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A Glimpse at the Major Shi'a Seminaries, Part 3

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Abstract

The previous articles in this series delved into the historical origins of some of the most important religious seminaries in the Shi'a world. Islamic seminaries are the most valuable institutions in promoting the instructions of the Qur'an and the Ahlul Bayt, and have generated a unique culture in the scientific, social, and political spheres. The seminaries allowed for pious Shi'a scholars who pursued *ijtihad* with the use of the Qur'an, Sunnah, and reason to respond to legislative needs and guide the Muslim community with their contemporary issues.

This part largely focuses on the Islamic Seminaries of Jabal Aamel, Isfahan, and Mashhad. Jabal Aamel saw hundreds of Shi'a scholars in the fields of hadith, jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, Qur'anic exegesis, theology, and ethics; Isfahan was the center of Shi'ism, and with their invitation of Shi 'a scholars and jurists from Jabal Aamel established great academic schools beginning an academic and cultural movement by translating Shi'a texts to Farsi and writing books on Shi'a theology; and Mashhad, home to the eighth Shi'a Imam, Imam al-Ridha, was the starting point for the establishment of one of the greatest academic institutions in the Shi'a world.

5. The Islamic Seminary of Jabal Aamel

Jabal Aamel is a mountainous region of southern Lebanon which runs from Sidon to Tyre (Soor). Its historical Shi'a community is a result of the influence and expatriation of Abu Dharr al-Ghaffari – a companion of the Prophet Muhammad – during the caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan[1] to this city. When after being exiled from Medina, Abu Dharr reached Damascus. Muawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan, governor of Damascus, who would exile his oppositions to the coastal regions of Damascus, present-day Jabal Aamel, sent him to this area as he did with the others. While living in Damascus, Abu Dharr introduced

his viewpoints regarding the caliphate and the status of Imam Ali, and this led Muawiyah to send him back to Medina.[2]

Thus, Shi'ism lasted in Jabal Aamel from the first century Hijri until the present day,[3] and from amongst its Shi'as, great scholars have arisen and brightened the Shi'a world. Sheikh Hurr Aamili, in his *Amal al-Amil fi Ulama' Jabal Aamel*, mentions the name of hundreds of Shi'a scholars of Jabal Aamel and others have added more names.[4]'

Among the great scholars of the fifth century Hijri in the Islamic seminary of Jabal Aamel are Sheikh Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Hibatullah Tarablusi, of Sheikh Tusi's students;[5] Sheikh Abu al-Qassem Sa'd al-Din,[6] known as ibn Buraj, was the chief of justice of Tripoli (Tarablus) and issued fatwas; Sheikh Abu al-Fadhl As'ad,[7] Ahmad ibn abi Ruh Tarablusi; and Sheikh Najm al-Din Taman or Tuman,[8] Ahmad Aamuli's son.

Throughout the historical course of the Jabal Aamel Seminary, the golden age of this school began during the eighth century and ended during the eleventh century Hijri. In the seventh century, a seminary was founded by the Shahid Awwal family in a village called Jizzin in Jabal Aamel. In the later centuries it became one of the important Shi'a academic and cultural centers that trained outstanding Shi'a scholars. Shahid Awwal's ancestor, Sheikh Muhammad ibn Fakhr al-Din, along with his father, Sheikh Jamal al-Din Makki, and himself are amongst the greatest scholars of the Jizzin seminary.

Shams al-Din Muhammad Makki Jabal Aamel,[9] or Shahid Awwal, is a well-known Shi'a scholar.[10] During his youth, he participated in the Islamic seminary of Hillah and Najaf, educating himself under great Shi'a jurists such as Fakhr al-Muhaqqiqin[11] and Sayyid Fakhr Musawi. In 755 AH, when he returned to his homeland – Jizzin – and founded a school in which he began instructing and mentoring seminarians and writing books.

The Islamic seminary of Jizzin flourished and rose to such a point during the time of Shahid Awwal that Sheikh Hurr Aamuli – a renowned figure of Jabal Aamel – writes in his honour:

I have heard from some of the great teachers that in one of the villages of Jabal Aamel during the time of Shahid Awwal seventy *mujtahids* were in attendance at his funeral. The number of scholars and writers in this region is almost one-fifth of the scholars and writers of other regions, though the geographical expanse of this region is one-hundredth of other countries.[12]

After returning to his country from Iraq, Shahid Awwal continued to travel to other Shi'a academic centers in Damascus, Egypt, Palestine, Mecca, Medina, and other cities. In addition to having complete mastery over Shi'a jurisprudence, he was proficient in Sunni jurisprudence and hadith, and by participating in their Islamic studies courses and holding academic debates with them, he became an assured *marja'* according to Sunni scholars. His expertise in their detailed rituals and religious issues was to such a point that he himself proclaimed, "I have permission to narrate works and hadith collections of almost forty scholars from Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, Damascus, Jerusalem (*Bayt al-Muqaddas*), and Maqam

Khalil (in Palestine)."[13]

The longest amount of time the Martyr (*Shahid*) resided outside of Jizzin is during his stay in Damascus, and his longest period of education, teaching, and publishing was during that time. He was also a prolific author; one of his major works is his *al-Lum'ah al-Dimashqiyyah*, a work on jurisprudence written in a span of seven days after a request made by Sultan Ali ibn Mu'ayyad, the last Sarbadars leader in Khorasan in 766 AH.[14] Along with its most important commentary by Shahid Thani,[15] this book has been taught in the seminaries as a coursebook.

The social and political transformation in Damascus and the change of its ruler in 784 AH gave Shahid Awwal's enemies the opportunity to prepare false evidence against him.[16] They eventually managed to imprison him and after receiving the verdict for his death sentence by the city judge, he was executed.

Another Islamic seminary of Jabal Aamel is the school of Jub' and Juba', the name of a region in southern Lebanon that has been the hub of many *mujtahids'* education throughout Shi'a history. Sayyid Muhsin Amin has mentioned 31 students, scholars, and clerics from Juba'.[17] This seminary was founded by Sheikh Salih ibn Mushrif Aamili Juba'i of Shahid Thani's ancestors. We owe the emersion, expansion, and prosperity of Juba' school to Shahid Thani's ancestors.

Sheikh Zayn al-Din ibn Nur al-Din, known as Shahid Thani,[18] is one of the most outstanding jurists and scholars of the tenth century Hijri. He was born in the village of Juba' and after his father's death, he migrated to neighboring cities to study at the age of fourteen. That which stands out in Shahid Thani's life is his travels to various parts of Muslim world and his conversations and companionship with Muslim scholars from other sects of Islam. Egypt, Damascus, Hijaz, Jerusalem, Iraq, and Istanbul are the areas Shahid Thani shortly resided in, and with teaching comparative jurisprudence, he drew the attention and found the respect of scholars from other sects.[19]

His most important works are the commentary of *al-Lum'ah al-Dimishqiyyah* of Shahid Awwal, called *al-Rawdha al-Bahiyah*; the commentary of *Sharh al-Islam* of Muhaqqiq Hilli, called *Masalik al-Ifham*; And *Muniyah al-Murid fi Adab al-Mufid wa al-Mustafid*, taught in the Islamic seminaries from long ago as a distinguished book in field of ethics (*akhlaq*).

This exceptional scholar was martyred in Constantinople by a scheming and revengeful group on one of his trips to the Kaaba in Mecca. After Shahid Thani's martyrdom, his children, grandchildren, and students continued leading the Islamic seminary of Juba'.[20]

Other clerics of the school in Juba' are Sheikh Nur al-Din Ali,[21] father and first teacher of Shahid Thani; Sheikh Jamal al-Din Abu Mansur Hasan,[22] Shahid Thani's son, a learned scholar; Sayyid Muhammad ibn Ali Musa Juba'i, Shahid Thani's grandchild, the author of *Madarik al-Ahkam*; Sheikh Fakhr al-Din Muhammad, Shahid Thani's grandchild, author of *Rawdha al-Khawatir*; Sheikh Husayn, Abd al-Samad Juba'i's son and Sheikh Baha'i's father; Sheikh Ali, son of Zuhrah; Sheikh Muhyi al-Din Ahmad ibn Taj al-Din Maybusi Aamili; Sheikh Ibrahim Kaf'ami, of the notable Shi'a scholars[23] and son of Ali Juba'i,

author of *al-Misbah* and *al-Balad al-Amin*.

Among the regions in Jabal Aamel, the village of Karak Nuh in Biqa'[24] of Lebanon, located near Baalbek, was an academic center. This seminary was renowned in the ninth and tenth century and experienced a period of great expansion in which many scholars arose from it and scores of them who migrated to Iran during the Safavid Dynasty.

This migration was an important event in the history of Jabal Aamel's seminary. During the tenth and eleventh century, due to the pressures imposed by the Uthmani government and several Sunnis, the Shi'as were forced to live in small cities and villages and established their Islamic seminaries in faraway areas.[25] In such a situation, with the establishment of the Shi'a Safavid Dynasty, a large group of scholars from Jabal Aamel[26] saw Iran as an appropriate location for publishing Shi'a ideology. Through traveling to its cities and undertaking chief positions in the Safavid Empire, they played a critical role in institutionalizing the Shi'a faith in Iran.

The most prominent scholars of this period who migrated to Iran are Sheikh Nur al-Din Ali Abd al-Ali Karaki, known as Muhaqqiq Thani;[27] Sheikh Husayn ibn Abd al-Samad Juba'i,[28] father of Sheikh Bahai; and Sheikh Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Ali ibn Husayn Aamili, known as Sheikh Hurr Aamili.[29]

The migration of Jabal Aamel scholars to Qum, Isfahan, and Najaf caused the Jabal Aamel seminary to lose its momentum, but the revival of the Islamic seminary of Lebanon is due to Sayyid Abd al-Husayn Sharaf al-Din,[30] a great jurist, experienced theologian, exceptional speaker, and a determined fighter who throughout his life worked hard to defend the Shi'a faith and debate and discuss with Muslim scholars.

Sharaf al-Din was born in Kadimiyya, Iraq and after studying in their seminaries, in particular the Islamic seminary of Najaf, where he studied jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, and exegesis and traditions from the most prominent scholars and *mujtahids*, he received certification for *ijtihad*. In 1321 AH, he returned to Jabal Aamel and was responsible for the leadership of Shi'as in that region for over fifty years during critical events such as Lebanon's movement for independence from Uthmani rule before the First World War as well as their struggle against the French occupation.

Firmly believing in the possibility of achieving unity amongst various Islamic sects, he believed that a careful study of the historical events after the Prophet Muhammad was needed to achieve this unity and that discovering the truth was not simply a matter of writing books, but also in need of discussion, dialogue, and debate.

Thus, he traveled to Egypt in 1329 AH to meet with Sheikh Salim al-Bishri Maliki at the Al-Azhar University. During this time, which lasted for six months, 112 letters regarding the topic of *khilafah* (caliphate) and *wilayah* (governate) were exchanged. All of the correspondence, which led to the acceptance of Shi'a claims in regards to the immediate caliphate of Amir al-Mu'minin by Sheikh Salim, have been gathered into a collection called *al-Muraja'at*, and according to some scholars is "an exquisite

example of Shi'a Alawi logic in present day."[31] He owns many books, many of which were burned by the French through the resistance and migration.

Indeed, the most influential religious personality in the current century which was the source of cultural and societal change in Lebanon and the revival of Shi'ism in the Lebanese social and political sphere was the great leader Imam Musa al-Sadr.[32] After completing the beginner and higher level courses in the seminary in Qum, he moved to Najaf and attended the Najaf seminary, benefitting from renowned scholars, one of whom was the grand Ayatullah Sayyid Abu al-Qasim Khui. In 1958, with the advice of individuals such as Ayatollah Burujerdi, he moved to Lebanon, and while residing there and based on Sayyid Sharaf al-Din's will, he led the Shi'a society.

While implementing cultural and developmental programmes, communicating with people of other faiths and sects in Lebanon with respect, and interacting with and consulting heads of neighboring states, Imam Musa al-Sadr took the Shi'a society out of its chaotic economical and societal situation, and with to the establishment of a Shi'a Supreme Council, he transformed the Shi'a from a forgotten group to one of the most active people in Lebanon.

Another factor that played an important role in the revival of the seminary of Lebanon was the migration of specific scholarly personalities from Najaf to Lebanon, such as Sheikh Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din[33] and Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadhlullah.[34] After completing their studies in Najaf, the two scholars made important scientific contributions in Lebanon after migrating there.

Although Imam Musa al-Sadr's abduction in Libya in 1979 put a halt to his local and international long-term programmes, his great impact on the religious and cultural landscape of Lebanon are evidently seen in the works of his prominent students and trainees.

6. The Islamic Seminary of Isfahan

In 23 AH, Isfahan was conquered by 'Umar ibn Khattab, the second Muslim caliph. It held a unique political and commercial opportunity compared to other Iranian cities, such that it was the capital during the Buyid, Sajuqi, and Safavid era;[35] in the second half of the fourth century, Isfahan was the largest commercial city from Iraq to Khorasan.[36]

In terms of academia, Isfahan was the center of establishing great academic schools and was the cradle of knowledge throughout various historical time periods. During Ale Kakuyeh's rule, when Abu Ja'far Ala' al-Dawla Kakuyeh (died 422 AH) was the commander of Isfahan, Ibn Sina went to Isfahan and spent the rest of his life teaching in a school credited to him, called Ala'i School. He managed doing so while taking part in other professions.

During the time of the Seljuq Empire and simultaneous with Khwaja Nizam al-Mulk's movement in founding schools, six schools have been reported in this city;[37] however, the construction of an Islamic

Shi'a seminary in Isfahan relating to the uprising of the Safavid Dynasty followed the development of Shi'ism in this region.

It was during the Safavid era that the Islamic seminary of Isfahan reached its peak. With the beginning of Shah Isamail Safavi's reign in 880 Hijri, the necessity of the presence of Shi'a scholars and jurists in a government where Shi'ism was its official religion prompted them to invite Shi'a scholars and jurists from Jabal Aamel. They were invited to migrate to Iran, and with taking on the title of Sheikh al-Islam as a deputy of the Imam of Time, they were responsible for issuing fatwas and managing the peoples' religious affairs. The acceptance of these scholars to move to Iran led to the expansion of the Islamic seminary of Isfahan and formation of one of the main seminaries amongst the Shi'as of this region in the ninth and tenth century Hijri.

Some of the scholars who traveled from the seminary in Jabal Aamel to Iran are Ali ibn Abd al-Aali Karki (870-940 AH), Kamal al-Din Darwish Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Aamili, Ali ibn Hilal al-Karki (died 993 AH), Husayn ibn Abd al-Samad al-Juba'i (918-948 AH), and Baha' al-Din Aamili (953-1030 AH).

The presence of outstanding Shi'a scholars in Iran, and more specifically in the Islamic seminary of Isfahan, was the start of an academic and cultural movement in terms of translating Shi'a texts to Farsi[38] and writing books on introducing and identifying Shi'a theological principles and the branches of Islamic commandments (*ahkam*). During this period, numerous publications were introduced. Today, they are of the most important text in Shi'a seminaries. Some include: *Wasa'il al-Shia ila Tahsil Masa'il al-Shari'ah*, written by Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Aamili (1033-1104 AH); *al-Wafi*, written by Faydh Kashani (1010-1090 AH); *Bihar al-Anwar*, written by Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (1037 AH); and the Farsi exegesis, *Minhaj al-Sadiqin*, by Fathullah ibn Shukrullah Kashani.

Along with the expansion of jurisprudence and hadith in the Islamic seminary of Isfahan during the Safavid era, we also see the rise of well-known Shi'a figures in philosophy and other intellectual sciences. As mentioned, the history of philosophy and wisdom in Isfahan date back to the fourth century during the many years Ibn Sina taught in Ala' al-Dawla school and to his determined student, Abu Abdullah Ma'sumi.[39]

Nonetheless, the expansion of philosophy in the Isfahan seminary dates back to the tenth and eleventh century, during the time of Mirdamad,[40] Sheikh Bahai,[41] and Mulla Sadra Shirazi[42] who managed the seminary of Isfahan during the Safavid dynasty. Moreover, the status of Sheikh al-Islam in the Safavid government was occupied mostly by scholars who had tendencies towards Akhbarism, and it created dispute amongst them. The usuli and philosophical scholars could be looked at as one of the greatest challenges of the Islamic seminary of Isfahan in that period.[43] Some of the outcomes of this dispute include the migration of great scholars of philosophy, such as Mulla Sadra, to other cities which also led to a decline in the field of philosophy.

The Afghan attack on Isfahan ended the Safavid Dynasty 1135 AH and the reign of Zill al-Sultan,

Arshad Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar's son, was followed by the destruction of a large number of Isfahan's historical monuments.[44] Moreover, the attack harmed the Islamic seminaries.

The Qajar Dynasty and its kings, who were known for disinterest in science and culture and were renowned for granting concessionary rights to foreigners in Iranian history, saw the presence of insightful and anti-colonialist scholars in the Shi'a seminaries as a barrier to their anti-religious and nationalistic motives. Throughout the Qajar dynasty, the Isfahan seminary saw many great minds who, while completely aware of colonialists and the Qajar kings' support for them, rose up to make known their destructive plans. During this time the name of the Najafi Isfahani family was most seen.

Hajj Sheikh Muhammad Baqir Najafi (died 1301 AH) is the son of the author of *Hidayah al-Mustarshidin* and grandson of Sheikh Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita'. After benefiting from scholars in Najaf such as Sheikh Muhammad Hasan Najafi, Sheikh Murtadha Ansari, and Sheikh Hasan Kashif al-Ghita', he reached higher academic levels, and in the year 1260 AH, he returned to Isfahan and became a religious leader who taught and published books in the seminary. His most celebrated book is *Sharh Hidayah al-Mustarshidin,* where he has compared his father's opinions to that of Sheikh Ansari's on the topic of suspicion (*dhan*).[45] From amongst his children are Hajj Najafi and Hajj Agha Nurullah Najafi whom were some of the top scholars of Isfahan and heroic fighters during the Qajar period.

Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Isfahani, known as Agha Najafi (1262-1332 AH), was among the well-known scholars who returned to Isfahan and was situated at the head of the seminary after studying under instructors such as Mirza Shirazi and Allamah Kashif al-Ghita' in Iraq. Agha Najafi, along with being academically active while teaching, writing, and mentoring students, made great initiatives in the significant events which include participating in Mirza Shirazi' tobacco boycott, fighting tyrannical policies of Zill al-Sultan - the governor of Isfahan - and opposing the Babiyyay group in Isfahan.[46]

Ayatullah Hajj Sheikh Lutfullah Safi Golpaygani states that the Grand Ayatullah Burujerdi used to frequently praise the deceased Agha Najafi and his brother Agha Sheikh Muhammad Ali Thiqat al-Islam. Ayatollah Burujerdi said that during the time of his study in Isfahan, there were ten thousand students in the seminary, and twice a month or sometimes once a month these two brothers used to distribute salaries to the students. When Thaqat al-Islam passed away, Agha Najafi himself would manage this large seminary and distribute salaries.[47]

Another son of Muhammad Baqir Najafi is Ayatullah Mahdi Najafi Isfahani (1278-1346 AH), known as Hajj Agha Nurullah Najafi, who was a scholar in the constitutional revolution in Isfahan. After reaching the level of ijtihad, he moved from Iraq to his hometown, Isfahan, and started teaching and mentoring.

In 1326 AH, when Muhammad Ali Shah Qajar bombed the national council killing a group of freedom fighters in the Shah's garden, Hajj Agha Nurullah gathered an army of constitutionalists in Isfahan and mobilized them to conquer Tehran with the help of the Bakhtiyari tribe. He then issued a fatwa declaring the support of the constitutional government as mandatory and opposition to it as forbidden. Even after

seeing deviations from this movement as a sign of protest against several extremist leaders, he returned to Iraq until 1333 AH. With the coming of Reza Khan, Hajj Agha Nurullah began to protest against the dictatorial rule and in the end mysteriously died there. Currently, his home in Isfahan has been made into a museum called "Khaneyeh Mashruteyeh Isfahan" and contains important documents about this scholar's life as well as the role the scholars of Isfahan in the constitutional revolution in Iran.

After the reestablishment of the Islamic seminary of Qum and its emergence as a central seminary along with the Najaf seminary, the expansion of the Isfahan seminary diminished. However, with the victory of the Islamic republic, this seminary, along with seminaries of other cities and regions, once again became the center of attention. Moreover, with the presence of personalities like Ayatullah Khadimi, Sadiqi, and Safi, the number of practicing seminarians rose to thousands of people. In 1375, Ayatullah Madhahiri moved from Qum to Isfahan to organize and manage the Isfahan seminary, and his presence gave a special vigor and joy to the seminary and the schools under its management, which were over thirty in number.

Among the scholars who excelled at the head of the Isfahan seminary are Mulla Muhammad Taqi Majlisi (1003–1070 AH), father of Allamah Majlisi; Allamah Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (1037–1111 AH); Sayyid Ni'matullah Jaza'iri; Ayatullah Mirza Muhammad Ali Shah Abadi (1292–1369 AH); Ayatullah Mirza Ahmad Bayd Abadi (1279–1357 AH); Ayatullah Mujahid Sayyid Hasan Mudarris (1287–1357 AH); and Banu Mujtahideh Nusrat Amin (1308–1265 AH).[48]

7. The Islamic Seminary of Mashhad

The arrival of the eighth Shi'i Imam, Imam al-Ridha, to the city of Merv and the Khorasan region was the starting point for the establishment of one of the greatest academic institutions in the Shi'a world. The arrangement of various debate and discussion sessions by the Imam with scholars from various denominations, though held with the intention of exploitation by the Abbasid caliphate, actually portrayed the Imam's God-given superiority and depth in knowledge. Like a valuable investment, the necessary motivation for Shi'a scholars to participate in theological and ideological discussions led to the most thorough analysis in theology and the doctrine of Oneness [of God].

After Imam al-Ridha's martyrdom and his burial in the village of the villages of Tus, called "Sanabad," the Imam's resting place turned into the site of great scholars, and with creating study circles beside the holy land (*turbah*) around which the Imam was buried, they expanded the area and constructed an academic center and educational institution that promotes the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt.

From the time study circles were created in the shrine until today, the Islamic seminary of Mashhad has experienced both expansion and decline depending on societal conditions. The attack by Sabuktigin, the Ghanznavid king, on Mashhad and on the Shrine of Imam Rida (a); the attack by the Oghuz Turks in the year 548 AH on Tus; the killing of people and great scholars; the Mongol attacks on Tus in the year 618 AH; and the mass killing on the people of Mashhad[49] were all unfortunate events throughout a couple

centuries, and undoubtedly affected the Islamic seminary of that city. However, during these rough times, we witness great efforts made by scholars of this city and the production of valuable works in the Mashhad seminary such as Tabarsi's efforts made in Qur'anic exegesis and academia.

Abu Ali Fadhl ibn Hasan ibn Fadhl Tabarsi, known as Amin al-Islam Tabarsi, was born in Mashhad around 460 to 470 AH. He resided in Mashhad for over fifty years, and in 523 AH he moved to Sabzawar and spent twenty-five years in this city teaching and writing. Although Tabarsi was familiar with various sciences such as jurisprudence, hadith, biographical evaluation, literature, and modern Arabic, he often studied Qur'anic exegesis. His most important work in exegesis is *Majma' al-Bayan*, completed in 536 AH, where amongst the Shi'a exegeses holds great value because of its integration of exegesis sciences and it style of writing. After ninety years of living a productive life, Tabarsi passed away in 548. His body was sent to Mashhad where he was buried.

In the history of Mashhad seminaries, the eleventh century was the inception of its revival, the period of academic re-growth, and the restart of courses held by prominent instructors. In the second half of this century, in terms of the number of scholars and instructors, the Mashhad seminary became one of the leading Shi'a seminaries, attracting not only its residents, but international students as well. The renowned teacher, Mowlana Muhammad Baqir, known as Muhaqqiq Sabzawari (1017-1090 AH), author of two books in jurisprudence, *Dhakhirah* and *Kifayah*, who held a management position and was called Sheikh al-Islam, moved to Mashhad towards the end of his life. He reconstructed and taught in the old school called "Sami'iyyah," which was from then on called "Baqiriyyah," named after him.[50]

Another great figure from the seminary of Mashhad is Muhammad Hasan, known as Sheikh Hurr Aamili. He is of the descendants of the "free man of Karbala", Hurr ibn Yazid Riyahi, who was born in 1033 AH in a region of Jabal Aamel and died in 1104 AH in Mashhad, buried beside Imam Ridha's shrine.

Sheikh Hurr Aamili is known by one of his famous works, *Wasa'il al-Shia*, which comprises traditions from the infallibles in various jurisprudential topics, a book in which a *mujtahid* does not need in making decisions in Islamic law (*ijtihad*). At the age of forty, Sheikh Hurr Aamili went to Mashhad to visit the Imam Ridha's grave. After witnessing the condition of Mashhad, he felt the need to reside to defend Shi'ism. During his stay, the Sheikh spent his time teaching and writing; his books amount to over forty-four. When Sheikh Hurr was in Mashhad, his classes and discussions were held in the courtyard of Imam Ridha where his sessions were known as the most interesting during that time.[51]

In the first few decades of the fourteenth century, with the expansion of the Islamic seminaries of Najaf and Karbala, the migration of scholars, and the formation of the Islamic seminary of Qum, the expansion of the Mashhad seminary declined and advanced jurisprudence and principles of jurisprudence were rarely formed in it.[52] However, even during this period, the seminary of Mashhad played a leading role in intellectual sciences and Arabic literature and where outstanding scholars were trained, such as Sheikh Abd al-Jawad Adib Nishaburi (died 1344 AH), instructor in literature; Mulla Muhammad Ali, known as "Hajji Fadhil" (died 1342 AH), instructor in jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, and philosophy;

Mirza Askari Shahidi, known as "Agha Bozorg" (died 1355 AH), instructor in philosophy; and Sheikh Asadullah Yazdi (died 1342 AH), instructor in philosophy.

With the passing of this period, in the second half of the fourteenth century and in recent decades, the Islamic seminary of Mashhad began a new era of academic achievements and has had an influential presence in creating societal changes. The migration of well-known scholarly figures from Najaf, the formation of higher level jurisprudential and theological classes, and the struggle against the wave of the Islamophobia that arose with the coming to power of the Pahlavi regime in an Islamic society were some affairs that once again brought the seminary's name to the forefront of active Shi'a seminaries in recent decades.

In 1331 AH, Hajj Agha Husayn Qummi moved from Najaf to Khorasan and taught higher level jurisprudence and principles of jurisprudence. He completed the higher level qualifications in Iraq and received permission for *ijtihad* from all his teachers in Najaf. He also obtained permission from the deceased Sayyid Murtadha Kashmiri to narrate hadiths. Because of the Mashhadi people's request to Ayatullah Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi (Mirza Dovvom) to send a God-conscious (taqwa) scholar and a learned and capable mujtahid for them, he put a stop to his forty years of education and moved to Mashhad to take on their leadership role.[53]

Along with teaching and mentoring seminarians, this great scholar was not indifferent to the societal changes and the anti-religious initiatives made by the government as he readily stood up against Reza Khan's western mentality.[54] This event led to his deportation from Iran to Iraq in 1354-1314 AH. Additional scholars in the Islamic seminary of Mashhad, also a part of his anti-government oppositions included Hajj Mirza Muhammad Kafaee Khorasani, who was exiled to Yazd and Ayatullah Sayyid Yunus Ardebili, who was imprisoned for some time and then exiled to Ardebil.[55]

The deportation of jurists such as Hajj Husayn Qummi and Hajj Mirza Muhammad Kafaee Khorasani left the Islamic seminary of Mashhad empty of first-rate scholars, and this led to a period of academic decline and recession once again. Although in 1373 AH with the arrival of Ayatullah al-Udhma Sayyid Muhammad Hadi Milani, a student of Mirza Na'ini, Hajj Agha Husayn Qummi, and Sheikh Muhammad Husayn Isfahani (Kumpani), once again the formation of study sessions and intellectual and philosophical discussions revived its academic vigor and enthusiasm.

The Islamic seminary of Mashhad played a crucial role in the national revolution against the imperial state of the Pahlavis and became a center of resistance against the idolatrous regime. Well-accomplished students, fighters, and speakers, like Shahid Sayyid Abd al-Karim Hasheminejad (1311-1360 Shamsi) and Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei, were trained, and they forced the tyrannical imperialist regime who suppressed, exiled, and tortured seminarian students and demolished the schools with the intention of controlling this seminary and its activities. As a result, the opposition was unsuccessful in reaching their goals, and this ended with the victory of the Islamic republic in 1357 Shamsi.

1. 23–35 AH
2. Hurr Aamili, Muhammad ibn Hasan, Amal al–Aamil, researcher Sayyid Ahmad Husayni, Qum Dar al–Kutub al–Islami, vol. 2, 1362, p. 13.
3. Travel writers like Nasir Khusraw, in the fourth century Hijri, and others after him have reported the presence of Shi'as in that land. R.K. Naisr Khusraw's Book of Travels, effort of Muhammad Dabir Siyaqi, p. 24.
4. Shi'a Seminaries across the World, p. 335.
5. Author of books like al–Zuhra fi Ahkam al–Hajjj wa al–Umarah was al–Wsatah Bayn al–Nafy wa al–Ithbat.
6. Died 481 AH
7. Before 520 AH
8. Approximately 728 AH
9. 734–786 AH
10. His academic genius and motivation in studying was to such a point that one time in the year 751 AH at the age of seventeen and another time in the year 756 AH he got certification of ijtihad and narrating traditions from Fakhr al–Muhaqqiqin. Shams al–Din, Muhammad Righa, Hayat al–Imam al–Shahid al–Awwal, p. 41.
11. Muhammad ibn Hasa ibn Yusuf (682–771 AH), known as Fakhr al–Muhaqqiqin was a great jurist from Hillah and Allamah Hilli's son. Most of his published works are commentaries on his father's books, which include Idhah al–Fawa'id commentary of Allamah Hilli's Qawa'id, and Tahsil al–Nijah commentary of the book Nahj al–Mustarshidin.
12. Amal al–Amil, Sheikh Hurr Aamili, vol. 1, p. 15.
13. Mirza Nuri, Mustadrik al–Wasa'il, vol. 3, p. 437.
14. Aamili, Shams al–Din Muhammad ibn Makki, al–Lum'ah al–Dimishqiyyah, p. 24.
15. al–Rawdha al–Bahiyah fi Sharh al–Lum'ah al–Dimishqiyyah, author Sheikh Zayn al–Din Ali ibn Ahmad Aamili, known as Shahid Thani (911–966 AH).
16. During Shahid's time, an individual named Muhammad Yalushi Aamili, through use of magic, claimed prophethood and invited people to a new religion. Shahid Awwal dismissed his magic and issued the fatwa for his death and convinced the Damascus government to raid his headquarters. Muhammad Yalushi was killed as result of the attack and many of his followers were killed.
17. Amin, Sayyid Muhsin, Khitat Jabal Aamel, p. 255.
18. 911–966 AH
19. As an example, Shahid Thani made a trip to Baalbek in the year 953 AH and with taking responsibility of the Islamic seminary of that area, he started to teach jurisprudence according to the four Islamic schools of thought and became a Shia and Sunni jurist (marja'). Shi'a Seminaries across the World, p. 338.
20. Encyclopedia of Shi'a, vol. 1, p. 186.
21. Died 925 AH
22. 1011 AH
23. 905 AH
24. Al–Biqa', also spelled Bekaa, or Beqaa, classical Coele Syria, broad valley of central Lebanon, extending in a northeast–southwest direction for 75 miles (120 km) along the Litani and Orontes rivers, between the Lebanon Mountains to the west and Anti–Lebanon Mountains to the east. (Britannica)
25. Shi'a Seminaries across the World, p. 341.
26. According to a research done by Ja'far al–Muhajir in his book al–Hijra al–Alimiyah ila Iran fi al–'Asr al–Safawi, from the 143 scholars who lived in Jabal Amel in the tenth and eleventh century, 45 only remained and didn't migrate. Seven migrated and returned to Jabal Aamel; thirty–one traveled to various areas like Hejaz, Yemen, Iraq, and Iran, but didn't remain in those regions; and sixty people moved to Iran and stayed in Iran. Salihi, Abbas, "An Analysis of the Migration of Jabal Aamel Scholars to Iran during the Safavid Dynasty" in the Hawza Journal, Farvardin and Ordibehesht 1374, number 67.
27. 870–940 AH
28. 918–984 AH
29. Born 1033 AH

30. 1290–1377 AH
31. Shariati, Ali, Tashayyu'–e Alavi va Tashayyu'–e Safavi (Alawite Shi'ism and Safavid Shi'ism), Entesharat Husayniyyah Irshad, 1350, p. 73.
32. Born in Qum in 1307 Shamsi
33. 1312–1379 Shamsi
34. 1354 AH –2010
35. Iran's Full Geography, vol. 1, p. 308.
36. Sultanzadeh, Husayn, An Introduction to the History of Urbanization in Iran, p. 94.
37. Islamic Seminaries in History, pg. 455.
38. Of the scholars of this period, who translated numerous works from great Shi'a scholars, was Mawla Ali ibn Hasan Zawarahi. He is of the well–known figures in the tenth century Hijri who owns many books and translation including the exegesis Tarjumah al–Khawas; the translation and commentary of the Nahj al–Balaghah called Rawdhah al–Asrar; the translation of Kashf al–Ghuma fi Marifa al–A'imah called Tarjumah al–Manaqib; the translation of Sheikh Saduq's Wasilah al–Nijah; the translation of Sayyid ibn Tawus' book, al–Tara'if fi Ma'rifa Madhahib al–Tawa'if; the translation of Fahad Hilli's book, Udah al–Da'i wa Nijah al–Sa'ee; the translation of Sheikh Tabarsi's book al–Ihtijaj, called Kashf al–Ihtijaj. Golizawarahi Qumshaee, Ghulam Ridha, "Tafsir Tarjumah al– Khawas" in the journal, "Aeeneyeh Pajuhesh," number 9, p. 39–47.
39. Muhammad ibn Abdullah Ahmad (died 450 AH) was one of Ibn Sina's outstanding students of Isafahan's jurists and philosophers. Ibn Sina preferred him to the rest of his students and would say the following about him: "Abu Abdullah has the same status in my eyes that Plato has in the eyes of Aristotle." Also, Ibn Sina named the book "al–Ishq" after Ma'sumi and wrote it because of his suggestion and in the introduction of his book he called him by Abu Abdullah al–Faqih Ma'sumi. Honarfar, Lutfullah, Isfahan, p. 210 and 211.
40. Muhammad Baqir Damad (961–1041 AH) son of Mir Muhammad Husayn Astarabadi and grandson of Abd al–Aali Karaki (Muhaqqiq Thani) and Ustad Mulla Sadra Shirazi.
41. Muhammad ibn Husayn, known as Sheikh Baha'i (935–1030 AH), famous Shia jurist, philosopher, astronomer, and mathematician. Born in Baalbek, Lebanon. At the age of 13 he moved to Iran with his father and after learning intellectual and transmitted sciences from scholars of Isfahan, he started writing and teaching students of that seminary.
42. Muhammad Sadr al–Din Shirazi (980–1050 AH), known as "Mulla Sadra" or "Sadr al–Mutalihin." A great Islamic scholar and philosopher and Sheikh Baha'i and Mirdamad's student. Author of the valuable book, Asfar Arba'ah. With bring philosophy and Islamic gnosis closer together he instituted a school of thought that with the wisdom of God is prominent even till today.
43. Ja'farian, Rasul, Religion and Politics during the Safavid Era, p. 260.
44. During the Safavid Era, 137 palaces, 162 mosques, 273 public baths, and 12 graveyards existed, where a large number of them were destroyed by Zill al–Sultan, Jazini Mahsa. "The Era of Destruction in Isfahan," in the Iran newspaper, number 3781, dated 86/8/17, p. 11.
45. Baqiri Siyani, Mahdi, "Sharh al–Hidayah al–Mustarshidin," in the journal, Aeeneyeh Pajuhesh, number 115, p. 68–70.
46. Sufi Niaraki, Taqi, in Harim wa Wisal.
47. Taken from Ayatullah Burujerdi's site: http://broujerdi.org/content/view/433/68 [1], on 90/1/5.
48. Shi'a Seminaries across the World, p.263–269.
49. Encyclopedia of Shi'a, vol. 1, pp. 56–57.
50. Shi'a Seminaries across the World, p. 357.
51. The deceased Sayyid Muhsin Amin narrates from Sheikh Muhammad Jazayiri: "Sheikh Muhammad Jazayiri writes in the explanation of the book, Ruh al–Jinan, I saw Sheikh Hurr in the year one–thousand some ninety and he says after that, he moved to Mashhad and in the year 1099 AH, I saw him there and I saw he has a big seminary and he teaches Wasa'il al–Shi'a. I would participate in his classes for the duration of the time I was in Mashhad." Amin, Sayyid Muhsin, 'Ayan al–Shi'a, p. 44–64.
52. The scholars who taught higher level (dars kharij) jurisprudence and principles of jurisprudence classes during this period are, Ayatullah Hajj Husayn Qummi (died 1366 AH) and Hajj Mirza Muhammad Kafaee Khorasani, known as "Aghazadeh" (son of Akhund Mulla Muhammad Kadhim Khorasani).

53. Sharif Razi, Muhammad, Ganjineyeh Daneshmandan, p. 152.

54. Of his initiatives was fighting the Reza Khan's law banning hijab. As a sign of protest, he went to Tehran in the year 1353 and in the garden of Siraj al-Mulk in Shar-e Rey he invited people to rise against this law. In Mashhad a large group of people sought refuge in Goharshad Mosque beside the shrine of the holy Imam. After these sit-ins the security forces of Reza Khan's regime entered the masjid after direct orders from him, and after some clashes, they open fired on them and killed a large number of people.

55. Andeesheh, the Islamic Seminary of Mashhad Journal, first year, number 2, 1370, p. 79.

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[1] http://broujerdi.org/content/view/433/68