



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

History and Development of the Shia

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Lesson: 31

Topic: Sheikh al-Kulayni

Sheikh Muhammad ibn Yaqub al-Kulayni:

- An influential scholar
- The author of *Al-Kafi*, one of the essential Shia hadith collections

Al-Kafi:

- Part I: Usul al-Din (fundamentals of the faith)
- Part II: Furu' al-Din (Islamic Laws)
- Part III: Rawdha

- Imams عليه السلام empowered and encouraged their students to receive, record, and document the hadiths. Among these documents are *al-Usul al-Arba'mia*.
- Another development came up by the start of the occultation age: to gather all of the hadiths narrated from Imams عليه السلام. Al-Kulayni was among the first ones.
- *Al-Kafi* is one of the four primary hadith sources of the Shia.
- The Four Books are written by three scholars, all of whom were Muhammad, and thereby they were called *al-Muhammadun al-Thalath (the three Muhammads)*:
 1. Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni: *al-Kafi*, with over 16199 hadiths.
 2. Muhammad ibn Hassan al-Tusi:
 - a. *Tahdhib al-Ahkam*: 13905 hadiths
 - b. *Al-Istibsar*: 5511 hadiths
 3. Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Babawayh (Sheikh al-Saduq): *Man la yahdhuruh al-Faqih*: 5998 hadiths

Al-Kulayni:

Name: Muhammad ibn Ya'qub

Title: *Thiqat al-Islam* (the trusted one)

Birth town: Kulayni (several kilometers from Rey, Iran)



Birth: Estimated around the birth of Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام

Death: 329 A.H.

- His whole life was during the Minor Occultation.
- Al-Kulayni's teachers were direct students of Imams عليهم السلام (like Ali ibn Ibrahim)
- It took him 20 years to gather, write down and compile the work *al-Kafi*.

To gather hadiths, he traveled from city to city:

- 1st. Rey (then a center for the Shia and scholars like Sayyid Abd al-Azim al-Hasani)
- 2nd. Qom (a big Shia school including the Al-Ash'ari family)
- 3rd. Baghdad (the city of the special deputies of the Imam عليه السلام), etc.

Some of his teachers:

- Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qommi (1/4th of al-Kafi from him).
- Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Ibrahim
- Sheikh Abu al-Husayn Muhammad ibn Ali al-Ja'fari al-Samarqandi
- Muhammad ibn al-Ahmad al-Khaffaf al-Neysaburi

Al-Kafi is very well-organized. The first part includes eight chapters:

1. Intellect and Ignorance;
2. The importance of knowledge
3. Tawhid.
4. The Proof
5. Faith and disbelief
6. Supplications
7. Importance of the Quran
8. How to live with others

Furu' al-Kafi in 26 chapters

Rawdha al-Kafi: different from other parts/ includes interpretation of the Quran, some of the dreams, *zuhd* of the prophet, and miscellaneous subjects.



The features that make *al-Kafi* stand out:

1. It has recorded the hadith word for word rather than quoting the meaning of the words of Ahlulbayt عليه السلام.
2. It has recorded all hadiths with the chain of narrators. That's why his book is the most important.

Is all of *al-Kafi* Sahih?

- A few: yes
- Majority: no
 - o However, the ones from whom he has narrated and himself are authentic and trustworthy.
- Al-Kulayni himself doesn't claim that every single hadith is 100% *sahih*. Hence, he brings the chain of narrators.
- Unlike Sunnis, no book is considered *sahih* for the Shia, and all are open to research.

The reason why the book was called *Kafi*:

- Some: Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام looked into it and said, 'الكافي كافٍ لشيعتنا': *al-Kafi* is sufficient for our Shia.
- He himself said in the preface that it is a book that is sufficient for the Shia.
- After al-Kulayni gathered *al-Kafi*, many primary books were lost (some burnt, some destroyed); however, hadith collections like *Kafi* were significant.
- Al-Kulayni was praised by all Shia scholars.
- He also has other books, but this work is the most notable.
- He died in 329 A.H. in Baghdad.
- *Al-Kafi* is considered a primary source due to the presence of the chains of narrators and its closeness to the time of Imams عليه السلام.