



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

History and Development of the Shia

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Lesson: 40

Topic: The Rise and Fall of the Akhbari Movement

The Rise of the Akhbari Movement:

- From 1030 to 1185 A.H., the main Shia movement said there was no *taqlid* and *ijtihad*, and we must refer to *Akhbar* (hadith/narrations). It started in the middle of the Safavid era.
- The period of the *Akhbari* movement didn't last very long because many scholars like al-Wahid al-Behbahani, Shaykh al-Ansari, and Kashif al-Ghita refuted the Akhbaris' claims.
- The mainstream thought process today is *Usuli*.
- The Akhbari movement died with the death of the late Shaykh Yusuf al-Bahrani.

The head of Akhbaris:

A. Extremist Akhbaris:

1. Muhammad Amin Astarabadi
2. Abd Allah ibn Salih al-Samahiji
3. Mirza Muhammad al-Akhbari

B. Moderates:

1. Shaykh Yusuf al-Bahrani
2. Seyyed Nematollah Jazayeri
3. The first Majlisi (Muhammad-Taqi al-Majlisi)
4. Muhammad Tahir al-Qummi
5. Al-Shaykh al-Hurr al-Amili (author of *Wasail al-Shia*)

How Akhbarism came up:

- During the time of Imams عليه السلام, people didn't need to do *ijtihad* or *taqlid*. With the start of the Occultation, ulema collected hadiths in their books, which was their *practical laws* book.
- Saduq did the same thing in his book *Man La Yahdhur*, which was simultaneously both a book of hadith and practical rulings.



The *Akhbarism Era* was the era of scholars (*Muhaddithin*) of Qom and Rey, including:

- Shaykh al-Kulayni (d. 329)
- Ali ibn Babawayh al-Qomi
- Ibn Qawlawayh.
- Shaykh al-Saduq

Other scholars then relied both on hadith and rational reasonings (deriving laws):

- Ibn al-Junaid
- Ibn Abi Aqil

They were accused of making *analogy*.

- Shaykh al-Mufid and the coming scholars were far from the time of *infallibles*, so they started developing the field of *Usul*.

Among the scholars who started developing *Usul*:

- Shaykh al-Mufid
- Sayyid al-Murtadha
- Shaykh Tusi

Usul al-Fiqh: The science that teaches you which laws to apply to derive a Sharia law.

Shaykh al-Mufid, for the first time, classified the scholars into:

- Fuqaha: those who do *ijtihad*
- Ahl al-Naql and Ashab al-Athar: Muhaddithin

Al-Shahristani in *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*: for the first time, he used the word *Akhbaris*.

- *Akhbarism* came to life in the 11th century under *Muhammad Amin al-Astarabadi*. In his article, he refuted *taqlid* and *ijtihad*.
- This movement's growth finished with the emergence of Shaykh Wahid al-Behbahani, who, in a fatwa, wrote that it was haram to offer prayers behind Shaykh Yusuf al-Bahrani. Al-Wahid put an end to this movement.
- Shaykh Yusuf al-Bahrani (Author of *al-Hadaiq*) was a *marja'* in Karbala. He wrote in his will that I wanted Shaykh Wahid al-Behbahani to pray on my body. It shows that he was convinced.
- Al-Bahrani was buried in Karbala next to Imam al-Hussain عليه السلام near the shrine of *Shuhada*. Shaykh al-Behbahani was buried next to him.
- They both lived in Karbala when this city was a center for seminary.
- After Wahid al-Behbahani, Shaykh Murtadha al-Ansari (d.1281 A.H.) set up the system of *Usul* that we have today. That's why he is known as *Mu'assis* (the founder).



- Shaykh Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita (d.1228) did a lot against *Akhbaris*. He debated *Mirza Muhammad Akhbari* in his book (Kashif al-Ghita). He sent a copy to Fath Ali Shah of Iran urging him to stop supporting *Akhbaris*, and the Shah accepted.

Beliefs of *Akhbaris* against *usulis*:

1. Ijtihad is haram, while *usulis* consider it as *wajib aini* or *kifai* (Quran 9:122) ﴿وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِن كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ﴾
2. The Quran and the Sunna are the only sources of religion (*hujja*), while the *Usulis* add *aql* (intellect) and *ijma'* (consensus if includes the Imam's approval).
3. *Akhbaris* refute relying on *dhann* (assumption). Only the things we are certain of can be relied on. All hadiths in the Four books are *sahih*.
4. *Akhbaris* reject the hadith division proposed by *Usulis*.
5. *Akhbaris* don't allow *taqlid of non-Ma'sum*.
6. *Usuli* scholars say the apparent meaning of the Quran is accepted. However, the *Akhbaris* accept the apparent meaning of the Quran only if there is any hadith telling this is the apparent meaning.
7. *Akhbaris* believe all hadiths in the Four Books are *sahih*.
8. *Akhbaris* confess that *husn and qubh aqli* (intellectual goodness and evilness) exist. However, they reject the *hujjiyya (authority)* of intellectual rulings.
9. *Akhbaris* reject acting upon *qiyas*. *Usulis* agree but in the meaning of analogy. *Qiyas* for *usulis* means syllogism.