

## The Author

Shaykh Saduq ibn Babawayhi is universally regarded among the Ithna 'Ashari Shi'a as one of their foremost doctors and traditionists.

Professor E.G. Browne, in discussing the founders of the Shi'a theology, says "The most important of these earlier divines are 'the three Muhammads', al-Kulayni (Muhammad bin Ya'qub, died 329/941), Ibn Babawayhi (Muhammad bin 'Ali bin Musa, died 381/991-2) and the already mentioned Tusi (Muhammad bin Hasan, died 460/1067).

Of these, the first composed the *Kafi*, the second *Man la Yahduruhu'l-faqih* (a title which approximates in sense to our familiar 'Every man his own Lawyer'), and the third, the *Istibsar* and the *Tahdhibu'l-Ahkam*, which are known collectively amongst the Shi'a as 'The Four Books' (*al-Kutubu'l-arba'a*) and of which the full particulars will be found in the above-mentioned *Kashfu'l-Hujub*".<sup>[1](#)</sup>

Considering the high repute in which he is held, the early times in which he lived, the great influence he had on later theologians and traditionists, and the numerous works which are attributed to him, it is very unfortunate that the earliest works which give an account of his life are extremely brief and give us no indication whatever of his character, his studies, his travels and his life.

Thus, at the end of our enquiry, we are faced with the problem of writing the account of a man, the whole of whose life is summarized by Tusi in about four lines (Tusi, *List*, 204) and by Najashi in three lines at the beginning and two lines at the end (*Rijal*. 276,279). Thus Browne is fully justified in observing that "The older 'Books of the Men' (*Kutubu'r-Rijal*), such as the works of at-Tusi and an-Najashi, are generally very jejune, and suited for reference rather than reading".<sup>[2](#)</sup>

The two earliest sources for the life of Ibn Babawayhi are *Shaykhu't-Ta'ifa* Muhammad bin Hasan bin 'Ali at-Tusi, born 385/995, died 460/1067.<sup>[3](#)</sup> His *Fihrist* was published by A. Sprenger in the *Bibliotheca Indica*, Calcutta, in 1853 - 1855, under the title of Tusi's *List of Shi'ah Books and Alam al-Hoda's Notes on Shi'ah Biography*. It has always been considered an early and reliable authority.<sup>[4](#)</sup>

The second source is Ahmad bin 'Ali an-Najashi, born 372/982, died 450/1063.<sup>[5](#)</sup> His *Kitabu'r-Rijal*

(Bombay, 1317/1899–1900) is a very useful book of reference, and is particularly exhaustive as it regards lists of works written by each author. On a comparison of these two, Najashi will be found to be the better and more detailed work, as has been pointed out by Sprenger.<sup>6</sup> Najashi gives a very comprehensive list of the Shaykh's works.

The later works of reference, like *Qisasu'1-'Uluma'*, *Amalu'1-Amil*, *Muntaha'1-Maqal* and others repeat with certain additions the information given in the earlier works. It is therefore safe to treat Tusi and Najashi as the basic authorities.

Of later works, I have made the fullest use of *Rawdatu'1-Jannat* by Muhammad Baqir bin Hajji Zaynu'l-Abidin al-Musawi al-Khwansari (lithographed Tehran, 1306/1888). This is the most scholarly and comprehensive of modern authorities, and as far as can be ascertained from the Imami scholars themselves, they place great reliance on it. The account of Shaykh Saduq, although it extends to four pages (557–560), consists mainly of a discussion of his views, opinions on his greatness as a doctor of theology, his soundness (being *thiqa*) as a traditionist, and various other matters, without giving us details of his life or glimpses of his character.<sup>7</sup>

With regard to his writings, according to Professor E.G. Browne, the *Qisasu'1-'Ulama'* attributes 189 (iv. 377,405) and Najashi 193 works to the Shaykh Saduq (EL, ji, 366). Tusi however mentions 43, and *Rawdatu'1-Jannat* 17 only. In addition to these authorities, such manuscript catalogues as were available in Bombay have been consulted by me, and after dealing with his biography, the results carefully stated.

Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin 'Ali bin al-Husayn bin Musa Ibn Babawayhi<sup>8</sup> al-Qummi is generally known as *ash-Shaykh as-Saduq*. His place of birth is not mentioned either by Tusi or by Najashi, but Donaldson says that he was born in Khorasan.<sup>9</sup> In 355/966 he went to Baghdad, apparently from Khorasan, and died in Rayy in 381/991.<sup>10</sup> Ahlwardt in the *Berlin Catalogue* says that the date of death is 391/1001,<sup>11</sup> and this is followed by some authors. There is however no sufficient authority for this date.

Of his life and character we know nothing; but of his birth a most entertaining legend is preserved. According to Tusi and Najashi,<sup>12</sup> when in Iraq, his father 'Ali bin al-Husayn Ibn Babawayhi al-Qummi (died 329/940–941) met Abu'l-Qasim Husayn bin Ruh, who was the third of the four agents of the Hidden Imam during the period of 73 years, 256–339 A.H.<sup>13</sup>, and asked him several questions. Thereafter 'Ali wrote a letter to him through 'Ali bin Ja'far bin al-Aswad<sup>14</sup> in order that the letter be delivered to the Hidden Imam.

In the letter 'Ali asked for a son, to which he received a reply from Husayn bin Ruh saying “We have prayed to Allah for it on your behalf and you will be rewarded with two goodly sons”. Afterwards two sons were born of a slave girl (*min umm walad*), Abu Ja'far Muhammad (the celebrated Shaykh Saduq) and Abu Abdullah Husayn. It is reported from his younger brother Husayn that Muhammad used to pride himself on the circumstances of his birth. **أنا ولدت بدعوة صاحب الأمر و يفخر بذلك**.

The same story is reported in *Rawdatu'l-Jannat* with certain variations in two different versions: (1) Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin 'Ali al-Aswad (*not* 'Ali b. Ja'far al-Aswad, as said by Tusi and Najashi) was asked to request Ruh to ask the Imam, and no letter was written. (2) Abu Ja'far asked Ruh and was informed after three days that he had prayed for 'Ali and the prayer was accepted. 'Ali had three sons, Muhammad (Shaykh Saduq), Hasan and Husayn.

'Ali was a theologian and divine and taught Shaykh Saduq. [15](#) Muhammad, the eldest son was the most famous of all. The second brother Hasan was devoted to piety and did not generally mix with the people. [16](#) The third and youngest brother was Husayn, also a well-known jurist and theologian.

Shaykh Saduq apparently taught at Baghdad and being a contemporary of the Buwayhid Ruknu'd-Dawla, entered into controversies at his behest. He was well known for his knowledge, memory, justice, intelligence and reliability; and he is universally regarded as a pillar of religion. Ibn Tawus and Shaykh Sulayman accepted his authority among others.

Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (who according to E.G. Browne was “one of the greatest, most powerful and most fanatical *mujtahids* of the Safawi period”, the well-known author of *Biharu'l-Anwar*, an encyclopedic work in 25 volumes, died 1111/ 1699–1700; see *Pers. Lit.*, iv. 403, 409–410) says that his traditions were declared as reliable by a decision of a number of '*Ulama'*. [17](#)

## His Works

With regard to the works of Shaykh Saduq, it has already been pointed out that Najashi mentions 193, the *Qisasu'l-'Ulama'* 189, Tusi 43 and *Rawdatu'l-Jannat* 17 works. The last-named work says that he is the author of 300 books [18](#); this clearly follows the tradition of earlier authorities. This wide divergence in number, although it cannot be fully explained, may be due to the fact that the titles mentioned by Najashi may, in a large number of cases, be called the chapters of a book, rather than books themselves. It is also possible that in some instances the same book may have been known by two different names. The lists below first consist of the books which are known and extant.

The two earliest authorities are Tusi and Najashi, and they give the following authorities for their statements:

**Tusi:** After mentioning 43 works, he says that there also exist smaller works, the names of which are not known to him (p.305). His sources are a number of people, chief among whom are (1) Shaykh Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Nu'man, (2) al-Husayn bin 'Ubaydu'l-Iah, (3) Abu'l-Hasan Ja'far bin al-Hasan bin Khaska al-Qummi, and (4) Abu Zakariya' Muhammad bin Sulayman al-Hamrani, all of whom were personally in touch with the author.

**Najashi:** He says that some of the books were actually read by his father 'Ali bin Ahmad bin al-'Abbas an-Najashi – with the author, and the rest were specifically mentioned by him (the father) when he heard

of them at Baghdad. The father was given an *ijaza* (permission) by Shaykh Saduq to teach all the books.

It is very interesting to observe that Khwansari in *Rawdatu'l-Jannat*, after mentioning seventeen works, observes that “the rest of the works have not come down to us”.

It will be observed that a full reference to all manuscript catalogues has not been possible in Bombay. Hence only a selection from the most important catalogues has been made. Nevertheless, it is hoped that a clear idea of the extant works of the Shaykh can be obtained from List A, and List B may be used for reference as Najashi is not always available and an alphabetical arrangement may facilitate reference.

The manuscript catalogues used are indicated by abbreviations, which can easily be identified with the help of Brockelmann's *Geschichte der Arab ischen Litteratur* and the recent *Supplement*, where full references are to be found. The only exceptions are Sipahsalar, Browne and one or two others, which are included in the list of abbreviations.

#### Works known and preserved

1. **الاعتقادات (رسالة) كتاب** Risalatu'l-I'tiqadat. Not mentioned by Tusi or Najashi. *Kashf*, 239; *RJ*, no. 14. **Text.** *GAL*, i. 187; *GAL*, Sup. i. 322 (7) numerous references. According to Brockelmann “Eng. Trans. By A. A. A. Fyzee, 1932” (!); Browne, p. 16; Brit. Mus., 851; Cod. Br. Mus., add. 19,623; Rieu, 385; Pet: Am., 61; Iv. ASB. Ar., 828, 829, 830; Berlin, 1944.

**Lith.** Najaf 1343/1924–25 (together with three other *risalas*), pp.234 = N; Delhi (with Urdu trans. by Md. I'jaz Husayn), Ithna'Ashari Press, 1347 (1st ed. 1332), sub nom. هدية جعفري ترجمة عقائد شيخ صدوق (sic) عليه الرحمة. Tehran (together with four other *risalas*), 1274 = T.

**Persian Translation.** Iv. Cur., 386. Sipahsalar, vol. ii, is not available to me, but in vol.i, p.534, no. 1839 is mentioned in the footnote.

**Commentary.** Arabic, تصحيح الاعتقادات *Tashihu'l-I'tiqadat* by Sh. Mufid, see *GAL*, Sup. i. 323. Printed in the Arabic periodical *al-Murshid*, Baghdad, 1344 sqq., vols. I, II and III were available to me by the kindness of the Rampur State Library. The rest, not available. A MS. copy exists in the Asafiya (Hyderabad, Deccan). Mufid differs on many points from Saduq, but according to *RJ* the truth is with both of them, 563. Tehran, 621/8 (ii. 379) mentions a Persian *sharh* by Abu'l Fath Husayni.

#### 2. إكمال (كمال) الدين وإتمام تمام النعمة في إثبات الغيبة و كشف الحيرة

**Ikmalu'din wa Itmamu'n Ni'ma fi Ithbatu'l-ghayba wa Kashfu'l-hayra.** *Kashf*, 271, add في غيبة مولانا not mentioned by Najashi or Tusi. *RJ* doubts authorship.

**Text.** Ed. F. Moller, Heidelberg, 1901; Sarkis, *Mu'jam*, 44; *GAL*, Sup. i. 322, many references. Berlin, 2721/2; Paris, 1231; Manchester, 807; Heidelberg. ZS, x. 74; Blochet, *Nouv. Acq.*, 6666; Sipahsalar, vol. I, nos. 97,271, 272 (pp.204–207), gives good account of Saduq and Ruknu'd-Dawla.

3. **Kitabu'l-Amali** (*Al-majalis*) Kashf 278; *RJ*; but not mentioned either by Najashi or Tusi under this name. The *majalis* of early authorities is probably the *Amali* of later ones. See also no. 12 below. GAL, i. 187; Sup.i,321,322; Berlin, 1269;Tehran, ii. 24–25 (p.11) **أين كتاب باسم المجالس** – Meshed, iv. 3, 5, 8;W. Ivanow in *JRAS* for 1920,543. Lith. Tehran, 1300 AH.; Brit. Mus., *Cat. of Print. Books*, 163. The *Amali* is a closely printed book (10 by 6 inches) of 402 pp., consisting of 97 *babs*, and containing many interesting things on a variety of subjects.

4. **Kitabu'l-Tawhid** – كتاب التوحيد. Tusi (29); Najashi; *RJ*; *Kashf* 2391. GAL, Sup. i. 322; Meshed, *JRAS* for 1920, 543 (3 copies); Sipahsalar, 106, 295, 296 (pp.229–230).

**Lith.** Tabriz or Tehran (?); no date or place, pp. 383, 7 by 4 1/2 inches, containing 64 *babs*.

5. **Kitab Thawabu'l-A'mal** – كتاب ثواب الاعمال. Najashi; Tusi (34);*RJ* (10); *Kashf*, 733. GAL, Sup. i. 322; Browne, 10; Manchester, 94.

6. **Kitabu'l-Khisal** – كتاب الخصال. Najashi; *RJ*; *Kashf*, 1050. GAL, Sup. i. 322; Meshed, W. Ivanow in *JRAS* for 1920,545 (حصال?)

Lith. Tehran, 1302; Sarkis, *Mujam*, 44.

7. **Kitabu's-Sahw** – كتاب السهو. Najashi. Berlin, 1370; apparently only one known copy. Sh. Mufid wrote a refutation of this, *RJ*, 564.

8. **Kitab 'Iqabu'l-A'mal** – كتاب عقاب الاعمال. Najashi; Tusi (35); *Kashf*, 2120; *GAL*, Sup. i. 322.

9. **Kitab 'Ilali'sh-Shara'i wa'l-Ahkam** – كتاب علل الشرائع و الأحكام. Najashi; Tusi (20); *RJ*; *Kashf* 2129. GAL, i. 187; Sup.i. 321; Berlin, 8326, 8327;Br. Mus., 1196, add. 23, 261 (p.542); Iv. ASB. Ar., 1038; Sipahsalar, 132 (pp.278–279)

10. **Kitabu'l-'Ilal ghayr mubawwab** – كتاب العلل غير ميّوب. Najashi; Tusi (25). Cf. *GAL*, i. 187 (*al-'ilal*); not known whether a separate work. Cf. Berlin, 8326, 8327.

11. **'Uyun Akhbar 'r-Rida** – عيون أخبار الرضا. Not mentioned by Najashi or Tusi; *RJ*; *Kashf*, 2149. GAL, i. 187; Sup. i. 321; Berlin, 9663; Munich, 188. 456; Paris, 2018; Br. Mus., 1619; and or. 130 (p.730); India Office, 146; Meshed, W. Ivanow, *JRAS* for 1920; 543 (3 copies); Tehran, 550; Sipahsalar, 135, 360, 361, 362, 364 (PP.282–283).

Lith. Tehran, 1275 A. H. Persian Translation. **تحفة ملكي** Bankipore, 507 (vi. 150) Sipahsalar, 103 (p.225). Persian Paraphrase. Iv. ASB. Per., 1108, 1109.

12. **Dhikr majlis al-ladhi jara lahu bayna yaday Ruknu'd-Dawla**. Najashi GAL, i. 187, بابويه (sic) **مناظرة الملك ركن الدولة مع الصدوق ال** Sup i. 322; Br Mus., add. 16,832 (31), p.403; Strothmann *Isl.* XXI, 307. *Kashf*, 3120 gives another title:

**مناظرة ركن الدولة مع محمد بن علي بن الحسين بن بابويه القميّ و قد جمعها الشيخ ركن الدين الدروبيستي**

Najashi mentions **الدوله** and goes on (2) (4) **ذكر مجلس ثالث** (3) **ذكر مجلس آخر**

ذكر مجلس خامس (5) and ذكر مجلس رابع. It is probable that all of these are now collected in the lithographed text of the *Amali* (no.3 above) which consists of 97 *majlis*.

13. **Ma'ani'l-Akhbar**. Najashi; Tusi (36); *RJ; Kashf*, 2992. GAL, i. 187; Sup. i. 321; India Office, 145. Persian Translation. Tehran, 25(ii. 16).

14. **Kitabu'l-Muqni' fi'l-fiqh** - كتاب المقنع في الفقه. Najashi; Tusi; *Kashf*, 3079. GAL, Sup. i. 322 (13).Lith Persia, 1860 A. H.; Sarkis, *Mu'jam*, 44; Br. Mus., *Cat. Arab Print. Books*, 164.

15. **Man la yahdhuru-hu'l-Faqih** - من لا يحضره الفقيه. Not mentioned by Najashi; Tusi (28); *RJ; Kashf* 3170. GAL, i. 187; Sup. i. 321 (numerous references); Berlin, 4782/3; Pet., 250; Br. Mus., 905; Sup., 330, add. 19,358; Ind. Of., 289; Paris, 1108; Blochet, *Nouv. Acq.*, 6615, 6616, 5559, 6662; Bodl. ii. 84-86; Buhar, 50; Bankipore, 263, 264, 479; Sipahsalar, 154 (and 10 other copies), gives full and very valuable account of its composition. See below. Lith. Lucknow, A.H. 1306-7, 4 vols.; Sarkis, *Mu'jam*, 44; Br. Mus., *Cat. Arab. Print. Books*, 164. Persian Commentary. Iv. Cur., 381; Bankipore, 1258, 1259, 1260.

With regard to its composition, the author writes in the introduction that when he was at Ilaq, near Balkh, he met Sharafu'd-din Abu 'Abdullah, known as Ni'matu'llah, Muhammad bin Hasan bin Ishaq bin Husayn bin Ishaq bin Musa bin Ja'far as-Sadiq and greatly profited by his learned company and discourse.

They discussed the book *Man la yahdhuru-hu't-Tabib* of Muhammad bin Zakariya ar-Razi, and Ni'matu'llah asked him to compose a book regarding what is lawful and unlawful and the sharia and its rulings. Shaykh Saduq agreed to the suggestion and composed the book (Sipahsalar, i. 325). The title is reminiscent of كتاب دعائم الإسلام في ذكر الحلال و الحرام و القضايا و الأحكام *Ismaili Law of Wills*, p. 1.

It is difficult to give an explanation to why Najashi does not mention this – the most important of the Shaykh's works, one of the “four books” of the Shi'a; it may however be suggested that instead of mentioning the whole book, he gave the title of each of the chapters.

That is the only explanation which accords with the additional fact that there is a wide disparity between the list given by him and his contemporary Tusi, who is also one of the most respected of Shi'ite doctors. Mus. iii. 547-719 deals with the authorities cited in this work.

16. **An-Nusus 'ala'l-a'immati'l-Ithna'ashar** - النصوص على الأئمة الإثني عشر. Not mentioned by Najashi or Tusi. GAL, i. 187; Paris, 20182 *Kashf*, 3268, says that it is ascribed to the Shaykh. The authenticity is therefore very doubtful.

17. **Kitabu'n-Nikah**. Najashi. Is this a chapter from some work or a separate work? Iv. ASB. Ar., 614 (?). It is doubtful whether this is the work of Saduq or of Qadi Nu'man.

18. **Kitabu'l-Hidaya** - كتاب الهداية في الأصول و الفروع. Najashi, *Kashf*, 3392; cf. *Kashf*, 3396 هداية الطالبين *RJ* says this is not mentioned by the author of *Amalu'1-Amil* (558). GAL, Sup. i. 322; Ind. Of., 4632 (A. J. Arberry in *JRAS* for 1939,395-6); Berlin, Brock., *Sup.*, p.952.

1. Persian Literature in Modern Times, iv. 358–359. He adds that more modern times have also produced their "three Muhammads", namely, Md. b. Hasan b. 'Ali . . . al-Hurr al-'Amili (author of *Amalu'l-Amil*), d. 1033/1623–24; Md. Ibnu'l-Murtadi, commonly known as Mulla Muhsin-i-Fayd, d. 1090/1679; and Md. Baqir-i-Majlisi, d. 1111/1699 – 1700. The first wrote the *Wasa'il*, the second the *Wafi* and the third the *Biharu 'l-Anwar*, which constitute the "three books" of the later times. These seven works are the most important works on Shi'a theology, jurisprudence and tradition.
2. *ibid.*, 358.
3. EI, iv. 982; Browne, *Lit. His.*, iv. 405.
4. See Sprenger's Preface and Browne's valuable discussion of biographical authorities, *Lit. His.*, iv. 355–358.
5. Browne, *loc. cit.*
6. Preface to Tusi's List, pp. 1 and 2.
7. Of modern accounts of his life, the two following may be consulted with advantage, by Hidayat Husain in EI, ii. 265, and by D.M. Donaldson, *The Shi'ite Religion*, London, 1933, pp.285–286. See also *Bihar Catalogue*, ii. 51, and R. Strothmann in EI, iv. 354.
8. The Shaykh is known generally by the title of Shaykh Saduq or by his name, Ibn Babawayhi. This is an interesting compound, made up of the word *baab* and the termination *-awayhi*, which originally was *-uya* and earlier *-oe*. Wright, *Arab. Gram.*, i. 244d, gives several examples of names such as: *نَفْطَوِيَه, عَمْرَوِيَه, بُوَيَه, سَيَّبَوِيَه* the last of which is dealt with as *Seboe* by Justi *Iranisches Namenbuch*, 293, the newer form being *Sibuyeh*. *Baboee*, *Babuya*, and thence the current arabicized *Babawayhi* is discussed by Justi, *ibid.*, 55, as being both Iranian and Semitic. The termination *-oe*, *-uya*, arabicized into *-a-way-hi* the last (*وَيْهٌ وَوَيْهٌ*) is probably a double diminutive, as my friend Mr. W. Ivanow explains. According to him *-uya* = *u + a (k)*; and such cases are to be found in Persian: *mardakak*, *marddkd*, *zanakak*, etc., also *kuchuluk*, *kuchulu*. Further philological discussion will be found in P. Horn, *Neupersische Schriftsprache in Grund*. *Iran. Phil.*, vol. i, Pt. 2, pp. 184 – 186 and No 1deke, *Persische Studien*, i. 4 sqq. The word *bab* is apparently of Semitic origin and may mean "gate". The compound "a small gate" is however not intelligible. It may be suggested that it has reference to the well-known hadith: *أنا مدينة العلم و علي بابها* so that *Saduq* is the "small", while his father 'Ali is the "great" gate. This however does not accord with the fact that 'Ali, his father, also bore the name of Ibn Babawayhi. The real reason of the appellation, as is so often the case, is lost in obscurity and no useful purpose would be served in making ingenious guesses. Similar compounds are *Hamduya*, *Sadruya*, *Hasanuya*, *Dhikruya*, etc. Also *خالويه* (RJ, 236), *قولويه* (*Kashfu 'l-Hujub*, no. 2312) and *ماجيلويه* (*Kashf*, p.33; *Najashi*, 184).
9. *The Shi'ite Religion*, 286. Date of birth not mentioned, *Bankipore Cat.*, v. Pt. I, p. 183.
10. *Tusi*, *Fihrist*, 304; *Najashi*, *Rijal*, 276, 279. For mistakes regarding date of death, see *Bankipore Catalogue*, v. Pt. I, p. 183.
11. *Ahlwardt*, nos. 1269, 2721, etc.
12. *Tusi*, 218; *Najishi*, 184–185.
13. *Donaldson*, 285.
14. According to *Rawdatu 'l-Jannat*, the correct name is *Abu Ja'far Md. b. 'Ali al-Aswad*, 378, 379.
15. *RJ*, 37222.
16. *RJ*, 55910–11 – *مشتغل بالعبادة و الزهد و لا يختلط بالناس*
17. *RJ*, 557 sqq. According to *Tusi* (304):  
كان جليلاً حافظاً للأحاديث بصيراً بالرجال ناقداً للأخبار  
لم يُر في القميين مثله في حفظه و كثرة علمه، له نحو ثلثمائة مصنف  
This tradition is repeated by all later authorities like *RJ*, *Lu'lu'atu 'l-Bahrayn*, etc.
18. *RJ*, 55824–25.