

[Home](#) > [A Strife-free Dialogue \(A Step towards Understanding\)](#) > [Stage 3: A Meticulous Understanding of the Imamiyyah's Faith](#) > [How to present the peculiarities of the Imamiyyah to the Wahhabis?](#) > The third trait

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## Stage 3: A Meticulous Understanding of the Imamiyyah's Faith

The issues that will be examined at stage three are a logical continuation of what was discussed in stage two; that is, when the concepts of divinity, Prophecy, *shari'ah*, the religious ultimate end and certain terms of the Shi'ah culture are explained, the origin of the Imamiyyah and that of the extremists will not be confused, nor will the Shi'ah sources and those of the Extremism be taken as identical. The items that need to be examined at this stage are three: the sources, identity and origin of the Imamiyyah. The important issues of Imamate and the Imam's ('a) occultation referred to here are in fact constituents of stage two, but are discussed here for the reasons mentioned before.

### 1. Sources of the Imamiyyah school of thought

Before making a thorough examination of the religious concepts and beliefs, the Wahhabis habitually claim that the Shi'ahs' beliefs stem from the Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity. This is an unfounded judgment because if they trace the same line that we have mentioned in the previous stages, they will realize that the fundamentals of the Shi'ism are all derived from the Qur'an and the correct Prophetic (S) *Sunnah*. If the Wahhabis were familiar with the Imamiyyah's scholarly verdicts and practice, they would perceive our assertion and would no longer accuse the Shi'ahs of being Zoroastrians. Since they equate the Shi'ism with Extremism, the Wahhabis think that the sources of these two are also identical, and that the Shi'ah sources have their roots in the Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity, just as the extremists' deviations come from the Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity. How distant are these two opinions!

### 2. The reality of the Imamate in the Shi'ah school of thought

Powerful and authoritative documents—the Qur'an and *Sunnah*—prove that the succession to the Prophet (S), Imamate, is a particular blessing Almighty God has, through His Messenger (S) made

known to the mankind; it is not a concept that has been fabricated by the Shi'ahs, nor is it the outcome of the oppression inflicted upon the Prophet's pure household (‘a). The Imamate i.e., leadership of the twelve Imams (‘a) has repeatedly been expressed in the correct texts from the early days of the advent of Islam, and has nothing to do with the fourth century or the time thereafter.

Sunni and Shi'ah Muslims unanimously maintain that the Holy Prophet (S) introduced the twelve Imams (‘a) as his vicegerents and inheritors. Muslim Bukhari, and scores of other narrators who lived before the fourth century A.H., at a time when the number of the Imams (‘a) had not yet come to twelve, have recorded the divine words of the Prophet (S) in their books.

These narrations played an important part in attracting people to the Imams (‘a). That is why the tyrant rulers who feared a shaky rule had, as items of their agenda, the plan to keep these traditional texts in hiding, to distort them, or to assign them esoteric interpretations.

We have provided indisputable evidence concerning this matter in our next book “*Rihlati min al-Wahhabiyyah ila al-Ithna ‘Ashariyyah*”.

The Wahhabis, however, say that these narrations have come from the extremist sources, but they have forgotten that the traditional texts on Imamate are preserved in the Sunni authentic books, too; proving that the *hadiths* in question have not been designed by the Shi'ahs.

The Wahhabis have neither thoroughly examined the narrations that are accepted by all Muslims of various schools of thought, nor have they taken pains to refer to the Imamiyyah books and study the undeniable evidences there are on the issue of the Prophet's (S) succession, but ignorantly insist that the belief in Imamate is a fabrication of the extremists and Zoroastrians.

It is our belief that the soaring bird of the Imamiyyah Shi'ism has two powerful wings to fly with: the *thaqalayn hadith* and the narrations concerning the twelve Imams [*Ithna ‘Ashar Khulafa*]. So long as the Wahhabis have not understood these two, they will not perceive other Imamiyyah realities.

In his book “*Al-Imam ‘Ali al-Rida wa Risalatuhu al-Tibbiyyah*”, Dr. Muhammad ‘Ali Bar, the distinguished Wahhabi author says the following about the *thaqalayn hadith*, “In his *Sahih*, Muslim quotes Zayd ibn Arqam as having said ‘Beside a brook at Ghadir Khumm, between Macca and Madina, the Holy Prophet (S) delivered a sermon.

Having praised and glorified Allah and having given us admonitions, he said, “O people! I am a human being who is about to be summoned by the divine angel and who is to respond to this call. I am leaving behind two precious things (*thaqalayn*): The first is the Book of Allah, which contains guidance and light. So take hold of the Book of Allah”; he then persuaded us to act according to it. Then he continued, “And, my Ahl al-Bayt (my Household). With regard to Ahl al-Bayt, I remind you of Allah.” He repeated this sentence three times’.”

In his book, *Sunan*, Tirmidhi, on the authority of Zayd ibn Arqam, has quoted the Prophet (S) as having said, “I leave behind two worthy things among you. If you take hold of them, you will not be misguided after me. One of them is greater than the other; the Book of Allah, which is a rope extending from the heavens to the earth, and my my Household [*‘itrah*]. The two will never separate until they return to me beside the pond of *kawthar*. So, heed how you deal with them.”

A large number of the contemporary men of knowledge and orators are curiously unaware or pretend to be so though Muslim and Tirmidhi have narrated this report as has Hakim Nayshaburi in his *Mustadrak* and so has Ahmad in his *Musnad*! These ‘*ulama*’ have replaced the phrase *wa ahl-i bayti* [my ‘*itrah*] with *wa sunnati* [my *Sunnah*] although Malik’s report in his *Muwatta’* is weak and disrupted in its chain of transmitters. These scholars should quote the two narrations simultaneously if they ever desire to cite something; it is improper to quote one and hide the other one, for it will be an example of “hiding the knowledge”. God and His Messenger have threatened (with punishment) the one who denies it.

‘Allamah Muhammad Nasir Albani has quoted the ‘*itrah* tradition in his *Silsilat al-Ahadith al-Sahihah* in this way: ‘O People! I am leaving behind among you two trusts; if you take hold of them, you will never be misguided: the Book of Allah and my Ahl al-Bayt.’ Albani then said, “This is a sound narration for which Zayd ibn Arqam’s report can be cited as evidence.”

“The following scholars have reported the same *hadith*: Muslim in his *Sahih*,<sup>1</sup> Tahawi in *Mushkil al-Athar*,<sup>2</sup> Ahmad<sup>3</sup> and Ibn-e Abi ‘Asim in *Kitab al-Sunnah*,<sup>4</sup> and Tabarani<sup>5</sup> on the authority of Yazid ibn Hayyan Tamimi. Besides, these reports Ahmad,<sup>6</sup> Tabarani,<sup>7</sup> and Tahawi have narrated it on the authority of ‘Ali ibn Rabi’ah, who said ‘I saw Zayd ibn Arqam and asked him ‘Did you yourself hear the Prophet (S) saying ‘I leave two precious things, *thaqalayn*, among you: the Book of Allah and my Household [*‘itrah*]?’ He answered, “Yes”. The chain of the transmission of this report is authentic. The same tradition has also been reported by different intermediaries, some named by Tabarani,<sup>8</sup> some others by Hakim,<sup>9</sup> who called a number of them ‘trustworthy’ as did Dhahabi.”

Another evidence: ‘Atiyyah ‘Awfi quotes Abi Sa’id Khudri as having said, “I am a human being who is about to be summoned by the divine angel and who is to respond to this call. I am leaving behind two things among you. If you hold on to them, you will not be misguided after me. One of them is greater than the other: the Book of Allah, which is a rope extending from the heavens to the earth, and my Household [*‘itrah*]. The two will never separate until they return to me beside the pond (of *kawthar*).”

Ahmad,<sup>10</sup> Ibn Abi ‘Asim,<sup>11</sup> Tabarani,<sup>12</sup> and Daylami<sup>13</sup> have reported the same narration.

Darqutini,<sup>14</sup> Hakim,<sup>15</sup> and Khatib have given other evidence in *Faqih*.<sup>16</sup> Dhahabi has called some of their reports as trustworthy.”

“On my trip to the UAE,” Albani continues, “I met certain doctors, one of whom gave me a book he had written to throw doubt on the *thaqalayn* narration. The book, with the two weaknesses it had—which I told him—showed that he was a novice in the science of traditions.

1. The *hadith* bibliography consisted of a handful of very ordinary books; the author had ignored a multitude of intermediaries and chains of transmission, each of which was authentic in itself without the need for other corollary evidence.

2. He had not referred to the works of tradition experts, nor had he taken notice of the rule that says, “The weak report will certainly gain force when there are many chains of transmission. The *thaqalayn* tradition has many authentic chains of transmission.

Some time before this, I heard that in Kuwait a certain doctor had written an essay to weaken the *thaqalayn* tradition, but I was not sure of the news until I received a letter criticizing me for having included the weak *thaqalayan* narration in my book *Sahih al-Jam‘ al-Saghir*. [17](#)

The evidence the surprised writer of the letter had referred to was the book the above-mentioned author had written. I asked him to go over the matter once again in order to perceive the doctor’s error. The writer of the letter had been unable to distinguish between a novice and an expert in the science of *hadith*—a circumstance that has snared many people. May God relieve those who are!” [18](#)

I have quoted all Albani’s words, so the Wahhabis who repeatedly reproduce Dr. ‘Ali Ahmad Salḥ’s’ books on weakening of the *thaqalayan* narration, will realize that this very doctor knows nothing about the sciences of narration and *rijal*, and that Albani’s has said these words for no reason other than refuting Dr. Salḥs.

### [3. The identity of the Imamiyyah school of thought](#)

It is impossible to know the intellectual identity of a school of thought before a deep and analytic examination is made of its ideological contents. Yet the Wahhabis have reversed the procedure. Without having made an analytical study, they have pronounced that the Shi‘ah intellectual identity is Zoroastrian.

Because there was a need for the discussion to proceed logically, the chapter on “the identity of Shi‘ism” came after “the realities of the Imamiyyah” presented in previous chapters.

Curiously some have claimed that the Shi‘ism is ethnically pure Persian although it carries the Islamic–Arabic identity, but we will, in future discussions, present authentic documents and prove that the Shi‘ahs were all Arabs when Islam first appeared, and most Iranians of the time were Sunnis. Ibn Khaldūn has, on same grounds, praised them in his *Muqaddamah*. For certain reasons, however, Iranians abandoned the Sunnism and turned to the Shi‘ism.

After it is proved to us that the realities of divinity and Prophecy as the Shi‘ahs understand them are derived from the Qur’an and the Prophet’s (S) *Sunnah*, as are the Imamiyyah’s juridical precepts; and, after it is made clear that the religious ends portrayed in the Qur’an, in the Prophet’s (S) *Sunnah* and the Imamiyyah school of thought are identical; and, after we have learned that the Qur’an and the Prophet’s

(S) *Sunnah* are the sources where the Shi‘ah knowledge and practical injunctions come from; and, when we know the reality of the Qur’anic issue of the Imamate is exactly as the Imamiyyah bring it up, we will inevitably conclude that it is impossible to separate Islam’s intellectual trend from the Shi‘ah intellectual identity, provided, of course, that we have followed the previous discussions sequenced; otherwise, we will end up in the vortex of taking the Shi‘ism from the Extremism.

## 4. The origin of Shi‘ah school of thought

The idea of assigning an identical manner of advent for the Shi‘ism and extremist sects stems from the Wahhabis’ ignorance of the Shi‘ah intellectual elements and those of the Extremism, as well as from the Wahhabis’ inability to hold onto a coherent dogma. The extremist thought emerged and developed in an environment already polluted by the Zoroastrian stories and Judaeo–Christian superstition. It is, therefore, a purely absurd and funny attempt to take the extremist thought and the Shi‘ah faith that stems from the Qur’an and the Prophet’s (S) *Sunnah* as identical.

Since the Wahhabis have not made an analytical study of the Shi‘ahs’ genuine source books (not even of the Sunnis’), they have disregarded the Prophet (S), the first person who brought up the issue of the guardianship, [*wilayah*] of the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali, (‘a) and have instead brought ‘Abd Allah ibn Saba’ to the fore claiming that the Shi‘ism began with him. He was in fact the first to have exaggerated the Commander of the Faithful’s (‘a) stand. This is how the issue of identifying the Shi‘ism with the Extremism [*quluww*] began to form.

Muslims unanimously agree on the following statement, “It was ‘Abd Allah ibn Saba’ who first called ‘Ali (‘a) a god and the transcendental beloved”; but the Wahhabis have replaced the word “god” with word “legatee [*wassiy*]” saying “‘Abd Allah ibn Saba’ was the first to have called ‘Ali (‘a) the Prophet’s (S) legatee.” This is why they credited him with the advent of the Shi‘ism.

In our book, *Rihlati min al-Wahhabiyyah*, we have proved that the Sunnis maintain that the Prophet (S) was the first person to have introduced ‘Ali (‘a) as his legatee. It is, therefore, sheer absurdity to mingle the two categories of “being a legatee” and “divinity” as the Wahhabis have done; the former is strongly supported by the Qur’an and is very far from the category of assigning ‘Ali (‘a) a divine stand—an idea that is rooted in polytheistic thoughts.

All this confusion has appeared because the Wahhabi sub–sect did not follow the logical sequences (we previously referred to) when they were doing their studies and analyses of the Shi‘ah belief. Consequently, they deviated. There are, however, Sunni scholars and sane Wahhabis who have realized the blunder.

That it was ‘Abd Allah ibn Saba’ who had called ‘Ali (‘a) the *wassiy* of the Prophet (S) is strongly rejected by most Sunni scholars, who have said that ‘Ali (‘a) had already been known among the Companions of the Prophet (S) as his *wassiy* long before ‘Abd Allah ibn Saba’ came into existence. The Sunnis have

accepted the fact that the Wahhabis' claim is a mere opinion invented to blemish the Imamiyyah, so that the illiterate may come to think that the intellectual basis of the Shi'ah school of thought—The Commander of the Faithful ('a) being a *wassiy* of the Prophet (S)—has been worked out by a Jew.

## Reasons for the advent of the Shi'ism

While examining the reality of the Imamate in the Shi'ite school of thought, we said that we have many documents proving that the Shi'ah belief in the twelve Imams ('a) is based on decisive arguments derived from the Book of Allah and the Prophetic (S) tradition [*Sunnah*]. This is why it is improper to talk about the reason why the Shi'ahs accepted the 'Ali's ('a) guardianship, [*wilayah*] before the reality of the Imamate is studied.

Once you have proved that the Shi'ism, *wilayah*, and resorting to the Imams ('a) are all obtained from the Prophetic (S) traditions of *thaqalayn* and the *Ithna 'Asharah khulafa'*, and that resorting to them is (in rank) next to resorting to the Qur'an, it is time to tell the interlocutor that there are fundamentally incongruent reasons for the advent of the Shi'ism and for the appearance of the Extremism. Why the Wahhabis do not perceive the issue is because they are suffering from the serious illness of mingling the Shi'ism with the Extremism; they should go through stage one discussed in this book in order to be cured.

## How to present the peculiarities of the Imamiyyah to the Wahhabis?

Having finished the stage on "The proper methods of discussion with the Wahhabis", it is time we began the section on "Peculiarities of Shi'ism" and consider the following three points:

1. Since the peculiarities of the Shi'ism cannot be perceived unless the realities of this school of thought are known, these have received priority in our discussion.
2. The Shi'ah and Sunni scholars have undividedly mentioned certain characteristics for Islam, whereas the Wahhabis have conceived certain others. Mingling of the two characteristics and confusing the principles of Islam with the Wahhabi dogmas has caused the Wahhabis problems and pushed them to bring a charge against other schools of thought.
3. It is clear that the Wahhabis make no distinction between the Imamiyyah traits and those of the Extremism, taking some of the latter's characteristics as belonging to the Imamiyyah. We have enumerated the Shi'ah traits in our book *Rihlati min al-Wahhabiyyah*. Of these, three are listed below:
  - a. Observing a positive golden mean as regards the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet, peace be upon them;
  - b. A realistic view of the Companions;

c. The issue of the occultation of the Twelfth Imam, may Allah hasten his glorious advent.

### The first trait

Of the most significant Imamiyyah traits mentioned here is the non-extremist, moderate view they hold on the Imams, peace be upon them, a trend of great impact in my converting to the Shi'ism. When I was a Wahhabi, I imagined the Sunnis had a non-extremist view regarding the Household of the Prophet (S) as the Sunnis themselves thought. But after I studied *al-Ta'ab al-Jamil 'ala Ahl al-Jarh wa'l-Ta'dil*, written by Ibn 'Aqil, the Shafi'i leader of the Sunnis, and *al-Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq*, written by Muhammad Abū Zahrah, I realized that the Sunnis' viewpoint on the Prophet's Household ('a) was not realistic, actual, or moderate, rather, it was the Shi'ah school of thought that maintained the real moderate view.

Although the Sunnis have rejected the *Nasibis'* and the *Ghulat's* extreme views concerning the Imams ('a) and have disavowed the two groups, they have, nevertheless, opted for a negative stance as regards the Household of the Prophet ('a); that is, although they have faith in what the Prophet (S) has said about Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and consider it an Islamic necessity to resort to them along with resorting to the Qur'an, they turn to sources other than the Imams ('a), stick to their choice, and oppose the Imams ('a) in practice or in words. This is what we mean by "the Sunnis' negative position" towards the Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt ('a). The Shi'ahs, on the contrary, have openly declared that they do not belong to the Extremism and never opt for an enmity towards the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) but take the Holy Prophet's (S) advice, resort to his Household ('a) and admit their deeds and words as authentic.

This is the point where the Sunnis' and Shi'ahs' approaches diverge—a point so critical that has resulted in a thorough separation of the two approaches that have no common grounds. All praise is due to Allah, whose grace guided us to choose the Imamiyyah school of thought and give up the Wahhabism.

### The second trait

The Shi'ahs treat the Companions realistically, and know that they are essentially human beings dominated by the same rules and conventions governing man, and can quite possibly err just as others do. I hope that the Wahhabis will not take my words as "a criticism of the justice of the Companions", but will ponder on realities instead. I say this because the Wahhabis greatly fear to talk about the issue, and are intolerant towards any criticism. I do hope, however, that they will see the content of the discussion, without giving it a particular label.

What the Shi'ism denounces is "the absolute justice of all Companions", but not partial justice of some Companions.

As I was a Wahhabi myself, I know it well that the Wahhabis value the name and the appearance of things so highly that they begin severely striving merely for a name or for an event, but end their struggle as soon as the headings are changed. They refuse to read certain books simply because they are sensitive to the title, but eagerly take up studying the same books as soon as the names are changed. In

none of over the three hundred taped discussions I have had with the Wahhabis will you hear me using the term “Shi‘ah”. I have, instead, used “*Ithna ‘Ashariyyah*” to make it easier for them to listen, because they bitterly hate the word “Shi‘ah”.

When speaking to the Wahhabis, you should not talk about the Companions before you have discussed the *thaqalayn hadith*, because the Wahhabis, favoring the idea of the justice of the Companions—a negative outcome of their opposing the *thaqalayn* narration—will reject the discussion. Once you have explained the *thaqalayn* narration, the issue of the Companions will have automatically found a due solution.

You should not talk about *Ghadir* before you have made a mention of the *thaqalayn* narration, otherwise you will be driven into a polemic on the Companions [*sahabah*] and on the event of *Saqifah* as soon as you mention *Ghadir*. The Wahhabis imagine that the two events are interrelated in the same way that most of them consider the *Ghadir* report, a mere political outdated discussion,<sup>19</sup> but not so on the *thaqalayn* narration. This is because they consider the latter narration directly linked with the religious authority of the Prophet’s Household (‘*a*)—a belief that is valid even for these days.

I do not mean to devalue the reports on the *Ghadir* event, but would like to mention that in talking to a Wahhabi we should remember that he has his own mentality. We desire to help him breakaway from the grip of some troublesome images. A Wahhabi cannot understand the *Ghadir* before he has understood the *thaqalayn*. The discussion should be delayed a bit until things are clear to him.

As I mentioned in the prologue, we had better begin with *tathir* and *mubahilah* verses of the Qur’an before we begin to speak about *wilayah* since the Wahhabis believe that *wilayah* and the Companions are closely related. They will be unable to grasp the *Ghadir* event correctly until they have not made sense of the issue of the Companions. That is why beginning the discussion with the *tathir* and *thaqalayn* verses before any mention is made of the *Ghadir*—will prepare him to ponder over the *Ghadir* narration on the one hand and the Qur’anic verses on *wilayah* on the other.

The Sunnis and the extremists’ ideas on the Companions indicate two exaggerations, two extreme ends of a scale: one considering them all perfectly just, the other denouncing justice in all of them. The Shi‘ahs, however, do not equate all the Companions but give each one the respect he deserves, thus maintaining a moderate and reasonable stance.

### The third trait

The belief that the twelfth Imam (‘*a*) is in occultation is one of the most important traits of the Shi‘ism that makes it quite distinct from other schools of thought. Now that the revelation has come to an end and the Prophecy is sealed, the one who is granted the rank of living in occultation is the link connecting the earth with the heavens.

We will try to present this vital doctrine to the Wahhabis in a new form so that the titles, the names and

the expressions will not drive them away.

The belief in the occultation of the twelfth Imam (‘a) is a fundamental reality foretold by the Prophet (S) 250 years before it occurred. Many Muslims of the time came to believe it; many of the Prophet’s (S) words in this regard were collected and some were even separately grouped together. [These narrations all point to] a fact that has now become a reality, and people feel it wholeheartedly. We have quoted these *hadiths* in the concluding chapter of our book *Rihlati min al-Wahhabiyyah*.

The discussion on the occultation of the Imam (‘a) will be fruitless if it is presented prior to the principle of the Imamate. The *thaqalayn* narration should, however, come first because it governs both the Imamate and occultation. Observing the logical sequencing presented in this book is very necessary to make the Wahhabis grasp the relationships better. The present book, divided into three chapters, is a prologue to our book *Rihlati min al-Wahhabiyyah ila al-Ithna ‘Ashariyyah* in which an extensive analysis is made of the points that are briefly discussed here. The present book, in fact, gives the reader a better insight into our future discussions raised in the above mentioned book.

[1.](#) Vol. 7, pp. 122–123.

[2.](#) Vol. 4, p. 368.

[3.](#) Vol. 4, 366–7.

[4.](#) Narrations 1550, 1551.

[5.](#) Narration 5026.

[6.](#) Vol 4, p. 371.

[7.](#) Narration 5040.

[8.](#) Narrations 4969, 4971, 4980–4982, 4050.

[9.](#) Vol. 3, pp. 109, 148, 533.

[10.](#) Vol. 3, pp. 14, 17, 26, 59.

[11.](#) Narrations 1553, 1555.

[12.](#) Narrations 2678–2679.

[13.](#) Vol. 2, p. 45.

[14.](#) Narration 529.

[15.](#) Vol. 1, p. 93.

[16.](#) Vol. 1, p. 56.

[17.](#) Narrations 2453–2454, 2745, 7754.

[18.](#) End of Alb n ’s words.

[19.](#) It is entirely wrong to abandon the discussion on the Ghadr event, contrary to what some Sunn s and a number of Sh ’ahs, with an identity loss, believe that it should. We have answered their claim in our book “A Re-reading of the Idea of Taqr b”.

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