



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

History and Development of the Shia

Teacher: Sayed Saleh al-Qazwini

Lesson: 33

Topic: al-Shaykh al-Mufid

Name: Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Nu'man al- 'Ukbari, known as Shaykh al-Mufid

Birth: 336 or 338 A.H.

- As the Major Occultation started, a new era emerged under new circumstances. The mindset and influences now were different. It was the beginning of the *ijtihad* movement.

Title: al-Shaykh al-Mufid (the one who everyone benefits from)

Death: 413 A.H.

Birthplace: A village close to Baghdad (so he was called *Baghdadi* as well)

- His father was a teacher; thereby, he was called *ibn al-Mu'allim*
- Title *al-Mufid* was given to him after a debate between him and a *Mutazilite* scholar.

Quran teacher: His father

Academic teacher: Both Shia and Sunni scholars, as it was common then.

Baghdad was a center for Shia Hawza then because Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام's four deputies lived there, followed by other scholars.

Mufid's top teachers:

1. Shaykh al-Saduq (d. 381 A.H.)
2. Ibn al-Junayd al-Iskafi (d. 381)
3. Ibn Qulawayh al-Qummi (d.369)
4. Abu Ghalib al-Zurari
5. Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Umar al-Ja'abi
 - By age 40, he had already become the Shia school of thought leader.

Mufid's top students:

1. Al-Sharif al-Murtadha



2. Al-Sharif al-Radhi (author of *Nahj al-Balagha*; passed away 30 years before his brother)
3. Shaykh al-Tusi (known as *al-Shaykh*)
4. Al-Najashi (a historian and biographical evaluator)

Mufid's contribution

- One of the most significant contributions of Al-Mufid was revolutionizing the methodology of al-fiqh (from a hadith-based approach and merely analogical approach of fiqh to a mixed approach using both hadith and intellect as sources. This was the beginning of *usul al-fiqh*)
- He also had contributions to *ilm al-hadith* as well as *ilm al-Kalam* (e.g., his debates on ideological matters)

Mufid's books

Number of written books: 175, including:

- *Al-Muqni'a fi ilm al-fiqh*
- *Awail al-Maqalat fi ilm al-Kalam*
- *Al-Irshad* (about the lives of the Imams عليهم السلام)

His Morals

- Al-Shaykh al-Mufid was a man of manners, etiquettes and behaviors; He wore rough clothes through which he was known as the sheikh of the Mashayikh of the Sufis. (suf literally means wool)

Letters from the Imam عليه السلام and evaluating them

- Al-Mufid received letters from Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام. We have two of them narrated by Sheikh al-Tabarsi (d.548 A.H.) in *al-Ihtijaj*.
- Seyyed Bahr ul-Ulum says there were three letters, one of which is unavailable today.
- The authenticity of the two remaining ones is highly questioned.

The reasons why they are questioned:

1. Al-Mufid himself hadn't mentioned them.
 2. Sayyid al-Murtadha and al-Tusi (his students) didn't mention them.
- However, al-Tabarsi didn't live in recent centuries. He belongs to one century after al-Mufid. Besides, receiving a letter during the Occultation isn't something impossible.

Text of one of the letters:



«لأخ السديد، والولي الرشيد، الشيخ المفيد، أبي عبد الله محمد بن محمد بن النعمان أدام الله إعزازه، من مستودع العهد المأخوذ على العباد. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم أما بعد: سلام عليك أيها الولي المخلص في الدين، المخصوص فينا باليقين...»

... فإننا نحيط علما بأنبائكم، ولا يعزب عنا شيء من أخباركم، ومعرفتنا بالذل الذي أصابكم مذ جنح كثير منكم إلى ما كان السلف الصالح عنه شاسعا، ونبذوا العهد المأخوذ وراء ظهورهم كأنهم لا يعلمون أنا غير مهملين لمراعاتكم، ولا ناسين لذكركم، ولولا ذلك لنزل بكم اللأواء أو اصطلمكم الأعداء...

A story that most scholars reject now, is narrated by al-Tunikabuni 140 years ago in *the Stories of the Ulama*. It was about a dead lady whose infant was alive in her stomach.

Why the story is not accepted:

1. No source
2. Narrations existed on the same issue from the time of Imam al-Baqir عليه السلام. How al-Mufid contradicts the hadith?
3. It contradicts his own fatwa in *al-Muqni'a*.