

Book Introduction

Kamal Al-Din Va Tamam Al-Ni'mah

Introduction: Amongst the books of Hadith that have been passed down to us throughout the centuries, less is well-known like “Kamal al-Din va Tamam al-Ni'mah”. In this book –which presents the Shia's perspective about Imam Mahdi's (as) occultation and longevity- many related subjects have been mentioned in a special order and proof of each claim has been put forward using narrations and sound reasoning.

The author of the book is “the elder of the learned scholars (Sheikh al-fuqaha)” and “the leader of Shia narrators (ra'is al-muhaddesin)”, Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Hussein ibn Babvayh al-Qumi (d. 381 AH / 991 AD), known as: “Sheikh al-Saduq”.

In this article, we will briefly introduce “Sheikh al-Saduq” and his book “Perfection of religion and completion of blessings” (Kamal al-Din va Tamam al-Ni'mah).

The Author

Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Hussein ibn Babvayh al-Qumi, known as “Sheikh al-Saduq” was the elder of the scholars of Rey and the leader of Khorasan's Shia's. Al-Tusi in his book “al-Estebzar”, has referred to him by the title “Imad al-Din (The pillar of religion)”. Ibn Idris has remembered him as “al-Saduq (the truthful)”. Khatib al-Baghdadi has remembered him with honor and Dhahaby (a prominent Sunni scholar) has mentioned him as “the leader of the Imamiah” and Ibn Shahr Ashoob and al-Helli have praised him much.

According to Sayyid ibn Tavoos, there is a consensus among Shia clerics on his justice and he has been called “the charitable and blessed scholar” by Imam Mahdi (as). He was born in 305 AH / 917 AD in the city of Qom following prayers made by Imam Mahdi (as).

He was a pupil of prominent scholars like: his father - Hussein bin Ali bin Babvayh (d. 329 AH / 941 AD), Muhammad ibn Huseinn ibn Ahmad ibn al-Walid, Muhammad bin Ali Majiluye and Ahmad Ibn Ali Ibn Ibrahim al-Qumi. He became famous among Qum Scholars for his talent and genius in learning knowledge. He left Qom for “Rey” which in those times was the capital of the Buwayyids (Ale Buyeh). Once he settled there he attended the school of scholars like Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Saqr al-Sa'igh and Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Ishaq al-Taleqani.

In 352 AH / 963 AD, al-Saduq went to Mashhad with the permission of Rokn al-Dowlah the lord of the Buwayyids and at the same time learned many narrations from the scholars of Neishabour (a city close to Mashhad). He then returned to Rey and set off for the Hajj pilgrimage near the end of the year 353 AH / 964 AD. On his return Journey he traveled to Iraq and met with its leading scholars. It was in this Journey that he gave al-Mufid (d. 412 AH / 1021 AD) “permission for narration (ijazah)”.

In Baghdad, al-Saduq had scientific and theological debates with the scholars of other religions. Najashi says: “Despite his young age, (Iraq's) prominent scholars learned hadith from him.”

In one of his journeys, Al-Saduq met a scholar in Ilaq which is in southeastern Uzbekistan. The scholar was called: ‘Sharif Mohammed Bin Hassan al-avi’ known as “Ne'mah”. It was because of this meeting that al-Saduq wrote his famous book, “He who has no access to a scholar”

(man la yahdharohu al-faqih).

On returning from Ilaq, he settled in Neishabour and continued promoting Shia beliefs. Writing "Kamal al-Din" happened during this same time. In the introduction of the book he expresses his willingness to return to Rey. After returning to Rey he stayed there till the end of his life in 381 AH / 991 AD. Today, his tomb receives great attention from Shi's who visit it.

He has written more than three hundred books and booklets of which some have reached us and others have perished in the pages of time.

Some of these works are dialectics (kalami), such as: Itiqadat (Beliefs) and Ibtal al-laghv va al-Taghsir, some parts of al-Amali which are his debates with the followers of other religions in the presence of Rokn al-Dollah. His other works have to do with fiqh, the most comprehensive being: "He who has no access to a scholar" (Man la yahdharohu al-faqih) which consists of narrations with the chain of narrators omitted (The scholars of Qom used this method when issuing a verdict (fatwa)).

The Book

"Perfection of religion and completion of blessings" (Kamal al-din va tamam al-Ni'mah) is the book al-Saduq wrote near the ends of his life.

The book has been written in Nishabour, which was one of the large Islamic cities of those times. Its population was estimated to be more than one million people. In those days, many of the people who visited al-Saduq expressed their surprise about the occultation of Imam Mahdi (as) and had doubts and questions about this matter. Al-Saduq did his best to guide them and restore them to the right path using the Quran and the Sayings of the Ahlul-Bayt (as). This situation continued until he met Sheikh Najm al-Din Saeed Mohammed bin Hassan bin Mohammad bin Ahmad bin Ali bin Salt al-Qumi. Sheikh Najm al-Din had lived in Bukhara for a while and there, under the influence of the speeches of one of its dialecticians and philosophers, he had become doubtful about Imam Mahdi's (as) occultation. To Prove Imam Mahdi's (as) presence and his occultation, al-Saduq made many elaborate discussions and brought forward many narrations from the Prophet (as) and the Imams (as). When Sheikh Najm al-Din's doubts turned to certainty and he became convinced, he asked al-Saduq to compile a book with the same topic. Al-Saduq promised him that if God provided him with the chance to return to his hometown "Rey", he would write such a book.

Some nights later, al-Saduq sees Imam Mahdi (as) in a dream while he himself is performing tawaf (the circling ritual around Kaba). The Imam (as) says to him "Why don't you write a book about the occultation ... and (also) mention in it the occultation of the Prophets". He woke up crying and started writing the book the same morning.

The Books subjects

The book consists of a relatively long introduction and fifty-five chapters. The introduction, which is considered by some as the first chapter, takes up about one-fifth of the book by itself and includes reasoning on the correctness of the Shia belief about Imam Mahdi (as), and answers the questions and doubts raised by the Zaidiyyah, Ismailiah and other sects that don't believe in the twelve Imams. The introduction shows that al-Saduq is not only unique in the field of Hadiths and narration, but also unique in dialectical reasoning and Hadith meanings (derayah). At the end of this introduction, he argues that, because in our time the Zaydiah are showing fierce enmity towards the Twelver Shia, I made the most comprehensive reasoning to answer them, so that those who are looking for the truth can use these reasons.

The first chapter after the introduction begins with the occultation of the Prophet Idris (as) and then refers to the occultation of Noah, Saleh, Ibrahim, Yousof, and then Moses (as). After that,

he mentions the occultation of those Hujjaj (proofs) who were between the time of Moses and Jesus (as). He then brings forward narrations that show the glad tidings of Jesus about the Prophet Muhammad (as). He then goes on to explain why people need an Imam. One of the long chapters of his book is called:

“The connectedness of the wills (vasi'yah) (of the Prophets) starting from Adam (as) and that earth will not become empty of a proof from God (hujjat Allah) until the Day of Rising”.

At the end of this chapter there is a discussion about the meanings of Etrah, Al and Ahl.

The other chapters of the book are dedicated to proving the twelfth Imam (as). The ending chapters speak about the rewards and virtues of those who await the Imam's appearance, and some other issues.

Why such a title was selected for the book

The title of the book -“Perfection of religion and completion of blessings” (Kamal al-din va tamam al-Ni'mah)- is based on the verse of the Holy Quran which states:

“Today, I have perfected your religion and completed my blessings for you. And I am satisfied with Islam as your religion.” (The holy Quran 5:3)

Islamic commentators have mentioned that this verse was revealed at Ghadir Khum and after the appointment of Ali ibn Abi-Talib (as) as the successor of the Prophet (as). Tabari quotes Abu-Saeed al-Khidri as saying: “When this verse was revealed the Prophet (as) said: ‘God is Great [for] perfecting the religion and completing the blessings and being satisfied by my mission and the Wilayah (successor-ship) of Ali ibn Abi-Talib (as) after me.’ He also said: ‘He who I had authority over, now Ali has authority over them. O' God, love everyone who loves him and be enemy with everyone who is his enemy and let down all who let him down.’”

Since the perfection of religion is based on the Imamah (leadership) of Ali (as) and the perfection of leadership is dependent on the presence of the twelfth Imam (as), al-Saduq chose this name for his precious book: “Perfection of religion and completion of blessings”.

The value and credibility of the book

This book has been compiled with regard to one of the brightest and most original ideals and promises of the Divine Prophets. All the divine religions have promised a bright future for the world and foretold the coming of a savior. Not only divine religions but also other schools of thought have mentioned “Utopia” and the world being ruled by a righteous government. The Holy Quran has spoken of this bright future in over one hundred and twenty verses and has explicitly promised the governance of the faithful, and a religious establishment in which fear will be turned into security and only God will be worshipped . God has also mentioned in The Torah and Psalms that the righteous people shall inherit the earth . And that God's religion shall prevail over all false religions , and that those who have been oppressed on the earth will become the leaders and inheritors .

The explanations and tafsirs of these verses have been put forward in the narrations of the Holy Prophet (s) and the Imams (as) sayings. They have also described the characteristics of the savior who will come and take mankind to salvation.

Al-Saduq (May God bestow him with his mercies) mentions this original belief of the Shia in this book. The authenticity of such a belief is just like the authenticity of all divine scriptures, Quranic verses and the Imam's narrations. He who denies this belief, has denied the divine prophets and the Imams (as).

Another reason that gives this book such stature and value is the dignity, justice and credibility of its author. Al-Saduq is probably the most prominent and honorable scholar of the Islamic world. Shia scholars regard his and his father's sayings as authentic narrations and regard him

to be as reliable as Salman and Abudhar. A large group of Shia scholars, like Al-Helli and Shahid al-Avval believe that the narrations he mentions without the chain of narrators, are condemned to be correct.

Many prominent Shia scholars have shown great respect toward this book and have used many of its narrations in their books. Al-Majlesi refers to al-Saduq's books at the top of his list of references; Feiz al-Kashani praised this book and used it to compile his invaluable book Navadir al-akhbar (Rare News). Hor al-Ameli in ithabt al-hoda and al-Nuri in Kashf al-astar and al-najm al-thaqib, are just some of the great scholars that have referred to this book in their writings.

Another part of the book includes the stories of those people who have lived a very long life and also has quotes from the sayings of people other than the infallibles. This is historically valuable because an honest and informant narrator like al-Saduq has provided us with information and events that happened more than a thousand years ago in large cities like Iraq, Hejaz, Rey, Hamadan, Neyshabour and Faghaneh. He has also gathered the narrations of the Ahlul Bayt which were dispersed far and wide amongst the scholars of these cities. In fact, if al-Saduq hadn't mentioned these traditions in his book, we would have been deprived of many of them today.