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Intellectual Status

Intellectually, Shi'ites had a privileged status in that period. Moreover, their doctrines of religion were established by Imam Sadiq (A.S) and Imam Baqir (A.S) and also Hadiths were saved in forms of *Usul* and *Jawami'*¹ while validation criteria of Hadiths and their refinement were gained from Imams (A.S). Sheikhs, pupils and companions² were trained to resolve crises and also support Shi'ite's reputation in beliefs and jurisprudence against different groups and sects, especially those who had Caliphs' support.

Guarding Islam and the concept of revelation and protecting it from misleaders and crises are among the duties of Imams (A.S). Some significant features of this period were 'Askariyain's (A.S) illuminations and true policy-makings against society's intellectual deviances such as the Waqifites, the Mufawwidah, dualists (*thanawiyah*) and zealots (*ghulāt*).³

Answering to jurisprudential questions and thought problems as well as keeping Shi'ites away from engaging in useless debates and unnecessary conflicts were among remarkable characteristics of that period.

Once, in answering one of the Shi'ites' question about whether the Qur'an is created [by God], Imam Haddad (A.S) wrote: "In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful; May God keeps us from being affected by this tribulation for then He has bestowed us the greatest bounty and the rest is all distractions ahead of us. In our opinion, arguing about the Qur'an (that if it has been created or it has been eternal) is a (reprehensible) innovation whose questioner and questioned are involved; because the questioner is looking for what he does not deserve it and the one who is questioned runs himself into trouble for an unimportant matter which is out of his competence.

The creator is no one but Allah and all others are creatures except Him, so the Qur'an is His words. Then, do not name it otherwise, for then you will be among the those who go astray. May Allah hold you and us up as exemplars of His word that states:

'The pious who fear their Lord in secret, and who are apprehensive of the Hour. (21:49).'⁴

Of the other key measures 'Askar^{عليه السلام} (A.S) took in that period was to provide intellectual preparation for Shi'ites for entering "the age of occultation"; among whose procedures were their hadiths about approaching occultation and their good news about the birth of Allah's authority (the promised Mahdi).⁵

Other activities consisted of referring the Shi'ites to Imam's deputies⁶ and validating some of jurisprudential books and hadith references⁷ and finally reducing their direct contacts with Shi'ites, until even in Samarra, they would answer Shi'ites' problems and issues by letter or their deputies and doing so, they prepared the Shi'ites to adapt themselves to conditions of the age of occultation and also indirect contact with Imam (A.S).⁸

As we will see later, this was the policy that the Twelfth Imam (A.S) himself later on adopted during the age of "minor occultation" and gradually prepared Shi'ites for the "greater occultation".

1. Muhammad b. Ma'ruf Hilal^{عليه السلام} said: "I went Hirah to Ja'far b. Sadiq [Imam Sadiq] (A.S.). I could not reach him because of the many people around him, until the fourth day he saw me and took me beside himself. He went on pilgrimage to Imam Ali's shrine after people went away, while I was his companion and heard what he stated. (Dr. Gorji, *Tarikh Fiqh wa Fuqah*, p. 115, quoted from Rijal Najashi). Hasan b. 'Ali b. Ziyad and Sha' told Ibn 'Usha: "I saw 900 Sheikhs in this mosque (Kufah Mosque), all of whom would say: 'Haddathani Ja'far b. Muhammad [Imam Ja'far Sadiq]'".

Hafiz Abu al-'Abb^{عليه السلام} b. Uqdah Hamid^{عليه السلام} K^{عليه السلام} (died 333 A.H) has written a book about the names of whom had quoted from Imam S^{عليه السلام} (A.S) and has introduced 4000 persons.

During the time of Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq, (A.S), hadithes spread so much among Shi'ites that had never spread before in any period or religion. (ref. Fadli, 'Abdul H^{عليه السلام}, pp. 203 & 204) This period is called the period of spreading knowledge of 'Aal-e Muhammad (A.S). (Ibid., p. 95

2. To know the number and the names of 'Askar^{عليه السلام}'s (A.S) pupils and companions ref. *Tarikh al-Tashree' al-Islami*. Sheikh T^{عليه السلام} counts the number of Imam H^{عليه السلام}'s (A.S) pupils in different fields as 185; among whom are distinguished people such as: Fadl b. Sh^{عليه السلام}dh^{عليه السلام}, Husayn b. Sa'id Ahwazi, Ayub b. Nuh, Abu 'Ali Hasan b. R^{عليه السلام}shid, Hasan b. 'Ali N^{عليه السلام} sir Kab^{عليه السلام}er, 'Abdul 'Az^{عليه السلام}m Hasani, 'Utm^{عليه السلام}n b. Sa'id Ahwazi, some of whom have definitive works and publications in different fields of Islamic sciences. (Al-Rijal, Sheikh T^{عليه السلام}s^{عليه السلام}, pp. 409 – 429) and also ref. Hay^{عليه السلام}at al-Im^{عليه السلام}m al-H^{عليه السلام}dd^{عليه السلام}, pp. 170 – 230. Some researchers have counted the number of Imam 'Askar^{عليه السلام}'s (A.S) pupils and transmitters of his Hadiths up to 213; ref. Hay^{عليه السلام}at al-Im^{عليه السلام}m al-'Askar^{عليه السلام}, pp. 345 – 413.

The author of A'y^{عليه السلام}n al-Sh^{عليه السلام}'ah also says: "Different sciences and knowledge acquired from Imam 'Askar^{عليه السلام} (A.S) have filled papers of books." A'y^{عليه السلام}n al-Sh^{عليه السلام}'ah, Vol. 1, p. 40.

3. Hay^{عليه السلام}at al-Im^{عليه السلام}m al-'Askar^{عليه السلام}, pp. 287–295.

4. Tawh^{عليه السلام}d, p. 224.

5. Hay^{عليه السلام}at al-Im^{عليه السلام}m al-'Askar^{عليه السلام}, p.316.

6. Ibid. p.324.

7. Ibid. p.325.

8. Ibid. p.324.

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