Allah and the Family of Revelation, for defending their sanctity, fulfillment of duties, defense of truth, dissemination of divine recognition and propagation of faith.

Indeed in the history of Islam he has opened an illuminated and vast chapter for himself in which prominently shine his writings and books. The passage of time couldn't destroy them because he was like a raging sea of information and the greatest scholar of the science of traditions whose writings illuminated all the corners of the world. In the matter of Islamic jurisprudence he was an authentic point of reference.

Questions regarding various aspects of religion and religious laws were sent to him and he replied to them in the best way. Najjasi has mentioned something under the title of 'Replies to problems' in his book Rijal which would further illustrate this point. He says: Shaykh Sadooq had replied to questions received from Qazwin, Misr, Basra and Nishapur and they are compiled in different books.

He also wrote a book in reply to the letter of Abu Muhammad Farsi, a book in reply to a letter from Baghdad and yet another in reply to a question received in the month of Ramadan. He wrote a letter to the people of Rayy regarding the matter of Ghaibat (occultation).

In the same way he held discussions and debates in defense of the true religion that were written down for the posterity. The best of such debates is the one that was held in the court of King Ruknuddin Buwayhid Dailami. It was held at a time when the fame of Shaykh Sadooq had reached all the corners of the world. The ruler sent one of his representatives to invite the Shaykh. When he reached the court he was received by the King himself.

The King had him seated next to himself and paid exceeding honor to him. Then he asked the Shaykh some very complex and difficult questions which he replied with absolute satisfactory replies, illuminating the veracity of the true religion. The King and other attendees accepted the arguments and the opponents had no choice but to accept the proofs.

Among the books listed by Najjashi are: Account of the debate in the court of Ruknuddaula, Account of another Debate, Account of Third Debate, Account of Fourth Debate and Account of Fifth Debate etc. The most important point of discussion in these gatherings was the veracity of the Imamiyah faith and the matter of Ghaibat (occultation).

These debates and discussion were especially arranged for the Shia people of Twelver (Ithna Ashari) Faith because they had, at that time separated from the Imam who should have been present among

them all the time. The situation was such that even during the period of Minor Occultation (Ghaibat Sughra) only the four special deputies in their respective tenures had direct contact with the Holy Imams (a.s.).

Also even the learned and scholars of the community spoke of him using titles and codes without openly disclosing his name and qualities etc.

So the majority of the people were very prone to all kinds of doubts and illusions. Consequently the debates of scholars like Shaykh Sadooq went a long way in clarifying doubts of the Shia populace and further strengthened the foundation of Imamiyah faith on which would be built in the near future an edifice of jurisprudence that shall last till the Holy Imam (a.s.) himself reappears to openly take the reins of his community.

The doubts prevalent in that age were further promoted by the proliferation of sub-sects like the Zaidiyyah (who were particularly strong), Kaisaniyah, Ismailia and Waqifiya who did not believe in any Imam after Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.).

These sub-sects were becoming stronger by the day and some of them even aligned with each other putting the true Imamiyah beliefs into a grave danger and deviating a large number of Shia people from the faith of their forefathers.

The author sensed this looming peril and stepped forward to correct the situation and save the Shias from this deviation and annihilating circumstances. If it was not for the efforts and debates of scholars like Shaykh Sadooq, it was very likely that the majority of Shia people would have succumbed to their doubts and completely washed their hands from the belief of Imam Mahdi (a.s.).

History and traditions bear witness how these warriors of the field of knowledge strived to save the people from perdition and the true Imamiyah faith from destruction. History bears witness that how they endeavored to remove doubts and clarified complex issues of religion, especially the matter of Ghaibat, so that the Shia community may not give up the authentic faith and stray to the path of deviation.

[Valuable Writings](#)

The venerable Shaykh penned books on almost all religious sciences and illuminated all the aspects of faith that were required by the Muslim Ummah. All his writings are marked with a distinctive style and arrangement. As mentioned by Shaykh Tusi, the number of his writings reach to 300. However most of them were destroyed by the ravages of time and circumstances and decayed in some corners of libraries. So what remains is only the sketch of the original and those that are lost have only left behind their names (titles).

Some of his books survived for a few hundred years and then suddenly disappeared as if they were lifted up to the heavens. Only a part of his huge wealth, comprising of not more than 20 books, has

survived to this day. Even these few books were littered with errors and differences in various versions etc.

As a result of which they were neither accepted by the scholars nor reached the standards of scholarship. It was so because those who were involved in their reproduction were neither capable nor committed to this job.

Thus a situation appeared when despite the presence of these few books they were of hardly any scholarly value.

This problem was not only with the books of Shaykh Sadooq. It was the same for writings of other well-known scholars. For example in the case of Ibne Quluwahy nothing remains from his writings except the book of Kamiluz Ziyaraat, although it is confirmed that he had written dozens of books. Shaykh Mufeed had written more than 200 books but only a few have survived to this day. The same is the case with the writings of Shaykh Tusi and Allamah Hilli.

In his compiled book, Tarihi has mentioned that 500 treatises written by the hand of Allamah Hilli were found; which were in addition to the books that people had access to. Ninety percent of Allamah Hilli's writings are lost as a result of centuries of conflict and bloodshed between Muslim sects in which the greatest loss was suffered through burning of libraries or throwing books into the sea/river.

After that the remaining books were destroyed by the Tatars. Thus our written treasures were always prone to destruction at the hands of the opponents. In the present age also some people approached us from far away lands and took away portions of our written heritage in exchange of a paltry sum.

Actually this matter is highlighted only to create an awareness how our laxity and indifference in this matter has wreaked havoc with our Islamic heritage, so that we do not repeat such mistakes.

Also most books that see the light of publication in this period are such that they are printed very badly without any regard for correcting textual errors and even lack proper sources from which it is taken so that it can be compared with them. Booksellers and publishers who are in this trade only for the sake of monetary gains have contributed largely in worsening the situation.

When such books come to a researcher he is absolutely defeated if he wants to understand or confirm a word, a phrase or some lines. In spite of all his efforts he would not be able to achieve his aim as the publisher has not provided any clue from which version he has reproduced it.

Though we must admit that some books stand out prominently as they were fortunate to have been corrected, checked and edited by a great scholar. May the Almighty bestow a great reward to them for such a service to Islam. Only these are the books that can be relied upon.

Teachers and Students of the Author

Shaykh Sadooq (q.s.) has narrated traditions from a large number of important traditionists whose count reaches to 250. One can refer to the Foreword of Maani al-Akhbaar where all the names are listed.

In the same way around twenty learned scholars have narrated traditions from Shaykh Sadooq, and they are introduced in the Foreword of Man Laa Yahzrul Faqih.

Death and Place of Burial

(From the introduction of Maani al-Akhbaar)

Shaykh Sadooq (q.s.) passed away in the year 381 A.H. He was aged seventy and odd years at that time. His magnificent tomb having a towering dome is built near the mausoleum of Abdul Azeem Hasani in the Rayy province. Many people visit the place seeking blessings and paying respects. This mausoleum was first built by Fath Ali Shah Qachar in 1238 A.H. This was after the well-known miracle that convinced the king, the queen and the courtiers.

The details of this incident are mentioned in Raudhat of Khwansari, Qisasul Ulama of Tankabani, Tanqihul Maqaal of Mamaqani and Muntakhib at-Tawarikh of Khorasani. Khwansari says: Among his miracles is one that was seen in the present age and which a large number of people with perception themselves witnessed and which people from faraway places also saw is that the Shaykhs tomb which is situated in Rayy was damaged with heavy rains as a result of which there developed a crack.

When renovation began and the gap was examined closely it was found that it led to an underground chamber in which the last remains of the Shaykh were placed. In this chamber, people saw an elegant dead body which was half covered but the private parts were not exposed. It was a huge body and the nails showed henna coloration and around the body lay twisted dusty threads of the shroud cloth.

This news spread all over the city of Tehran and even reached Fath Ali Shah Qachar who was the great grandfather of Nasiruddin Shah. This happened around 1238 A.H. So the King, with perfectly good faith, decided to see for himself and he reached the tomb with an entourage of courtiers. Since the officers advised that King himself does not enter the burial chamber, he deputed some reliable persons to go down and report the facts to him. At last, the truth of the miracle was confirmed for him and he finally ordered that the crack be filled and the tomb be renovated in the most magnificent way.

I myself have heard about this incident from an eyewitness and some of our senior scholars have mentioned this event in their books.

Mamqani has quoted this incident from the personification of justice and truth, Sayyid Ibrahim Lawasani Tehrani's Tanqihul Maqaal.

[1.](#) Surah Taubah 9:122

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