

Modern Islamic Thought research paper

Rising up in Twelver Shiite thought.

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Introduction

Islam is a religion which embraces politics. This is evident from the fact that its most important figure, the Prophet Muhammad built a state, and as such Muslims from most of the schools of thought have tried to establish Islamic states, laying claim to the caliphate, or succession to Muhammad himself. Historically, the Shiites were not as successful as their more numerous and powerful Sunni counterparts, but in 1979 the spotlight moved towards the Shiites with the overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty in the Iranian Revolution, and the rise of Iran's clerics to a position of supreme political power.

This Revolution completely changed the balance of power in the region, and to this day, Iran's foreign policy has revolved around exporting its revolution to neighboring Muslim states. However, Iran is certainly not seen as a legitimate Islamic state by the Sunnis in the region, with very few exceptions, and even among the Shiites of the world, Iran's government is not universally accepted either. This paper seeks to highlight why, particularly from a historical and theological basis, and in doing so answer the following questions; Firstly, what has the Shiite attitude been towards rising up historically? Secondly, what sets Twelvers apart from other Shia groups with regards to political aspirations? Thirdly, with regards to the concept of Wilayat al Faqih, how have modern Twelver scholars interpreted the Shia hadith corpus to arrive at their respective conclusions with regards to political activity vs quietism?

History

Most scholars agree that Shia Islam arose regarding the dispute regarding the succession to the Prophet Muhammad. The Shiites championed the succession of Ali and his household as opposed to Abu Bakr and his successors. It is important to note that these proto Shiites had many differences with modern Shia. For example, many of them didn't believe in the Imam's *Isma*, or

sinlessness, and many also had positive views of the Rashidun caliphs as well as Ali. The proto-Sunnis were an even larger group; there were a variety of groups that were not not supporters of Ali but also didn't fit neatly into the modern Sunni madhabs. The Murji'a were infamously Pro Umayyad/establishment¹² while the Khawarij³ were vicious enemies of the Alids, but also fierce enemies of the Caliphs. During these dangerous and often chaotic times, the evolution of Shiism took place, eventually producing the modern Shia groups.

With regards to rising up against the establishment, Ali famously did not take this approach. Ali's avoidance of politics is easy to understand; Ali did not wish to cause disunity among the Muslims at a time when they were surrounded by enemies who could easily tear them apart,⁴ but he also refused to cooperate with a politically unjust regime, instead only advising on theological matters. His allies aided the government in various matters that were both political and non political; Ammar ibn Yasser, a known Shiite fought alongside Abu Bakr's army at

¹ See "Murji'ah," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed November 20, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Murjiah>.

²Tahdhib al Tahdhib, Volume 3 No. 181. The extreme loyalty towards the Umayyads that the Murji'ah possessed is exemplified by one of their leaders, Khalid bin Salmah bin al Aas. According to Imam Ibn Hajar, Khalid used to recite poems for the Umayyad caliphs in which Muhammad himself would be disrespected;

البخاري في الأدب المفرد ومسلم والأربعة... وقال أحمد وابن معين وابن المديني ثقة وكذا قال ابن عمار ويعقوب بن شيبان والنسائي وقال أبو حاتم شيخ يكتب حديثه... وقال ابن عدي هو في عداد من يجمع حديثه ولا أرى بروايته بأساً وذكره ابن حبان في الثقات.. وقال محمد بن حميد عن جرير كان الغافاء رأساً في المرجنة وكان... وذكر ابن عائشة أنه كان ينشد بني مروان الأشعار التي هجى بها المصطفى صلى الله عليه وسلم.
"Narrated in Bukhari (Al-Adab Al-Mufrad), Sahih Muslim and the four (Sunan Abu Dawood, Sunan Al-Tirmidhi, Sunan Al-Nisa'i, Sunan Ibn Majah)...Ahmad (Ibn Hanbal), Ibn Mueen, Ibn Al-Madini, Amar, Yaqub bin Shaibah and Al-Nisa'i said about him: 'Thiqah'. Abu Hatim said: Sheikh and his hadith are reliable to be written...Ibn Uday Said: 'He is counted among the narrators whose hadith are allowed to be written and I don't see any thing wrong about his narration'... Ibn Haban mentioned him in 'Al Thiqat'. Muhammad bin Hamid narrates that Jarir said: **'Al Fa'fa' was the head of Murji'a (a sect), and he hated Ali'... Ibn Aisha said: 'He used to say poems to Bani Marwan in which he disrespected Al Mustafa (s.a.w)'**"

³ "Kharijite," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed November 20, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Kharijite>.

⁴ For a detailed examination of Ali's decision to avoid conflict for the Caliphate from a Twelver Shia perspective, see Sharif al-Radi and Ayatollah Murtada Motaheri, *Nahjul Balagha: Sermons, Letters, and Sayings of Hazrat Ali* (Elmhurst, NY: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 1981), pg. 241.

Yamama,⁵ and later governed Basra, while Salman served as Umar's governor of Ctesiphon⁶ and Hudhayfa Ibn Yaman advised Uthman on the matter of standardizing the Quran.⁷

Despite being one of Muhammads fiercest warriors and his personal executioner, Ali is nowhere to be seen during the Arab conquests, and was not appointed a governor in any of the conquered regions. During the reign of the third Caliph and the subsequent uprising against him, Ali's partisans were one of the major groups that rose against the Caliph, but Ali himself was innocent of any wrongdoing. During his own caliphate, Ali had to deal with the non Umayyad party that was opposed to him and this faction at the battle of Jamal, and later he had to deal with the Umayyads at Siffin. Ali's inability to defeat Muawiya once and for all and his assassination at the hands of a Kharijite ended his short rule, and his son Hassan gave the caliphate to Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan a few months later. While Hassan remained politically inactive during Muawiya's reign, his brother Hussein refused to accept the caliphate of Yazid, and assembled his family and companions then marched towards Iraq, leading to his martyrdom at the Battle of Karbala⁸, which is still commemorated annually on the tenth of Muharram, and 40 days later in Arbaeen. Hassan and Hussein's positions are far more important in the modern day; the Islamic Republic and its proxies and allies routinely cite Hussein's epic stance⁹ against overwhelming

⁵ *Biography of Ammar Ibn Yassir*, Youtube, 2017,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YR9QYsV-HPU&feature=emb_logo.

⁶ Also called Madai'in in Arabic sources. See 'Alī-khān b. Aḥmad al Madanī, *Al-Darajāt Al-Rafī'a Fī Ṭabaqāt Al-Shī'a* (Beirut: Dār al-Wafā, n.d.), pg. 215.

⁷ See Ṣaḥīḥ Bukḥarī, Book 66, Ḥadīth 9. <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/66/9>

حَدَّثَنَا أَنَّ حُدَيْفَةَ بْنَ الْيَمَانَ قَدِمَ عَلَى عُثْمَانَ وَكَانَ يُغَازِي أَهْلَ الشَّامِ فِي فَتْحِ إِزْمِينِيَّةَ وَأَذْرَبِيْجَانَ مَعَ أَهْلِ الْعِرَاقِ فَأَفْزَعَ حُدَيْفَةَ اخْتِلَافَهُمْ فِي الْقِرَاءَةِ فَقَالَ حُدَيْفَةَ لِعُثْمَانَ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَدْرِكْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْتَلِفُوا فِي الْكِتَابِ الْيَهُودِ وَالنَّصَارَى

"Hudhaifa bin Al-Yaman came to `Uthman at the time when the people of Sham and the people of Iraq were waging war to conquer Armenia and Azerbaijan. Hudhaifa was afraid of their (the people of Sham and Iraq) differences in the recitation of the Qur'an, so he said to `Uthman, "O chief of the Believers! Save this nation before they differ about the Book (Qur'an) as Jews and the Christians did before."

⁸ For a detailed account of the Battle of Karbala, see *Maqatal al Husayn* by Abu Mikhnaf, or any secondary source that cites it.

⁹ Michael M. J. Fischer, *Iran: from Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), pg. 213.

odds as their inspirations for rising up against the modern Yazid's of the world,¹⁰ but the peace loving Imam Hassan is mentioned only on the anniversary of his death. The second fitna which took place after Hussein's death notably included many factions, of which were many pro Alid groups calling for retribution for Hussein's death, including the fanatical Tawabin lead by Sulayman ibn Surad al Khuzai,¹¹ and the political mastermind Mukhtar al Thaqafi, whose uprising escalated into a full blown rebellion, subduing Kufa, Northern Iraq, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.¹² Mukhtar was eventually killed, but to this day his uprising remains controversial among Shiites, as there are reports of him being a Kaysanite and a demagogue who merely used Hussein's death as a stepping stone to rise to power,¹³ while other scholars highlight that Mukhtar rose up with approval from Ali ibn Hussein, and the fact that he sent the heads of Hussein's killers to the Imams as signs of his genuine intentions.¹⁴ The successors of Hussein were nowhere near as politically active as Ali and his sons; Ali ibn Hussein avoided politics entirely and so did his son, Muhammad Al Baqir and his grandson Jafar al Sadiq.¹⁵ Hussein's grandson Zayd Ibn Ali led an uprising in Iraq, which was brutally crushed by the Umayyads, marking the split between the Twelvers and the Zaydis, for while Muhammad Al Baqir did not rise up along his brother, he and his son Jafar expressed approval at his uprising and deep sorrow at his

¹⁰ Khomeini famously referred to the Shah of Iran as "the Yazid of our time." See Halm 1997, p. 140.

¹¹ Aṭ-Ṭabarī and G. R. Hawting, *The Collapse of Sufyānid Authority and the Coming of the Marwānids* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1989).

¹² Fred MacGraw. *Donner, Muhammad and the Believers: at the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), pg. 185.

¹³ Among classical scholars, Allameh Majlesi held a neutral view of Mukhtar, writing "Al-Mukhtar was not complete in his faith and certitude, and did not have permission for the things he did, nevertheless, since he did many good deeds he died a faithful man. I am of those who have decided to remain silent regarding al-Mukhtar, although most scholars believe he was of the praised." See Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, p. 339.

Among contemporary scholars, Abdulaziz Sachedina also has a negative view of Mukhtar, calling him "an ambitious politician who manipulated the religious sentiments of common people for his own good." See Sachedina 1981, p. 9.

¹⁴ According to Ayatollah Khomeini, some reports suggest that al-Mukhtar's uprising was with the special permission of Imam Ali Ibn Hussein. See Khomeini, *Mu'jam rijāl*, vol. 18, p. 100

¹⁵ For biographies of Al Baqir and Al Sadiq, see Shaykh al Mufid's *Kitab al Irshad*.

demise.¹⁶ In response to the brutal death of his uncle, Imam Sadiq issued a famous warning to his followers: do not rise up against the government, even if the leaders of the uprising claimed to be rising up in the names of the Imams,¹⁷ making the Twelver theological position towards the non Twelver movements crystal clear: condemned and unacceptable. Zayd may have had noble intentions, but Zayd was an exception; the Abbasids who came later proved to be a devastating lesson for the Shiites; those who rise up in the name of the prophets household often have ulterior motives. The Alids initially supported the Abbasid revolution, but their Abbasid allies quickly turned against them, crushing the uprisings of Nafs al Zakiyya¹⁸ and Fakh¹⁹. This effectively made not only the Abbasid regime, but the Zaydi uprisings as well as the Ismaili movements (The Qarmatians and Fatimids) unacceptable with regards to establishing a precedent for uprising in Twelver theology.

The Shia Imams meanwhile, kept far from politics. Jafar's son Musa was imprisoned by Harun al Rashid due to the influence he had in Medina, and his son Ali al Ridha was forced to accept the position of crown prince by Mamun (famously refusing to make an political decisions while he held the position), while Ali's son Muhammad al Jawad was married to Mamun's daughter, who eventually poisoned him. Al Jawad's successor Ali al Hadi and his successor

¹⁶ The tradition of Jafar's sorrow upon hearing of his uncle's death is recorded in Sheikh Seduq's 'Uyun Akhbar Al-Ridha, pp. 466–472.

¹⁷ Al Sadiq is quoted as saying:

وَلَا تَقُولُوا خَرَجَ زَيْدٌ فَإِنَّ زَيْدًا كَانَ عَالِمًا وَكَانَ صَادِقًا وَلَمْ يَدْعُكُمْ إِلَى نَفْسِهِ إِنَّمَا دَعَاكُمْ إِلَى الرَّضَا مِنْ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ) وَ لَوْ ظَهَرَ لَوْفِي بِمَا دَعَاكُمْ إِلَيْهِ إِنَّمَا خَرَجَ إِلَى سُلْطَانٍ مُجْتَمِعٍ لِيَتَّقِضَهُ فَالْخَارِجُ مِنَّا الْيَوْمَ إِلَى أَيِّ شَيْءٍ يَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى الرَّضَا مِنْ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ) فَنَحْنُ نَشْهَدُكُمْ أَنَّا لَسْنَا نَرْضَى بِهِ وَ هُوَ يَعْصِينَا الْيَوْمَ

“For Zayd was a scholar, and he was truthful, and he did not call you for himself. But rather he called to the pleasure (Al-Reza) from the Progeny of Muhammad, and had he been victorious he would have been loyal to what he called you to. But rather, he came out against an authority to break it. So the one who comes out from us today for anything, he will call you to the pleasure (Al-Reza) from the Progeny of Muhammad. So we are testifying to you that we are not happy with it, and he has disobeyed us today.” See Al Kafi, Volume 8, hadith 382.

¹⁸ For details on Nafs al Zakiyya's uprising, see Abū I-Faraj al-Iṣṣfahānī, Maqātil al-ʿālibīyyīn, p. 238, 239, 251.

¹⁹ The Fakh uprising led by Husayn ibn Ali ibn Hassan is said to have been second only to Karbala in terms of the sorrow it caused the Alids. See Tarikh Tabari, Volume 30, pg. 14-32.

Hassan al Askari both lead politically inactive lives, but despite this both Imams were assassinated by order of the Abbasid caliphs. The final Imam of the Twelver Shias is then said to have gone into occultation.

Quietism and cooperation

In the aftermath of the Imams occultation, the Twelvers took to the political quietism their Imams had so painstakingly encouraged. Following the Twelfth Imam's Occultation, the Twelvers famously had far better relations with the Sunni Abbasid Caliphs than either the Zaydis or the Ismailis. Another important note to keep in mind is that Twelvers never cooperated with outside powers no matter how bad the Caliphs treated them; the non believers in Dar al Kufr would always be enemies, and cooperating with them was forbidden.²⁰ The Twelvers were not to make any moves against the Caliphal authorities until the *Qaim* (a title of the twelfth Imam that roughly translates to "The ones who rises up.") returns, and as such they remained harmless. Famous Shia scholars such as Sharif al Radi and his brother Sharif Murtada were held in high esteem in Baghdad, and enjoyed good relations with the Buyid and Abbasid authorities.²¹

While Twelver Shiite uprisings against the Caliphs were virtually non-existent, a strange phenomenon began to take place; more and more Shiites began to rise in power across the Islamic world, inside and outside the areas controlled by the Abbasid government. The Zaydi Imams managed to conquer Tabaristan,²² while within the heart of the Islamic state, Sayf Al

²⁰ The attitude of the Twelver Imams towards the non muslim states that the caliphate fought is apartment from the *Dua ahl al Thughur* or "Supplication for people of the frontier." In this supplication are the lines "O God, include in this Thy enemies in the regions of the lands, the Indians, the Byzantines, the Turks, the Khazars, the Abyssinians, the Nubians, the Zanjis, the Slavs, the Daylamites, and the rest of the idol-worshipping nations, those whose names and attributes are concealed..." See Sahife Sajjadiya, accessed November 20, 2020, <https://www.duas.org/sajjadiya/s27.htm>.

²¹ The father of both Sharif Radi and Sharif Murtada was a man named Abu Ahmad Husayn, and he was given the position of Naqib in Baghdad by the Abbasid authorities. When his two sons, who went on to become famous scholars passed away, their funeral prayers were led by the Abbasid caliphs. See "Al-Sharif Al-Radi," WikiShia, accessed November 20, 2020, https://en.wikishia.net/view/Al-Sharif_al-Radi.

²² The Zaydi Imams of Tabaristan famously created the first Shia state in Iranian history. The 3 famous rulers among them are Hassan Ibn Zayd (*Al Da'i al Kabir* or the elder proselytizer), Muhammad Ibn Zayd

Dawla al Hamdani, a Twelver Shiite,²³ managed to earn the title “Sword of the Abbasid State” through cunning political movements in Baghdad, and was given an emirate in northern Iraq and Syria, centering himself in Aleppo and famously holding back Islam’s ancient enemy, the Byzantine Empire. The Hamdanids under Sayf al Dawla were able to spread Twelver Shiism and (inadvertently) the Nusayri sect in Syria,²⁴ while Sayf himself was and still is seen as a champion of Islam who never backed down in the face of a resurgent Byzantine Empire. Within Iran and Iraq, the originally Zaydi and later Twelver Buyids had risen to power, conquering Baghdad, where their Shah was given the title Adud al Dawla²⁵ (“Pillar of the State”) by the Abbasid Caliph. The Buyids sponsored famous Shia scholars and built the foundations of many of the modern Shia shrines in Iraq and Iran. More infamously, the Ismaili Shia Fatimids conquered Egypt, and their missionary efforts created the Qarmatians, whose devastating raids into Abbasid territory eventually resulted in a brutal attack on Mecca and their theft of the Black Stone.²⁶ In what some historians dubbed “The Shia Century,”²⁷ Shiites had managed to take control of

(*Al Da'i al Saghir* or the younger proselytizer) and Hassan Utrush, who according to some scholars was in fact an Imami Shia. See https://en.wikishia.net/view/Al-Hasan_al-Utrush

²³ Sayf Al Dawla’s Shiism is confirmed by Imam al Dhahabi in his *Siyar Alam Al Nubala*:

أبو الحسن علي بن عبد الله بن حمدان صاحب حلب مقصد الوفود وكعبة الجود وفارس الإسلام وحامل لواء الجهاد . كان أديباً مليح النظم ، فيه تشيع .

“Abu Hassan Ali ibn Abdullah Ibn Hamdan, the ruler of Aleppo, the destination of emissaries, the Kaaba of generosity, Islam’s cavalier, and the carrier of the banner of Jihad. He was a cultured writer, and **he had signs of Shiism.**”

²⁴ Sayf al Dawla infamously sponsored Al Khasibi, the Nusayri preacher responsible for bringing the Nusayri (now known as Alawi) sect to Syria. It is highly unlikely that Sayf knew that Khasibi was in fact a deviant, as the book Khasibi dedicated to him, *Al Hidaya al Kubra* shows no signs of Nusayri ideology and appears to be a Twelver book and was even praised by Allameh Majlesi. See Friedman, Yaron (2010). *The Nuṣayrī-‘Alawī: An Introduction to the Religion, History and Identity of the Leading Minority in Syria*. Leiden: Brill. p. 26.

²⁵ Adud al Dawla’s Shiism is undeniable, as he built many of the now famous shrines for the Shia Imams in Iraq, and is buried next to his hero Ali ibn Abi Talib in Najaf. Ibn Abil Hadid wrote about him; " 'Adud al-Dawla had an ineffable love for Shi'a Imams and Shi'ism. The icon of Imam Ali (a) was carved on the sword of 'Adud al-Dawla and also his father's, Rukn al-Dawla." See Ibn Abī I-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, vol. 1, p. 29

²⁶ The infamous Qarmatian sack of Mecca and theft of the Black Stone was one of the most devastating tragedies to occur in the holy city. See Encyclopedia Britannica for info on the attack.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Mecca/Economy#ref37835>

²⁷ Fitzroy Morrissey | Published in History Today Volume 69 Issue 4 April 2019, “The Shia Century,” History Today, accessed November 20, 2020, <https://www.historytoday.com/reviews/shia-century>.

Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus and Aleppo, effectively controlling the most prosperous and important cities in the Islamic world.

The Shiite century came to an end when the Seljuks wrested control of Iran and Iraq from the Buyids. Although the Seljuks were initially very sectarian, they realized that the more dangerous enemy was in fact the Ismaili Fatimids.²⁸ The Seljuks thus gradually began to tolerate the Twelvers, but with the collapse of a centralized Seljuk state, Syria was cleansed of Shiites due to the efforts of Nur al Din Zengi,²⁹ while his underling and successor Saladin brutally ended the Fatimid state in Egypt.³⁰ In Baghdad, the Abbasids continued to have good relations with the Shiites, with the vizier of the final Abbasid Caliph Ibn Alqami being a Shiite himself. The Shia wouldn't rise to power again until the Safavids conquered Iran and made it a solidly Twelver Shia state, with Iran becoming and remaining the nerve center of the Shia world both theologically and politically. The clerics in Iran played a role in reinforcing the rule of the Shahs until 1979, when they effectively took over the state.

Opposing views

Modern Twelvers are divided into two camps with regards to rising up against the government in the present day. One camp is the traditionalists who favor political quietism, like

²⁸ "Seljuk Dynasty," WikiShia, accessed November 21, 2020, https://en.wikishia.net/view/Seljuk_Dynasty. In the period following Malik Shah's death, Twelvers living within the Seljuk empire enjoyed good relations with the state. This is evidenced by a long list of Shiite agents and viziers working in the Seljuk government, particularly in Iran. Famous scholars such as Ibn Shahrastub, author of *Manaqib Ale Abi Talib*, and Fadl ibn Hassan al Tabrisi, author of *Majma al Bayan fi Tafsir al Quran* lived during the Seljuk period in Iran and wrote their famous books.

²⁹ See Raby 2004, p. 296 - 299. "Nur Al-Din, the Qastal Al-Shu'ubiyya, and the 'Classical Revival,'" Archnet, accessed November 20, 2020, <https://archnet.org/publications/5407>.

³⁰ Saladin's brutal suppression of the Fatimids and Shiism in general throughout his lands is well known among historians. See "The Encyclopaedia of Islam" (Leiden, 1936, 3rd vol., p. 353)

Ayatollah Ali Sistani³¹ and Ayatollah Sadiq Shirazi.³² These scholars emphasize that without an infallible Imam, the responsibilities of government are simply too dangerous for fallible men to engage in. The other camp is the camp that believes in the concept of *Wilayat al Faqih*, or Guardianship of the Jurist, which is the belief that qualified jurists are given religious authority over certain matters, including the management of the state. This is of course the view propagated by Ayatollah Khomeini and his successor Ayatollah Khamenei, and thus the Islamic Republic of Iran and its supporters.

The followers of the traditional view highlight hadiths such as the one of Imam Sadiq warning his followers against rising up, as well as the example set by the Imams themselves; politics is the ultimate worldly temptation, why should men of jurisprudence concern themselves with it? With regards to figures like Mukhtar, they condemn him as a political opportunist, or maintain that the Imam had given him permission to avenge Hussein. Like the companions of Ali, the later Imams had companions who managed to get important positions in the Abbasid government, with Ali ibn Yaqtin even managing to become Harun al Rashid's vizier even while his master Musa al Kadhim was imprisoned by Al Rashid.³³ Ali Ibn Yaqtin had attained his position non violently, not through rebellion or uprising. With regards to the Safavids, the Safavids did not rise up in the name of Shiism or to claim the caliphate, but rather they converted to Shiism after uniting Iran and under a single polity;³⁴ the conversion to Shiism was simply for

³¹ Dexter Filkins, "Shiites in Iraq Say Government Will Be Secular," The New York Times (The New York Times, January 24, 2005), <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/24/world/middleeast/shiites-in-iraq-say-government-will-be-secular.html>

³² Bloomberg.com (Bloomberg), accessed November 21, 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-03-26/iranian-revolution-shiite-clerics-are-standing-up-to-khamenei>.

³³ Najāshī Ahmad ibn 'Alī and Zanjānī Mūsā al-Shubayrī., *Fahrasat asmā' musannif Al-shī'ah Al-Mushtahiru Bi-Rijāl Al-Najāshī* (Qum: Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī al-Ṭabī'ah li-Jamā'at al-Mudarrisīn, 1407).

³⁴ M. L. Rossi, *What Every American Should Know about the Middle East* (New York: Plume, 2008), pg. 61.

the sake of building a national identity with which to separate the Safavids from their Ottoman neighbors.

The followers of *Wilayat al Faqih* took a new approach.³⁵ Khomeini formed his view around the idea that the only legitimate state was an Islamic state, and that the rulers of an Islamic state must be experts in Sharia, and thus the only way this state can come about is through the Shia scholars leading an uprising against secular rulers across the Middle East, with his native Iran being the prime target.³⁶ With regards to the issue of rising up, proponents of *Wilayat al Faqih* argue that the Imams didn't rise up because they didn't have enough followers; had Ali had enough men he would have fought for the caliphate, and likewise his successors, with Hussein being the exception because Yazid was a tyrant and a *Fasiq* (open transgressor) who threatened to destroy the religion itself. Unlike the Imams, modern Shia are a majority in countries like Iran and Iraq, why then should they allow themselves to be ruled by secular tyrants like Yazid? These scholars also point to the Maqbulah of Umar Ibn Hanzala, an extremely important Hadith recorded in the 4 main Shia canonical hadith books, in which Imam Sadiq says "I have made him a ruler for you".³⁷ The remark is said to show that a *faqih* (jurisprudent) is appointed by the Imam as the ruler of the Shias.

Conclusion

³⁵ For a more detailed look at Khomeini's theory, see Ruhollah Khomeini and Hamid Algar, *Islamic Government: Governance of the Jurist* (Tehran: The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Work (International Affairs Department), 2015).

³⁶ Heinz Halm and Allison Brown, *Shi'a Islam: from Religion to Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Wiener, 1999), pg. 143. Condemning the Iranian monarchy, Khomeini wrote: "The struggle of al-Husayn at Karbalâ is interpreted in the same way as a struggle against the non-Islamic principle of monarchy."

³⁷ "Hadith Library - Al-Kâfi - Volume 1 - Chapter on the Differences in Al-Hadith," Thaqalayn, accessed November 21, 2020, <https://thaqalayn.net/hadith/1/2/21/10>.

قَالَ يَنْظُرَانِ إِلَى مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مِمَّنْ قَدْ رَوَى حَدِيثَنَا وَنَظَرَ فِي حَالِنَا وَحَرَامِنَا وَعَرَفَ أَحْكَامَنَا فَلْيَرْضُوا بِهِ حَكْمًا فَإِنِّي قَدْ جَعَلْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاكِمًا

He (Jafar al Sadiq) said "They must look for one among you who have narrated our Hadith and have studied what is lawful and unlawful in our teachings and have learned our laws. They must agree to settle their dispute according to his judgment because **I have made him over you a ruler.**" Note that traditionalists translate the work حاكم as "judge" not "ruler."

While most Islamic scholars and political scientists tend to focus on Islamism from a Sunni perspective, as of the writing of this paper, the Shiites seem to be preparing for another Shiite Century. Iran shows no signs of backing down in the region, while the traditionalist Shia scholars like Sistani have even been forced to intervene in political matters, most famously in 2014, when Sistani gave a fatwa calling for *Jihad* or armed struggle against ISIS in the aftermath of their conquest of northern Iraq.³⁸ Should the concept of political uprising gain more acceptance among the Shiites in the region, Iran's influence over the region would propel it to a level of power of influence not seen since the days of the Achaemenid Empire, while Twelver Shiism would become more powerful than it has ever been politically been in its entire history. After all, the Twelvers have never launched uprisings and spread revolution before, and it seems they are only getting started, for Iraq, Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon have already risen up.

³⁸ "Iraq Conflict: Shia Cleric Sistani Issues Call to Arms," BBC News (BBC, June 13, 2014), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27834462>.

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