

A Comparative Analysis of the Dialectical and Synthetic Approaches of al-Shaykh al-Mufid and Homsî Razi

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ABSTRACT:

Notwithstanding the variations in their perspectives on the era and community they inhabited, Imamiyyah scholars exhibit a consensus in addressing theological inquiries, with only slight variations in their core doctrines. This article seeks to scrutinize and contrast the dialectical and synthetic methodologies of al-Shaykh al-Mufid and Homsî Razi, eminent figures from the Baghdad and Rey schools, respectively. Furthermore, it investigates the extent of their intellectual debt to the Mu'tazilites and their divergence from the Mu'tazila, which illuminates their respective reliance on reason and broad philosophical tenets in substantiating theological assertions.

The research methodology entailed a meticulous examination of primary texts, with a deliberate avoidance of sweeping generalizations. The study's conclusions highlight the esteemed role of reason, its application in theological argumentation, the dismissal of solitary narratives as authoritative in matters of faith, and the utilization of theological science and the exegesis of narrative attributes as commonalities between al-Shaykh al-Mufid and Homsî Razi. Moreover, it reveals that while al-Shaykh al-Mufid eschews the use of philosophical principles in defending Islamic creeds, Homsî Razi frequently incorporates them.

Keywords: *al-Shaykh al-Mufid, Homsî Razi, Mu'tazila, Rationalism, Traditionalism*

INTRODUCTION:

Kalam, a pivotal discipline in the annals of Islamic scholarship, is dedicated to elucidating, systematizing, affirming, and vindicating the tenets of Islam. In its defensive capacity, Kalam has evolved in tandem with the shifting nature of skepticism and critique, ensuring its relevance through adaptation and metamorphosis. This evolution has prompted theologians to diversify their methodologies within Kalam, yet this should not be construed as a deviation from the foundational doctrines of the Imamiyyah school of thought. Among the various schools, those of Baghdad and Rey are particularly noteworthy. This article¹ undertakes a comparative analysis of the dialectical and compositional techniques employed by two eminent scholars from these schools: al-Shaykh al-Mufid and Sadîd al-Din Homsî Razi. The impetus for this study stems from a previous comparative examination by Mohammadali Niazi and Seyyed Ahmad Mahmoudi, who explored the dialectical methods of al-Shaykh al-Mufid and Shaykh al-Saduq. However, a comprehensive comparative study between al-Shaykh al-Mufid and Homsî Razi has hitherto remained unexplored. The significance of this endeavor is amplified by the speculations surrounding potential

doctrinal shifts among Imamiyyah theologians, ostensibly due to methodological changes. Accordingly, this article commences with an introduction to the schools of Baghdad and Rey, followed by a scrutiny of the propositions that elucidate the disparities and convergences in the dialectical and compositional approaches of the two esteemed scholars.

Baghdad School

Originally founded as the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, Baghdad evolved into a pivotal hub for Shi'a learning and the propagation of the wisdom of Ahl al-Bayt, due in part to the enlightening presence of Imam al-Kazim and Imam al-Jawad. The Shi'a population took residence in the Karkh quarter of Baghdad, where distinguished scholars like the Four Deputies, Abu Sahl Isma'il ibn Ali al-Nawbakhti, and notably al-Shaykh al-Mufid and his students, disseminated the profound teachings of Ahl al-Bayt. This golden age of intellectual activity was curtailed in the mid-5th century, specifically in 448 AH, by the incursion of Tughril II, resulting in heightened oppression of Ahl al-Bayt and the Shi'a, the incineration of Shi'i literature, and the compelled relocation of Shaykh Tusi to Najaf.

Academics often categorize the Baghdad school of theology into two distinct phases, delineated by their respective levels of rationalism: the formative period, which includes the era of al-Shaykh al-Mufid and his

¹ Niazi, Mohammadali, and Mahmoudi, Seyyed Ahmad, "A Comparative Study of the Dialectical Thought of Al-Shaykh al-Saduq and Al-Shaykh al-Mufid."

predecessors, and the subsequent period, which encompasses the times of Sharif al-Murtaza and Shaykh al-Ta'ifa. Al-Shaykh al-Mufid's methodology was distinguished by tempered rationalism, a reflection of the influence exerted by the Mu'tazilites of Baghdad, including figures like Abu al-Qasim al-Balkhi. Conversely, al-Sharif al-Murtaza's approach was defined by unrestrained rationalism and a diminished emphasis on traditional sources in theological debates, leading his school to be recognized as the most rationalist within the Imamiyyah theological tradition, a stance shaped by the Mu'tazila of Basra, particularly the adherents of Abu Hashim al-Jubba'i².

The principal factors contributing to the establishment of the Baghdad School are as follows:

- The diversity of theological perspectives in Baghdad and the absence of doctrinal homogeneity among the Muslim population, as opposed to the situation in Qom.
- The proliferation of various theological inclinations in Baghdad, a consequence of the city's exposure to the translation of Greek philosophical works.
- The perpetual engagement in theological and philosophical disputations, particularly between the Mu'tazila and the Ash'arites, and their sporadic challenges to the tenets of Imamiyyah.
- The pressing necessity to elucidate the concept of occultation (ghayba) and other principles related to the Imamate, in response to the rise of spurious claimants.
- The need to distinguish the authentic Imamiyyah sect from the multitude of groups professing adherence to Shi'ism³.

Rey School

Following the Seljuk Empire's assault on Baghdad, numerous Imamiyyah theologians relocated to the city, establishing the foundational core of a scholarly tradition that can be traced back to Abu Ali, the son of Shaykh Tusi. Prominent figures such as Fatal Neyshabouri, Ibn Shahrashub, Shaykh Tabarsi—who penned *Majma' al-Bayan*—Mueqri Neyshaburi, and Imad al-Din Tabari, all hailed from this city and were known for their leanings towards Kalam theology⁴. In the subsequent generation of scholars, Ahmad bin Ali Tabarsi, author of "Al-Ihtijaj," and Qutbu'ddin Rawandi emerged as notable figures. Rawandi, as reported by Sayyid Ibn Tawus, was critical of the Baghdad School's theological methodology and instead favored the tradition-based approach of Qom⁵. Subsequently, Sadid al-Din Homsî Razi carried forward the legacy of the Rey School, introducing a fresh perspective. In contrast to his predecessors, his intellectual pursuits were not solely shaped by the Baghdad School; he also engaged with the works of

later Mu'tazilite thinkers like Abu al-Husayn al-Basri and Muallemi Khwarazmi. Consequently, it has been suggested that before Sadid al-Din Homsî Razi, Rey lacked a distinct scholarly tradition of its own, and it is to Homsî Razi that the establishment of a new school of thought in Rey is attributed⁶.

Among the factors contributing to the establishment of the Rey School are:

- The existence of adherents of diverse religious and sectarian groups in Rey, who engaged in debates to advocate for their respective beliefs.
- The critique by the Mu'tazilites of certain Shiite doctrines, particularly concerning the concepts of Imamate and Occultation.
- The proliferation of rational inquiries, including the exploration of the resurrection of the nonexistent.

A review of the theological traditions of Baghdad and Rey, along with the contributions of two key figures from these schools—al-Shaykh al-Mufid and Homsî Razi—reveals that both scholars ascribed a significant role to reason in the comprehension of religious matters. The elaboration and substantiation of this viewpoint will be addressed in subsequent discussions. Before delving into their perspectives on the nature and extent of reason, as well as their other theological stances, it is advisable to first provide a concise overview of the concept of reason itself.

Analysis of the Concept of Reason

Linguistically, "reason" is characterized as the antithesis of ignorance⁷, folly, or the restriction of an entity⁸, and it encompasses notions such as a "stronghold" or "fortress." Ibn Faris posits that the diverse interpretations of "reason" stem from a fundamental concept, which is "to restrain." This suggests that the exercise of reason by an individual serves to inhibit them from committing unjust acts or aids in the revelation of previously concealed truths⁹.

The term "reason" and its various forms are employed in numerous verses of the Quran to signify reflection, comprehension, and accurate understanding. For instance:

فَرِيْقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ¹⁰»
 «تِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالَمُونَ»¹¹

Within the Hadith collections, the term "reason" is utilized in a manner consistent with its Quranic usage, as evidenced by the following succinct references:

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, when queried about the essence of reason, responded, "It is through reason that the Merciful is worshipped and Paradise is earned."¹²

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq further stated, "Indeed, the recompense is proportional to one's reason."¹³

⁶ Mousavi, Seyyed Jalal al-Din, "Rey School," p. 21.

⁷ Al-Farahidi, Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad, "Al-'Ayn," Vol. 1, p. 159.

⁸ Ibn Manzur, Muhammad ibn Mukarram, "Lisan al-Arab," Vol. 11, p. 458.

⁹ Ibn Faris, "Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah," Vol. 4, p. 69.

¹⁰ The Holy Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 75.

¹¹ The Holy Quran, Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 43.

¹² Al-Kulayni, "Kitab al-Kafi," Vol. 1, p. 11.

¹³ Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 12.

² Ataei Nazari, Hamid, "A Glance at the Stages and Schools of Imamiyyah Theology in the Middle Ages," p. 26.

³ Razavi, Seyyed Abbas, "Encyclopedia of the World of Islam," Vol. 1, p. 6637.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Sayyid Ibn Tawus, "Kashf al-Mahajja li-Thamarat al-Mahajja," p. 64.

The insights gleaned from the compilation of verses and Hadiths, given that the texts do not seek to elucidate the intrinsic nature and definition of reason, but rather delineate reason through its consequences, correspond to the linguistic understanding of reason. This refers to the capacity for comprehension and insight that both dissuades individuals from engaging in morally reprehensible actions and illuminates the previously obscure. In light of the esteemed position of reason in theological discourse and the presence of Hadiths that acknowledge the pivotal role of reason¹⁴, Shia scholars, in contrast to certain Sunni scholars like the traditionalists, have accorded reason a distinguished status. Nonetheless, the degree of this emphasis exhibits variation.

The Role of Reason in Theological Inquiry

Broadly speaking, the deployment of reason within theological debates and the degree to which it is employed can be classified into four primary contexts. The viewpoints of the two scholars concerning this range will be explored in detail:

a) Purely rational discussions, where the employment of revelation is not feasible, such as demonstrating the existence of God and His attributes of knowledge and power. Al-Shaykh al-Mufid maintains that reason is essential in every domain, including the acknowledgment of monotheism and the fundamental responsibilities of humanity. In his treatise "Awa'il al-Maqalat," he asserts: "The Imamiyyah concur that reason necessitates revelation for knowledge and its implications, and that reason cannot be dissociated from revelation, as it assists the discerning in their reasoning processes and a prophet is required at the inception of human duties. This perspective is held by the traditionalists, whereas the Mu'tazila, Kharijites, and Zaydis contest this view, arguing that reason alone can achieve an understanding of God and the imperative of duty without the need for revelation."

Al-Shaykh al-Mufid utilizes¹⁵ reason in a defensive capacity¹⁶, and this approach is apparent even in his most minor propositions. For instance, when he endorses the theory of the four elements, he justifies it by stating: "Having found no evidence to contradict the theory of the four natures and having found it consistent with divine wisdom and supportive thereof, I thus proposed this theory."¹⁷

In contrast to al-Shaykh al-Mufid, Homsî Razi endorses the first category of rational discussions and regards subjects such as substantiating the existence of

God and the means of knowing Him as the sole province of intellectual apprehension, with no place for revelation in this domain¹⁸.

b) Topics where revelation furnishes proof, yet reason can also contribute to understanding and reinforce the revelation. Al-Shaykh al-Mufid assigns certain subjects to this category. For instance, concerning the "capacity of the Imams to hear the discourse of angels," he posits: "I deem this feasible on rational grounds, and there exist authentic accounts that validate its permissibility."¹⁹ Moreover, he substantiates the claim that divine speech is created through both rational and scriptural arguments. Homsî Razi²⁰, too, maintains parallel viewpoints on select issues. For example, he considers the requirement of the Imam's infallibility during the Imamate as demonstrable by both reason and scripture. Furthermore, he regards the approach to proving the necessity of Imamate from the Imamiyyah perspective as a question of reason, with revelation acting to corroborate it²¹.

c) Matters in which reason perceives solely the possibility or desirability of an issue, without grasping its necessity or intricacies. In this perspective, the two scholars are remarkably alike, with no substantial disparity detected. For instance, Homsî affirms the attribute of speech for God through revelation, and from his standpoint, reason can merely apprehend that God is capable of speech²². In a similar vein, reason can grasp the concept of merit for reward or punishment among the obligated, yet the specifics or perpetuity of these are beyond the scope of rational understanding²³. Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, within this framework, does not regard reason as autonomous and substantiates all of God's attributes through revelation, without suggesting whether reason can validate the plausibility of these attributes for God. In another context²⁴, when demonstrating that God possesses will, he invokes a scriptural rationale and asserts: "The Supreme God possesses will, grounded in scriptural and transmitted evidence, as disclosed in the Holy Quran, and I do not substantiate this attribute for God through reason."²⁵ It is conceivable that al-Shaykh al-Mufid, akin to Homsî, held that reason is capable of comprehending such attributes for God, yet he did not articulate this, as he declared that he does not establish God's will through reason.

¹⁴ Such as the Hadith of Imam Musa al-Kazim addressing Hisham: "Indeed, Allah has two proofs against people, an apparent proof and an inner proof. The apparent proof consists of the messengers, prophets, and imams, peace be upon them, while the inner proof is reason." Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 13.

¹⁵ Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, "Awa'il al-Maqalat," p. 44.

¹⁶ McDermott, Martin, "The Theological Thought of al-Shaykh al-Mufid," p. 84.

¹⁷ Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, "Awa'il al-Maqalat," p. 102.

¹⁸ Sadid al-Din Homsî Razi, "Al-Munajjid min al-Taqlid," Vol. 1, p. 261.

¹⁹ Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, "Awa'il al-Maqalat," p. 69.

²⁰ Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, "Al-Nukat al-Itiqadiyyah," p. 27.

²¹ Sadid al-Din Homsî Razi, "Al-Munajjid min al-Taqlid," Vol. 2, p. 239.

²² Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 212.

²³ Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 373-374.

²⁴ Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, "Awa'il al-Maqalat," p. 54.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 53.

d) Al-Shaykh al-Mufid further alludes to a fourth classification, encompassing matters that reason innately comprehends and endorses as permissible, yet revelation opposes. For instance, al-Shaykh al-Mufid views revelation to the Imams as rationally feasible but does not consider it permissible due to consensus, and he regards adherence to such a belief as equivalent to disbelief. An additional illustration is the potential for a prophet to be sent after Prophet Muhammad, which is rationally plausible but is impermissible to believe due to its contradiction with explicit scriptural evidence²⁶. The interplay between the dictates of reason and revelation in theological inquiries, as delineated in the fourth category, is absent in the corpus of Homsī Razi's works.

Reason and Revelation from the Perspective of al-Shaykh al-Mufid

In his treatise "Awa'il al-Maqalat," al-Shaykh al-Mufid articulates a departure from Mu'tazila's perspective, which posits the obligation of knowledge as a rational pursuit. He contends that the Imamiyyah school of thought maintains that reason is fundamentally reliant on revelation—specifically, scriptural texts—for the acquisition of knowledge, the process of reasoning, and the derivation of conclusions. Moreover, he emphasizes that from the onset of human accountability and the genesis of the world, humanity has been dependent on divine prophets for guidance. This stance is in opposition to the beliefs of both the Mu'tazila and the Zaydiyyah, who advocate for the autonomy of reason in comprehending religious matters without the need for revelation²⁷. Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, therefore, positions the pursuit of knowledge as a divine injunction. This perspective inherently suggests that reason, in isolation, is incapable of fully grasping the intricacies of religious knowledge without the illumination provided by scriptural texts. However, he does acknowledge reason's capacity to recognize the imperative of prophethood and the dispatch of divine messengers. For al-Shaykh al-Mufid, the deployment of reason in the defense of pivotal revealed doctrines is of utmost significance; it is through reason that revelation finds its ally and confirmation. He consistently highlights the symbiosis of reason and revelation throughout his literary contributions.

In the discourse on the recognition of the Imams, al-Shaykh al-Mufid does not perceive the potential for such recognition to be irrational across various disciplines and linguistic realms, nor does he consider it a rational imperative for the Imams to exhibit such qualities²⁸. He initially posits the manifestation of miracles by the Imams as a plausible rational occurrence and subsequently declares: "Given the

support of reliable traditions and narrations for this matter, I have reached a definitive stance on the occurrence of miracles.²⁹" In a similar vein, concerning the visual perception of God, which he substantiates through scriptural verses and consistent accounts, he affirms reason's endorsement of this concept³⁰. Al-Shaykh al-Mufid employs verses and narrations in diverse contexts, which can be classified into three categories:

- The application of revelatory evidence as a demonstrative example within the linguistic and rhetorical sciences. An illustration of this is found in the opening chapter of "Awa'il al-Maqalat," where he cites verse 15 of Surah Al-Qasas to elucidate the essence of Shi'ism³¹.

- Those phenomena whose validation is solely dependent on revelatory evidence and, in the view of al-Shaykh al-Mufid, elude rational comprehension. Examples encompass the doctrines of return (raj'a), alteration (badā')³², and the divine attributes of will, knowledge, hearing, and sight, among other names of God³³.

- Those subjects on which reason, in conjunction with revelation, can provide insight. These include the manifestation of miracles by the Imams³⁴, God's pre-creation knowledge of all things³⁵, and the impossibility of visually perceiving God³⁶.

Reason and Revelation from the Perspective of Homsī Razi

Homsī Razi, in concordance with al-Shaykh al-Mufid, assigns a distinguished role to reason, acknowledging rational investigation and debate as a method for gaining insight³⁷. He posits that the understanding of God is not innate and advocates for rational deliberation and contemplation as the sole avenue to recognize the divine. The title of his renowned work reflects his critique of imitation (taqlid) in the quest for divine knowledge, which he deems unsound, asserting: "Were imitation acceptable, there would be no distinction between emulating a believer in God and an unbeliever. Moreover, Judaism and Christianity, being imitative of their forebears, would be justified."³⁸ Paralleling al-Shaykh al-Mufid, Homsī Razi places significant importance on revelation and employs revelatory evidence across various topics. This evidence can be divided into two categories:

²⁹ Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, "Awa'il al-Maqalat," p. 68.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 57.

³¹ Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, "Awa'il al-Maqalat," p. 34 "فَأَسْتَعَاثَهُ الَّذِي مِنْ شَيْعَتِهِ عَلَى الَّذِي مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ" Surah Al-Qasas, verse 15.

³² Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, "Awa'il al-Maqalat," p. 46.

³³ Ibid., p. 53.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 68.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 55.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 57.

³⁷ Sadid al-Din Homsī Razi, "The Savior from Imitation," vol. 1, p. 261.

³⁸ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 263.

²⁶ Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, "Awa'il al-Maqalat," p. 68.

²⁷ Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, "Awa'il al-Maqalat," p. 45.

²⁸ Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, "Awa'il al-Maqalat," p. 67.

- Those aspects that are solely substantiated by revelation, including the affirmation of God's³⁹ attributes such as knowledge, hearing, sight, and will, as well as specifics of the afterlife⁴⁰.

- Those principles that are verifiable not only through revelation but also through reason, encompassing the incompatibility of God's will with the commission of evil⁴¹ deeds, the imperative and merit of prophetic missions⁴², the merit of repentance⁴³, and the entitlement to reward and punishment⁴⁴.

The Scholarly and Theological Methodology of al-Shaykh al-Mufid

Al-Shaykh al-Mufid's intellectual development was shaped by the Baghdad School, making it relevant to consider the intellectual climate of Baghdad in his time. Following its establishment, Baghdad emerged as a focal point for theological and sectarian debates, attracting diverse intellectual and cultural factions from various lands. The city also hosted centers of theological discourse for other Abrahamic faiths. Before the fourth Islamic lunar century, Baghdad was influenced by Manichaean Morocco, and individuals like Saleh Bin Abdolghoddus participated in theological discussions with Muslim scholars in Baghdad. Despite his apparent conversion to Islam, Saleh retained Manichaean dualistic beliefs, leading to his execution by the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdi⁴⁵. A notable advancement within this scholarly environment was the commencement of the translation movement, which thrived under the patronage of al-Ma'mun and was centered around the "Bayt al-Hikma." During this era, Platonic philosophical works were translated from Syriac into Arabic, paving the way for the dissemination of Greek, Indian, and Iranian philosophical concepts among Muslim scholars.

It has been suggested that each nation and religious group translated their doctrines into Arabic to disseminate their intellectual principles among Muslims more rapidly than their counterparts⁴⁶. Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, a prominent figure and leader of the Baghdad School, encountered these dynamics while also engaging with the Mu'tazila sect. The Mu'tazila, bolstered by government backing, vigorously propagated their views and launched critiques against Shi'ite tenets, especially regarding the Imamate⁴⁷. Consequently, al-Mufid was compelled to introduce a theological approach that incorporated a measure of rationality and logical reasoning, allowing him to

counter emerging skepticism from other intellectual circles and to respond to the Mu'tazila's contentions. Al-Shaykh al-Mufid seems to favor reason in the debate between revelation and rational judgment⁴⁸. Nevertheless, in contrast to the Mu'tazila, he maintains that reason is not autonomous from revelation (Wahy) when it comes to the comprehension of religious verities and the doctrine of tawhid (monotheism).

The preeminent theological treatise bequeathed by al-Shaykh al-Mufid, "The Beginnings of Articles," is distinguished by its definitive authorship and composition towards the end of his life, encapsulating the culmination of his intellectual maturity. The work exhibits several notable features:

- Composed at the behest of his pupil Sharif Radhi, during the zenith of his academic stature, al-Shaykh al-Mufid's treatise diverges from the conventional structure of theological works. It is organized around an introduction followed by 156 theological inquiries, each initiated with the designations "chapter" and "statement."⁴⁹

- The treatise initiates with an exposition of the perspectives and distinctions among intra-Shi'ite and non-Shi'ite sects, proceeding to delineate the doctrinal disparities between Shi'ite thought and that of the Mu'tazila. Thereafter, it explores jurisprudential and foundational topics, including the probative value of individual narrations, and concludes with an examination of broader themes such as the essence of substances and accidents⁵⁰.

- In contrast to theologians who favored a philosophical approach, al-Mufid eschewed grounding his theological deliberations in general philosophical discourse. Rather, he incorporated within the latter part of his work, under the title "Al-Latif min al-Kalam," those elements of general knowledge essential to the comprehension of the core principles of Kalam.

The Scholarly and Theological Methodology of Sadid al-Din Homsî Razi

Sadid al-Din Homsî Razi was educated within the scholarly tradition of the Rey School, necessitating a brief examination of the academic milieu that prevailed during his time. The roots of Shi'ism in Rey can be traced back to the period of the Imams, and under the Abbasid Caliphate, Rey emerged as a vibrant hub for Shi'ite scholars. Notable disciples of the Imams, including A'yan al-Razi, Sahl ibn Ziyad al-Razi, and Salih ibn Hammad, were part of this intellectual circle. With the patronage of the Buyid dynasty, Rey became a focal point for Shi'ite theological discussions with various other faiths and doctrines. However, in 420 AH, the city faced a severe setback when Mahmud of Ghazni launched an assault on Rey, disrupting its scholarly activities. Despite this, the Shi'ite community persevered, maintaining their

³⁹ Homsî Razi, Sadid al-Din, "The Savior from Imitation," vol. 1, pp. 59, 60, 62.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 185.

⁴¹ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 179.

⁴² Ibid., vol. 1, p. 421.

⁴³ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 88.

⁴⁴ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 249.

⁴⁵ Al-Dhahabi, "History of Islam," vol. 10, p. 269.

⁴⁶ Bigdeli, Ali, "The Translation Movement in the Islamic World."

⁴⁷ Razavi, Seyyed Abbas, "Encyclopedia of the Islamic World," vol. 1, p. 6637.

⁴⁸ Mufid, "Correction of Beliefs," pp. 125 and 126.

⁴⁹ Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, "Awa'il al-Maqalat," p. 34.

⁵⁰ Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, "Awa'il al-Maqalat," p. 95.

academic endeavors throughout the Seljuk Empire era by adopting a measured and accommodating stance.

As alluded to earlier, the doctrines of the Imamiyyah, including the concepts of occultation and Imamate, were subjected to scrutiny by both the Mu'tazila and the Zaydiyya during this time⁵¹. The composition of "Al-Naqd" by Abdul-Jalil Qazwini, brimming with skepticism toward the Imamiyyah, attests to the widespread and unrestricted nature of theological debates at the time. When engaging with diverse faiths and sects that not only advanced their creeds but also challenged the tenets of the Imamiyyah, Homsî Razi was compelled to devise a strategy capable of addressing the criticisms of his adversaries, especially those from the Mu'tazila. His tactic bore a resemblance to that of al-Shaykh al-Mufid, yet, as mentioned before, there were distinctions in certain respects. Primarily, in the application of philosophy, Homsî Razi's preferences diverged from those of al-Shaykh al-Mufid. Additionally, he often referenced in his work two of his Mu'tazilite mentors, Abu al-Husayn al-Basri and al-Malhani al-Khwarazmi, a practice that may be seen as a secondary point of departure in methodology between the two eminent Imamiyyah scholars⁵².

As previously indicated, the sole extant work attributed to him is the treatise "Al-Munqidh min al-Taqlid." However, there exists another text entitled "Al-Mu'tamad min Madhhab al-Shi'a al-Imamiyya," which, based on the research of Abdol Hossein Haeri, is ascribed to Homsî. The attribution of "Al-Munqidh" to its author is definitive, and consequently, certain distinctive features of this work will be highlighted.

- The author positioned the discourse on the afterlife after the section on prophethood and preceding that on Imamate. Despite the placement of the Imamate discussions in the concluding part of his book, he maintained that due to the Imamate's nature as a divine grace and a precursor to religious obligations, it ought to be linked to the concept of divine justice⁵³.

- In a manner akin to al-Shaykh al-Mufid, Homsî did not view theological deliberations as contingent upon general or philosophical explorations⁵⁴. He voiced certain criticisms against the philosophers, drawing parallels between them and the proponents of predestination and the Qadariyah⁵⁵. In the compilation of his work, he drew upon both general and specific sources that continue to be celebrated today. These include "Jumal al-'Ilm wa al-'Amal" and "Al-Dakhira fi 'Ilm al-Kalam" by Sharif al-Murtaza (436 AH)⁵⁶, "Al-Iqtisad fi Ma Yata'allaq bi al-'Itiqad" by Shaykh

Tusi (460 AH)⁵⁷, and "Al-Fa'iq fi Usul al-Din" by Mahmud al-Malhani al-Khwarazmi (536 AH)⁵⁸.

The Role of Hadith in the Theological Doctrines of al-Shaykh al-Mufid and Homsî Razi

Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, the architect of the Baghdad School, diverged from the Qom School by eschewing reliance on solitary hadiths (akhbar al-ahad) for foundational beliefs, deeming such dependence impermissible. In his seminal work "Al-'Aqa'id," he elucidates: "There is no obligation to accept isolated hadiths as authoritative or to act by them, nor is it sanctioned to categorically endorse a singular hadith in religious contexts without corroborating evidence of the narrator's veracity. This stance is shared by the majority of Shi'a scholars.⁵⁹" Consequently, the acceptance and application of solitary hadiths in religious affairs are inadmissible unless substantiated by factors that validate the narrator's credibility.

Grounded in this doctrine, al-Shaykh al-Mufid offered a critique of his mentor, Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, concerning the probative value of isolated hadiths. He posited: "It is not incumbent to adhere to every statement attributed to Abu Ja'far, as he is a conveyor of hadiths. The corpus of hadith transmitters encompasses both the meritorious and the spurious, lacking in discernment and rigor. Hence, their accounts are a blend of the reliable and the dubious.⁶⁰"

Homsî Razi, in concordance with al-Shaykh al-Mufid, rejects the substantiation of incontrovertible doctrinal principles through singular hadiths. In the discourse on Imamate, he responds to those who endeavor to validate the principle of succession to Prophet Muhammad by invoking consensus and the hadith "My nation will never concur on an error,⁶¹" stating: "We do not acknowledge the authenticity of this hadith, as it is conveyed through a singular source and merely engenders speculation. The matter at hand is of foundational importance and demands certitude, thus it is impermissible to rely on that which merely insinuates speculation."

In the first instance, we do not deem this hadith to be reliable; in the second, a singular hadith, being speculative in nature, cannot serve to establish an incontrovertible doctrinal principle, particularly when the issue of Imamate calls for certitude (and thus necessitates incontrovertible evidence)⁶².

The Kharijites held the belief that the offspring of polytheists were themselves infidels and polytheists and that they would be subjected to punishment for the transgressions of their forebears. They subsequently

⁵⁷ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 221.

⁵⁸ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 56.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 122.

⁶⁰ Mufid, Al-Masa'il al-Sariyyah, p. 72.

⁶¹ Ibn Maja al-Qazwini, Muhammad, "Sunan Ibn Maja," vol. 2, p. 1303, no. 3950. Additionally, in Sunan Ibn Maja, the word "error" is replaced with "misguidance," and this hadith with the word "error" does not exist in any of the reliable sources of the Sunni tradition.

⁶² Sadid al-Din Homsî Razi, "Al-Munqidh min al-Taqlid," vol. 2, p. 275.

⁵¹ Razavi, Seyyed Abbas, "Encyclopedia of the Islamic World," vol. 1, p. 6636.

⁵² Sadid al-Din Homsî Razi, "The Savior from Imitation," vol. 1, pp. 63, 162.

⁵³ Homsî, Sadid al-Din, "Al-Munqidh min al-Taqlid," vol. 1, p. 150.

⁵⁴ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 19-25.

⁵⁵ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 292.

⁵⁶ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 213.

invoked a hadith from Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, wherein they inquired of Prophet Muhammad regarding the children who perished during the Age of Ignorance. Prophet Muhammad responded that these children reside in Hell! In rebuttal of this conviction, Homsî pens: "This hadith stands alone and, as per the consensus of scholars, is insufficient to substantiate correct beliefs."⁶³

Interpretation of Religious Texts

Al-Shaykh al-Mufid has provided interpretations for the verses of attributes (ayat al-sifat), which attribute to God qualities akin to those of His creation. For instance, in the verse "وَٱذْكُرْ عِبْدَنَا ٱدَّوٓدَ ذَا ٱلْأَيْدِ"⁶⁴ exhorting the remembrance of David as "the man of might," he elucidates "man of might" to signify either the possessor of strength or the recipient of divine favors. In another verse "بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ"⁶⁵ stating, "Nay, His hands are outstretched," he construes this as a reference to the dual blessings of the temporal realm and the eternal hereafter.⁶⁶

Sadid al-Din Homsî, emulating al-Shaykh al-Mufid, prioritizes reason when confronted with a discrepancy between the literal interpretations of Quranic verses and intellectual discernment. In contesting the notion of the annulment of deeds, he asserts: "There is a consensus that the literal interpretations of the Quran must be grounded in rational proof, rather than the inverse, for reason is the cornerstone and all else is derivative. Consequently, the literal interpretation of verses about the annulment of deeds necessitates a reinterpretation."⁶⁷

Nevertheless, when transmitted evidence does not contradict reason, he deems interpretation unnecessary. From this standpoint, he censures those who reinterpret the forgiveness mentioned in the verse "إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ ٱنۢبِرَاطَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَشْرِكُونَ بِهِ"⁶⁸ "Indeed, Allah does not pardon the association of partners with Him" as a deferment of divine retribution.⁶⁹

CONCLUSION

The acknowledgment of reason's unique position, the reluctance to employ philosophy in the validation of theological statements, and the independence of Kalam discussions from broader philosophical inquiries, along with the critique of philosophers, the application of reason in the establishment of theological principles, the rejection of the authority of solitary hadiths in matters of belief, the utilization of Kalam, and the hermeneutics of anthropomorphic descriptions, are shared features between al-Shaykh al-Mufid and Homsî Razi.

Homsî Razi posits that certain theological assertions, notably the understanding of God, are attainable solely through reason and rational analysis, whereas al-Shaykh al-Mufid maintains that reason must be complemented by revelation and tradition in all theological domains, encompassing the comprehension of God and the affirmation of divine unity.

Furthermore, al-Shaykh al-Mufid was influenced by the Mu'tazila of Baghdad, and his approach to Kalam was developed in contrast to their views. In contrast, Homsî Razi was inspired by the Mu'tazila of Basra and authored his works in opposition to their doctrines. Sadid al-Din Homsî, in deviation from al-Shaykh al-Mufid, references some of his perspectives from his Mu'tazili mentors, yet the theological tenets of the Imamiyyah remain unchanged across the diverse schools of Shi'a Kalam.

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⁶³ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 200-201.

⁶⁴ p. 17.

⁶⁵ Al-Ma'idah / Verse 64.

⁶⁶ Al-Mufid, "Tashih al-I'tiqadat", p. 30.

⁶⁷ Homsî Razi, Sadid al-Din, "Al-Munqidh min al-Taqlid", vol. 2, p. 70.

⁶⁸ An-Nisa / Verse 116.

⁶⁹ Homsî Razi, Sadid al-Din, "Al-Munqidh min al-Taqlid", vol. 2, p. 131.

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