

Who Would Be Successful in the Hereafter?

Amir-ul-Momaneen^{a.s.}'s Khutabah¹:

Aban said that I have heard from Sulaim^{r.a.} that he had heard the following from Imam Ali^{a.s.}, This nation (of Mohammed^{saww}) will be divided into 73 sects, out of which 72 will be sent to hell whereas only one sect would succeed in reaching the paradise. Among the 73 sects, 13 would claim to be the followers of Ahlul Bait^{a.s.} but only one of them will reach the gardens of paradise whereas the remaining 12 will be directed to the hell. Only that sect is the victorious, guided, possessor of 'Eemaan²', committed to Islam and firm on Haq³, **who obeys my commands, submits to my Imamat⁴, rejects my enemies, extends love to me and holds animosity against my foes.** (This sect) has recognised my^{a.s.} (Divine) rights and Imamat and believe that it has been made compulsory to obey my commands in the Book of Allah^{swt} and traditions of Rasool Allah^{saww}. These are the ones who have never ever raised any doubts and suspicions once Allah^{swt} has implanted the 'Light' (Noor) of our recognition into their hearts. **They have acquired mystical knowledge through associating themselves to 'Our Noor' and receive prophecies.** The people of this sect have been respectfully invited to join our group of Shias. Their hearts are content and have become so firm in their beliefs that doubts would never even touch their thoughts. Indeed, my (Infallible) successors and myself are Divinely guided and will enlighten others until the Doom's day. We^{a.s.} are those who have been described in those verses of Quran by Allah^{swt} where He mentions Himself^{swt} and His Prophet^{saww}. Allah^{swt} has created ourselves^{a.s.} pure and Impeccable and has made us witness to His creatures on the earth, His 'Hujjat⁵', trustee of His knowledge, origin of His Blessings and messenger of His^{swt} Message. He has blessed us with Quran and Quran is going to follow us in such a way that neither we will depart from it nor Quran will deviate from us. As per Rasool Allah^{saww} 's tradition, we will (be together) until we both meet Rasool Allah^{saww} at the Spring of Kausor.

Hence only one sect out of 73 will manage to escape the hell-fire, which is worst then all turmoil, troubles and is beyond one's imagination. (Our followers) are indeed destined for paradise, they are only 70,000 in numbers and will enter into paradise without being quizzed (on deeds).

¹ Sulaim bin Qais Hilali, pp.60.

² Amir-ul-momaneen^{a.s.} says, 'Eemaan' is believing in from heart, iterating it from the tongue and demonstrating it through acts of worship, Nahjul Balagha.

³ Just and Divine path.

⁴ Divine right to guide in both worldly as well as religious affairs.

⁵ Divine authority

All the remaining ones are on the wrong path and are aides to Satan. Satan and his associates have taught them and they are the enemies of God^{swt}, Prophet^{saww} and momaneens⁶. They will be sent to hell fire without any judgement/reservation, they have noting to do with Allah^{swt} and Rasool^{saww}, they have worshiped others along with Him^{swt} and hence committed 'Shirk' and have become non-believers. Although they assume that they are on the right path as they take oaths in front of you. They will also say the same on the day of Judgement, O! Lord^{swt}, we swear by Your Name, we were not among 'Mushriks', they will keep reiterating these words. They have the perception that they have proofs to support their beliefs but be aware! They are liars.

Amir-ul-momaneen^{as} was asked. How about that fellow who neither obeyed you nor kept any grudges against you and remained in the state of 'Intermission'⁷? And never committed anything to annoy you but did not love you and rejected your enemies? Amir-ul-momaneen^{as} replied, 'I do not agree that such a person exists', if so (we assume there is one) then he is not among those 73 sects.

Rasool Allah^{saww} has mentioned 73 sects, among them are the deserters (in majority) and a successful one 'The Naji'⁸. The others are those who have first made themselves famous and then started inviting people to their faith. Only one among (these sects) has truly embraced Allah^{swt}'s 'Deen'⁹, whereas the remaining 72 are the followers of Satan's teachings, Satan really likes them and fights against all those who reject the 72 sects.

Imam^{as} explained, if a person believed in One God, has faith in Rasool Allah^{saww} but was not aware of our 'Wilayat' (mastership), was unaware of our enemies, kept hinging onto the unjust faith but did not invent a new religion, neither converted hallal into harram nor harram into hallal. He acted on that which was not disputed and entrusted that to Allah^{swt} which was beyond his comprehension, such a person will also succeed in the hereafter. But he would stand between the 'Mushriks' and the 'Momin', these people are descent and stand above the ordinary people. These are people of dignity and wisdom.

The people destined to hell fire are will beg for intercession from the Prophets^{as}, Angels^{as} and momaneen. Momaneen are those who will surely be successful and enter into Paradise without being scrutinised. Only

⁶ Followers of the successful sect.

⁷ Tauwaqqaf

⁸ Who would enter into paradise

⁹ Religion.

those people will be quizzed who have elected to remain between the ‘Mushriks’ and the ‘Momin’.

Imam^{as} added, ‘Moulaf-al-Qalab’ and ‘Mutqarfa’ are those people who got mixed up in doing good and bad deeds whereas ‘Mustafezeen’ are those who never came up with lame excuse (to justify their conducts) but never adopted the righteous path but they did not have the ability to indulge into ‘Kufr and Shirk’, they neither wanted to nominate someone as their guide nor had any desire to follow the righteous path. These people will remain in the ‘Araf’ and will be entirely on the Mersey of Allah^{swt}. Allah^{swt} may send them to hell fire based on their deeds and His justice or may like to forgive them due to His^{swt} Blessings and Generosity.

I (Sulaim) asked Will an ‘Arif’ momin who calls people to the true path (Haq) will end up in hell? Imam^{as} replied, no, never. I then asked will an ignorant person who would not recognise Imam^{as} of his time will enter into Paradise? Imam^{as} replied, No, unless Allah^{swt} would wish. Imam^{as} replied Allah^{swt} is the ‘Wali’ (Guardian) of those Momaneen, (who would never be scrutinised) ‘These are the people who perform good deeds and these are those who have never mixed up ‘kufr’ with ‘Eemaan’.

Who is Shia?

One of our Shias’ qualities is that they are pleased with what pleases us and they are grieved with what makes us^{a.s} sad.

When our shia is happy that makes us^{a.s} happy and when he is unhappy that makes us^{a.s} unhappy.

Shia of Amir-ul-Momaneen^{a.s}, adhered to the true path for a long time but with the passage of time, smaller shia groups went astray and started following their own appointed or self claimed ‘non-masoom’ (fallible) Imams, i.e., 6th Imamis. However, the majority of them, including those who deviated for some time/generations embraced the 12 Imami mainstream Shia sect. They were guided by the 12 Infallible Imams^{a.s}’s traditions along with direct supervision and teachings until the time of longer occultation of the 12th Imam^{a.s} which occurred in 329 AH¹⁰. After this time, the 12 Immami Shias gradually adopted two main schools of thought, the Usooli Shias and the Akhbari Shias, see Appendix I.

Who is Usooli Shia?

The Usooli Shias are those who have devised principles and interpret Quran and Ahadith through their own constructed toolos, i.e., ‘Ilmul

¹⁰ After Hijjra-Islamic calendar,

Rijal¹¹, Istambat¹² and acting on the judgement of previous non-masoom scholars. For a detailed account of Usooli beliefs, see [..\Usooli Akbari\Newman, Akhbaris, Prt 1, 1992.pdf](#)

Who is Akhbari Shia?

Those Shias who interpret Quran from the traditions of Masomeen^{as} and do not use their own wisdom or any other man-made principles in the derivation of Islamic laws and solely rely on Masomeen^{as}'s traditions. They use Quran and traditions of Masomeen^{as} to establish the authenticity of traditions- based on criteria given by the Masomeen^{as}. See further details on Akbari school of thought, see [..\Usooli Akbari\Newman, Akhbaris, Prt 1, 1992.pdf](#)

Who is Momin?

It is narrated from Ibn-e-Auzniya that more than one narrator have referred to either Imam Mohammed Baqir^{a.s.} or Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq^{a.s.} ‘No one becomes **Momin** until and unless he recognises¹³ Allah^{swt}, His Rasool^{saww}, His Imams^{a.s.} along with Masoom Imam^{a.s.} of his time (Imam-e-Zaman^{a.s.}). He then should refer to them in all his affairs and put himself in their^{a.s.} custody. And added, ‘what will he know in the hereafter who has been ignorant from the very beginning?’¹⁴

Someone asked from Amir-ul-momaneen^{as} what will be the identity of a monin in future? Amir-ul-Momaneen^{as} replied, ‘He would like to stay close to God’s representative, he will establish friendship upon seeing him but would disassociate himself from the enemies of Allah^{swt} even if they are his close relatives.’¹⁵

In another tradition narrated by Zarah, Imam^{as} said, Momin is that who has directly received Allah^{swt}'s’ message in his heart regarding our (divine) rights on him.¹⁶

¹¹ Knowledge about the reliability of those men who are in the chain of tradition narrators.

¹² analyses

¹³ Abu Hamza narrates from Imam Mohammed Baqir^{a.s.} that Imam^{a.s.} said, ‘Only that would worship Allah^{swt} who acquires His^{swt} recognition (Marafat) but the one who does not recognise Allah^{swt}, only humiliates himself while worshipping. I asked, what is the recognition of Allah^{swt}? Imam^{as} replied, ‘Marafat’ of Allah^{swt} is to substantiate Him and His Prophet^{as}, love of Imam Ali^{as} and acceptance of his master-ship (Imamat) along with guardianship of other (masoom) Imams^{as}, as well as rejection of their enemies. That’s how one gets to recognise Allah^{swt}. (Usool-e-Kafi, vol. 2, Kitabul-Hujjat, tradition 1, pp. 30)

¹⁴ Usool-e-Kafi, vol. 2, Kitabul-Hujjat, tradition 2, pp. 30

¹⁵ Salooni Salooni Qabal An Tafqad duni, Nahjul Asrar, vol.1, pp. 186.

¹⁶ Usool-e-Kafi, vol. 2, Kitabul-Hujjat, tradition 3, pp. 31

Qualities of a Momin?

Amir-ul-momaneen^{as} said in a sermon, ‘A monin will be grieved and troubled deep down but would reflect gladness from his face, he would keep a low profile but will have resolute determination, he would be not be rude and hate popularity, his sufferings are endless but he never gives up hope, he would be calm, active, thankful, patient and a deep thinker. He would not ask for favours and will be extremely polite and kind. His ‘Nafs¹⁷’ (will power) would be strong than rocks but his manners would be warmer than a humble slave.

Zahid’, ‘Rageeb’ and ‘Sabir’

In a sermon¹⁸, Amir-ul-momaneen^{as} said, Keep in mind! people created by Allah^{swt}, fall into three categories, ‘Zahid’, ‘Rageeb’ and ‘Sabir’. ‘Zahid’ is that who would neither get excited upon acquiring something and nor gets saddened when something is taken away from him. ‘Sabir’ is that who neither desires for worldly status nor is grieved upon losing it. ‘Rageeb’ is that who does not care about lawful and unlawful means in collecting whatever he can lays his hand onto.

Who is Muqassir¹⁹?

Imam Mohammed Baqir^{a.s} replied to a question on Muqassir that Muqassir is that who would refrain from gaining the recognition of Masomeen^{a.s}, Amr and Ruh, which are compulsory (to learn) for everyone. I asked, how one could recognise ‘Ruh’?

Imam^{a.s} replied, One should believe and understand that to whom Allah^{swt} associated with Ruh and has handed over His Amr (meaning Masoom Imam^{a.s} has in his control both the Ruh²⁰ and Amr). Thus, he^{a.s} would resurrect and create with His^{swt} permission. He would know what are people’s intentions and thoughts and all that has already happened (in the past) and what to come until the day of judgement. This is all due to the ‘Ruh’ which is ‘Amr’ of Allah^{swt}, thus whoever has in his powers both the **Ruh** and **Amr** is perfect without any inadequacies and flaws. He (Imam^{a.s}) would be able to perform as per his Wish- which is the

¹⁷ The heart.

¹⁸ Salooni Salooni Qabal An Tafqad duni, Nahjul Asrar, vol.1, pp. 186.

¹⁹ Al Qatarah, vol. 2, pp. 27

²⁰ According to Masomeen a.s. Ruh is superior to angles (including Jibraeel a.s.)

reflection of Allah^{swt} 's attributes. He would go from East to the West in a split of a second, can reach skies and come back within no time; there are no limitations in performing any of tasks what so ever.

I asked, I would like to know about Ruh from the Book of Allah^{swt} in order to understand whether it is among those command which Allah^{swt} has specified for His Prophet Mohammed^{saww}. Imam^{a.s} said, read this verse: 'And similarly we have sent to you our Ruh which is from Our Amr. Prior to this they did not know about the Book and the Eemaan. But we have sent down the Noor through which we guide whoever we select.'²¹

'We have secured Eemaan in their hearts and provided them guidance through Our Ruh'.²²

I then said to Imam^{a.s}, God may bless you, it would mean that most of the Shia are 'Muqassir' I do not find any one of my friends who would be qualify to the qualities which you have described. Imam^{a.s} replied O Jabir! Although you do not know them but I know few of them who visit me, send blessings and ask about those hidden and sacred knowledge, which is not known to ordinary people. I told Imam^{a.s} about a person and his friends who, I think, God willing, have such qualities in that they know about something about the Divine knowledge, as I have heard from them what could be regarded as elevated and deep knowledge and I think they are the best (shia). Imam^{a.s} asked me to invite them tomorrow and come back with them for a session.

Jabir says, I took them to Imam^{a.s} next day, upon arrive there they greeted Imam^{a.s} with lot of respect and showed their devoutness. Imam^{a.s} said, O Jabir! Indeed they are your brothers but their faith is not near perfection, as yet, owing to some weaknesses. Imam^{a.s} then turned to them and asked, 'Do you believe that whatever Allah^{swt} wants to perform can do so or give commands and no one can dare to disobey Him? And He cannot be asked to justify His deeds, however people would be examined for what they have committed. They all replied what you have said is correct, Allah^{swt} does whatever He likes to do and issues commands to others as per His decisions. Imam^{a.s} said, thank God! you are aware of (Tauheed) and your faith is perfect about it (Tauheed). Imam^{a.s} then looked at Jabir and said do not make up your mind yet, on what is obscure to you. Jabir says, I got very nervous and perplexed (as Mola^{a.s} knew what was going through my mind).

²¹ Al Shura, verse 52

²² Al Mujadila, verse 22.

Imam^{as} then turned to them and asked me to ask them (in order to judge them further) ‘If it is within my abilities to turn into the appearance of my son Mohammed Baqir^{as} ? When Jabir asked them they remained silent. Then Imam^{as} asked Jabir again to ask them if my son can turn into my appearance? Jabir asked this question from them but they again kept quiet. Imam^{as} then asked Jabir, ‘why they do not reply to my questions? Jabir replied, I have asked them again, ‘ why you do not reply to Imam^{as}, they again did not reply and showed an bewilder-ness! Imam^{as} then said to Jabir, don’t worry, they will remain like this, as I have informed you earlier. Then Imam^{as} addressed them directly and asked ‘why you do not reply to my questions? They started looking at each other and reluctantly replied we lack knowledge and could not reply due to our ignorance. Afterwards, Imam Zain-ul-Abadeen Ali bin Hussain^{as} looked at Imam Mohammed Baqir^{as} and asked them who is he? They replied, ‘O! Son of Prophet^{as}, he is your son’. Imam^{as} asked who am I? They replied, ‘You are his father, Imam Ali bin Hussain^{as}, Thus Imam^{as} recited few words which we could not understand and immediately Imam Mohammed Baqir^{as} turned into Imam Ali bin Hussain^{as} and Imam Zain-ul-Abadeen Ali bin Hussain^{as} became Imam Mohammed Baqir^{as}. Upon observing this, all the companions started reciting ‘La a la ha Il-llah’. Imam Ali bin Hussain^{as} said, ‘Do not be surprised at the supremacy of Allah^{swt}. ‘I am Mohammed^{as} and Mohammed^{as} is from Ali^{as}’. Imam Mohammed Baqir^{as} then explained, ‘O! People, do not be surprised to see the ‘Amr Allah’, I am Mohammed^{as} and Ali^{as} is in my (Mohammed’s) appearance. We are all the same, from one ‘Noor’ and our souls are ‘Amr Allah’. Our first, was Mohammed^{as}, our middle one was Mohammed^{as} and our last one is also Mohammed^{as}, in fact we are all Mohammed. Upon listening this, they all went down in prostration and uttered we all believe in your authority- also in your hidden attributes, in your clear miracles and we submit to your eloquent status and high ranks.

Imam Ali bin Hussain^{as} said, rise from prostration and lift your faces, now you truly recognise us and have succeeded! You have witnessed the facts and perfected your beliefs and by doing so you have found means of reaching Allah^{swt}. Be aware! Allah^{swt} does not show these signs to the one who have weak-beliefs and are among ‘muqassareen’²³ - which you are observed today from my son Mohammed^{as} and myself. If you are going to narrate what you have seen today then people will not admit it and make ridicule of you. They replied we have understood it and we will obey you. Imam^{as} said, now go away since you achieved comprehensive guidance. And they went away.²⁴

²³ The ones who are stingy in admitting our attributes

²⁴ Bihar ul-Anwar, vol 26, Chapter 14, pp. 16

Who is Ghali?

A Gali is that who attributes to us what we do not say about ourselves^{a.s.}²⁵.

Who is Nasbi?²⁶

My father told me, who heard from Saed bin Abdullah, who heard from Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Aisa, who from Mohammed bin Khalid, who from Nazhar, who from Yahiya Halabi, who from Abu Mughara, who heard from Abu Baseer, who narrates from Ali Sainay that Abu Abdullah Imam Jafar Sadiq^{a.s.} said, 'Indeed, (on the final Day of Judgement) Our momin will be able to intercede for his friends and relatives unless they are among 'Nasbi' (those who hold hostilities against Ahul Bai^{a.s.}). A 'Nasbi' will never ever be forgiven- even if all 'Mursil Prophets^{a.s.27} and high rank Angels^{a.s.} pray to Allah^{swt.} on his behalf.

- (2) *And from the sources, Mohammed bin Khalid, who from Hamzah bin Abdullah, who from Hashim bin Abi Saeed, who from Abu Basir Alaas almaradi, who said I have heard from Abu Abdullah Imam Jafar Sadiq^{a.s.} 'Certainly Hazrat Nuh^{a.s.} had on board even dogs and pigs but did not invite any illegitimate fellow, But Nasbi is worst than an illegitimate person.*
- (3) *I have told by Mohammed bin Ahmed, who refers from Ibrahim bin Ishaq, who from Abdullah bin Hammad, who from Abdullah bin Sanan who narrates from Abu Abdullah Imam Jafar Sadiq^{a.s.} said: 'A person is not Nasbi who bears grudges against us Ahul Bait^{a.s.} as you will not find a single fellow who would say that he holds animosity against Mohammed^{saww} and his progeny^{a.s.} but in fact a 'Nasbi' is that who becomes your enemy due to your faith on our 'Wilayat' and being among our Shia'.*

²⁵ Usool-e-Kafi, vol. 2, pp. 315.

²⁶ Sawab-ul-Amal and Atab-ul-Amal, Chpt Atab-ul-Amal, Sheikh Sadduq.

²⁷ Those Prophets^{a.s.} who brought Divine Books with them.

Appendix²⁸

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SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE OCCULTATION: INDIVIDUAL RELIGION AND COLLECTIVE RELIGION

The imam is omnipresent in Imamite religious life. Given the capital role that this presence plays, it is obvious why there were such substantial modifications in Imamite religious life after the final Occultation. One question inevitably comes to mind when we examine the evolution of Imamite doctrine: after the Occultation, is Imamite religious life deprived of all collective characteristics, of all community practice, of all social application? This question is at first glance provocative; it nevertheless appears to find a partial answer in certain "distinctive characteristics" of the doctrine. Although our work here has been a study of early Imamism, we might do well at this point to outline the historical evolution of the doctrine, in order to be able to look at the influence that this evolution has had on Imamism's basic teachings. Such an outline will help us to understand better the historical fate of Imamism, on the one hand, and to evaluate the relationship that the faithful believer is supposed to maintain with the imam during the Occultation, on the other.⁶⁹³ Let us look first at the case of Imamite jurisprudence (fiqh), since it is the discipline that touches daily religious life most closely. It is jurisprudence that codifies and regulates the most concrete aspects of dogma, and it appears to have been the discipline that was most immediately touched by the problems posed by the Occultation. Imamite fiqh came into existence as a discipline of its own, so to speak, during the Imamates of Muhammad al-Baqir^{as} and especially Jafar al-Sadiq^{as}, even though its systematic methodology was not worked out until later.⁶⁹⁴ For a long time the principles of jurisprudence (Usul al-fiqh) included only the Quran and the hadith, the latter comprising the traditions of the Prophet and those of the imams, those of the imams being able to abrogate those of the Prophet. As we have seen, the imams are extremely critical of both reasoning by analogy (qiyas) and the use of personal opinion (raay) in religious matters.⁶⁹⁵ We have also seen that in the early "esoteric non-rational" tradition, 'aql' not only had the meaning of a dialectic faculty of discernment, but it also referred to a cosmic force, like the Imam of Creation, actualized in individuals in the form of a faculty of metaphysical apperception and considered as the individual imam of each faithful believer.⁶⁹⁶ Even among the first great "rationalist" theologians like al-Mufid (d. 413/1022) and his disciple al-Murtada (d. 436/1044), the Qur'an and the hadith are recognized as being the only bases of law. Ijtihad (the "personal interpretation" of the doctor/theologian), of great importance in later Imamism, was rejected as being a disguised form of the "reasoning by analogy" that was criticized by the imams.^{696bis} The "consensus" (ijma) of the Doctors of the Law, as it is described by these two authors, comes in a typically Shiite form: the "consensus" is of no value unless it includes the will of the imams, a will that must be shown through their words. The value of the "consensus" is thus "effaced" by the validity of the hadith.⁶⁹⁷ The same opinions of ijihad and ijma are found in Abu Jafar al-Tusi (d. 460/1067), but in his case we can already see the first influences of

²⁸ Adopted from 'THE DIVINE GUIDE IN EARLY SHIISM, The Sources of Esotericism in Islam' by Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, translated by David Streight, STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK PRESS

Mu'tazilism: 'aql' begins to lose its early definition and approaches the reasoning faculty of the dialecticians.⁶⁹⁸ It appears as though the somewhat later al-Allama al-Hilli (d. 726/1325) was the first of the great Imamite scholars to have classified ijihad, and consequently 'aql' (in its acceptance as dialectical reasoning) as methodological principles of jurisprudence to be used along with the Qur'an and the hadith.⁶⁹⁹ In its early stage, then, the bases of Imamite law were practically limited to the Qur'an and the hadith.⁷⁰⁰ As we will see, it will not be until about the tenth/sixteenth century, that the two ideas of ijihad and 'aql' are effectively considered to be two bases for jurisprudence, that the doctor/theologians will acquire significant political and social power.

As far as "applicable branches" (furu) are concerned, transactions (mu'amalat) in Imamite law are with very few exceptions identical to those in Sunni schools of law.⁷⁰¹ Problems become more thorny when we get into the field of duties regarding worship ('ibadat) and precepts (ahkam); here, even in Imamism, scholars have long debated certain points. Let us begin with duties regarding worship, divided into prayer (both individual and collective), fasting, the religious "taxes," pilgrimage, jihad (in the sense of "holy war"), and ordering what is good and forbidding what is evil. From what can be gleaned from the notes of Aqa Bozorg al-Tihharu in his al-Dharia, a colossal collection of Shiaite works, fierce debates were waged on the practice of two of these, collective prayer and holy war. In essence, what characterizes these two is their need for a "leader" or a "guide" to be practiced appropriately. We know that in Imamism this "leader" can only be the imam himself, or someone designated by him. According to the early corpus of the imams, the collective prayer of the two feasts of the Sacrifice at the end of the month of Ramazan are specifically declared as impossible to perform in the absence of the imam or his delegate.⁷⁰² On the other hand, since the leaders of the Imamite collective prayer on Fridays were named by the imams, once the imam is absent, it appeared as though the Friday prayer could no longer be practiced, or that it was at least suspended" (mutawaqqif al-ijra) until the Return of the Mahdi^{as} and his designating new leaders for prayer. This situation prevailed throughout the pre-Safavid period, since at the beginning of the Safavid dynasty (circa 927/1520 to 1009/1600) nearly a hundred books or treatises were written to justify the legal status of Friday prayer.⁷⁰³ The composition of these books was linked to the religious politics of the Safavids, specifically to attempts at setting up another Islamic "pole" in the face of the Ottoman Empire, on the one hand, and the "ideologization" of Imamism, on the other. We shall return to this.

We find ourselves facing the same phenomenon when it comes to the holy war. With the arrival of the Safavids, a number of polemical works were composed to prove the legal or illegal status of jihad in the absence of the imam.⁷⁰⁴ A solution was finally reached through compromise, and the doctor-theologians distinguished between two different holy wars: the offensive jihad, declared to be "suspended" during the period of Occultation, and the defensive, legal jihad, which may be obligatory in the case of an attack from outside. The polemics and the juridical-theological debates in the Safavid and post-Safavid periods show that the question was still moot until relatively recently.

Among the ahkam, religious jurisdiction (hukuma/qada") and legal punishments (hudud) were subject to this debate. The need for justice based on the Law and religious science of the judge being beyond question, the question remains as to whether the judge should be a religious person, in the sense of a religious

"professional," or not. The problem is raised by later sources, once again starting in the time of the Safavids and the constitution of a class of Imamite religious professionals. Actually, among the early Imamites, the theologian-judges (hukkam/qudat al-share) were named directly by the imams; some of the imams' remarks regarding the difficulty of just jurisdiction 705 appear to have led Imamite doctors to wonder whether, in the absence of the imam, a religious judge, all the more likely to make judgment errors since he is not designated by the infallible person of the imam, could exercise such a responsibility without compromising both the Law and religion. The number of works written from the Safavid period on against this argumentation encourages us to think that it was effectively used by Imamites in earlier times.⁷⁰⁶ Imamite law divides legal punishments into two categories:⁷⁰⁷ there are first of all those punishments instituted by the Qur'an and whose application is designated by the expression "God's right" (haqq Allah); next, there are the punishments applied to errors not foreseen by the Sacred Text and whose commission is called "man's right" (haqq al-nas). Since the imam is the only person with the ability to apply Qur'anic precepts to individual cases appropriately, the practice of "God's right" can be carried out only by Him, or by the person specifically designated by Him. "Man's right," on the other hand, can be carried out by an individual whose virtue and religious knowledge are recognized by everyone. The final part of al-Murtada's treatise, *Risalat al-ghayba*, summarizes and illustrates quite well this somewhat discomfiting and ambiguous situation that we are examining.⁷⁰⁸ The somewhat stilted language of the text is from A. Sachedina's translation:

The doctrine of the hudad [legal punishment] during the ghayba is clear. It is like this that if [the hadd] was to be implemented on a person, if the Imam appears and if that person is still alive and if it is proved on him by imputation and confession of having been committed by him, the Imam will impose the legal punishment on him. But if the punishment was not implemented because of his having died, the sin is on those who have frightened the Imam and forced him to go into ghayba. The Shari'ah does not get abrogated in the execution of the hudad, because abrogation is at that time when there is a possibility of implementing the punishment and when obstacles preventing its enforcement have been removed. But under the condition we have mentioned, it does not get abrogated. "⁷⁰⁹

This short excerpt seems to sum up the early Imamite concept as concerns the social application of jurisprudence: as long as the imam remains in hiding, it is impossible for the Law to function correctly on the collective level. There is no one but the hidden imam who, once he comes back, can carry out all the precepts applicable to the collective religious life. The Imamites could not have been ignorant of the inevitable implications of a complete Occultation: without the designation of the imam, no chosen delegate could be named; without the delegate, there could be no "leader" or "guide" for collective prayer, which, therefore, becomes "suspended." Nothing in the early corpus of the imams suggests a remedy for such a situation. The last letter of the twelfth imam will cut to the quick: not only will there not be a "representative," but no one but an **impostor** will claim to be one. In the face of this information, we might wonder-and here we return to our original question-if the complete Occultation did not bring about the end of the collective dimension of the Imamite doctrine, and if this doctrine did not become, from that point on, a completely interiorized, individualized, initiatory kind of "religion. "

In addition to the information examined previously, there are also comments by the imams about the Occultation that appear to corroborate our idea here. The fourth imam, 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidi'n^{as}, after saying that the Imamate belongs to al-Husayn's descendents and that the Mahdi^{as} will have two Occultations, states: " As far as the [second] Occultation is concerned, its duration will be prolonged until the majority of those who profess this doctrine go back on their belief; at that time the only one who will remain steadfast will be he whose certainty [yaqin] is strong [or "strengthened"] and whose knowledge [ma'rifa] is healthy [or "restored"], he who finds in himself no difficulty accepting what we [the imams] proclaim, he who salutes us "people of the house" [of the Prophet]." ⁷¹⁰ The conditions required to be a true faithful believer during the period of the major Occultation are thus 10'ie (walaya) for the imams, absolute "certainty" about the truth of their teachings, and knowledge, which, in the technical terminology of the imams means knowledge of the initiatory secrets of the doctrine. These conditions point only to an interior and individual religious spirituality. Two of Ja'far^{as}'s traditions appear to suggest that such a believer remains in contact with the hidden imam, even during the period of the major Occultation: "The Qa'im will have two Occultations, a short one and another of long duration. During the first of these, only certain chosen Shiites will know where he is hidden, and during the second [Occultation], only the chosen ones among the intimate Friends in his Religion will know this place."⁷¹¹ Again, Ja'far^{as} says: "The Lord of this Cause [that is, the Mahdi] will have two Occultations; one will be so long that some of [the Imamites] will say that he is dead, others that he has been killed, and still others that he has disappeared [definitively]. Only a few of his faithful will remain attached to his Cause, and none of his friends or anyone else will know where he is, except for the intimate Friend who rules over his Cause."⁷¹² Let us not forget this other saying, constantly repeated by the imams: "Our Cause is difficult; the only ones able to bear it are a prophet sent by God, an angel of Proximity, and a faithful believer whose heart has been tested by God for faith."⁷¹³ We discern in the expression "test of the heart" an allusion to initiation into the spiritual "technique" of vision with the heart, through which the initiated discover the Light of the Imam in their hearts and thus attain esoteric Knowledge and miraculous powers. Is this tantamount to saying that "vision with the heart," with the "certainty" and "knowledge" that accompany such vision, is what makes the faithful believer become an intimate Friend of the imam? Is it what allows the faithful believer to know the "location" of his Master? This is at any rate what Imamite mystics have always claimed.⁷¹⁴ Only a small minority will know "the location of the hidden imam," or, in other words, only a small minority will be in contact with him. But this same handful of believers will be able to hide their privilege from the eyes of the world, so that the conditions set up by the hidden imam in his last letter may be respected. These believers are those that later sources called "men of the Invisible" (rijal al-ghayb), and about whom it is said that their existence is indispensable to humanity, since they are the ones that will continue to transmit the Divine Science secretly until the Return of the hidden imam.⁷¹⁵

But things evolved quickly from the beginning of the major Occultation. The Imamite Community's situation was becoming untenable. Living in a socially and ideologically hostile environment, deprived of the physical presence of its charismatic leader, in possession of a body of beliefs that appeared "heretical" and "irrational" at a time when "orthodoxy" and "rationalism" had firm footing, Imamism felt forced to adopt a solution of compromise in order to survive as a religious community. Everything seems to have begun with the slide of the meaning of the word 'aql that, from the time

of shaykh al-Mufid, was beginning to refer to the faculty of logical reasoning. From that time on, the traditions judged to be too "irrational?" were quietly left unmentioned, or were even considered suspect.⁷¹⁶ The door was thus open for the principle of ijtiḥād ("the personal interpretation of the doctor-theologian regarding religious matters"), giving the doctor-theologian tremendous social and political power. The process nevertheless took a number of centuries to crystallize.^{716 bis} As we have seen, respect for the rules instituted by the imams began to get in the way of the application of the doctrine in collective matters. The great turning point was the rise of the Safavids in Iran. The evolution of Imamite law and the chronological placement of sources coincide directly with this political and cultural change that transformed Imamite doctrine into a state religion beginning in the tenth/sixteenth century. Before the Safavids, the problem of a government drawing its legitimacy from its adherence to a doctrine does not even seem to have been an issue among the Imamites. Imamite or proImamite powers like the Buyids (334/945 to 447/1055) and the Ilkhanids (from the sixth/twelfth to the eighth/fourteenth centuries) appear never to have been forced to justify their legitimacy by their profession of faith. It is undeniable that this attitude had its political reasons, but we might also think that it was founded on the fundamental Imamite belief according to which any power before the Return of the hidden imam is by its very nature a usurper, or on some of the imam^{as}' traditions where they vehemently impugn the very idea of government.⁷¹⁷ Things changed radically when the Safavids took power in 907/1501. Shah Ismail, the founder of the dynasty, publicly called himself the precursor and the "representative" of the hidden imam^{as}, and his followers looked upon him as a reincarnation of the imams.

In order to create another political and religious pole in the face of the Ottoman sultan-caliphs, he ferociously imposed his ideas and ultimately declared Imamism to be the state religion of Iran. Drawing its legitimacy from its doctrinal adherence, the Safavid power needed a religious "system." Besides local doctor-theologians, religious authorities were invited from Syria, Bahrain, and Arabian Iraq to put into place a veritable "ideological" armature, in order to support the Safavid idea of Imamism. A whole religious structure, to avoid the term "official Church," controlled by the state was put into place. Simultaneously, the religious system gave birth to a body of independent Doctors of the Law vis-a-vis the powers that be.⁷¹⁸ The disappearance of the charisma of the sovereigns, the failure of the religious politics of the state, and serious economic crises created a condition of wavering and uncertainty, the beneficiaries of which were the independent Doctors.⁷¹⁹ With the exception of a few cases of desperate resistance on the part of sovereigns, it can be said that from the time of Shah Tahmasb I's reign (931/1524 to 984/1576), power effectively fell into the hands of the Doctors of the Law.⁷²⁰ The School of usulī ("rationalist") theologians, who carried on the thought of **al-Mufid or al-Allama al-Hilli, was restructured at this time, and it displaced (although not without violence)** the old akhbarī ("traditionalist") School; thus the idea of ijtiḥād, supported by the theologian's personal dialectical reasoning, officially and effectively became one of the methodological bases of Imamite law.⁷²¹ Ijtiḥād brought significant political and religious power to the jurist-theologian who used it (**the mujtahid**). The mass of faithful, incapable of reaching the level of ijtiḥād, was relegated to relying on "imitation" (taqlid), that is, to following the mujtahid and his instructions scrupulously (painstakingly). The mujtahid was promoted to the rank of "general representative of the hidden imam" (naib-e amm-e imam), and the four

"representatives" of the period of the minor Occultation were henceforth named "the particular representatives of the imam" (naib-e khass).⁷²²

The fiqh, which tends to be usuli, easily became the dominant discipline of Islamic studies, and eclipsed the other sciences almost totally. **The search for an interiorized individual religion, spiritual effort through the strength of walaya, "Knowledge," and "Certitude" in the hope of establishing "contact" with the hidden imam were practiced by very few, often persecuted groups.**

Political ambition and power, defined by the imams^{as} as being destroyers of the "true Religion," were from then on presented as guarantees of its just application. The religious "system" worked out by the Safavids succeeded in putting into place a "process of substitution": the jurist-theologian took the place of the imam;⁷²³ principles of jurisprudence replaced the teachings of the imams; **walaya, love/submission/fidelity-that all initiates owe to their initiating Master-was transformed into taqlid**, servile imitation of the all-powerful jurist; love for the imams was transformed into a morbid, dolorous cult whose violent group demonstrations were approved and perhaps even encouraged by clerical authority; **an official, institutionalized clergy replaced the "invisible companions" of the Awaited imam^{as}. This process took place in a specific direction: its aim was to drag Imamism into the political arena, apply it on the collective level and crystallize it as an ideology.**⁷²⁴