



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

History and Development of the Shia

Teacher: Sayed Saleh al-Qazwini

Lesson: 35

Topic: Shaykh al-Tusi

Short Bio

Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn al-Hasan al-Tusi

Birth: 385 A.H. (995 A.D.)

Death: 460 A.H. (1067 A.D.)

Title: Shaykh al-Taifa (Shaykh of the Shia)

Birthplace: Tus (Khurasan)

- At 23 (in 408 A.H.), Al-Tusi migrated to Baghdad, the Shia's center and capital.
- The Abbasids started to lose power, and other governments began ruling while keeping the Abbasids on top. Buyid dynasty (a Shia government) from Iran and Seljuks (a Sunni government) ruled over Baghdad.
- The Buyid focused on academia, study, and knowledge accessible to everyone. That's why the Shia and all Muslim scholarship flourished at that time. The king gave the *ulama* seats for teaching.
- An Abbasid caliph found that the Shia were growing more powerful. He betrayed the Buyids, caused their collapse, and helped the Sunni Seljuks (Tugrul Baig) overtake Baghdad and persecute the Shia.
- Al-Tusi was forced to leave Baghdad and move to Najaf (a village then), where he began the Hawza of Najaf.
- Al-Tusi studied with Shaykh al-Mufid. Finding al-Tusi, a talented student, Mufid gave him his book *al-Muqni'a* and asked him to explain the reasonings behind every ruling. So, al-Tusi wrote *Tahdhib al-Ahkam* (one of the Four Books).
- Al-Tusi spent 408 to 413 A.H. under al-Mufid's leadership and then under al-Sayyid al-Murtadha (d. 436 A.H.). After al-Murtadha, al-Tusi took on the position of leadership. The Abbasid caliph *Al-Qaim Billah* gave him the seat.



- Over 300 mujtahids attended his classes, both the Shia and Sunnis. Al-Tusi knew both Shia and Sunni rulings and wrote a book *al-Khilaf*, that includes all.
- Al-Tusi's seat continued until the Sunni Turkic Seljuks took over Baghdad (447 A.H.). By betrayal of the then Abbasid caliph, they started genocide of the Shia. They also set fire to the great Shahpur and al-Tusi libraries, fed by the Buyids who loved knowledge (448 A.H.).
- The Seljuks triggered sectarianism in Baghdad. They burnt Shaykh al-Tusi's library and minbar and destroyed his house. This forced him to move to the then-small village *al-Najaf*, near Kufa.
- When the scholars found that al-Tusi was in Najaf, they started moving there; eventually, the Hawza of Najaf was established.
- He passed away in Najaf and was buried in his house. His house became a mosque, and now it is attached to the shrine of Amir al-Muminin ﷺ.

Contributions of Shaykh al-Tusi:

- Two of the Shia Four Books: *al-Tahdhib* and *al-Istibsar*.
- He impacted the thought process of the Shia ideology. He developed the skeleton of the Shia school of thought. Thereupon, he was called *Shaykh al-Ta'ifa*.
- Al-Tusi revolutionized Shia thought. For 100 years, no one challenged/criticized his theories; until Ibn Idris al-Hilli (d.598) questioned him.
- Al-Tusi's *Risala Amaliyya* (book of laws), known as *al-Nihaya*, was practiced for 200 years until Muhaqqiq al-Hilli (d.676) wrote *Sharayi' al-Islam*.
- Al-Tusi's *Usul al-Fiqh* (though started from al-Mufid) was completely independent of the Sunnis. His book was *Uddat al-Usul*.
- In addition to being a *muhaddith*, *faqih*, etc., al-Tusi was also an exegete of the Quran. His book in this field is *al-Tibyan*.

Some of his books in fiqh:

- *Al-Mabsut fi al-fiqh*
 - *Al-Khilaf* (different ideas of the Shia and the Sunni sects)
- Because he knew the Sunni sect's ideas in fiqh and other fields, he was accused of being attached to *Shafi'is*.



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- Al-Tusi's theological book: *Talkhis al-Shafi* (a summary of al-Shafi by al-Murtadha.) Because of his revolutionary ideas here, he was called *al-Mujaddid*.
- The scholar Sayyid Muhammad-Baqir al-Sadr said the knowledge before al-Tusi was preschool level, but it became real knowledge after him.
- He had more than 400 books.

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