بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

History and Development of the Shia

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Lesson: 30

Topic: Roles of Scholars during the Occultation

- The Greater Occultation started in 329 A.H. In this Occultation, the focus is more on the Scholars**.**
- Their duty: not to invent knowledge but to compile more-than-300-year hadiths and knowledge from the infallible, document and organize them to issue fatwas.
- Al-Kafi (literally means 'the Sufficient') by Sheikh al-Kulayni is in three parts: Usul al-Kafi (Aqaid), Furu' al-Kafi (Ahkam), Rawdha al-Kafi (moralities)
- For a long time, the Imamsﷷ were educating their Shia to prepare for the time of *ghayba*. Imamsﷷ set general principles and foundations like *Istishab* and *presumption of Tahara*

Methods and ways Imamsﷷ' knowledge passed on to their Shia:
1. *Al-Usul Al-Arba'ami'a* (the 400 principal hadith collections on different subjects)
2. More focused books written by Imams' companions. E.g. the *Book of Hariz on Salat.*

- The Imamsﷷ endorsed their works and corrected them. E.g. Ubaid Allah al-Halabi
- Yunus ibn Abd al-Rahman, a close companion of the Imamsﷷ, wrote the book *Yawm wa Layla*. Imam al-Jawadؑ checked it when he visited Ahmad ibn Abi-Khalaf during his illness. Then Imamؑ said three times: "May Allah have mercy on Yunus" (رَحِمَ الله يونس)
- Abu Hashim al-Ja'fari's hadith about the book *Yawm wa Layla* (by Yunus ibn Abd al-Rahman) that Imam al-Askariؑ confirmed as his religion.
- The books *al-Kafi* and others came from a system that developed these books.

Issuance of fatwas during the era of the Imams

- The scholars issued fatwas during the life of the Imams, obeying their command. These fatwas are available even today, showing that the Imam (as) agreed with them.
- Imams؏ taught their students how to derive the rulings from the sources or gave them general rules and wanted them to derive the fatwas accordingly. Like the story of Zurara and why the Shia wipes a part of the head, not the whole.
- The story of Muhammad ibn Muslim who narrated over 30,000 hadiths from Imam al-Baqir (as) and 60,000 hadiths from Imam al-Sadiq (as).
- Muhammad ibn Muslim's story shows how people resorted to him to issue fatwas because he was very close to the Imam. He saved a baby in the stomach of a dead mother with the fatwa that he had taken from the Imam.
- The previous figures, as well as Yunus ibn Abd al-Rahman, al-Fadl ibn Sahdhan, Ibn Abi Umair, Jamil ibn Darraj, etc., were the companions of the Imams؏ and beginners of Ijtihad.

The centers of knowledge during the time of the Imams؏ and then during occultation:

1st. Medina: Rasulullah, Imams؏, and some of their followers like Ibn Abbas and Abu Khalid al-Kabuli

2nd. Kufa: Although Imams؏ were in Medina, many Shias moved to Kufa. Imam al-Sadiq؏ lived in Kufa for two years. Great scholars like Zurara, Aban ibn Taghlib, and Muhammad ibn Muslim lived there. They wrote over 6600 books on different topics.

- 3rd. Qom, Rey (south Tehran), and parts of Khurasan.

A short history of Qom

- A Shia tribe called al-Ash'ari family originally from Yemen living in Kufa were highly persecuted by al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf al-Thaqafi, so they moved to Qom.
- Zakaria ibn Adam was a grand Shia scholar of the Ash'ari family in Qom and a close companion of Imams؏. He is the one who wanted to leave Qom, but Imam al-Rida؏ didn't let him, calling him insurance of the people in Qom as Imam al-Kazim؏'s grave is to Bagdad.

- Seeds of today's Qom as a significant Shia hub were planted by the Imams؏ then.
- Thousands of hadiths for the time people would be disconnected from their Imam؏; someone was needed to collect and organize them. Here the role of scholars like al-Kulayni becomes clear.
- At the beginning of the major Occultation, there were scattered books of narrations from Ahlulbayt؏ like Usul al-Arba'amia. Scholars like al-Kulayni took the initiative to organize them.