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Part 1: A Cursory Glance at the References

Lesson 1: Historical References

In this writing, I do not claim to be able to comprehensively study and analyze everything that is relevant to the history of Shi'ism. Instead, I shall try to cite the most important references and citations, and to present and analyze them concisely.

Since there have been many books on history and books about the life account of the Infallibles {*ma'sumin*}1 (*'a*) as well as books on *hadith*s and *rijal*,2 which are related to the history of Shi'ism, I have divided the references dealing with the history of Shi'ism into two: (1) special references and (2) general references, which we shall deal with in two lessons.

Special References

In this lessons, some of the references on the history of Shi'ism have been cited. These references which have been introduced in brief are the following:

1. *Maqatil at-Talibiyyin*;

2. *Ad-Darajat ar-Rafi'ah fi Tabaqat ash-Shi'ah*;

3. *A'yan ash-Shi'ah*;

4. *Tarikh ash-Shi'ah*;

5. *Shi'eh dar Tarikh*;

6. *Jihad ash-Shi'ah*; and

7. *Tarikh-e Tashayyu' dar Iran az Aghaz ta Qarn-e Haftum-e Hijri*.

1. Maqatil at-Talibiyyin

One of the most significant references dealing with the history of Shi'ism is the book *Maqatil at-Talibiyyin*. Its author, Abu'l-Faraj 'Ali ibn al-Husayn al-Isfahani, was born in 284 AH in the city of Isfahan. He grew up in Baghdad and was educated under the guidance of scholars and learned men there. His genealogy can be traced back to the Umayyads but he is a Shi'ah {*'alawi madhhab*}.3

As indicated in its title, the book deals with the descendants of Abu Talib {*talibiyyun*} who were killed at the hands of the oppressors and tyrants of the time, as the author thus writes:

In this book of mine, by the help and will of Allah, I shall give a summary of the reports on the murdered ones among the descendants of Abu Talib from the time of the Messenger of Allah (S) up to the moment when I started writing this book in Jumadi al-Awwal 313 AH (circa July-August 925 CE). It includes those who were killed by means of eating or drinking poison; those who escaped from the ruler of the time, hid somewhere else and died there; and those who died while languishing in prison. And in mentioning them, I observed the chronological order of their deaths and not their merits...4

This book is generally divided into two parts. The first part covers the period from the time of the Prophet (S) up to the establishment of the 'Abbasid caliphate while the other part covers the 'Abbasid period.

Although this book deals only with the life account and martyrdom of the martyrs among the descendants of Abu Talib {*al abi talib*}, including life account of the Imams (*'a*), martyred leaders and leading figures among the 'Alawis (descendants of 'Ali (*'a*)) and their own followers, a part of the history of Shi'ism can be extracted from every part of it. Of course, since this book is more relevant to Shi'ism's political history, it is less beneficial with respect to other aspects of the history of Shi'ism.

2. Ad-Darajat ar-Rafi'ah fi Tabaqat ash-Shi'ah

The author of this book is Sayyid 'Ali Khan Shirazi who was born on Jumadi al-Awwal 5, 1052 AH (August 2, 1642) in the holy city of Medina where he was educated. In 1068 AH (circa 1657-8) he migrated to Hyderabad, India where he lived for 48 years. He then went to Mashhad, Iran for the *ziyarah* {visitation} of Imam ar-Rida (*'a*). During the reign of Shah Sultan Husayn Safawi, he went to Isfahan in 1117 AH (circa 1705-6) where he stayed for two years. Thereafter, he proceeded to Shiraz where he shouldered the religious and educational management of the city.5

The book, *Ad-Darajat ar-Rafi'ah fi Tabaqat ash-Shi'ah*, is one of the works of this high-ranking Shi'ah scholar. Although the subject of this book is a description of the condition of the Shi'ah and their history, general history of Shi'ism can also be deduced from it for two reasons. One reason is that it is a study of the conditions of the Shi'ah in the different periods and places, while the other reason is that the author

himself has dealt briefly with the history of Shi'ism especially during the Umayyad period of strangulation. He thus says in the introduction:

Be aware that—may God be merciful to you— in every epoch and period the Shi'ah of the Commander of the Faithful {*Amir al-Mu'minin*} ('Ali) (*'a*) and other Imams (*'a*) from among his descendants were hiding in the nook and corner, keeping away from the attention of the rulers...6

Then, he described the beginning of repression from the time of the Umayyads up to the period of the 'Abbasids.

This book, as it is noted by the author in the introduction, has been arranged in 12 classes. That is, he has classified and then examined the Shi'ah into the following 12 classes:

(1) *As-Sahabah* {Companions of the Prophet (S)};

(2) *At-Tabi'un* {Followers};7

(3) *Al-Muhaddithun alladhi rawu 'an al-A'immah at-Tahirin* {Scholars of *Hadith* who Narrated Traditions from the Pure Imams (*'a*)};

(4) *'Ulama' ad-Din* {Religious Scholars};

(5) *Al-Hukama' wa'l-Mutakallimin* {Philosophers and Scholastic Theologians};

(6) *'Ulama' al-'Arabiyyah* {Scholars of Arabic Language};

(7) *As-Sadah as-Sawfiyyah* {Commoners};

(8) *Al-Muluk wa's-Salatin* {Kings and Sultans};

(9) *Al-Umara'* {Rulers};

(10) *Al-Wuzara'* {Viziers and Ministers};

(11) *Ash-Shu'ara'* {Poets}; and

(12) *An-Nisa'* {Women}.

What is available so far from this valuable reference is the first class, i.e. the Class of the Companions in complete form, part of the fourth class, and a small portion of the 11th class.

This book is considered the most significant reference on the subject of Shi'ism among the Companions and in this respect, it has also a good sense of comprehensiveness. The writer of this book was able to compile the views and opinions of the Shi'ah scholars and biographers {*rijaliyyun*} regarding the Shi'ah among the Companions, and as such, he has not much engaged in expressing his own views, opinions,

analyses, and investigations.

3. A'yan ash-Shi'ah

The writer of this unique book is the great Shi'ah researcher and scholar, the late Sayyid Muhsin Amin. The book, *A'yan ash-Shi'ah*, as its title indicates, is a book concerning the life account and description of the leading Shi'ah figures. This book has three introductions. The first introduction explains the author's method of writing. The introduction begins thus: "In stating our method in this book which is as follows..." and then he explains in detail in 14 parts the method of his writing.

The second introduction, meanwhile, is about the general history of Shi'ism, which is consisted of 12 discussions. The third introduction deals with the references and authorities used in the book:

Discussion 1: The meaning and connotation of the word *Shi'ah*; other Shi'ah terminologies; criticizing the view of the Ahl as-Sunnah writers regarding the Shi'ah sects.

Discussion 2: The emergence of the Shi'ah and their expansion; the Shi'ah among the Companions; Shi'ah Companions; growth of the Shi'ah.

Discussion 3: Points to the some of the oppressions perpetrated against the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) and their Shi'ah.

Discussion 4: Unjust treatment of the Shi'ah of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*).

Discussion 5: Incessant attacks against the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*).

Discussion 6: The existence of many calumnies against the Shi'ah and a summary of the Ja'fari Shi'ah Ithna 'Ashari beliefs.

Discussion 7: Factors behind the spread of Shi'ism in the Muslim lands.

Discussion 8: The virtues of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) and their services to Islam.

Discussion 9: On the beliefs of the Shi'ah Imamiyyah.

Discussion 10: Concerning the Shi'ah *'ulama'*, poets, men of letters, and writers, and their works.

Discussion 11: Viziers and ministers, rulers, judges, and chiefs among the Shi'ah.

Discussion 12: Enumeration of the Shi'ah-populated cities.[8]

It must be beyond our responsibility to talk about the importance, reputation and value of the book, *A'yan ash-Shi'ah*, as it is an ocean of historical knowledge and information which we cannot fathom, overcome, or measure. Rather, we can benefit from it in proportion to our capability. The articulacy of

writing, depth of the subjects, approach to the subjects, arrangement of the topics, logical order, and the like are among its merits.

With regard to the points of criticism that can be made against it, secondary cases may be indicated such as the following:

On the discussion of the other terms for the Shi'ah, they are mentioned very briefly and only the names such as Imamiyyah, Muta'awwalah, Qizilbash, Rafidhiyyah, Ja'fariyyah, and Khassah have been enumerated,9 whereas the names applied to the Shi'ah are more than these. Only in the first century *hijri*, the labels such as 'Alawi, Turabi, Husayni, etc. have been applied to the Shi'ah.

The other criticism that can be made with respect to this book is related to the meaning of *Shi'ah*. The Shi'ah writers of *rijal* do not regard as Shi'ah some of the people whom he counted as Shi'ah because although these people were Shi'ah in the political sense, they cannot be considered as such in the ideological sense.

That is to say that in the political disputes they took the side of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*), but in terms of belief, they did not benefit from that fountainhead {of knowledge} (*Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*)). A separate section is supposed to be allotted to this discussion, and the beginning should have stated to whom the label *Shi'ah* refers.

4. Tarikh ash-Shi'ah

The book, *Tarikh ash-Shi'ah*, written by the late great 'Allamah Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Muzaffar, is one of the important references and authorities on the history of Shi'ism. This book, reprinted many times, has been translated into Persian by Prof. Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Hujjati.

The late Muzaffar has surveyed and discussed in 82 headings the history of Shi'ism from the time of the Prophet (S) up to his own time. In general, the topics of this book can be summed up in three parts:

(1) periods of the spread of Shi'ism,

(2) Shi'ah-populated places, and

(3) Shi'ah governments.

The late Muzaffar has been an able writer and erudite scholar whose pen, apart from being versatile and fluent, has the necessary power and firmness.

One of the most important merits of the book, *Tarikh ash-Shi'ah*, is its comprehensiveness as it has examined the presence of the Shi'ah in all parts of the world. This book can be one of the most important references and authorities for the researchers dealing with the history of Shi'ism in every period and epoch.

In spite of all these merits that *Tarikh ash-Shi'ah* does possess in comparison with other books, on account of its brevity, it fails to present the absolute truth except in topics such as the meaning of Shi'ah, the specific time when the label *Shi'ah* was applied to the sympathizers of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*), the beginning of Shi'ism, and the spread of Shi'ism, which are related to the main discussions about Shi'ah. In these cases, he has engaged in giving a detailed account, which is appropriate to the subjects. The late Muzaffar thus says in the introduction of this book:

"I have no other aim but to let the people know that Shi'ism commenced at the time of the Receiver of Message (Muhammad al-Mustafa (S)), and the Iranians and Ibn Saba' had no hand in founding it."

The other defect of this book that can be cited is its lack of scholarly character. Due to the observance of brevity, the honorable writer has failed to quote and analyze the views of others.

Parts of this book dealing with the formation of Muslim states are supposed to be completed. For, with the passage of time, main changes and developments in the Shi'ah states under discussion have occurred and some of them have even ceased to exist, but the honorable translator of the book has not discussed some of the new states and not conducted up-to-date research. As a result, it has been translated in such a form that the sections dealing with the Shi'ah states gives an impression of antiquity.

5. Shi'eh dar Tarikh

The book, *Ash-Shi'ah fi't-Tarikh* {*Shi'eh dar Tarikh*}, written by Muhammad Husayn Zayn 'Amili, has been translated into Persian by Muhammad Rida 'Ata'i and published by Astan-e Quds-e Radhawi (Custodianship of Imam ar-Rida's Holy Shrine). As one of the authorities on the history of the Shi'ah, this book consists of five chapters and the concluding part:

● The first chapter is about the meaning, concept, background, and a summary of the Shi'ah beliefs.

● The second chapter deals with the sects and groups that have separated from the Shi'ah.

● The third chapter covers the history after the Prophet (S) up to the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (*'a*) and an analysis of the events and occurrences during that period.

● The fourth chapter is about the position of the Shi'ah during the Umayyad and 'Abbasid caliphates.

● The fifth chapter deals with the Shi'ah disavowal {*bara'ah*} of *ghulu* {extremism} and *ghulat* {extremists}.

The book, *Shi'eh dar Tarikh*, is a good authority on the discussion of the splits within the Shi'ah, it has especially analyzed various factors behind the separation of groups and sects from the Shi'ah.

As a book on the history of Shi'ism, it does not cover all the topics and subjects dealing with the Shi'ah. This is because at times the discussion drifts away from the subject of Shi'ism, embarking on such

subjects as the Khawarij (Kharijites)[10] and the history of caliphate, which are not so relevant to the history of Shi'ism.

6. Jihad ash-Shi'ah

Another reference for the history of the Shi'ah is the book *Jihad ash-Shi'ah* (even though its main focus is the armed struggles and movements of the Shi'ah). This book is written by Dr. Samirah Mukhtar al-Laythi, university professor at the 'Ayn Shams University, Egypt. The Beirut-based Dar al-Jayl publisher has published *Jihad ash-Shi'ah* in 1396 AH (1976) with 424 pages, 16.2x22.9 cm size, and hard-bound cover.

After the introduction, this book has been arranged into 5 parts and a conclusion, and its subject is the *jihad* of the Shi'ah. It has examined and discussed the subject approximately up to the end of the 2nd century *hijri*. In other words, the author of the book, on one hand, talks about the armed struggles and movements of the Shi'ah against the 'Abbasids, states the 'Alawi uprisings and factors for their defeat, and discusses the role of the Shi'ah movements and sects in the socio-political currents and conditions of that period.

On the other hand, she has also analyzed the policy of the caliphs toward the Holy Imams (*'a*) and the Shi'ah. Topics on the general history of the Shi'ah have been discussed in a certain section of the first part which covers such topics as: Shi'ah in the lexicon; the concept of Shi'ah; history of the emergence of the Shi'ah; the impact of the *jihad* of Imam al-Husayn (*'a*) in the emergence of the Shi'ah; the Shi'ah *jihad* in Iraq; the emergence of the Kaysaniyyah sect; and the Shi'ah Imamiyyah. In discussing the emergence of the Shi'ah, she has advanced various views and opinion regarding the history of the Shi'ah.

One problem that can be cited with respect to the book is in elucidating the "political theory" of the Holy Imams (*'a*) whom the author has described as "the Imams of the Imamiyyah sect". As the author is not a Shi'ah, she has failed to discern and explain the foundation of the political thought of the Imams (*'a*). As such, she describes the basis of Imamate after Imam al-Husayn (*'a*) as spiritual and intellectual Imamate, regarding their method as different from that of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (*'a*).[11]

7. Tarikh-e Tashayyu' dar Iran az Aghaz ta Qarn-e Haftum-e Hijri

The writer of this book, Mr. Rasul Ja'fariyan, is among the valuable researchers of the Islamic Theological Center in Qum. This book is a well-researched and distinctive one in its own right, and it is one of the best writings and literary works of this author. It is also one of the most important research references on the history of Shi'ism.

This book has valuable historical information and data, which no researcher on the history of Shi'ism will

be needless of. Among the merits of this book is its rich content. If it has any defect, it (only) pertains to the form and appearance. For example, its footnotes have not been printed in a standard and technical manner.

The other one is that some subjects such as critique of the references used in the book are inserted in the (main) subjects, which gives confusion to the readers. Of course, it would have been better to discuss them in a separate chapter with the same heading, or at least, they must have been mentioned in the footnotes so as to cause no disruption to the main subjects.

Lesson 1: Summary

All history books can be good references for the research on the history of Shi'ism. Among the special references on the history of Shi'ism, however, are the following:

● *Maqatil at-Talibiyyin* – the life account of the descendants of Abu Talib {*talibiyyin*} who were murdered at the hand of the tyrants of their respective times.

● *Ad-Darajat ar-Rafi'ah fi Tabaqat ash-Shi'ah* – the history of the Shi'ah and not history of Shi'ism, but a part of the history of Shi'ism can be learned from its survey of the conditions of the Shi'ah as well as from its introduction.

● *A'yan ash-Shi'ah* – Although it is about the conditions of the Shi'ah, its second introduction is about the general history of Shi'ism.

● *Tarikh ash-Shi'ah* –"This book has surveyed the periods of the spread of Shi'ism, the Shi'ah-populated places, and Shi'ah states." {The late Muzaffar}

● *Shi'eh dar Tarikh* – "It has explained the meaning and concept of Shi'ah, the Shi'ah beliefs and its sects." {Muhammad Husayn Zayn al-'Amili}

● *Jihad ash-Shi'ah* – Examines Shi'ah uprisings till the end of the 2nd century *hijri*.

● *Tarikh-e Tashayyu' dar Iran az Aghaz ta Qarn-e Haftum-e Hijri* – This book contains precious information regarding the history of Shi'ism in Iran, which no researcher can be needless of in his research.

Lesson 1: Questions

1. How many types do references on the history of Shi'ism have?

2. What is the subject of the book *Maqatil at-Talibiyyin*?

3. Give a brief description of the book, *Ad-Darajat ar-Rafi'ah fi Tabaqat ash-Shi'ah*.

4. What is the relationship between the book *A'yan ash-Shi'ah*, and the history of Shi'ism?

1. Ma'sumin: those possessing the quality of 'ismat (see n. 67 above); i.e., the Prophet, Fatimah, and the Twelve Imams. See A Brief History of the Fourteen Infallibles (Tehran: WOFIS), http://www.al-islam.org/brief-history-of-fourteen-infallibles [1] ; Sayyid Murtada al-'Askari, The Twelve Successors of the Holy Prophet (S), http://www.al-islam.org/twelve [2]. {Trans.}
2. Rijal or 'Ilm ar-Rijal: a branch of the science of hadith dealing with the biography of the hadith transmitters or reporters. {Trans.}
3. Sayyid Ahmad Saqar, "Introduction to Maqatil at-Talibiyyin", 2nd edition (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radi, 1416 AH, p. 5.
4. Abu'l-Faraj 'Ali ibn al-Husayn al-Isfahani, Maqatil at-Talibiyyin, 2nd edition (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radi, 1416 AH, p. 24.
5. Sayyid 'Ali Jan ash-Shirazi, Ad-Darajat ar-Rafi'ah fi Tabaqat ash-Shi'ah (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Wafa', n.d.), pp. 3-5.
6. Ibid., p. 5.
7. Tabi'un {'Followers' or 'Successors'} refers to the second generation of Muslims who came after the Companions, who did not know the Prophet (S) but who knew his Companions. {Trans.}
8. Sayyid Muhsin Amin, A'yan ash-Shi'ah (Beirut: Dar at-Ta'aruf Li'l-Matbu'at, n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 18-209.
9. Ibid., pp. 20-21.
10. Khawarij (Kharijites or dissenters) were a group of quasi-holy, narrow-minded Muslims who were originally followers of Imam 'Ali ('a) and fought with him at the Battle of Siffin. Initially they supported arbitration, pushing Imam 'Ali to accept it; however, later they revolted against it arguing that because God was the only true arbitrator, Imam 'Ali and those who agreed with him in the arbitration were not just wrong they were unbelievers, hence they could have no dealings with them. On Imam 'Ali's return to Iraq from Siffin, this group split off from his army and set up camp on the banks of the Nahrawan canal where they began terrorizing the people whom they regarded as unbelievers. Imam 'Ali was at first able to talk to them and persuade some of them to cease in their hostilities, but eventually he was forced to take up arms against them. In 659 CE he attacked their army under the leadership of 'Abdullah ibn Wahhab al-Rasibi at Nahrawan almost annihilating them. Nahrawan was the third and last battle Imam 'Ali had to wage with his enemies. {Trans.}
11. Samirah Mukhtar al-Laythi, Jihad ash-Shi'ah (Beirut: Dar al-Jayl, 1396 AH), p. 36.

Lesson 2: General References

After having a general survey of some of the special references on the history of Shi'ism, we shall examine the general references for this history. The general references with respect to their subjects are as follows:

1. *Tarikh-e 'Umumi* {General History};

2. *Zendeginameh-ye Imaman* ('a) {Biography of the Imams ('a)};

3. *Kitab-ha-ye Fitan va Hurub* {Books on Revolts and Wars};

4. *Kitab-ha-ye Rijal va Tabaqat* {Books on *Rijal* and Classes};

5. *Kitab-ha-ye Jughrafiya* {Books on Geography};

6. *Kitab-ha-ye Akhbar* {Books on Narrations};

7. *Kitab-ha-ye Nasab* {Books on Genealogy};

8. *Kitab-ha-ye Hadith* {Books on *Hadith*s};

9. *Kitab-ha-ye Milal va Nihal* {Books on Nations and Religions}.

1. General History

In this book's survey of the history of Shi'ism, the most widely used books are those relating to the general history of the first centuries *hijri* and the history of the caliphate, such as *Tarikh al-Ya'qubi*, *Murawwij adh-Dhahab*, *Tarikh at-Tabari*, *Al-Kamil fi't-Tarikh*, *Al-'Abr*, *Al-Imammah wa's-Siyasah*, *Tarikh al-Khulafa'*, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, including even the analytical history research and books written by contemporary writers. Among the general history books, I have used *Tarikh al-Ya'qubi* and *Murawwij adh-Dhahab* extensively.

In these two books, historical events and occurrences have been recorded fairly impartially and without any attempt at concealing the truth. Ya'qubi has expressed in detail the oppositions of Companions of the Prophet (S) with the caliphate of Abubakr, criticizing the groupings after the demise of the Prophet (S).[1]

He has embarked, as far as he could, on mentioning the events relevant to the history of the Shi'ah such as the government of the Commander of the Faithful (*'a*),[2] the peace treaty of Imam al-Hasan (*'a*),[3] the martyrdom of Hujr ibn al-'Addi,[4] 'Amru ibn Hamq[5] and that of Imam al-Husayn (*'a*),[6] more or less presenteing the truth of the matter.

Mas'udi is also among the historians who had no intention of concealing the truth. Although he has only dealt in passing with the event of Saqifah in the books *Murawwij adh-Dhahab* and *At-Tanbiyyah wa'l-Ashraf*, he nevertheless has mentioned the differences of the Companions and the Banu Hashim's refusal to pay allegiance to Abubakr.[7]

In another part of the first book, Mas'udi wrote the issue of Fadak[8] and discussed in detail the events that took place during the caliphate of the Commander of the Faithful (*'a*) and the martyrdom of Imam al-Hasan (*'a*).[9]

He has mentioned the names of the Shi'ah and their tribes as well as the enemies of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) in various parts of *Murawwij adh-Dhahab*.[10] Also, in the years of the Holy Imams' (*'a*) demise, he has given a short account of their lives.[11] He has, in particular, detailed the uprisings of the 'Alawis during the 2nd century *hijri*.[12]

2. Biography of the Imams (‘a)

Among the books relevant to the life accounts of the Imams (*‘a*), the book, *Al-Irshad*, by Shaykh al-Mufid and *Tadhkirah al-Khawas* by Ibn al-Jawzi occupy (special) importance. *Al-Irshad* is the first and most important available Shi‘ah reference authority on the life account of the twelve Imams (*‘a*).

In view of the fact that part of ‘Ali’s (*‘a*) life overlapped that of the life of the Prophet (S), the life account and conduct {*sirah*} of the Prophet (S) has also been included in this book, especially his battles in all of which ‘Ali (*‘a*) had been present, with the exception of the Tabuk expedition. Concerning the book, it is enough to say that no researcher on the history of Shi‘ism and the biography of the infallible Imams (*‘a*) is needless of it.

The *Tadhrikah al-Khawas* of Ibn al-Jawzi occupies special importance in the sense that the biography of the Shi‘ah Imams (*‘a*) has been expressed through the language of a Hanafi and non-Shi‘ah person, but no sort of negligence of the truth and concealment of the reality has taken place.

3. Books on Revolts and Wars

These references deal particularly with the wars that have great importance in the historiography of Muslims. The *Waq‘ah as-Siffin* of Nasr ibn Mazahim al-Munqari (born 212 AH), which deals with the event and confrontation at Siffin, can be regarded as the oldest among them.

This book contains valuable information regarding the correspondence between ‘Ali (*‘a*) and Mu‘awiyah as well as the various sermons and speeches of the former. Valuable information concerning the opinion of the Companions of the Prophet (S) regarding ‘Ali and the influence of Shi‘ism among the different tribes can be acquired from the different parts of the book.

The book, *Al-Gharat*, written by Ibrahim Thaqafi al-Kufi (283 AH), is one of the other references written about this subject. This book is related to the events that occurred during the caliphate of the Commander of the Faithful (*‘a*), and examines the plunders and pillages committed by Mu‘awiyah’s agents in the realm of ‘Ali’s (*‘a*) government. The conditions and situations of the Commander of the Faithful’s (*‘a*) Shi‘ah can be extracted from various sections of the book.

Al-Jamal or *Nusrah al-Jamal* of Shaykh al-Mufid, which examines the event of the Battle of Jamal (Camel) is yet another valuable references in this regard. As it is about the Commander of the Faithful’s (*‘a*) first battle during his caliphate, this book illustrates ‘Ali’s (*‘a*) station among the people of Iraq prior to his arrival there.

4. Books on Rijal and Classes

‘Ilm ar-Rijal is one of the sciences mentioned in relation to the science of *hadith*. Its utility is in the study

of the chain of transmission of *hadith* through which it deals with the life account and background of the *hadith* narrators and on the rectification of the Companions of the Prophet (S).

In the Shi'ah *rijal*, apart from the Companions of the Prophet (S), the companions of the infallible Imams (*'a*) have also been discussed. The science of *rijal* started in the 2nd century *hijri* and continues to exist to the present, having acquired perfection with the passage of time.

Some of the most famous and reputable writings of the Ahl as-Sunnah in this context are *Al-Isti'ab fi Ma'rifah al-Ashab*, written by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr al-Qurtubi (463 AH); *Asad al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifah as-Sahabah*, authored by Ibn Athir al-Juzri (630 AH); *Tarikh Baghdad*, penned by Khatib al-Baghdadi (392-463 AH); and *Al-Isabah fi Ma'rifah as-Sahabah*, written by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani.

Similarly, the most important Shi'ah *rijali* books are *Ikhtibar Ma'rifah ar-Rijal*, written by Shaykh at-Tusi (385-460 AH); *Rijal an-Najasi* (*Fihrist Asma' Musannif ash-Shi'ah*) better known as *Rijal*, *Kitab ar-Rijal*, and *Kitab al-Fihrist* of Shaykh at-Tusi (385-460 AH); *Rijal al-Burqa*, authored by Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Burqa (280 AH); *Al-Mashaykhah* of Shaykh as-Saduq (381 AH).

Ma'alim al-'Ulama' of Ibn Shahr Ashub Mazandarani (488-588 AH); and *Rijal Ibn Dawud* of Taqi ad-Din Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Dawud al-Hilli (647-707 AH). Of course, the science of *rijal* has acquired greater perfection among the Shi'ah and has been divided into various branches.

Some books on *rijal* such as *Asad al-Ghabah*, *Fihrist Shaykh*, *Rijal an-Najashi*, and *Ma'alim al-'Ulama'* have been written in (Arabic) alphabetical order while some others such as *Rijal Shaykh* and *Rijal al-Burqa* have been arranged according to the classes of the Companions of the Prophet (S) and the Imams (*'a*).

There are other types of *rijal* books in which the people are surveyed according to various classifications, and the most important of them is the *Tabaqat* of Ibn Sa'd.

5. Books on Geography

Some of the geography books are travelogues most of which have been written after the third century *hijri*. Since in this book the history of Shi'ism has been examined in the first three centuries *hijri*, a number of them have not been used so much, but other geography books which have presented documents are among the references used in this research.

Among them, *Mu'jam al-Buldan* has been used most on account of its comprehensiveness. The writer of the book, *Yaqut al-Hamawi*, has treated the Shi'ah with bias; mentioning the names of the great families in Kufah, he has failed to mention any of the names of the great Shi'ah scholars and families.

6. Books on Narrations

What is meant by references and books on narrations {*akhbar*} is not the books on *hadith* that dealt on the lawful {*halal*} and the prohibited {*haram*}. They referred instead to history books based on the method of writing history during the period of Islam in which historical events and news have been mentioned in narrative form with the inclusion of the chain of narrators; that is, following the method of the people of *hadith* in recording and narrating historical events.

This kind of history writing has some salient features. Firstly, any set of news regarding isolated event is mentioned distinct from other events, and it is by itself complete without any link with other news and events. Secondly, literary characteristics can also be observed in it; that is, sometimes the writer makes use of poem, story and debate.

In most cases, this feature can be seen particularly in narrative works which were influenced by the form of *Ayyam al-'Arab* narrations. On account of this, some researchers have regarded the historiography of *khabar* {news, report, narration} to have originated from the *khabar* of the stories about the period prior to the advent of Islam.

Thirdly, the chain of narrators is mentioned. In reality, this method of history writing, particularly during the first two centuries *hijri*, was in most cases the way of presenting the primary sources of history. Significant corpus of the written works of the Islamic period is through this method.

Among the books on narrations {*akhbar*}, *Al-Akhbar al-Mu'affaqiyyat* of Zubayr ibn Bakkar occupies special importance. The writer of this book, Zubayr ibn Bakkar, apart from being among the descendants of Zubayr who had ancient hostility to the *Ahl al-Bayt* of the Prophet (S), had good relations with Mutawakkil, the 'Abbasid caliph, who was a staunch enemy of the Commander of the Faithful (*'a*) and his descendants; the teacher of his children[13] and had been appointed as the judge in Mecca.[14] In spite of this, valuable information regarding the Companions of the Prophet's (S) protest against the caliphate of Abubakr has been recorded in this book. The narration of their poems, in particular, which contain their belief on the guardianship {*wasayah*} of 'Ali (*'a*), is an expression of these protests.

7. Books on Genealogy

Among the books on genealogy, *Ansab al-Ashraf* of Baladhuri, which is the best reference in this regard, has been used most. On the other hand, this book can be considered as among the books on (personal) backgrounds {*ahwal*}.

This is in spite of the fact that in terms of genealogical knowledge, the book *Jumharah Ansab al-'Arab* is the most comprehensive book, which has also presented a brief explanation of the description of some individuals.

The book, *Muntaqilah at-Talibiyyin*, has examined the migration of *sadat* (sing. *sayyid*) and descendants of the Prophet (S). By utilizing its subjects, the trend of Shi'ism during the first centuries *hijri* in the Muslim lands can be examined.

8. Books on Hadith

Another set of the references on the history of Shi'ism includes the books on *hadith*. *Hadith* in the Sunni usage refers to the Prophet's (S) sayings, actions and tacit approvals of others' actions, but the Shi'ah regards the infallible Imams (*'a*) as also attached to the Prophet (S), treating their sayings, actions and tacit approvals as proofs {*hujaj*} as well.

The *hadith* books of the Ahl as-Sunnah such as *As-Sahih* of al-Bukhari (194-256 AH), *Al-Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal (164-241 AH), and *Al-Mustadrak 'ala's-Sahihayn* of Hakim an-Nayshaburi (d. 450 AH) are good references for the study of Shi'ism among the Companions and of the rightfulness of the Commander of the Faithful (*'a*) which is the basis of Shi'ism.

The Shi'ah books on *hadith* such as the "four books" {*kutub al-arba'ah*}, viz. *Al-Kafi* of al-Kulayni (d. 329 AH); *Man La Yahdhuruh al-Faqih* of Shaykh as-Saduq (d. 381 AH); and *Tahdhib al-Ahkam* and *Al-Istibsar* of Shaykh at-Tusi (d. 360 AH).

And other books such as *Al-Amali*, *Ghurar al-Fawa'id* and *Durar al-Qala'id* of Sayyid Murtada (355-436 AH); *Al-Ihtijaj* of at-Tabarsi (6th century *hijri*); and the bulky encyclopedia of *hadith*, *Bihar al-Anwar* of 'Allamah Majlisi (d. 1111 AH), apart from having the merit of the books of the Ahl as-Sunnah, can be utilized, by referring to the *hadith*s of the infallible Imams (*'a*), in knowing about the scattering of the Shi'ah, their resident places, their social relations, and their mode of communication with the infallible Imams (*'a*).

9. Books on Nations and Religions

One of the most important references and authorities in this regard is the book, *Al-Milal wa'n-Nihal* of Shahristani (479-548 AH). In terms of comprehensiveness and oldness, this book is considered a good reference and as a reference authority of researchers and scholars.

This is in spite of the fact that the author has approached the subject with bias. In the beginning of the book, he has quoted the *hadith* on "73 sects" and introduced the Ahl as-Sunnah as the "saved sect". As such, he tried his best to highlight the spread of "Shi'ah sects" so as to prove that the plentitude of the "Shi'ah sects" is a proof of the falsehood of this school of thought {*madhhab*}.

He has regarded the sects such as Mukhtariyyah, Baqiriyyah, Ja'fariyyah, Mufdhalah, Nu'maniyyah, Hishamiyyah, and Yunusiyyah as "Shi'ah" although these sects do not exist in reality. Similarly, in the book, *Khutat*, Maqrizi has said that the "Shi'ah sects" are 300 all in all, but at the time of enumerating

them he failed to mention more than 20 sects.

Among the oldest and most important books on nations and religions are *Al-Maqalat wa'l-Firaq* of Ash'ari al-Qummi and *Firaq ash-Shi'ah* of Nawbakhti. Ash'ari al-Qummi and Nawbakhti are among the Shi'ah scholars who lived in the second half of the 3rd century *hijri*. The book, *Al-Maqalat wa'l-Firaq*, in terms of presenting information, is so extensive and has good comprehensiveness, but its subjects are diverse with any proper classification.

According to the views expressed by some researchers, the book, *Firaq ash-Shi'ah* of Nawbakhti is actually the same book as *Al-Maqalat wa'l-Firaq*.

Lesson 2: Summary

General references for the history of Shi'ism are the following:

- Books on general history, which have been written in the first centuries *hijri*, and among them *Murawwij adh-Dhahab* and *Tarikh al-Ya'qubi,* occupy special importance;

- Books on the biography of the Imams (*'a*) such as *Al-Irshad* of Shaykh al-Mufid;

- Books on revolts and wars such as *Waq'ah as-Siffin*;

- Books on *rijal* and classes as well as books written about (personal) backgrounds {*ahwal*};

- Books on geography such as travelogues and history of cities;

- Books on narrations which have been the same in form with the first history writing;

- Books on genealogy such as *Jumharah Ansab al-'Arab*;

- Books on *hadith* as well as books on nations and religions.

Lesson 2: Questions

1. Among the books on general history, which of the earlier books that have dealt more with the history of Shi'ism?

2. Briefly describe the books, *Al-Irshad* and *Tadhkirah al-Khawas*.

3. Which type of books does *Waqi'ah as-Siffin* belong to?

4. Briefly describe the books on *rijal*.

5. How many types do the books on geography have?

6. What are the salient features of the books on narrations {*akhbar*}?

7. Name two books on genealogy.

8. What is the relationship between the books on *hadith* and the history of Shi'ism?

9. What is the title of one of the most important books written on nations and religions?

1. Ahmad ibn Abi Ya'qub ibn Wadhih, Tarikh al-Ya'qubi (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radi, 1414 AH0, vol. 2, p. 123-126.
2. Ibid., pp. 178-179.
3. Ibid., pp. 214-215.
4. Ibid., pp. 230-231.
5. Ibid., pp. 231-232.
6. Ibid., pp. 243-246.
7. 'Ali ibn al-Husayn Mas'udi, Murawwij adh-Dhahab (Beirut: Manshurat Mu'assasah al-A'lami Li'l-Matbu'at, 1411 AH), vol. 2, p. 316; At-Tanbiyyah wa'l-Ashraf (Cairo: Dar as-Sawi Li't-Tab' wa'n-Nashr wa't-Ta'lif, n.d.), p. 427.
8. Murawwij adh-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 262.
9. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 246-266.
10. Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 59, 74.
11. Ibid., pp. 180, 243, 313, 388.
12. Ibid., pp. 324-326, 358.
13. Al-Hafiz Abubakr Ahmad ibn 'Ali Khatib al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad (Egypt: Matba'ah as-Sa'adah, 1349 AH), vol. 8, p. 467.
14. Ibn Nadim, Al-Fihrist (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, n.d.), p. 160.

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