The Ahlul Bayt and Hadith

The Ahl Al - Bayt And The Recordation Of Hadith

It has been uninterruptedly narrated that the Ahl al - Bayt allowed the recordation of the Hadith. Imam `Ali ibn Abi - Talib recorded the seventy - cubit book of al - Jami`ah, which included the dictations of the Holy Prophet and has been reported in the narrations of the Holy Imams. In a book entitled The Book of `Ali ibn Abi - Talib as reported from the Messenger of Allah; A Muslim Jurisprudential Documentative Thesis, Dr. Rif`at Fawziy `Abd al - Muttalib has collected all the narrations of that al - Jami`ah that are dispersed in the jurisprudential reference books.

This Sahifah (i.e. book) was kept by the Imams - the descendants of Imam `Ali. They handed it over in heritage from one to another and preserved it to the greatest extent. In this respect, Imam al - Hasan ibn `Ali is reported to have said,

“Verily, the (true) knowledge is with us, and we are its people. The entire knowledge is elaborately collected with us. Indeed, we have all the things that shall take place up to the Resurrection Day, including matters that are as minute as the retaliation of scratching, collected in a book dictated by the Messenger of Allah with the handwriting of `Ali.”

When he was asked about his father’s opinion about the right of option, Imam al - Hasan ordered a box to be brought to him. He then opened it and took out a yellowish book that comprised the opinions of Imam `Ali about that matter.

This book was kept by Imam al - Husayn, then Imam `Ali ibn al - Husayn, then Imam Muhammad al - Baqir, then Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq... etc.

It is thus obvious that the descendants of Imam `Ali cared about this book so incomparably that in spite of all the horrible circumstances that surrounded him, Imam al - Husayn was not distracted by anything from depositing that book to his elder daughter, Fatimah, and ordering her to give it to his son, Imam `Ali ibn al - Husayn. This is because this book has been one of the treasures of the Holy Prophet’s Household and his deposit with them.

Moreover, this book was so precious in the view of Lady Fatimah al - Zahra', the daughter of the Holy Prophet, that when she once missed it, she said to Fiddah her bondmaid, “Woe to you! Look for that book because it is as precious as al - Hasan and Husayn in my view.”

This great interest in the book was neither aimless nor originated from personal desire. In point of fact, to equalize this Sahifah to al - Hasan and al - Husayn, the one and only delight of the Holy Prophet in this world, is a matter that requires thorough consideration.

On the face of it, the knowledge that is comprised by that Sahifah is equivalent to the knowledge carried by al - Hasan and al - Husayn from the Holy Prophet and, similarly, that Sahifah can supply the Muslims with the same amount of knowledge that can be given to them by Imam al - Hasan and Imam al - Husayn.

On the other side, this ever - increasing attention to the books in general and to the Sahifah of Imam `Ali in particular cannot be found with the adversary school of Ijtihad and Opinionism. Abu - Bakr is reported to have set fire to the books in which he had written down the instructions of the Holy Prophet; and `Umar ibn al - Khattab is reported to have set fire to the books in which the people had recorded the Hadith; and `Uthman ibn `Affan is reported to have set fire to the copies of the Holy Qur'an; and Mu`awiyah is reported to have ordered the publics not to narrate the heritage of the Holy Prophet except the Hadiths that were widespread during the reign of `Umar ibn al - Khattab. The same thing is applicable to the other rulers.

Nevertheless, the Ahl al - Bayt continued recording the heritage of the Holy Prophet and preserved these records since the beginning of the Islamic legislation and the divine revelation up to a recent time.

It has been narrated that the Holy Prophet ordered Imam `Ali to write down, saying, “Write down what I will dictate.”

Imam `Ali asked, “Do you anticipate that I may forget?”

The Holy Prophet answered, “No, I do not. But I want you to write down so that your partners will benefit from it.”

“Who are my partners?” asked Imam `Ali.

The Holy Prophet answered, “They are the Imams who will come after you.”

This narration confirms that the Holy Prophet wanted to preserve, with his Household and others, the divine legislation that he conveyed by means of writing down so that these records would be maintained as scientific heritage from which all the Muslim generations would benefit. Hence, as the Ahl al - Bayt used the Sahifah of Imam `Ali, looked in it, and asked the others to witness its existence, they intended to give proof on the authenticity of their reportings from the Holy Prophet and on the fact that whatever they said had never been personal views or baseless suggestions; rather they had been originated by the Holy Prophet.

It has been narrated on the authority of Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq that whenever Imam `Ali ibn al - Husayn studied the Sahifah of `Ali, he would say, “Who can do all these?”

It has been also narrated on the authority of Imam Muhammad al - Baqir that his father, Imam `Ali ibn al - Husayn, once asked him, “Get me these papers comprising the acts of worship of `Ali ibn Abi - Talib.”

When he did so, his father read a few lines of these papers and then left them with tedium, saying, “Who can stand the worship of `Ali!”

These two narrations make us ask whether the Sahifah of `Ali comprises explications of the religious laws and duties only or includes other fields of knowledge. According to the abovementioned texts, the book of Imam `Ali comprises the major and supererogatory acts of worship as it embraces all the fundaments and principles of Islam as a perfect, cognate unit in addition to all matters required by the Muslims.

As Imam `Ali ibn al - Husayn Zayn al - `Abidin (the best of the worshippers) who is well - known of his unparalleled worship studied the recommended, supererogatory, and preferable acts of worship mentioned in the Sahifah of `Ali, he said, “Who can do all these?”

While the Holy Imams of the Ahl al - Bayt and their adherents continued ceaselessly recording the Holy Prophet’s heritage and worked for preserving these records, the other School of Opinionism and Ijtihad set fire to and erased such records and prohibited the reporting and recordation of the Hadith.

This great incongruity undoubtedly proves the most authenticity and most accuracy of the proofs of the Ahl al - Bayt and the trend of the thorough compliance with the sacred texts, unlike the other trend of Opinionism and Ijtihad, which carries a confused heritage that is influenced by various factors and personal opinions beginning with the enactment of the personal opinions and interpretations disregarding the sacred texts, passing by the ratification of analogy and other innovative and invented principles, and ending up with endless personal opinions and trends.

To have a deeper look at the narrations of the Sahifah (book) that were held by Imam Muhammad ibn `Ali al - Baqir and Imam Ja`far ibn Muhammad al - Sadiq opens our eyes on the fact that these holy Imams had increasingly concentrated on and cared for that Sahifah. It has been narrated that `Adhafir al - Sayrafiy said that he, accompanied by al - Hakam ibn `Utaybah, visited Abu - Ja`far (i.e. Imam Muhammad al - Baqir) and asked him many questions. Although the Imam honored them considerably, they disagreed about a certain question.

Settling the dispute, Abu - Ja`far asked his son to bring him the Book of `Ali. Having been kept in a drawer, it was a handsome book through which Abu - Ja`far began to skim until he reached at the question involved. Referring to the book, Abu - Ja`far said, “This is the handwriting of (Imam) `Ali and the dictation of the Messenger of Allah.”

He then turned his face towards al - Hakam and said,

“Wherever Salamah, Abu’l - Miqdam, and you go, you shall never find any people carrying the

most authentic knowledge other than the people to whom (Archangel) Gabriel used to ascend (from the heavens)."

According to another narration, al - Hakam ibn `Utaybah, once, asked Imam Muhammad al - Baqir about the parts of the blood money for the teeth. Answering him, Imam al - Baqir said, "Thus have we found it (i.e. the question) in the Book of `Ali."

It has been also narrated that Zurarah ibn A`yun once asked Imam Muhammad al - Baqir about the share of grandfathers from inheritances... Zurarah said that Imam al - Baqir then asked his son, Ja`far, to recite the Sahifah of the shares of inheritances before me. He therefore brought out a book that was as huge as a camel's thigh and threw its edge before me.

As Zurarah looked in it, it was obvious that it must have been written in an ancient age. The next morning, Imam al - Baqir asked Zurarah whether he had read the chapter of the shares of inheritances in that book. He then added,

"By Allah I swear, what you have seen is verily the very truth. What you have seen was the dictation of the Messenger of Allah and the handwriting of `Ali. My father told me on the authority of his father that Amir al - Mu'minin told him of such."

It has been also narrated on the authority of Abu - Ayyub al - Khazzaz that Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq said that it has been written down in the Book of `Ali that he who has relatives... etc.

It has been also narrated on the authority of Sulayman ibn Khalid that Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq said that it has been written down in the Book of `Ali that one of the Prophets complained to .Almighty Allah about... etc

The Book Of `Ali Again

As has been previously said, the Book of Imam `Ali was so comprehensive that its contents cannot be dedicated to questions of the religious laws of inheritance and judicature since the Holy Imams have referred to this book during discussing all the life affairs as well as the various fields of the Muslim jurisprudence, such as the following questions:

Cats' leftover; performing the ritual ablution as a part of the bathing of the major ritual impurity; the rulings of the funerals, the best time of offering the Dhuhr and `Asr Prayers, and the Tashahhud in the prayers; the ruling regarding what to do with a dead Muhrim; performing the prayer while putting a garb made of the hair of an animal the meet of which is forbidden to eat; the Tashahhud in the prayers; the fact that Almighty Allah rewards those who very much offer prayers and observe fasting; the decency of the imam of congregational prayers; the etiquettes of supplication (Du`a'); the forbiddance from defraying the Zakat; some questions about

Enjoining the Right (al – Amr bi'l – Ma`ruf), the outbreak of adultery, and rupture of family ties; the observance of fasting when the new moon is, personally, seen; the Muhrim's putting on pallium; the Muhrim's hunting; doubt in the times of the ritual Circumambulation (Tawaff); granting security to those who voluntarily join the Muslim community; the properties of one's son; the meaning of 'thing' in a will; a number of questions appertained to matrimony; the oaths; eating the meat of falcons and hawks; some questions appertained to game and legal slaughtering of animals; the parts to be cut from the fat tails of sheep; the forbiddingness from eating the catfish, the eel, the fish that die inside the water and then float on its surface, the pipefish, the spleen, the wastes of the sea, the hagfish, and the meat of domestic donkeys; rulings appertained to the lands; laws and statutory shares of inheritance; judicature; doctrinal provisions (Hudud); blood money (Diyah); rulings of adultery; the major sins; devouring the wealth of orphans; the punishments for acts of disobedience (to Almighty Allah); painstakingness in acts of worship; divine tests for the faithful believers; the likeness of the worldly life; having a good opinion about Almighty Allah; respect for the neighbor; well – manneredness; the violators of the Sabbath; the encouragement on seeking knowledge; the blood money for the damaged teeth; and many other issues that are derived from the primary religious questions and fields of knowledge.

Although I have not been very accurate in the inventory of the narrations in the Imamiyyah Shi`ite reference books of Hadith, the aforesaid topics have been no more than various examples on the subjects comprised by the Book of `Ali.

My purpose beyond this has been only to demonstrate the difference between the two schools – Sunnite and Shi`ite – in jurisprudence and to prove the fact that the Muslims, after they had disagreed about the political leadership, disagreed about jurisprudence. It is worth mentioning that the School of Thorough Compliance with the Sacred Texts adhered to the Book of `Ali in order to prove its genuineness and derivation from the Holy Prophet and the Divine Revelation. Consequently, those who issued the decision of prohibiting the reporting and recording of the Hadith blacked out this book and, as a result, some people received the rulings mentioned therein very astonishingly because they had never heard of them before.

All these narrations prove that the "Book of `Ali" has been so comprehensive that it comprises all the worldly and religious sciences that the Holy Prophet conveyed from Almighty Allah. One of the abovementioned narrations has confirmed that the "Book of `Ali" comprises the recounting of the previous Prophets and the ancient nations that Imam `Ali took directly from the tongue of the Holy Prophet. Moreover, the narratives of the ancient beliefs and peoples .have reached us from the Book of `Ali... etc

Imam `Ali Ibn Abi - Talib

Besides the writing down of the famous Sahifah from the Holy Prophet, Imam `Ali ibn Abi - Talib, according to reference books of history, recorded other books the materials of which were derived from the knowledge of the Holy Prophet. Sharif al - Murtada (died in AH 436) has ascribed the book of al - Muhkam wa'l - Mutashabah fi'l - Qur'an (The Decisive and Allegorical Verses in the Qur'an) to Imam `Ali. Al - Ash`ariy al - Qummiy (died in AH 301) has ascribed the book of Nasikh al - Qur'an wa - Mansukhuh (The Repealing and the Repealed Verses of the Qur'an) to Imam `Ali. al - Hafidh ibn `Uqdah al - Kufiy (died in AH 333) has confirmed that Imam `Ali wrote in about sixty items of the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an.

Patterning the pioneer of the Islamic recording, Imam `Ali's descendants and disciples wrote many books in all fields of religious knowledge. It has been narrated that al - Harith al - A`war al - Hamadaniy and Abu - Rafi` each reported from Imam `Ali an entire book. Rabi`ah ibn Sumay` has narrated the rulings of the Zakat that Imam `Ali wrote down with his handwriting when he appointed him as the Zakat collector.

Muhammad ibn Qays al - Bujaliy has narrated the suits in which Imam `Ali issued judgments. He then presented these narrations before Imam Muhammad al - Baqir, who attested them. Maytham ibn Yahya al - Tammar wrote down a famous book, which was circulating up to the seventh century (of Hijrah). Directly from this book, al - Tabariy quoted many paragraphs. Asbagh ibn Nubatah al - Mujashi`iy has reported from Imam `Ali the section of the suits in which he issued judgments. These reports have been published in a book entitled Aqdiyat al - Imam `Ali (The Judgments of Imam `Ali) and `Aja'ib Ahkam Amir al - Mu'minin (The Amazing Verdicts of Amir al - Mu'minin). Sulaym ibn Qays has also written down a book from whom Aban ibn `Ayyash narrated.

In addition, many other Sahabah and Tabi`un wrote down many books whose materials were quoted or reported from Imam `Ali ibn Abi - Talib. In this respect, al - Suyutiy, in his book of al - Ashbah wa'l - Nadha'ir, has written down on the authority of Ibn `Asakir that some of the Grammarians used to refer to the thesis of Abu'l - Aswad al - Du'aliy that he had received from Imam `Ali ibn Abi - Talib.

It has been also narrated that Imam `Ali wrote an epistle to Malik al - Ashtar when he appointed him as the governor of Egypt. This epistle has been published with the famous book of Nahj al - Balaghah and in an independent book. Master scholars have written down many commentaries and explanations of this famous epistle that comprises the significant and unparalleled concepts of Imam `Ali in the fields of policy, management, unity, and rights of the leaders and the subjects.

It has been narrated on the authority of al - A`mash, on the authority of Ibrahim, that his father once said, “One day, (Imam) `Ali delivered a sermon in which he said, Verily, liar is he who claims that we (i.e. the Ahl al - Bayt) hold anything from which we read except the Book of Almighty Allah (i.e. the Holy Qur'an) and this Sahifah. The Sahifah was a book hanged to his sword comprising some laws of the blood money for breaking the teeth of camels as well as details of the blood money for some wounds.

It has been also narrated that Tariq said that he once heard Imam `Ali saying from the minbar, “We have no book to recite before you except the Book of Almighty Allah and this Sahifah.”

These two narrations and their likes reveal significant features about the Sahifah of Imam `Ali and the recordation of the Hadith. Accordingly, a part of the Muslims found it strange that Imam `Ali kept a book, or a number of books, comprising the knowledge of Islam. Of course, such astonishment was the result of their accumulative ignorance with the recordation of the religious knowledge in general and in its benefits; with the reporting of the Hadith and with its good results; with the divine revelation; and with the true interpretations of the sacred texts... etc.

Moreover, these Muslims accused Imam `Ali of having held a book “besides the Book of Almighty Allah” or another “Qur'an.” Unfortunately, some of the modern Muslim scholars and writers who lack any knowledge with the minute details of the recording and the records that were present in the first age of Islam have falsely claimed that Imam `Ali held a book of the Holy Qur'an different from the existent one.

Through the aforementioned texts, Imam `Ali wanted to explain the matter for the Muslims; he had nothing other than the Holy Qur'an and a book (Sahifah) in which he had written down the dictations of the Holy Prophet.

This Sahifah is a comprehensive exegesis and interpretation of the Holy Qur'an and the divine revelations with all of their dimensions and purports. Thus, the Sahifah comprises nothing further than these two basic sources of the Islamic legislation.

Once again, Imam `Ali’s words in the aforesaid narrations stood for refuting a spurious argument or a false accusation of the existence of a book matching or opposing the Holy Qur'an; therefore, the narrator has mentioned in particular the laws of the blood money for breaking the teeth of camels as well as details of the blood money for some wounds, because these laws had been known for them since the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. The Sahifah had not comprised materials that they had never heard of; rather it comprised the details of such materials.

Furthermore, the narrations have mentioned the Sahifah in particular; and this does not mean

that Imam `Ali did not write down or hold other books; rather it has been proven that the Ahl al - Bayt kept other books. Later on in this book, details in this respect will be presented.

To put it briefly, by his saying, “and this Sahifah” Imam `Ali intended to declare that all his sayings are originated from the Holy Prophet.

If truth be told, the Sahifah of Imam `Ali was the head of all items of knowledge and the loftiest book in the view of the Ahl al - Bayt; therefore, Imam `Ali and his descendants concentrated on it so confirmatively that Ibn Sirin wished had he seen or obtained that book, saying,

“Had I obtained that Book (i.e. the Sahifah), I would have certainly obtained the knowledge entirely.”

Imam `Ali ibn Abi - Talib was the foremost caller to the recordation of the religious knowledge in general and the heritage of the Holy Prophet in particular. He immeasurably confirmed and supported this process. In this regard, it has been narrated on the authority of al - Harith that Imam `Ali once declared, “Who will purchase knowledge from me with one dirham!” I thus went to him and bought some papers with one dirham.

In addition, too many are the narrations that demonstrated Imam `Ali’s having encouraged and declared the legality of recording the religious knowledge. For instance, he is reported to have said,

“Write down the knowledge, Write down the knowledge!”

“Handwriting is a signal; therefore, the clearer the better.”

To his clerk `Ubaydullah ibn Abi - Rafi`, Imam `Ali once said,

“Prepare your ink - pot, extend the edges of your pen, expand the distance between the lines, and reduce the distance between the letters (of one word).”

He is also reported to have said,

“Lengthen and fatten up the tip of your pen, sharpen it, make me hear the drone of the ‘n’, roll the ‘h’, stuff the ‘s’, crisscross the ‘`’, rend the ‘k’, intensify the ‘f’, well - arrange the ‘l’, lighten the ‘b’, ‘t’, and ‘th’, stand up the ‘z’ and raise its tail, and always put your pen behind your ear so as to remember it.”

These excellent instructions in the Arabic calligraphy are considered among the important pillars of the process of recording. Up to the present time, these instructions have been applied by the calligraphists in order to show their skillfulness in bettering the Arabic handwriting.

The Ahl al - Bayt cared for the recordation of the religious knowledge very much; they therefore guided their disciples in particular and the clerks in general to the minutest details of writing. Additionally, the above - mentioned narrations prove false all the claims that Imam `Ali warned against the compilation of books on religious knowledge and the keeping of such records.

They also confirm our discussions about the role of the ruling authorities in the fabrication and forgery against the Holy Prophet and the Ahl al - Bayt.

For more clarification, let us cite the following narration that was reported by Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al - Thaqafiy (died in AH 283) in the book of al - Gharat:

Having quoted Imam `Ali's epistle to Muhammad ibn Abi - Bakr and the people of Egypt - regarding religious affairs - , the writer narrated on the authority of `Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn `Uthman on the authority of `Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Abi - Sayf on the authority of the companions of Muhammad ibn Abi - Bakr that when the epistle of Imam `Ali reached him, he used to read it carefully, learn from it, and apply it to his affairs and judgments.

When Muhammad ibn Abi - Bakr was attacked and murdered, `Amr ibn al - `As seized all of the epistles and books that he had kept and sent them to Mu`awiyah ibn Abi - Sufyan. As he read this very epistle of Imam `Ali, he liked it very much. Al - Walid ibn `Aqabah, who accompanied Mu`awiyah, suggested to him to set all these books and epistles to fire.

"Shut up, son of Abi - Ma`it! Your opinions are always worthless!" shouted Mu`awiyah.

Al - Walid answered, "It is you who lacks good opinion! Is it reasonable that all the people know that you keep the words of Abu - Turab (i.e. Imam `Ali), learn from them, and judge according to them? If such, why do you then fight against him?"

Mu`awiyah said, "Woe to you! Do you want me to burn such knowledge? By Allah I swear that I have never heard of or seen any item of knowledge more comprehensive, more sagacious, and clearer than this one."

Al - Walid asked, "If you do admire his knowledge in such a wonderful manner, what for then are you fighting against him?"

Mu`awiyah answered, "Unless Abu - Turab killed `Uthman, we would accept and adopt his judgments."

Mu`awiyah then paused for a while, gazed at the attendants, and said, "We will not say that these epistles were from `Ali ibn Abi - Talib; rather we will declare that these were Abu - Bakr's epistles that he had sent to his son Muhammad. We thus can accept and adopt them."

Abu - Ishaq (i.e. Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al - Thaqafiy, the author of al - Gharat, narrated on the authority of Bakr ibn Bakr on the authority of Qays ibn al - Rabi` on the authority of Maysarah ibn Habib on the authority of `Amr ibn Murrah on the authority of `Abdullah ibn Salamah that Imam `Ali, having led a congregational prayer, expressed great sorrow - in a form of a poetic verse - and when he was asked about the reason, he said, "When I appointed Muhammad ibn Abi - Bakr as the governor of Egypt, he told me about his lack of knowledge concerning the religious laws. I therefore wrote to him an epistle comprising these laws, but he

was then killed and that book was taken."

This narration demonstrates the scope of Imam `Ali's anticipation that Mu`awiyah ibn Abi - Sufyan would distort the Holy Sunnah.

Fatimah Al - Zahra'; Daughter Of The Holy Prophet

Both Sunnite and Shi`ite narrators have confirmed that Lady Fatimah al - Zahra' had a book that she had received from her father. As for the Sunnite reference books of Hadith, al - Khara'itiy has recorded on the authority of Mujahid that when Ubayy ibn Ka`b visited Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family), she showed him a kurbah (a part of the trunk of date - palm trees) on which it was written that one who has believed in Almighty Allah and in the Hereafter must be kind to his neighbor.

It has been narrated on the authority of al - Qasim ibn al - Fudayl that Muhammad ibn `Ali narrated that `Umar ibn `Abd al - `Aziz, the Umayyad ruler, once sent him a missive in which he ordered him to copy the will of (Lady) Fatimah. One of the paragraphs of that will was the claim that she put a curtain before her, and when the Messenger of Allah saw that curtain, he returned while he had intended to visit her... etc.

As for the Shi`ite reference books of Hadith, Ibn Babawayh al - Qummiy has recorded that Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq said,

"As I was reading in the Book of Fatimah, I found that all the kings (i.e. rulers) that would rule on this earth are written in that book by their fathers' and their names."

It has been also recorded in al - Kafi that Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq answered a question depending upon the contents of the Book of Fatimah.

Because the Book of Fatimah has been well - known as al - Mushaf, the enemies have used this point to malign the disciples of the Ahl al - Bayt School although the word Mushaf was used in the first age of Islam to denote any book and it has been never dedicated to referring to the Holy Qur'an alone.

To support this fact, Shaykh Tahir al - Jaza'iriy has written down that as soon as the Holy Prophet departed life, the Sahabah hurried to compile all that which he had written in his will in one book that they named al - Mushaf.

Imam Al - Hasan Ibn `Ali Al - Mujtaba

Imam al - Hasan kept his father's Sahifah from which he learnt the knowledge of the Holy Prophet. It has been narrated that `Abd al - Rahman ibn Abi - Layla asked Imam al - Hasan

about Imam `Ali's verdict about the right of option. Imam al - Hasan ordered a box to be brought to him. He then opened it and took out a yellowish book that comprised the opinions of Imam `Ali about that matter.

This narration reveals two facts the first of which is that the Sahabah had disagreed about the ruling of the right of option; therefore, `Abd al - Rahman ibn Abi - Layla asked Imam al - Hasan about Imam `Ali's opinion in the question. Secondly, it was commonly known that Imam `Ali's religious rulings (i.e. jurisprudence) was the most genuine; therefore, `Abd al - Rahman ibn Abi - Layla asked for these rulings from Imam al - Hasan since he believed that the Book of `Ali had been with him.

More than once, Imam al - Hasan ibn `Ali concentrated on the significance of spreading the genuine knowledge and the necessity of the responsibility that the Ahl al - Bayt and their descendants should undertake in preserving the genuine Islamic legislation by means of reporting and recording the Hadith. In this regard, it has been narrated on the authority of Shurahbil ibn Sa`d that Imam al - Hasan, once, summoned his sons and nephews and said to them,

"My sons and nephews: As you are now the infants among this people, you will soon be the adults of others. You should thus learn the (religious) knowledge. Any of you who cannot report it must write it down and keep it in his house."

Thus, Imam al - Hasan instructed his sons and nephews to learn the religious knowledge since infancy so that they will benefit by it and teach it to others. Of course, this instruction was resulted from the fact that the genuine knowledge was on the edge of loss and in the danger of falling in abyss. One can now imagine what the fate of the Islamic legislation be if these records would not be preserved for the next generations.

Although records and reference books are existent and easily obtainable in the present time, disagreements and waste of the actual religious rulings are in full swing; what would be our manner if recordation of the religious knowledge was not practiced at all?

It has been narrated on the authority of Abu - `Amr ibn al - `Ala' that Imam al - Hasan answered those who asked him his opinion about an eighty year old man who was still writing down the Hadith, "This man is making good living".

Imam Al - Husayn Ibn `Ali, The Martyr

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al - Bayt and their adherents believe indisputably that the Book of Imam `Ali moved to Imam al - Husayn after the martyrdom of Imam al - Hasan. According to the book of Basa'ir al - Darajat, when Imam al - Husayn had to encounter the enemy, he

summoned his elder daughter, Fatimah, and gave her a folded book.

According to another narration, when Imam `Ali advanced to Iraq (for fighting), he trusted the books that he had kept to Ummu - Salamah, the Holy Prophet's widow. These books were kept by Imam al - Hasan after the demise of Imam `Ali. After the demise of Imam al - Hasan, these books were kept by Imam al - Husayn and then by Imam `Ali ibn al - Husayn... etc.

These books were different from the book that the Holy Prophet had trusted to Ummu - Salamah and asked her not to hand it over to his successor provided that the successor himself would ask her for it. Ummu - Salamah maintained that book, and when the publics elected and swore allegiance to Imam `Ali as their leader, he came and asked her about the book, and she gave it to him.

It has also been narrated on the authority of Imam `Ali ibn al - Husayn that Muhammad ibn al - Hanafiyyah, Imam `Ali's son, came to Imam al - Husayn and asked him something from their father's heritage.

"Your father left nothing more than seven hundred dirhams that remained from his gifts. However, the people came to me asking, and I have to answer them," answered Imam al - Husayn.

Muhammad then said, "Well, give me from the knowledge of my father."

Hence, Imam al - Husayn brought a book that is four fingers longer or shorter than one span (of the hand). That book was filled up with knowledge.

To sum it up, the book that the Holy Prophet had trusted with Ummu - Salamah was different from the one that he had dictated to Imam `Ali ibn Abi - Talib. The earlier one comprised materials needed by the ruler for managing the governmental affairs, while the latter comprised the religious laws, the history of the ancient nations, and so on.

Owing to the incomparable significance of that book, Imam al - Husayn, having encountered the worst circumstances, exerted all efforts for conveying the knowledge of that book to his successor. It is thus undeniable that Ummu - Salamah was one of the foremost Muslim women who preserved the recordation of the religious knowledge and realized the menace of preventing it. For that reason, this righteous lady was highly respected by the Holy Imams of the Ahl a - Bayt who trusted with her the records of the genuine legislation of the Holy Prophet.

Having been one of the supporters and heralds of the necessity of reporting and recording the Hadith, Imam al - Husayn said in a sermon that he had delivered at Mina,

"You have seen, realized, and witnessed what this tyrant is doing to us and to our adherents. I therefore want to carry out a matter; and if you believe it as true, then you should carry it out. Listen to my words and write down my sayings; and when you go back to your districts and

tribes, call those whom you trust and believe to our right that you know, for I fear lest this matter will be wiped out and thus the right would vanish."

It has been also narrated on the authority of `Abdullah ibn Sinan that he once asked Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq what should be done to a Muhrim (entering into Ihram: putting the pilgrimage uniform) who departs life.

The Imam answered that when `Abd al - Rahman ibn `Ali died at al - Abwa' (while having been Muhrim), Imam al - Husayn who was accompanied by `Abdullah ibn `Abbas and `Abdullah ibn Ja`far did the same procedures that are done to the other dead people and then covered his face without letting any scent touch his body. He then commented, "I found this way written down in the Book of `Ali."

It has been also narrated that Muhammad ibn al - Hanafiyyah wrote down a reference book of Hadith. This indicates that all the sons of Imam `Ali wrote books on the religious knowledge and concerned themselves with the recording out of their care for preserving the Holy Sunnah .and documenting all that which they reported from the Holy Prophet

Imam `Ali Ibn Al - Husayn Al - Sajjad

Imam `Ali ibn al - Husayn is reported to have written down many epistles the most famous of which are Risalat al - Huquq (The Treatise on Rights) and al - Sahifah al - Sajjadiyyah commonly known as "The Psalms of Islam." It has been narrated that Abu - Hamzah al - Thamaliy said, "As I recited an epistle that comprised the words of (Imam) `Ali ibn al - Husayn on asceticism, I copied it. I then showed my copy to `Ali ibn al - Husayn who confirmed and corrected it."

It is probable that Abu - Hamzah al - Thamaliy had read a part of the al - Sahifah al - Kamilah al - Sajjadiyyah because this epistle comprises many topics besides asceticism. It is also probable that the book was a part of Imam `Ali ibn Abi - Talib's Book since Imam al - Sajjad had that book with him. It has been narration, in this respect, that when he was asked about an issue, he answered that in the Book of `Ali, it is written... etc.

Shaykh al - Kulayniy, too, has narrated on the authority of Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq that whenever Imam `Ali ibn al - Husayn read the Book of Imam `Ali, he would say, "Who can do all this?" He would then act upon it.

In addition, Imam Muhammad al - Baqir, Zayd ibn `Ali (the martyr), and al - Husayn al - Asghar are reported to have narrated from their father an epistle on the rulings of the ritual Hajj.

Imam Muhammad al - Baqir and Zayd ibn `Ali, sons of Imam `Ali ibn al - Husayn, are also widely known as having cared for the documentation of the religious knowledge. Shaykh

Ahmad Muhammad Shakir, the editor of the book of Mafath Kunuz al - Sunnah, has considered the book of Zayd ibn `Ali entitled al - Majmu` - on the assumption that the book is truly ascribed to him - the oldest among the books of the ancient master scholars.

Mr. Muhammad `Ajjaj al - Khatib says,

“In view of that, the book of al - Majmu` is considered the most important historical document proving that the compilation and writing down of books began at the beginning of the second century (of Hijrah). This fact has been concluded through our presentation of many books and compilations without putting our hand on any material model representing the foremost of these books except for Malik ibn Anas’s al - Muwatta' which was accomplished before the middle of the second century. Accordingly, the book of al - Majmu` was written down thirty years before al - Muwatta'. Obviously, the book of al - Majmu` comprised inseparably the two collections of the Muslim jurisprudence and the Hadith.”

From the book of Tamhid(un) Li - Tarikh al - Falsafah al - Islamiyyah, Asad Haydar quotes the following:

“Zayd ibn `Ali wrote a jurisprudential record, which has been discovered among the ancient manuscripts in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan; section of the Southern Arab lands. This manuscript is considered the most ancient collection on the Muslim jurisprudence. In any case, this book should be taken into consideration as regards the compilation of the Muslim jurisprudence.”

The books has been published under the title of Musnad al - Imam Zayd ibn `Ali.

Nevertheless, since the time of the Holy Prophet, many records were written down and these are surely more ancient than the collection of Zayd ibn `Ali. Moreover, the material model of the Islamic records belongs to the first century (of Hijrah) as represented by Risalat al - Huquq and al - Sahifah al - Kamilah al - Sajjadiyyah, which were put in written forms by Abu - Hamzah al - Thamaliy and others. These two books are two lively material models that are still surviving.

It is worth mentioning that the books of Imam `Ali ibn al - Husayn, in their major significance, betook themselves a new trend in the Muslims’ documented culture and opened new fields, which are still huge in the heritage of the Muslims. These fields are the Du`a' (Supplication) and the Huquq (Rights).

As a matter of fact, these two fields are considered the most important and ancient culture ever known by the Muslims, because they treated the two most necessary matters needed by the Muslim community during the lifetime of Imam `Ali ibn al - Husayn after the Islamic ethics and the individual and social rights had been about to be wiped out during the reigns of Yazid

ibn Mu`awiyah and the rulers who followed him.

As a result, the recordation of the treatments of these issues stood for the documentation of the diseases and remedies of that period of the Islamic history, as well as the history of an important stage of the Islamic legislation and fresh Islamic knowledges.

On the assumption that the book of al - Majmu` is truly ascribed to Zayd ibn `Ali, the records of Imam `Ali ibn al - Husayn confirm the authenticity of the books of Imam Muhammad al - Baqir and Zayd ibn `Ali, for their books comprised materials that they had received on the authority of their father from their ancestors.

It has been also narrated on the authority of Ibn al - Safwan that Zayd ibn `Ali wrote another book entitled al - Qillah wa'l - Jama`ah upon which he depended in disputing against his rivals.

In the introduction of his revision of the book of al - Safwah that is ascribed to Zayd ibn `Ali, Naji Hasan writes down that more than ten epistles on various topics, such as theology, Tafsir, Muslim jurisprudence, and narrations are ascribed to Zayd ibn `Ali.

Sayyid al - Mu'ayyidiy al - Hasaniy has also listed some titles of the books written by Zayd ibn `Ali, yet I have not been acquainted with any further information about these books.

Mr. `Abd al - Halim al - Jundiy has also quoted that `Amr ibn Abi'l - Miqdam compiled a comprehensive reference book on the Muslim jurisprudence that he had reported from Imam `Ali ibn al - Husayn Zayn al - `Abidin.

Recently, Sayyid Muhammad Jawad al - Jalaliy has revised the book of Gharib al - Qur'an that is ascribed to Zayd ibn `Ali. The book has been published by the Islamic Propagation Organization - Iran.

It is now noticeable that the Holy Imams of the Ahl al - Bayt gave considerable attention to the process of recording and reporting the religious knowledge in general and the heritage of the Holy Prophet in particular. In addition, they themselves used to record the Hadith, instruct their sons to do it, and encourage their disciples on writing down.

The age of Imam `Ali ibn al - Husayn should be considered exclusively; it was the most critical age by which the Scholars of the Ahl al - Bayt passed since it followed the Incident of al - Taff (the martyrdom of Imam al - Husayn). By virtue of the documentation of the Holy Prophet's heritage, precious books during that age of the Islamic history came to light. This was in fact one of the miracles in the history of the Muslim culture.

Imam Muhammad Ibn `Ali Al - Baqir

The age of Imam Muhammad al - Baqir and Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq is considered the golden age as regards the spread of the rulings of the School of Recordation. During that age,

Almighty Allah prepared certain political circumstances - that resulted in the collapse of a state (i.e. the Umayyad) and the emergence of another (i.e. the `Abbasid) - in which the ruling authorities were engaged. This matter opened wide the door for the followers of the School of Recordation to write down, report, and present all that which they had without any fear.

It was also natural that the Book of `Ali and the other books of the Ahl al - Bayt, in the capacity of their being the most ancient and the most authentic reference books on the Islamic knowledges, held the highest position and played the greatest role, because they were written during the age and on the order of the Holy Prophet who dictated them while Imam `Ali handwrote them, and Imam al - Hasan and Imam al - Hasan, from whom Almighty Allah has removed uncleanness and purified thoroughly, retained them. Such characteristics cannot exist in any recording save the Holy Qur'an and the Sahifah of Imam `Ali.

Pursuant to and in view of this, we can understand the secret behind the fact that Imam Muhammad al - Baqir and Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq showed the Book of Imam `Ali to their disciples, to the adherents of the trend of prohibiting the recordation of the Hadith, and to the askers in generals. Mostly, the holy Imams used to present the Sahifah of Imam `Ali when disputes about controversial questions flared up.

Nevertheless, they also referred to and presented the Sahifah even on ordinary occasions in order to increase the faith of their disciples. Of course, when such disciples would see with their own eyes the handwriting of Imam `Ali and the dictation of the Holy Prophet, their belief in their intellectual trend, that is originated from the Holy Sunnah, would increase.

Yet, the most important point in this discussion is that the age of Imam Muhammad al - Baqir and Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq was characterized by the launch of scientific activities and the existence of large quantity of scholars, scientists, jurisprudents, and intellectuals. It has been narrated that there were, in the age of the origination of the Islamic jurisprudential schools, four hundred narrators each of whom used to say, “(Imam) Ja`far ibn Muhammad narrated to me... etc.”

Thus, the holy Imam deemed necessary to refute the opposite opinion and to give greater value to the trend of the thorough compliance with the sacred texts over the other trend of Opinionism and Ijtihad. Such preponderating could be done through the written evidence that perpetuated from the age of the Holy Prophet since the authenticity of such evidence is not exposed to any sort of criticism or refutation.

For this reason, the holy Imams presented the Sahifah of Imam `Ali on many occasions so as to prove false the opposite opinions and to confirm that all what they were reporting from the Holy Prophet had never been distorted, changed, or influenced by the political factors.

In this respect, it has been narrated that Imam Muhammad al - Baqir said to Zurarah: "O Zurarah: Beware of those who act upon analogy in the religious affairs. They have neglected the knowledge that they were commissioned to learn and have engaged themselves in learning the knowledge that has been already given to them. They are interpreting the traditions and forging fabrications against Almighty Allah since they are depending upon their fancies. Almighty Allah has said in this respect,

'Say: Has Allah commanded you, or do you forge a lie against Allah?' (Holy Qur'an: 10/59)

I see coming that when one of these (who act upon analogy) is called from ahead, he answers from behind and when he is called from behind him, he answers from ahead. Thus have they strayed off and been confused in the lands and in the religion."

As has been previously cited, it has been narrated that `Adhafir al - Sayrafiy said that he, accompanied by al - Hakam ibn `Utaybah, visited Abu - Ja`far (i.e. Imam Muhammad al - Baqir) and asked him many questions. Although the Imam used to honor him considerably, they disagreed about a certain question.

Settling the dispute, Abu - Ja`far asked his son to bring him the Book of `Ali. Having been kept in a drawer, it was a handsome book through which Abu - Ja`far began to skim until he reached at the question involved. Referring to the book, Abu - Ja`far said, "This is the handwriting of (Imam) `Ali and the dictation of the Messenger of Allah." He then turned his face towards al - Hakam and said,

"Wherever Salamah, Abu'l - Miqdam, and you go, you shall never find any people carrying the most authentic knowledge other than the people to whom (Archangel) Gabriel used to ascend (from the heavens)."

The aforementioned narration proves that because al - Hakam ibn `Utaybah, Salamah ibn Kuhayl, and Abu'l - Miqdam were master scholars, Imam Muhammad al - Baqir used to honor them considerably. Supposing this, Muslim biographers have written nicely about these personalities. Likewise, the Imam took out the Sahifah of Imam `Ali after they had disagreed about a question in order to clarify it for them.

The statement, "it was a handsome book" confirms that the Book of Imam `Ali was very big and was considered an encyclopedia on the Islamic knowledge. The Ahl al - Bayt cared very much for that book; they therefore kept it in a drawer in order to maintain it and procure its safety.

According to another narration, Muhammad ibn Muslim is reported to have said, Abu - Ja`far (i.e. Imam Muhammad al - Baqir) opened before me a book (Sahifah), and the first sentence that caught my eyes was that "When a legator's heirs are his nephew and his

grandfather, the inheritance is divided between them equally." I said to him, "May Allah accept me as ransom for you! Judges are not deciding anything of an inheritance to the nephew (of a legator) when the grandfather is existent." Imam Muhammad al - Baqir answered, "Verily, this book is written with the handwriting of `Ali according to the dictation of the Messenger of Allah."

So, the attention of Muhammad ibn Salamah was attracted to the religious ruling as he noticed that it had not been carried out by the judges whom were appointed by the ruling authorities. He therefore wanted to know the secret beyond that.

Answering him, Imam Muhammad al - Baqir confirmed that the ruling on which his eyes fell was not recently recorded and thus it might have been exposed to oblivion, errancy, or distortion; rather it was found in a paper dictated by the Holy Prophet with the handwriting of Imam `Ali. As a result, the ruling was decisively free from distortion or mistake.

According to another narration, it has been narrated that Ibn `Uyaynah al - Basriy said that he was present when the following issue was put before Ibn Abi - Layla, the judge: Before his demise, a man had endowed one of his relatives a house without determining the time of the transfer of the possession.

When the man departed life, his heirs as well as the man to whom that house was endowed attended before the judge, Ibn Abi - Layla, who commented, 'I think that the matter should be left as it had been during the lifetime of the legator.' Rather, Muhammad ibn Muslim al - Thaqafiy intruded saying, 'Verily, `Ali ibn Abi - Talib had decided the opposite of your decision in this very mosque.'

'What you do you know about this issue?' asked Ibn Abi - Layla.

Muhammad ibn Muslim al - Thaqafiy said, 'I have heard Abu - Ja`far (i.e. Imam Muhammad al - Baqir) saying that (Imam) `Ali ibn Abi - Talib decided to cancel the retention and carry out the inheritances.'

Ibn Abi - Layla asked, 'Can you prove this in a written form?'

'Yes, I can,' answered Muhammad.

'You should thus bring me that written form,' Ibn Abi - Layla said.

'I will do provided that you will not read except the paragraph intended,' stipulated Muhammad.

'I will observe this,' agreed Ibn Abi - Layla.

Hence, Muhammad ibn Muslim al - Thaqafiy showed the judge that narration in the book. He therefore objected the lawcase.

From the above - mentioned narration, we can conclude that Ibn Abi - Layla, the judge, used to examine matters before issuing judgments; he knew that the wording of Muhammad ibn

Muslim al - Thaqafiy was not enough proof in itself and in the same way as Muhammad was jurisprudent, Ibn Abi - Layla was also jurisprudent in the same level; he therefore asked him, "What do you know about this issue?"

Although the answer came that it was Imam Muhammad al - Baqir who had said so, the judge was not convinced with this answer; he therefore demanded with seeing that judgment in a written form (i.e. in a book) because he had, firstly, realized the significance of the reconditions and, secondly, he had heard about the Sahifah of `Ali and that was the best opportunity to be sure of the existence of such a book when his eyes would fall on it.

Furthermore, Muhammad ibn Muslim specified as a condition of seeing that book that Ibn Abi - Layla would not see any other item except that question involved. He thus confirmed that the disciples of the Ahl al - Bayt had been too careful to let that book or its contents and narrations fall in untrustworthy hands and it would thus be confused with personal opinions and then such opinions would be falsely ascribed to the Book of Imam `Ali causing the original narrations to be wasted and lost by people.

If truth be told, Ibn Abi - Layla had submitted to the right, retracted his previous judgment, and issued a new judgment congruent with what had been mentioned in the Sahifah of `Ali. This case demonstrates the significance and benefit of the recordation of the Hadith. Had all the narrations and religious laws been recorded in this form, no difference between the Muslims would have ever been noticed except in a scanty amount.

It has been narrated on the authority of `Abd al - Malik that Imam Muhammad al - Baqir, once, ordered the Book of Imam `Ali to be brought to him. Having been folded like a thigh, the book was brought by Ja`far (i.e. Imam al - Sadiq).

In the book it was written down that wives must have no share of their husbands' estates that are left as inheritance. Commenting on this, Imam Muhammad al - Baqir said, "I swear by Allah that this is the dictation of the Messenger of Allah and the handwriting of `Ali."

It has been also narrated on the authority of Abu - Basir that he, once, asked Abu - Ja`far (Imam Muhammad al - Baqir) whether the testimony of adultery is permissible or not. The Imam's answer was negative. Abu - Basir, however, answered that al - Hakam ibn `Uyaynah claimed the opposite. The Imam thus said,

"O Allah! Do not forgive him! Almighty Allah has not said to al - Hakam,

'And most surely it is a reminder for you and your people.' (Holy Qur'an: 43/44)

Let al - Hakam go left and right! By Allah I swear that (true) knowledge cannot be obtained from anyone save us, the Ahl al - Bayt, to whom Archangel Gabriel used to ascend (from the Heavens)."

It has been also narrated on the authority of Muhammad ibn Muslim that Imam Muhammad al - Baqir said,

“Verily, each and every item of truth and reality that is kept by any of the people must have been taken from us, the Ahl al - Bayt. Similarly, Amir al - Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi - Talib is certainly the clue, source, basis, and spring of each and every decent and just issue that is decided by any of the people. However, when matters are confused for the people, it must be their own fault; and when they are right, the source of this right must be `Ali ibn Abi - Talib.”

In addition, Imam Muhammad al - Baqir kept many other books that he had received from his forefathers as well as the choicest companions of the Holy Prophet. He also dictated very much of this knowledge to his students who wrote them down in books. In this respect, Muhammad `Ajjaj al - Khatib says,

“Muhammad al - Baqir, son of `Ali ibn al - Husayn, (AH 56 - 114) wrote down many books some of which were received and spread by his son, Ja`far al - Sadiq.”

`Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn `Aqil ibn Abi - Talib is reported to have said,

“Abu - Ja`far (Imam Muhammad al - Baqir) and I used to visit Jabir ibn `Abdullah carrying clays on which we would write down.”

Obviously, the Holy Prophet must have ordered Jabir ibn `Abdullah to convey some of his instructions to Imam Muhammad al - Baqir.

It has been also narrated on the authority of Abu’l - Jarud al - `Abdiy that Imam Muhammad al - Baqir had a book on the exegesis (Tafsir) of the Holy Qur'an as his disciples kept many other books that they had received from him. Furthermore, the majority of his disciples wrote down his narrations and sayings.

Imam Ja`far Ibn Muhammad Al - Sadiq

As for Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq, he concentrated on the recordation of the religious knowledge as he, from time to time, used to show the Book of Imam `Ali to his companions and those who put religious questions before him as well as whenever a controversial question would be discussed.

In this regard, it has been narrated that Abu - Basir al - Muradiy, once, asked him about a question concerning the laws of inheritance. The Imam said, “Should I show you the question in the Book of `Ali?”

“Has the Book of `Ali been still existent?” wondered Abu - Basir.

Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq answered, “The Book of `Ali shall never be obliterated.”

The Imam then took out a handsome book in which the following statement was written:

“When the heirs of a man are his paternal and maternal uncle, the paternal uncle’s share is two thirds of the inheritance while the maternal uncle’s is one third.”

Although he was one of the intimate friends and the devoted adherents of the Ahl al - Bayt, Abu - Basir believed that the Book of Imam `Ali had been obliterated due to Abu - Bakr’s decision of the prohibition of the existence of the recordations, or the book would have been burnt with the other books of the Sahabah that had been set to fire at the hands of `Umar ibn al - Khattab, or Mu`awiyah would have wiped the book out after the martyrdom of Imam `Ali. Nevertheless, Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq answered Abu - Basir unfalteringly, “The Book of `Ali shall never be obliterated.” This statement demonstrates that the Book of `Ali has been the most precious thing for the Ahl al - Bayt; it is therefore impossible that it would be wiped out or lost; rather it is preserved with them as it is transmitted by inheritance from one to another. Obviously, it was Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq who suggested to Abu - Basir that he would show him the Book of `Ali. This fact confirms that the Imam desired that the Book would occupy its proper place in the Muslim jurisprudence; he therefore very frequently showed and cared for it.

Owing to his very much interest in the recordations and books, Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq was called Suhufiy, which means bookish or one who is interested in books. This title was loved by the Imam who used to say, “Yes, it is true! I am bookish. I have read the books of my forefathers - Abraham and Moses.”

It has been also narrated on the authority of Abu - Basir that Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq said, “One day, some people from al - Basrah visited and asked me about narrations that they had written down. What is the thing that prevents you from writing down? Verily, you shall not learn unless you write down.”

Supporting the aforesaid fact that the Holy Imams paid great attention to the questions of the laws of inheritance, judicature, and legal testimonies, it has been narrated that Muhammad ibn Muslim asked Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq about the amount of the knowledge that has been inherited whether it is general items of knowledge or the interpretation of all the matters about which people are talking, such as the laws of divorce and the shares of inheritance. The Imam answered,

“Verily, (Imam) `Ali had written down all the items of knowledge including the laws of divorce and the shares of inheritance... etc.”

As noticed in this narration, Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq, having referred to the entire knowledge, mentioned in particular the laws of divorce and the shares of inheritances. In other words, the Imam mentioned the particular cases after the general. This is an obvious indication to the fact that big distortion and deformation had occurred to these two sections of the Muslim

jurisprudence.

As has been previously cited, `Umar ibn al - Khattab ignored the majority of the religious laws in general and the laws of the share of grandmothers and the Kalalah (those who leave no descendants or ascendants as heirs) in particular.

He also used to rest upon the judgments of the others, such as Imam `Ali ibn Abi - Talib. The Holy Imams thus cared for showing the Book of Imam `Ali especially in the field of the religious laws appertained to the shares of inheritance and divorce because distortion and confusion had occurred to these two fields.

Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq took pride in his having in possession the Sahifah of Imam `Ali and the al - Jafr that comprised the hidden knowledge of the Holy Prophet. It has been narrated on the authority of `Abdullah ibn Sinan that Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq said when we mentioned before him the activities of the descendants of Imam al - Hasan and also the al - Jafr:

"By Allah I swear; we keep two papers made of skins of goat and sheep. These two papers comprise the dictation of the Messenger of Allah with the handwriting of (Imam) `Ali. We also keep a paper that is seventy cubit length comprising the dictations of the Messenger of Allah with the handwriting of (Imam) `Ali. It includes all that which may be needed even matters that are as minute as the retaliation of scratching."

By virtue of the abovementioned, Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq was the pyramid head in the recordational construction of the Holy Imams of the Ahl al - Bayt. Likewise, he mainly depended upon the Book of Imam `Ali and the books of his forefathers that they had received from the Holy Prophet as well as the books of the Prophets and Messengers that they had obtained in inheritance.

Surprisingly, the followers of the other school of the prohibition of recording the Hadith criticized the school of the Ahl al - Bayt until recent ages regarding the dependence upon the previous generations as the true knowledge while the dependence upon the sacred texts as dishonor. In this regard, Abu - Hanifah used to criticize Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq for his having rested upon the recorded knowledge, while the latter used to say,

"What do they want from you and what for are they criticizing you? By Allah I swear; we have in possession the thing that makes us dispense with all the people while they are in need for us. Verily, we have the book that comprises the dictations of the Messenger of Allah written with the handwriting of (Imam) `Ali; a paper that is seventy cubit length in which all the lawful and the unlawful are written."

Both the Sunnite and Shi`ite Muslims knew about the books that Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq had had in inheritance from his father and forefathers and then dictated to his disciples. Ibn `Adiy

says,

“Ja`far kept many Hadiths and copies of books. He is one of the trustworthy people in the words of Yahya ibn Mu`in.”

`Amr ibn Abi’l - Miqdam also says,

“If you look at him, you will realize that Ja`far ibn Muhammad belongs to the lineage of the Prophets.”

Quoting the words of Ibn Hajar in Tahdhib al - Tahdhib, Muhammad `Ajjaj al - Khatib says,

“Ja`far al - Sadiq, the son of Muhammad al - Baqir, (AH 80 - 148) kept many epistles, Hadiths, and copies of books. He was one of the most trustworthy reporters of Hadith.”

As a matter of fact, Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq represents the most excellent mentality among the Muslims during that time. Out of his unparalleled dexterity, he realized the menacing danger that threatened the Muslims as regards the significance of the recordation of the religious knowledge. In this respect, he said to al - Mufaddal ibn `Umar al - Ju`afiy,

“Write down and spread your knowledge among your brethren - in - faith. Before you die, give your books in inheritance to your sons, for I see coming that an age will come upon people during which nothing will entertain them save their books.”

This is the very interconnection and continuity that are found with the Holy Imams of the Ahl al - Bayt; in the same way as Imam al - Hasan al - Mujtaba ordered his followers to write down the religious knowledge when they would be prevented from reporting the Hadith as a result of the Umayyad intellectual terrorism, Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq carried the same idea urging on paying very much attention to the recordations since he lived in an age that was similar to that of the Umayyad dynasty and the same tragedy would be about to take place again though in another form.

The prohibition of the Hadith was about to reach its climax during the reigns of the `Abbasid rulers, but those rulers had to build good relations with the neighboring nations, such as the Persians, the Turks, and others, and they lived in noticeable opulence, especially during the reigns of al - Mansur and al - Rashid.

These reasons diverted the people from paying considerable attention to the religious knowledge; rather they devoted themselves to the fields of amusement and impudence as well as other secondary items of knowledge. Moreover, the psychological and doctrinal connections became difficult and the attainment of the genuine knowledge with the existence of such choppy waves was hardly possible.

In view of that, Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq gave attention to the necessity of keeping the recordations of the religious knowledge so that people would seek the light of these books

during the murks of policy and controversies.

Moreover, Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq and his disciples are reported to have never wasted any moment that would be used for recording the religious knowledge. It has been narrated that he once asked one of his disciples, “I know that you cannot memorize; where is your friend who writes down for you?” The man answered that his friend might have been engaged in a matter that prevented him from presence there. The Imam thus asked another man to write down for him.

All the words of Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq were written down by his disciples who kept them in books. He also wrote down many epistles refuting the false claims of the atheists, and answering the questions of `Abdullah al - Najashiy (the governor of al - Ahwaz, southern Iran). He also wrote down an elucidation of the religious laws entitled al - Ja`fariyyat or al - Ash`athiyyat because the reporter was ibn al - Ash`ath. It has been also narrated that Yahya ibn Sa`id said that Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq dictated to him a lengthy Hadith concerning the .rulings of the ritual Hajj

Imam Musa Al - Kadhim

Following the course of his forefathers, Imam Musa al - Kadhim paid great attention to the question of recording the religious knowledge and safeguarding such recordations in general and the Book of Imam `Ali in particular. However, the recording of the Hadith during the age of the Imam took another form. The Imam, from behind the bars of al - Rashid’s jail, had to use the form of the secret correspondence that he sent to his disciples answering their questions concerning religious affairs.

According to narrations, Imam Musa al - Kadhim, remained in prison for seven years on the order of `Abbasid ruler, Harun al - Rashid. Other narrations defined fifteen years as the period spent by Imam Musa al - Kadhim in the prison.

At any rate, such a long period of imprisonment naturally necessitated the style of correspondence; therefore, the Imam used to exchange letters with his disciples some of whom used to visit him secretly and ask him about religious affairs although the style of correspondence was dangerous because the ruling authorities could have found such letters and investigated about the matter.

On the other hand, the intellectual and material luxury during the reign of al - Rashid caused the majority of the righteous and pious people to confine themselves to their houses and betake the methods of Sufism and seclusion. In no time did these practical methods change into intellectual aspects producing dangerous notions in Islam.

Consequently, Imam Musa al - Kadhim had to concentrate on this field and show the actual meaning of asceticism as well as the genuine trend of Islam. One of the Imam's efforts caused Bishr al - Hafı (the barefooted) to convert from the state of ultimate luxury and corruption into a superior state of asceticism and piety by virtue of the Imam's sound presentation.

The prison, the attempts of amending the deviations, and the sound treatments of the innovative schools - all these matters caused the religious course of Imam Musa al - Kadhim to slightly stand behind the lights that concentrated on the abovementioned aspects.

In spite of the presence of all these trends, the features of the recordation of the religious knowledge can be obviously seen in the conduct of Imam Musa al - Kadhim. Nevertheless, these features are less than they are with Imam Muhammad al - Baqir and Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq.

In this respect, Musa ibn Ibrahim Abu - `Imran al - Maruziy al - Baghdadiy narrated that he heard from Imam Musa al - Kadhim, during his having been in the prison of the `Abbasid ruler, some questions that the Imam narrated on the authority of his father on the authority of his forefathers on the authority of the Holy Prophet. These questions have been recorded by Shaykh al - Tusiy and al - Najashiy.

It has been also recorded by al - Halabiy, in his book of Kashf al - Dhunun, who says, "It has been also narrated by Abu - Na`im al - Isfahaniy." Depending upon al - Halabiy, Musa ibn Ibrahim also narrated these questions. This book has been reprinted many times.

Imam Musa al - Kadhim had the Book of Imam `Ali with him. Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq introduced him to al - Mufaddal ibn `Umar as "the holder of the Book of `Ali." Al - Nu`maniy, in his book of Kitab al - Ghaybah, has narrated on the authority of `Abd al - Wahid, on the authority of Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Rabah, on the authority of Ahmad ibn `Ali al - Himyariy, on the authority of al - Hasan ibn Ayyub, on the authority of `Abd al - Karim ibn `Amr al - Khath`amiy that al - Sa'igh said that he heard al - Mufaddal ibn `Umar asking Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq, "Is it possible that Almighty Allah imposes upon us to obey one of His servants but He does not acquaint him with the news of the Heavens (i.e. the hidden knowledge)?"

The Imam answered, "Be it known to you that Almighty Allah is too elevated, too generous, to merciful to his servants, and too compassionate to order of obeying a servant but He then conceals the hidden knowledge from that servant; rather Almighty Allah acquaints him with the hidden every day and night."

Meanwhile, Abu'l - Hasan (Imam Musa al - Kadhim) attended that conversation. Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq, hence, asked al - Mufaddal, "Would like to see the holder of the Book of `Ali?"

Al - Mufaddal said, "Nothing will ever delight me more than seeing that one."

Imam al - Sadiq, pointing to Imam al - Kadhim, said, “This is the holder of the Book of `Ali.”

Ahmad ibn `Isa al - Ash`ariy, in his book of al - Nawadir, has narrated that he heard Ibn Abi - `Umayr saying that `Ali ibn Yaqtin asked Imam Musa al - Kadhim about the temporary marriage.

The Imam answered, “Why do you ask about such a matter while Almighty Allah has saved you from it?”

`Ali ibn Yaqtin answered, “I just want to learn its ruling.”

The Imam answered that in the Book of Imam `Ali, it is written... etc.

It is worth mentioning that `Ali ibn Ja`far learned at the hands of his brother Imam Musa al - Kadhim and then recorded that knowledge in a book entitled Masa'il `Ali ibn Ja`far. This book was reprinted several times and finally it has been published by The Mu’assasat Al al - Bayt li - Ihya’ al - Turath (The Al al - Bayt Foundation for Heritage Revivification) in Qumm - Iran.

In addition, his disciples have narrated many other books and epistles from Imam Musa al - Kadhim who, also, objected to the innovative principles (Usul), such as analogy and Opinionism. These objections can be clearly found in his addresses to Suma`ah ibn Mahran and Muhammad ibn Hakim.

It has been narrated that Muhammad ibn Hakim said to Imam Musa al - Kadhim, “May Allah accept me as ransom for you! We have learned the questions of our religion and by means of you, Almighty Allah has made us in no need for the people to the degree that we know the answer of each question that is ever put in any session that we attend.

This is of course out Almighty Allah’s grace to us as a result of your presence among us. However, it happens that we face some questions the answers of which have not been known by us because we have not received anything from you or your forefathers in this respect. We therefore have to choose the best answer that jumps to our minds and select the answer that best suited the narrations that we have received from you.”

Answering him, Imam Musa al - Kadhim said, “Far away is this! Son of Hakim! Because of such (baseless verdicts), perdition has afflicted people.”

It has been reported that Abu - Yusuf, once, asked Imam Musa al - Kadhim whether it is legal for a Muhrim to shade himself (or herself) under matters that should be avoided by the Muhrims.

The Imam answered no.

Abu - Yusuf then asked whether it is lawful for a Muhrim to sit under the shade of a wall, a howdah, or enter a house or a tent.

The Imam answered yes.

Abu - Yusuf thus laughed mockingly, but the Imam said to him,

"Abu - Yusuf! The religion cannot be exposed to analogy like yours and your teachers! Certainly, Almighty Allah, as is in His Holy Book, has enacted the law of divorcement and confirmed such with two witnesses stipulating that these two being decent. As is in His Book too, He has enacted the marriage but without witnesses.

Nevertheless, you have stipulated the existence of two witnesses in the matter about which Almighty Allah has not stipulated witnesses and canceled the stipulation of two witnesses in matters about which Almighty Allah has stipulated the existence of witnesses.

Moreover, you have made lawful for the insane and the drunk to divorce. Similarly, when the Messenger of Allah went on the Hajj, he did not use the shade of anything nor did he enter a house or a tent; rather he shaded himself with a howdah and a wall. We are thus doing the same as the Messenger of Allah did."

This answer muted Abu - Yusuf.

It is now obvious that the Book of Imam `Ali was kept by Imam Musa al - Kadhim who acted upon it and showed before his disciples and others, especially in the controversial questions. In this respect, it has been narrated that Hammad ibn `Uthman asked Imam Musa al - Kadhim about the ruling appertained to the shares of inheritance of a man whose heirs are only his mother and brother.

The Imam asked, "Do you want me to judge according to the Book of `Ali?"

"Yes," answered the man.

The Imam then said, "(Imam) `Ali used to give the inheritance according to the degrees of kinship."

The man said, "This means that the brother's share is nothing."

The Imam commented, "I have told you that `Ali used to give the inheritance according to the degrees of kinship."

The Imam's answer in the abovementioned narration was the elucidation of the general rule without plunging into the details. The addressee understood the Imam's intention although the latter could not state the ruling openly for fear of the leverage of the ruling authorities and their fans who used to lurk each and every word that would be said by the Imam as reported from his forefathers and the Holy Prophet.

It is also noticeable that Imam al - Kadhim, in the previous narration, documented his answer by showing that it would be quoted from the Book of Imam `Ali so that the asker would be certain of the accuracy of the answer and that the Imam would never answer out of his own conjecture as the others used to do.

A deep look into the presence of the Book of `Ali with the Holy Imams demonstrates that the book slowly graduated until it manifested itself clearly during the ages of Imam Muhammad al - Baqir and Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq. But it then began to abate during the age of Imam Musa al - Kadhim then began to graduate again, yet slowly, after the age of him.

This is because the genuine Muslim jurisprudence and the narrations from the Holy Prophet that were conveyed by his Household (i.e. the Ahl al - Bayt) who informed all the Muslims of the existence of the Book of `Ali with them and that all their reports are from this book as well as other not less important books - all these matters were perfected to form an independent school of clear features during the ages of these three holy Imams.

Accordingly, the intensive manifestation of the Book of `Ali was purposed for consolidating and spreading the true knowledge of Islam. As a result, the majority of such intensive manifestation of the genuine Muslim jurisprudence happened during the ages of these three Imams.

Remark

It is evidently noticeable that the holy Imams used to refer to the Book of `Ali particularly in matters appertained to the religious laws of inheritance, judicature, and testimonies; what is the secret beyond such particularization?

To trace the march of the history of the Muslim jurisprudence leads us to a serious reality that confirms the fact that has been documentatorily demonstrated in this book. This reality is that because the caliphs were in need for the religious authority while they failed to accomplished it, they had to prohibit the reporting and recordation of the Hadith.

What is more is that because the elasticity in Opinionism and Ijtihad would greatly contribute in achieving their aims especially in hard times, they adopted and enacted it. To prove this fact, it is easily noticeable that the majority of the reports from the Book of Imam `Ali were in the fields of the laws of inheritance, judicature, and testimonies.

As a matter of fact, the first jurisprudential controversy that occurred after the demise of the Holy Prophet was that which occurred between Lady Fatimah al - Zahra', the Holy Prophet's daughter, and Abu - Bakr, the caliph. This controversy aroused an enormous noise the sound of which has been heard all over ages up to the current day.

The issue in brief is that when Abu - Bakr, having become the ruler of the Muslim community, confiscated the garden of Fadak from the attorney of Lady Fatimah al - Zahra', she came to him demanding with her property. In the presence of the Muslims, she asserted that her father, the Holy Prophet, had donated that area to her exclusively.

Yet, Abu - Bakr asked her to present witnesses supporting her claim. She therefore presented

Imam `Ali, al - Hasan, al - Husayn, Ummu - Ayman, and Ummu - Salamah.

In that session, Abu - Bakr had to reject the testimonies of these people presenting excuses that were unacceptable for Lady Fatimah al - Zahra' for they were contradictory to the texts of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah. Correspondingly, this was the first controversial issue in the Muslim history.

When Abu - Bakr rejected these testimonies, Lady Fatimah al - Zahra', condescendingly, argued with him that if Fadak was not her father's gift to her, it should be within her inheritance from him. She then provided a number of verses from the Holy Qur'an as her evidence. In her fabulous, excellent address, she said,

"You are now claiming that I should not have any of my father's inheritance;

'Is it then the judgment of the times of ignorance that they desire? And who is better than Allah to judge for a people who are sure?' (Holy Qur'an: 5/50)

Son of Abu - Quhafah; is it mentioned in the Book of Allah that you inherit your father while I am prevented from inheriting my father?

'Surely you have done a strange thing!' (Holy Qur'an: 19/27)

Has it been deliberately that you have neglected the Book of Allah and thrown it away behind you back, while it reads,

'And Solomon was David's heir,' (Holy Qur'an: 27/16)

and also reads, within the story of Prophet Jonah son of Prophet Zachariah,

'Therefore, grant me from Thyself an heir who should inherit me and inherit from the children of Jacob,' (Holy Qur'an: 19/5 - 6),

and also reads,

'And the possessors of relationships are nearer to each other in the ordinance of Allah,' (Holy Qur'an: 8/75) and also reads, 'Allah enjoins you concerning your children: The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females,' (Holy Qur'an: 4/11)

and also reads,

'If he leaves behind wealth for parents and near relatives, according to usage, a duty incumbent upon those who guard against evil.' (Holy Qur'an: 2/180)

As you have neglected all these and claimed that I should not have of my father's inheritance?"

Abu - Bakr thus had to claim, alone, that he had heard the Holy Prophet saying, 'We, the Prophets, do not leave as inheritance a single dirham or dinar.' This in fact was the second controversial issue, because Lady Fatimah al - Zahra' refuted this claim using the general Qur'anic texts concerning the question of inheritance and that Prophet Solomon did inherit his father, Prophet David.

However, the best evidence on the falsehood of Abu - Bakr's claim is that he himself gave al - Zubayr ibn al - `Awwam, the husband of his daughter Asma', and Muhammad ibn Muslimah and others their shares from the inheritance of the Holy Prophet!

In view of that, it is easy to conclude that these two fields of the Muslim jurisprudence experienced distortion and ignorance more than the other fields did.

The extension of changes in these two fields is another proof on this fact; the issue of Khalid ibn al - Walid's having murdered Malik ibn Nuwayrah and committed fornication with his fresh widow was an extension of the policy of ignorance and opening wide the door of Opinionism in the field of Muslim judicature.

In order to find himself an exit from this judicial confusing issue, Abu - Bakr had to invent the question of "As Khalid tried to infer the ruling (i.e. practice Ta'wil: interpretation), he missed the right," although Khalid himself could not deny the perpetration of fornication because all the army had been the witnesses. Naturally, decent, trusty people must have existed among the individuals of that army.

A similar issue took place during the reign of `Umar ibn al - Khattab; Imam `Ali ibn Abi - Talib and al - `Abbas ibn `Abd al - Muttalib litigated before `Umar, although some narrations confirm that this issue was filed before Abu - Bakr, as regards the issue of the inheritance of the Holy Prophet.

As `Umar ibn al - Khattab judged that the riding animal, the weapon, and the ring of the Holy Prophet should be kept by `Ali, objections were aroused against him before he had previously supported the claim of Abu - Bakr that the Prophets do not leave inheritances; therefore, it was improper for him to judge that `Ali and al - `Abbas would inherit the Holy Prophet!

As a result, `Umar had to chide them and declared nonintervention in the solving of that issue. This was of course an escape from plunging in the fields of the shares of inheritance, judicature, and testimonies that caused the doctrinal provisions to be violated.

During that period too, another similar issue took place. Al - Mughirah ibn Shu`bah committed fornication, and three witnesses testified so; rather the ruling authority colluded with the last witness in order to save al - Mughirah from the doctrinal punishment of committing such a crime.

Yet, according to the Muslim jurisprudence the testimonies of three witnesses, although they are not sufficient to materialize the crime of fornication, achieve the provision that the committer should be sentenced to the censure punishment for his having secluded himself with a married lady. Nevertheless, none of these punishments or procedures was carried out by the caliph. On the contrary, `Umar ibn al - Khattab threw aside all the religious laws

appertained to this issue justifying that he had practiced Ijtihad in the fields of judicature, testimonies, and the violation of the doctrinal provisions.

During the reign of `Uthman ibn `Affan, a similar issue took place. Al – Walid led a congregational prayer while he was drunk, and a complete number of witnesses testified such. Rather, `Uthman desired to save al – Walid from the punishment of that act but Imam `Ali, as well as the other Muslims, insisted on implementing that religious provision.

A look at the proofs of `Uthman ibn `Affan that he presented for justifying the act of the accused as well as his efforts of threatening the witnesses confirms the topic of this discussion. In fact, `Uthman exceeded all limits in this respect until `A'ishah declared that he had violated the doctrinal provisions and threatened the witnesses.

Distortion in the issues of the laws of inheritance continued and attained its climax when `Uthman ibn `Affan gave Fadak and al – `Awaliy in possession to Marwan ibn al – Hakam violating the allegation of Lady Fatimah al – Zahra' that these areas had been donated to her by her father or that they had been within her share of her father's inheritance. `Uthman's deed is also a violation to the claims of Abu – Bakr that these areas were for all the Muslims.

Having not stopped at this edge, this state reached a crisis when Yazid violated all the religious laws, committed all forbidden crimes, and drank intoxicants publicly while his father, Mu`awiyah, neither sentenced him to the doctrinal punishments of committing such crimes nor warned him against corruption and libertinism, publicly at least, although the Umayyads in general and Mu`awiyah in particular fought against Imam `Ali under the pretense of inheritance and that his having been the heir of `Uthman ibn `Affan for nothing more than that both of them meet in the upper lineage while `Uthman's son was alive and he, not Mu`awiyah, was legally authorized in judging about the issue of his killed father.

Nevertheless, Mu`awiyah distorted the facts appertained to the laws of inheritance and could deceive the Muslims of Syria convincing them to fight and be killed depending upon this distorted presentation of the inheritance.

However, this distortion was preceded by a similar one, which was declared on that day during the meeting of the Saqifah when the people of Quraysh took the leadership (caliphate) from the Ansar under the pretense of kinship to the Holy Prophet, while they neglected Imam `Ali on the pretext that they were the clan of the Holy Prophet and were more powerful than Imam `Ali in the administration of the new state since they were old men while `Ali was still young!

The greatest calamity accompanied the coming of the `Abbasid rulers to power; because the rivals of the `Abbasid rulers, namely the descendants of Imam `Ali ibn Abi – Talib, were closer to the Holy Prophet than the `Abbasids and they are thus worthier of holding the position of the

leadership of the Islamic state, the `Abbasids distorted and misused the religious laws of inheritance, judicature, and testimonies.

As they realized that this fact would invalidate all their claims, the `Abbasids spared no single effort in distorting the religious laws of inheritance, misrepresenting all the concepts and texts of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah. In this respect, they urged a poet, named Marwan ibn Abi - Hafsah, to poetize the following:

How can it be? And it can never be
Descendants of daughters inherit instead of uncles!

Though some reference books confirm that it was Imam `Ali ibn Musa al - Rida who refuted such distortion, a Shi`ite poet replied,

Why can it not be? Verily, it can be
Descendants of daughters inherit instead of uncles
A daughter has a whole half of the heritage
And the uncle's share is nothing
What the Released one's relationship with the heritage
While he only prostrated for fear of sword!

It has been also narrated that Harun al - Rashid, the `Abbasid ruler, once visited the holy city of al - Madinah. When he passed by the tomb of the Holy Prophet, he greeted him saying, "Peace be upon you, cousin!" Imam Musa al - Kadhim who also attended that situation greeted the Holy Prophet saying, "Peace be upon you, father!" This answer enraged the `Abbasid ruler very much.

According to another narration, it has been narrated that Harun al - Rashid, once, asked Imam Musa al - Kadhim, "How do you claim that you, rather than us, are the sons and heirs of the Messenger of Allah while we are all cousins?"

Answering the ruler, Imam Musa al - Kadhim asked, "Let us suppose that the Holy Prophet will ask for your daughter's hand, will you agree?"

Harun al - Rashid answered, "Definitely I will; and I will certainly take pride in this over all the Arabs and non - Arabs."

Imam Musa al - Kadhim commented, "But if the Holy Prophet asks for my daughter's hand, it will be unlawful for me to agree, because he is my father."

This answer confuted the `Abbasid ruler who could not find any answer.

A similar situation occurred between the same `Abbasid ruler and Yahya ibn `Abdullah ibn al - Hasan. These situations and their likes were among the reasons that made the `Abbasid ruler persecute Imam Musa al - Kadhim, Yahya, and many other members from the Holy Prophet's

offspring.

On the other hand, the `Abbasid rulers' attempts to distort the religious laws of inheritance, judicature, and testimonies continued ceaselessly. The best example on this fact is the following incident:

One day, Harun, the `Abbasid ruler, summoned Abu - Yusuf, the famous judge, to find a solution for the issue that Harun was entrapped in an ethical trouble when the Muslims as well as Harun himself saw his son, al - Amin, drinking wine in the royal palace.

Harun did not know what to do; if he neglected the matter, it would be circulated among the Muslims who would no longer believe him as the commander of the believers, and on the other hand he did not want his crown prince and son to be sentenced to the legal punishment of consuming intoxicants.

He therefore sought the help of Abu - Yusuf, the judge, who did not disappoint the ruler when he presented so ridiculous pretexts in order to save the ruler's son. Thus, Harun prostrated himself as an expression of gratitude to Almighty Allah for such (baseless) solution and conferred upon the judge a good wealth.

From the abovementioned presentation we can realize why the Holy Imams focused exclusively on the religious laws of inheritance, judicature, and testimonies among the other sections of the Muslim jurisprudence.

Besides, the most common acts of the rulers obliged them to distort and misrepresent the laws of inheritance as well as the financial laws since such laws, if preserved as exactly as they are, would prevent them from usurping the public funds and misusing the fortunes of the Muslim community.

Similarly, in order that the rulers' parties of entertainment, singing, and impudence would continue, there should be found excuses for saving them from the doctrinal provisions of committing such acts. They therefore distorted the laws of testimonies and judicature.

In the same way as the true divine law of Islam refutes the false claim that the ruler of the Muslim community is above the law and that all of his crimes and misdeeds are forgiven, it refutes all the distortions of these rulers.

Imam `Ali Ibn Musa Al - Rida

As has been previously cited, reference books of the Ahl al - Bayt - the most important of which was the Book of Imam `Ali, al - Jafr, and al - Jami`ah - was transferred from one Imam to another. It thus reached Imam `Ali ibn Musa al - Rida from his father.

As regards, the al - Jafr, al - Kishiy in his famous book of biography (i.e. al - Rijal) has

recorded that Nasr ibn Qabus was in the house of Imam Musa al - Kadhim when he saw his son `Ali (i.e. Imam al - Rida) reading in a book. Imam al - Kadhim commented, “This is my son `Ali, and the book he is reading is al - Jafr.”

It has been also narrated on the authority of `Ali ibn Ibrahim, on the authority of Muhammad ibn `Isa, on the authority of Yunus, on the authority of Abu’l - Hasan (i.e. Imam `Ali ibn Musa al - Rida), and on the authority of his father that Ibn Faddal said, “As I showed him the Book of `Ali, Imam `Ali ibn Musa al - Rida confirmed it, saying: Amir al - Mu'minin issued a verdict about the blood money for the wounds of the organs.”

It has been also narrated on the authority of `Ali ibn Ibrahim on the authority of Muhammad ibn `Isa on the authority of Yunus on the authority of Imam `Ali ibn Musa al - Rida, and on the authority of his father on the authority of Ibn Faddal that he said, “I showed the Book (i.e. Kitab al - Fara'id) before Abu’l - Hasan (Imam al - Rida) as investigation of its authenticity.”

It has been also narrated on the authority of `Ali ibn Ibrahim on the authority of his father that Ibn Faddal, Muhammad ibn `Isa both narrated that Yunus said, “As we presented before him the Kitab al - Fara'id that is reported from Amir al - Mu'minin, Imam al - Rida confirmed its authenticity.”

It is true that in the age of Imam al - Rida, a new era commenced. It was the era of compilation, foundation, and documentation of the records that are claimed or supposed to have quoted the materials of the Book of Imam `Ali as well as the religious laws reported by the Ahl al - Bayt. During this era, their disciples used to compile and present these books before the holy Imams in order to document them.

This course began noticeably during the age of Imam `Ali ibn Musa al - Rida. In this respect, it has been narrated that Ibn Faddal and Yunus ibn `Abd al - Rahman said, “As we showed him Kitab al - Fara'id (The Book of Laws of Inheritance) that is reported from Amir al - Mu'minin, Imam al - Rida confirmed it.”

It has been also narrated that `Abdullah al - Ju`afiy said: I, once, visited Imam `Ali ibn Musa al - Rida carrying with me a sheet of paper on which it was written, “It is reported that (Imam) Ja`far (al - Sadiq) said that this world has been represented for the Owner of this Matter (i.e. Imam al - Mahdi) like a half of a walnut that is split.” Imam al - Rida commented, “This is unquestionably true. Copy it to a sheet made of leather.”

In this narration, a Hadith that was reported from Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq is presented before Imam `Ali ibn Musa al - Rida in order to investigate whether it is authentic or nor. Imam al - Rida, of course, would either check for the Hadith from the Book of Imam `Ali or, more generally, from the Hadiths that he had received from his father and forefathers.

At any rate, the aim of presenting the Hadiths before Imam al - Rida was to document these narrations that were reported from the three holy Imams - Muhammad al - Baqir, Ja`far al - Sadiq, and Musa al - Kadhim. Naturally, these narrations were mainly reported from Imam `Ali who had reported from the Holy Prophet.

It has been also narrated on the authority of Hamzah ibn `Abdullah al - Ja`fairy that Abu'l - Hasan said, "I, once, wrote down on a sheet of paper (the Hadith) that this world has been represented for the Imam (i.e. al - Mahdi) like a half of a walnut that is split, and I presented it before Imam al - Rida saying, 'May Allah accept me as ransom for you! Our companions have reported a Hadith that I could not deny; rather I would like to hear it from you.' As the Imam looked in the paper, he folded it until I thought that he could not stand the matter. He then said, 'This is true. Write it down on a sheet of leather.'"

Out of his extensive interest in the recordation of the religious heritage, Imam al - Rida used to offer an inkpot to everyone who would write down for the sake of knowledge and the religion. In this respect, it has been narrated that `Ali ibn Asbat said that Imam al - Rida, once, said, "The treasure about which Almighty Allah, in the Holy Qur'an, says, 'And there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them...' (Holy Qur'an: 18/82)..."

On hearing this, I said to the Imam that I would like to write down his saying. He immediately extended his hand to take the inkpot and put before me. But I hurried to his hand, kissed it, took the inkpot, and wrote down the saying.

In addition, Imam al - Rida used to confirm that all that which he would say was the pure truth that was inherited from the Holy Prophet and that the genuine heritage of Prophethood was held by none except him.

In this respect, it has been narrated that Ya`qub ibn Ja`far said that he was accompanying Imam `Ali ibn Musa al - Rida in Makkah when a man said to him, "You are interpreting the texts of Allah's Book (i.e. the Holy Qur'an) in an unprecedented way." Answering the man, Imam al - Rida said,

"Before it was revealed to the people, the Qur'an had been revealed to us; and before it was explained to the people, it had been explained to us. We thus know best what is lawful and what is unlawful therein... This is the knowledge of what I have conveyed to you so long as I am bound by this duty. If you accept from me, you should then thank; and if you neglect, then it is Almighty Allah Who witnesses all things."

It has been also narrated that `Abd al - Salam ibn Salih al - Harawiy said that on hearing Imam al - Rida saying, "May Allah have mercy upon him who enlivens our Matter," I asked, "How is your Matter enlivened?" The Imam answered,

“It is enlivened by learning our knowledge and conveying it to the people. Had the people been acquainted with our excellent wording, they would certainly have followed us.”

It has been also narrated that Abu - Nasr said to Imam al - Rida, “May Allah accept me as ransom for you! Some of our companions claim that they hear the traditions that are reported from your fathers and you and then analogize and act upon them!” The Imam answered, “How strange this is! Nay, by Allah! This does not belong to the religion of Ja`far (al - Sadiq)! These people have nothing to do with us. They have neglected the obedience to us and occupied our positions. Where is the submission that they have shown to Ja`far and the father of Ja`far? Ja`far has said: Act not upon analogy. Nothing matches analogy except analogy that breaks it.”

About those who were entrapped by spurious arguments and were confused as regards the religious affairs, Imam al - Rida says,

“They have been deceived by spurious matters; therefore, the fact of their religion was confused for them. As they wanted to be guided to the right path of their own accord, they asked why, when, and how. As a result, perdition came upon them from the very place of their expectation. That was because of what their own hands have committed; verily, ‘And thy Lord is not at all a tyrant to His slaves.’

They have not been ordered to do such; rather in such situations what is obligatory upon them is only to stop at situations of perplexity and refer what they have ignored to the learned ones who can infer it (from the Holy Qur'an), for Almighty Allah says in His Book, ‘Whereas if they had referred it to the messenger and to such of them as are in authority, those among them who are able to infer the matter would have known it’ (Holy Qur’an: 4/83) These are certainly the Family of Muhammad. It is they who can infer it from the Qur'an, and it is they who know best what is lawful and what is unlawful, and it is they who are Almighty Allah’s arguments against His creatures.”

Imam al - Rida is also reported to have written a book entitled Sahifat al - Rida that he reported from his forefather. This Sahifah has been frequently published.

He also wrote down the al - Risalah al - Dhahabiyyah (the Golden Epistle) for al - Ma'mun, the `Abbasid ruler, who ordered this epistle to be written with liquid gold and thus it took the title of the Golden Epistle. Yet, other historians have mentioned other reasons for this title. This epistle has been published many times.

It is also narrated that the book of al - Ahlilijiyyah (The Ellipse) was written by Imam al - Rida. About this book, Sayyid al - Amin says, “It comprises effective arguments and excellent topics concerning theology.”

Furthermore, Imam al - Rida dictated to his disciples as well as the Muslim jurisprudents and students of jurisprudence numerous items of knowledge, since his sessions were dedicated to teaching and dictations of knowledge.

It has been narrated on the authority of `Ali ibn `Ali al - Khuza`iy (brother of Di`bil, the famous poet) that Imam `Ali ibn Musa al - Rida, in the city of Tus in the year AH , dictated to us a narration that he reported from his father, Musa ibn Ja`far.

This narration clearly demonstrates that Imam al - Rida, having been interested in the recordation and the records of the religious knowledge, used to dictate Islamic knowledge to the scholars and students of religious knowledge who used to attend his sessions.

Imam Muhammad Ibn `Ali Al - Jawad

Imam Muhammad al - Jawad continued to take an interest in the recordation of the religious knowledge and to preserve the books and records in this field through exerting all possible efforts in amending and keeping them in safety.

For his having been too young, the rulers held many sessions of debate in order to confute or belittle Imam al - Jawad, but all their attempts failed. Moreover, the scholars and jurisprudents, as well as the publics, who attended these sessions were astonished by the unmatched scientific capacities of him.

In addition to his interest in the Muslim jurisprudence and the recordation of the religious knowledge, Imam al - Jawad was known of his having paid much attention to the doctrinal questions owing to the circumstances by which he passed.

Not only were the Imam's efforts dedicated to the sessions of debate and arguments but also he continued the march of recordation and documentation of the Islamic heritage. He therefore had full acquaintance with the Book of Imam `Ali and the reports from Imam Muhammad al - Baqir and Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq.

In this respect, it has been narrated that Muhammad ibn al - Hasan ibn Abi - Khalid asked Imam al - Jawad, "May Allah accept me as ransom for you! Our master scholars have reported from Abu - Ja`far (Imam al - Baqir) and Abu - `Abdullah (Imam al - Sadiq) when it was very recommended to practice Taqiyyah; therefore, they concealed their books and no longer were they narrated. When these scholars passed away, their books have become in our hands. Are the contents of these books authentic that we permitted to spread them?"

The Imam answered, "You all should spread the knowledge of these books, for they are the truth."

This narration demonstrates the intellectual persecution, especially in the field of the

recordation of the religious knowledge, that was practiced by the Umayyad and `Abbasid rulers to the degree that one of the intimate disciples of Imam al - Jawad doubted, or wanted to be sure, whether the contents of these narrations had been authentic or not.

Of course, such doubt was the natural result of the intellectual and doctrinal persecution that were practiced against the Muslims. In such situations did the actual role of the Imam manifest itself. The Imam is in fact the most accurate criterion of discriminating the authentic from the dubious as regards the recorded and reported heritage of Islam.

Most probably, the Imam had already seen such narrations in the Book of `Ali as well as the books of his forefathers; he therefore said to the asker, “You all should spread the knowledge of these books, for they are the truth.”

Although the asker was single, the Imam answered using the form of plural. This indicates that this misfortune was encountered by all the disciples of the Imam and that the majority of the recorded and reported narrations were not yet documented as a result of political suppression, persecution, and terrorism.

As he had known for sure the recordations of his father in form and content, the Imam wept when he put the handwriting on his eyes and swore its having been his father’s in order to refute any probability that the book might have been distorted or falsely ascribed to Imam al - Rida.

It has been narrated that Ibrahim ibn Abu - Mahmud said that he once visited Abu - Ja`far (Imam al - Jawad) carrying some of his father’s books. The Imam took them, read them, and then moved the book closer to his eyes, saying, “This is my father’s handwriting. I swear it by Allah.” He then wept heavily that his tears flew on his cheeks.

Al - Arbaliy, in Kashf al - Ghummah, has also narrated on the authority of Imam Muhammad al - Jawad that it is written in the Book of `Ali that son of Adam is similar to a scales; he is either preponderant due to knowledge (or reason) or low - grade due to ignorance.

The Imam also confirmed the significance of recording the religious knowledge since it is more influential than reporting and even more authentic in the view of the receiver of the narration, especially when some of the readers of these records had known the handwriting of the Imam.

In this connection, it has been narrated that `Abd al - `Aziz ibn al - Muhtadiy asked Imam al - Jawad about the manner of Yunus ibn `Abd al - Rahman. In a written form, Imam al - Jawad answered, “I love him and ask Almighty Allah to have mercy upon him although he disagreed with the people of your town.”

The Imam wrote a number of epistles and missives to his disciples. It has been narrated that Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn `Isa said that Abu - Ja`far (Imam al - Jawad) sent him a missive

with his slave in which he asked him to pay him a visit... Give him this missive of mine and order him to send me the money... etc.

It has been also narrated that al - Hasan ibn Sham`un said that he read the following missive written by Imam al - Jawad personally to `Ali ibn Mahziyar: “In the Name of Allah, the All - beneficent, the All - merciful; O `Ali! May Allah reward you excellently... etc.”

The Imam sent another missive to `Ali ibn Mahziyar who was in Baghdad and a third one while the latter was in al - Madinah. He is also reported to have said that he sent a missive to Imam al - Jawad asking him what to do with a thing that belonged to him, and the Imam answered... etc. It has been also narrated that Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Hammad al - Maruziy said that Imam Muhammad al - Jawad wrote a missive to his father... etc.

In a long narration, it has been narrated that `Abd al - Jabbar al - Nahawandiy saw a missive sent from Muhammad ibn `Ali al - Hashimiy (i.e. Imam al - Jawad) to `Abdullah ibn al - Mubarak... etc.

Shaykh `Azizullah al - `Ataridiy has compiled the narrations of Imam Muhammad al - Jawad in a book entitled Musnad al - Imam al - Jawad.

Imam `Ali Ibn Muhammad Al - Hadi

Like his holy forefathers, Imam `Ali al - Hadi kept the Book of Imam `Ali from which he reported the traditions and blessed Sunnah of the Holy Prophet. Out of his incomparable interest in the Book of `Ali, Imam `Ali al - Hadi reported from that book while he was bed - ridden due to the poison that was put to him.

It has been narrated that Abu - Du`amah said: I visited `Ali ibn Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn Musa in his final ailment because of which he departed life. When I was about to leave, he said to me, “Abu - Du`amah! It is now incumbent upon us to honor you. May I inform you of a narration that will please you?”

“I am terribly needful for such a narration, son of Allah’s Messenger!” I said. He said, “My father Muhammad ibn `Ali (Imam al - Jawad) reported to me from his father `Ali ibn Musa (Imam al - Rida) that his father Musa ibn Ja`far (Imam al - Kadhim) reported to him from his father Ja`far ibn Muhammad (Imam al - Sadiq) that he reported from his father Muhammad ibn `Ali (Imam al - Baqir) that his father `Ali ibn al - Husayn (Imam Zayn al - `Abidin) reported to him from his father (Imam) al - Husayn ibn `Ali that his father (Imam) `Ali ibn Abi - Talib reported to him that the Messenger of Allah asked him to write down. ‘What should I write down,’ asked `Ali. The Holy Prophet answered, ‘Write down: In the Name of Allah, the All - beneficent, the All - merciful; Real faith is that which is confirmed by hearts and substantiated

by deeds. Islam is that which is said by tongues and by which marriage is deemed lawful." (Abu - Du`amah added) I then said, "Son of Allah's Messenger! I cannot tell whether the contents of the Hadith or its series of narrators are the best!"

Imam al - Hadi answered,

"This is taken from a Sahifah that is handwritten by `Ali ibn Abi - Talib and dictated by the Messenger of Allah. We are inheriting this Sahifah from one another."

This narration reveals that all or the majority of the narrations said by the Holy Imams of the Ahl al - Bayt are quoted from the Book of Imam `Ali even if they would not declare so in each and every saying; rather they declared it in general.

Unfortunately, some ignorant people had not realized this fact; they therefore accused Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq of having been 'bookish' since they could not understand that he depended upon the books that comprised the dictations of the Holy Prophet and were handwritten by Imam `Ali ibn Abi - Talib.

In order that the Hadiths would reach the next generations as purely and authentically as possible, Imam `Ali al - Hadi continued the process of the documentation of the narrations and records that are reported from his father and forefathers.

It has been narrated that Muhammad ibn `Isa said: Dawud ibn Farqad al - Farisiy read to me his missive to Abu'l - Hasan III (i.e. Imam `Ali al - Hadi) who answered that missive with his own handwriting. In this missive, Dawud had asked him, "We would like to ask you about the knowledge that is reported to us from your father and forefathers; controversy occurred to such narrations and we do not know what to do about it. Should we refer such contradictory items to you?"

Answering him, Imam `Ali al - Hadi wrote down,

"As regards the items that you are sure of their being authentically ascribed to us, you must adhere to them. But as for the items about which you are not sure, you must refer them to us."

In the abovementioned narration, the Imam made incumbent on his disciples to refer the dubious and ambiguous narrations, as well as those whose ascription to the Holy Imams is suspected, to the Holy Imams in order to document the authentic and reject the forged and the erroneous.

Some of his disciples have narrated that Imam `Ali al - Hadi wrote down a book on the exegesis (Tafsir) of the Holy Qur'an entitled al - Amaliy fi Tafsir al - Qur'an. This book has been frequently reprinted although some scholars have doubted its having been written by Imam `Ali al - Hadi.

Sayyid al - Amin has also mentioned that Imam `Ali al - Hadi wrote another book about the

laws of the religion (Ahkam al - Din) refuting the spurious arguments of the Fatalists (Ahl al - Jabr) and the Indeterminists (Ahl al - Tafwid).

Copies of this book were kept by Abu - Tahir, `Isa ibn Ahmad ibn `Isa, `Ali ibn al - Rayyan, and `Ali ibn Ja`far al - Hamaniy.

Shaykh `Azizullah al - `Ataridiy has compiled the Hadiths reported from Imam `Ali al - Hadi in a book entitled Musnad al - Imam al - Hadi.

Imam Al - Hasan Ibn `Ali Al - `Askariy

Imam al - Hasan al - `Askariy dedicated his efforts to two chief tasks; he first exerted all efforts in informing his intimate disciples everything related to his son, Muhammad al - Mahdi, as being the next Imam.

Secondly, he concerned himself with the matter of the recordation and the documentation of the records comprising the religious knowledge through comparing them to the contents of the Book of Imam `Ali as well as the heritage that he had received from his father and forefathers.

In this discussion, we will deal exclusively with the second task for it is related to the main topic of this book.

It has been narrated on the authority of Sa`d ibn `Abdullah al - Ash`ariy that Ahmad ibn `Abdullah ibn Khanibah showed a book to our master Abu - Muhammad al - Hasan ibn `Ali ibn Muhammad (al - `Askariy) who, having read that book, declared its authenticity and ordered to act upon it.

After it had been confirmed by Imam al - `Askariy, the book became a reference for the seekers of the genuine knowledge and the authenticated narration. They therefore investigated the narrations that they had taken from other sources to this book.

It has been narrated that al - Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn al - Wajna' Abu - Muhammad al - Nusaybiy said that when they wrote a missive to Imam al - `Askariy asking him to write down or supply them with a book upon which they would act, the Imam gave them such a book.

Al - Safwaniy said that he copied it and compared it to the book of Ahmad ibn `Abdullah ibn Khanibah and found out that they were almost the same with a little difference in a few number of letters.

Apparently, Imam al - Hasan al - `Askariy gave them a book that comprised the major and most important religious questions. This fact demonstrates the Imam's great attention to the recordation of the religious knowledge. Although he was among them, the Imam realized the significance, comprehensiveness, and common benefit of the recorded knowledge; he therefore wrote a book for his disciples.

Like their master, the disciples of Imam al - Hasan al - `Askariy took a great interest in the recordation and the documentation of the recorded knowledge; therefore, al - Safwaniy, according to the aforesaid narration, copied the book of Imam al - `Askariy and then compared it to the book of Ahmad ibn `Abdullah ibn Khanibah, which had been already documented by the Imam.

As a conclusion, the process of documenting the reported and recorded narrations was very important in the view of the Ahl al - Bayt who also conveyed it to their disciples and taught them to preserve such records.

When they asked him what they should do about the books of the sons of Faddal that were filling their houses, Imam al - Hasan al - `Askariy answered, “You should accept their narrations and neglect their opinions.”

Sons of Faddal had been Shi`ites and had recorded the Hadiths of the Holy Imams of the Ahl al - Bayt before they deviated doctrinally and adopted erroneous concepts about Imamate. Accordingly, the people doubted the narrations that they had recorded although their houses were full of such records.

This is an indication to the fact that the followers of the Ahl al - Bayt took a great interest in and benefited from the records that comprised the religious knowledge in the same way as they used to investigate the authenticity of the contents of such records.

The Imam thus answered that the reports of the sons of Faddal had been authentic and they therefore should be adopted, but their opinions and concepts that violated the genuine beliefs of the true course of the Ahl al - Bayt should be neglected.

It has been narrated that Dawud ibn al - Qasim al - Ja`fary showed the book of Yawm(un) wa - Laylah to Imam al - Hasan al - `Askariy who asked, “Who compiled this book?”

“Yunus, the slave of the Yaqtin did,” I answered.

The Imam commented, “May Allah confer upon him, on the Resurrection Day, with illumination for each letter that he had written.”

Imam al - Hasan al - `Askariy is reported to have written down a book on the exegesis of the Holy Qur'an. This book has been many times reprinted under the title of Tafsir al - Imam al - `Askariy.

It has been reported that some books reported to have been written by Imam al - Hasan al - `Askariy were kept by Ibn Mu`adh al - Huwaymiy, Abu - Tahir al - Raziy - grandfather of Abu - Ghalib - , Muhammad ibn al - Rayyan ibn al - Salt, and Muhammad ibn `Isa al - Qummiy. These books comprised many questions which were reported by these disciples.

It has been also reported that when his disciples sent messages asking about questions in the

religious laws and doctrines, Imam al - Hasan al - `Askariy used to answer all these questions. Historians have mentioned the names of some of those who exchanged letters with the Imam, such as Muhammad ibn al - Hasan al - Saffar, `Abdullah ibn Ja`far, Ibrahim ibn Mahziyar, `Ali ibn Muhammad al - Husayniy, Muhammad ibn al - Rayyan, al - Rayyan ibn al - Salt, `Ali ibn .Bilal, Hamzah ibn Muhammad, and Muhammad ibn `Abd al - Jabbar

Imam Muhammad Ibn Al - Hasan Al - Mahdi

Imam al - Mahdi inherited the knowledge of his forefathers including the Book of Imam `Ali and the others that they had kept. Before that, the Holy Imams had stated that the Book of Imam `Ali, the Mushaf of Fatimah, and the others books that were written during the age of the Holy Prophet would be found with Muhammad al - Mahdi, the last Imam, and that he would not issue any judgment unless it would be corresponding to the contents of these books.

In this connection, it has been narrated on the authority of Hamran ibn A`yun that Imam Muhammad al - Baqir (Abu - Ja`far) pointed at a big house and said,

“O Hamran! In this house there is a Sahifah of seventy cubit length. It was handwritten by (Imam) `Ali with the dictations of the Messenger of Allah. If we rule over the people, we would judge between them according to what Almighty Allah has revealed and thus we would never exceed the contents of this Sahifah.”

The Holy Imams had also stated that the Book and the Sahifah of Imam `Ali would be kept by them forever and they would never be exposed to obliteration; rather they (i.e. the Holy Imams) would inherit them from one another.

As has been previously cited, Abu - Basir is reported to have said that Imam Muhammad al - Baqir showed him a Sahifah comprising all that which is deemed lawful and unlawful as well as the laws of inheritance.

“What is this?” asked Abu - Basir.

The Imam answered, “This Sahifah comprises the dictations of the Messenger of Allah with the handwriting of (Imam) `Ali.”

“Will this Sahifah be exposed to extinction?” asked Abu - Basir.

Imam al - Baqir answered, “What is the thing that will cause it to be extinct?”

“Will it be exposed to obliteration?” asked Abu - Basir.

Imam al - Baqir answered, “What is the thing that will cause it to be obliterated?”

In the famous narration about his meeting with Imam al - Mahdi in Samarra' (a city northern Baghdad, Iraq), al - Hasan ibn Wajna’ an - Nusaybiy said that the Imam gave him a book comprising the Du`a' al - Faraj (Supplication of asking Almighty Allah for hastening His relief to

Imam al - Mahdi by permitting him to reappear in this world) and a statement about the way of sending blessings to him (i.e. Imam al - Mahdi).

The Imam then taught him to say these supplications whenever he wanted to pray to Almighty Allah to send His blessings to the Imam. He also asked him not to give this book except to the intimate disciples... etc.

It has been also narrated that Imam al - Mahdi once asked one the disciples of his father and him to show him a ring that had been given to him by Imam al - Hasan al - `Askariy (Imam al - Mahdi's father). When the man showed him the ring, the Imam wept and kissed it. He then began to read the inscription on that ring, which reads, 'Ya - Allah, Ya - Muhammad, Ya - `Ali.' He then said to the ring, "Sacrificed be the hand in which you were placed for long time."

Because he disappeared from visions for about seventy years, Imam al - Mahdi could not spread the religious laws and encourage the recordation of the religious knowledge openly; rather he was exchanging letters with his intimate disciples who used to ask him about the major religious questions and he thus answered by sending them messages containing his signature so that they would not be distorted or counterfeited.

Accordingly, these messages have been called al - Tawqi`at (The Signatures). In the past as well as in the current time, many scholars have compiled these al - Tawqi`at in books. Abu'l - `Abbas al - Himyariy, one of Imam al - Mahdi's disciples who died in AH , was the first to compile these al - Tawqi`at in a book.

Recently, a book comprising the majority of Imam al - Mahdi's messages and written instructions has been compiled by Shaykh Muhammad al - Gharawiy under the title of al - Mukhtar min Kalimat al - Imam al - Mahdi (Selected Words of Imam al - Mahdi). This book has been recently published.

From the aforecited discussion, we can conclude that the Holy Imams' continuity in the field of the recordation of the religious heritage began with Imam `Ali ibn Abi - Talib's writings and then continued throughout the generations up to the age of Imam Muhammad al - Mahdi. After that, the disciples of the Holy Imams and the scholars have compiled these records. Distinctive concentration and confirmation was given to the question of the documentation of the records of the religious knowledge after the Imamate of Imam Musa al - Kadhim. However, the process of the documentation was originally very old since the Holy Imams confirmed and practiced it and documented all the texts that their disciples used to show to them. At any rate, during the age of Imam `Ali ibn Musa al - Rida and afterward, the process of documenting the religious records noticeably increased.

As we are coming to the conclusion of this part of our thesis, it is important to attract

attentions to a significant factor that stood behind the slow down of the recordations and records for the followers of the School of Ijtihad and Opinionism. Some of those who surrounded the Holy Prophet used to treat with him as if he had been an ordinary person, without making any difference between any other person and him.

They therefore called out to him from behind the private chambers; and annoyed him by sitting with him for very long times; and believed his having been an ordinary person that was exposed to errancy in the very same way as he might be correct; and believed that when he was enraged, he might say things that he would not say if he was pleased.

It has been narrated that `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn al - `As said: I used to write down each and every item that would be said by the Messenger of Allah so that I would memorize it, but the people of Quraysh warned me against such, saying, “Do you really write down each and every item that is said by the Messenger of Allah while his sayings are influenced by his manners; that is when he is enraged, he may say things that he does not say when he is pleased?” I therefore stopped writing down his sayings. When I mentioned this matter before him, the Messenger of Allah said to me,

“Write down (everything I say); for, I swear by Him Who grasps my soul, nothing comes out of my mouth except the truth.”

According to the abovementioned narration, it was the people of Quraysh who ordered `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn al - `As to stop writing down the Holy Prophet’s words, claiming that he might say untrue things when he would be angry!

The Holy Prophet is too great to pronounce any untrue word.

It has been also narrated on the authority of `Amr ibn Shu`ayb on the authority of his father that his grandfather, once, asked the Holy Prophet whether he might write down everything that he would hear from him.

“Yes, you may,” the Holy Prophet answered.

“In both manners of anger and pleasure?” asked the man.

“Yes, in both manners. Verily, I say nothing but the truth whatever my manner be,” answered the Holy Prophet.

This very idea was also common and prevalent, and even effective, during the ages of the Holy Imams. Accordingly, some people imagined that the Imam, being enraged, might report a matter or say something that he would not say it when he would be pleased.

Unfortunately, such people believed that the Holy Imams were just like the other fuqaha, scholars, and Ijtihadists whose opinions are exposed to change according to the circumstances by which they pass or according to the proofs on which their eyes might fall in a

certain period of their lifetimes.

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al - Bayt always answered and said the same words of the Holy Prophet; as a result, none of the Muslim master scholars dared to say so save them, since they enjoyed the highest degree of self - confidence and they believed indisputably in the authenticity of their reports as regards the religious affairs and laws. They therefore ordered their disciples to write down these reports because they were conclusively true.

It has been narrated on the authority of Hamzah ibn `Abd al - Muttalib that `Abdullah al - Ju`afiy said: I, once, visited Imam `Ali ibn Musa al - Rida carrying with me a sheet of paper on which it was written, "It is reported that (Imam) Ja`far (al - Sadiq) said that this world has been represented for the Owner of this Matter (i.e. Imam al - Mahdi) like a half of a walnut that is split." Imam al - Rida commented, "O Hamzah! This is unquestionably true. Copy it to a sheet made of leather."

Many uninterrupted narrations have been reported concerning the fact that the Holy Imams of the Ahl al - Bayt say nothing but the truth and that they have never issued verdicts out of personal Ijtihad or given their own notions or opinions as regards a religious question. In this respect, it has been narrated on the authority of al - Fudayl ibn Yasar that Imam Muhammad al - Baqir said,

"If we speak out of our own opinions, we will certainly miss the right way in the same way as those, who were before us, had missed the right way when they spoke out of their own opinions. Rather we speak depending upon a proof of our Lord that He has explained to His Prophet and His Prophet has explained it to us."

Similarly, it has been narrated on the authority of Dawud ibn Abu - Yazid al - Ahwal that Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq said,

"If we give religious verdicts out of our desires and personal opinions, we will certainly be of those who shall perish; rather we give people verdicts derived from the traditions of the Messenger of Allah and from principles that we have inherited from our great fathers. We have hoarded up these principles in the same way as those people have hoarded up their fortunes of gold and silver."

It has been also narrated on the authority of Qutaybah that after Imam Ja`far al - Sadiq answered the questions of a man, the latter said, "What if the answer is such - and - such, what will you say about it?"

Imam al - Sadiq, reproachfully, answered, "Shut up! Any answer that I give to you must be taken from the Messenger of Allah. We are not of those who say 'what if' at all."

Without doubt, such continuity in the recordation of the religious affairs and such ultimate

confidence that all these records are the same as what have been said by the Messenger of Allah - such continuity and confidence cannot be found with any other Muslim School except the School of the Ahl al - Bayt that is the basis of the recordation of the religious knowledge and the foundation of the structure of the School of Thorough Compliance with the Sacred Texts. The matter is now too clear to be misunderstood; therefore, one may choose any narration that he/she likes.

Finally, it seems appropriate to quote the wording of Dr. Mustafa al - A`dhamiy about the Shi`ite Muslims:

"As for the Shi`ite Muslims the majority of whom belong to the Ithna`ashariyyah (Twelvers) School in the recent times, they believe in the Holy Sunnah as a source of the religion. Rather, the difference between them and us lies in the method of proving the authenticity of the Sunnah itself".

Note: This article has been taken from the famous book "The Prohibition of Recording the Hadith, Causes and Effects" written by Sayyid Ali Al - Shahristani. To study the book with the references, please clik here.