An Evaluation of the *A ÍÉdÊth* on the Imamate Creed within Shi'ism by Using the Criticism Methods of the *U ÎËliyyÊn*

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Abstract—The two largest Muslim sect of the world, the Sunni and the Shi'ite have a totally different view and discipline on handling the Islamic Law. However, the most distinctive factor that differentiates these two giant sects is the creed of Imamate. This creed is extracted by the Shi'ite from various sources of Islamic law. This article is focusing on evaluating those *a ÍÉdīth* by using the method outlined by the Shi'ite themselves. Results suggested that these *a ÍÉdīth* cannot be used as a solid material in determining a creed in a given school of thought.

Index Terms—Creed, imamate, Shi'ism, *U ÎËliyyÊn*.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Muslim world is being lived by billions of believers. B.A Robinson from the Religious Tolerance movement in America estimated that as of mid 2010, they are 1.57 billions of Muslims all around the world, quoted from Pew Forums [1] (Religious Tolerence). From these billions of people, the Muslims are mainly divided into two main sects, namely the Sunni and the Shi'ite. While keeping the same faith in the same God, these two sects does not share a lot of common belief and creed. Almost all of their methods in debating the matters of faith, acts of worships, the interpretation of the Holy *Qurān*, as well as the jurisdiction methods in determining what is permissible and what is forbidden in their daily lives differs greatly. However, if one leading variation of creed be singled out, then it has to be the creed on the Imamate. In this article, a number of *a ÍÉdÊth* (reports) from the Prophet (peace be upon him) from the sources of the Shi'ite will be tested by using their own standard of evaluation, as to see whether they can act as reliable sources of creed or not.

II. THE DEFINITION OF IMAMATE

The Shi'ite believe that after the death of the seal of the Prophet (pbuh) i.e. Muhammad, the call to Islam continues under the hands of their chooser leaders, known as the *ImÉms* and they were twelve of them. All of them were the descendents of AlÊ, who was the cousin of the Prophet (pbuh), and they are listed as below by Ibnu Taimiyyah: [2]

- 'AlÊ bin AbÊ ÙÉlib,
- His son, Al-×asan bin 'AlÊ bin AbÊ ÙÉlib,
- Al-×asan's brother, Al-×usayn bin 'AlÊ bin AbÊ ÙÉlib,
- 'AlÊ bin Al-×usayn, known as Zain Al-'ÓbidÊn,
- Mu áammad bin 'ÓlÊ, known as Al-BÉqir,
- Ja'far bin Mu áammad, known as Al-ØÉdiq,
- MËsa bin Ja'far, known as Al-KÉÐim,
- 'AlÊ bin MËsa, known as Al-Ri àa,
- Mu áammad Al-JawÉad bin 'AlÊ, known as Al-Taqī,
- 'AlÊ Al-HÉdiy bin Mu áammad, known as Al-Naqī,
- Al-×asan Al-'Askariy bin 'AlÊ, known as Al-Zakī,
- Mu áammad bin Al-×asan, known as Al-Mahdī.

The Shi'ite is of the opinion that not only the responsibilities of carrying Islam is on the shoulders, they ImÉms were also responsible in maintaining the *SyarÊ'a* (Islamic law), abrogating the Holy *QurÉn*, explaining the *áadÊth* and collecting them, as well as answering daily jurisprudential questions that they were asked. Because of this, the *ImÉms* should be infallible for anything less than that would not fit their divine responsibilities. Mu áin Al-AmÊn said [3]: "And those who are not infallible are unjust to himself, and this does not fit the testament of Imamate, that was from Allah". He later put forward his argument based on the Quranic verse (1:124): "And (remember) when the Lord of IbrÉhÊm tried him with (certain) Commands, which he fulfilled. He (Allah) said: "Verily, I am going to make you a leader of mankind". He (IbrÉhÊm) said, "And of my offspring", (Allah) said, "My Covenant includes not ÐÉlimÉn (polytheists and wrong-doers)". Two things can be extracted from his argument here, first being that the descendents of IbrÉhÊm, who was the great grandfather of Prophet Mu áammad (pbuh) were choosen to be leaders, in other words, the *ImÉms*. Secondly, those *ImÉms* were infallible as opposed to being 'wrong-doers', as suggested in the verse.

III. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE *U ÎËLIYYÊN*

Mainly the Shi'ite are divided into two main groups, they are the *AkhbÉriyyÈn* and the *U ÎËliyyÈn*. Various debates had been put forward as regards to their respective characteristics, however the main criteria in the discussion of *áadÊth* within Shi'ism is that the *akhbÉriyyÈn* believe in total authenticity of the whole four major books of Shi'ite *áadÊth* collection, while majority of the *U ÎËliyyÈn* believe that those books were divided into categories, some of them are authentic and some of them should be rejected. A renowned Shi'ite scholar Mu áammad 'AlÊ ØÉli ÍAl-Mu'allim [4] said: "That it is well

known among the *AkhbÉriyyÊn* and some of the *UÎëliyyËn*, the authenticity of the Four Books". The result of such distinction is that the *UÎëliyyÊn* had developed their own methods in evaluating all the *ÍadÊth* of the four books, which were led by Zain Al-DÊn Al-'Ómilī also known as Al-SyahÊd Al-TsÉnī in his book "*Al-DirÉyah*", which he later commented it himself and published a second book called "*Syar ÍAl-DirÉyah*"[5]. In this article, the method will be used against the *a ÍÉdÊth* that mainly speaks about the characteristics of the ImÉms.

IV. CRITISM METHODS OF THE UØÕLIYYÔN

A. The Definitions of Al-Sunnah and Al-HadÊth

Before we begin, it is important for us to look at the definition of what is *al-sunnah* and *al-ÍadÊth* according to the *uÎëliyyÊn* among Shi'ism. This is because these definitions varied greatly from that of the Sunni's. The Sunni's defined *al-sunnah* as "the speech of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well as his deeds and silent approval, his ethical conducts and his physical form" [6], while the Shi'ite defined it as "every report that is attributed to the Prophet (pbuh) or those who are infallible, they're deeds and silent approval" [7]. What is meant by the word 'infallible' was FÉïmah the daughter of the Prophet (pbuh), her husband 'AlÊ AbÊ ÙÉlib, their sons Al-×asan and Al-×ussein, as well as nine (9) of their descendants after them, as we've seen above. Al-MÉmaqÉmÊ then added: "It is known that the definition of *al-sunnah* are the sayings of those who are impossible to have lied about it, other than the Holy QurÉn nor the sayings of the common people" [8]. From this, clearly we can see that while the Sunnis believed that only the sayings and reports attributed to the Prophet (pbuh) are considered as al-sunnah, the Shi'ite on the other hand believed that all the sayings and reports attributed to their 12 ImÉms are also counted as *al-sunnah*. All of the sayings, thus, are eventually attributed to Allah swt, whether their ImÉms had mentioned it or not. It was narrated Ja'far Al-Øadiq, the 7th and the most popular ImÉm among Shi'ite had said: "Verily my *ÍadÊth* is the *ÍadÊth* of my father (MuÍammad bin 'AlÊ), and the *ÍadÊth* of my father is the *ÍadÊth* of my grandfather ('AlÊ bin Al-×ussein), and the *ÍadÊth* of my grandfather is the *ÍadÊth* of Al-×ussein, and the *ÍadÊth* of Al-×ussein is the *ÍadÊth* of Al-×asan, and the *ÍadÊth* of Al-×asan is the *ÍadÊth* of 'AlÊ, and the *ÍadÊth* of 'AlÊ is the *ÍadÊth* of the Prophet (pbuh), and the *ÍadÊth* of the Prophet (pbuh) is the Word of Allah" [9]. For this reason, the majority of reports in the the four (4) main books of the Shi'ite, that is *Al-KÉfÊ* by Al-KulaynÊ, *Man La Ya Íðuru Al-FaqÊh* by Al-ØÉdËq, *TahdhÊb Al-AÍkÉm* and *Al-Istib ÎÉr FÊ Ma Iktalaf Min Al-AÍkÉm* both by Al-ÙËsÊ are all ended up as narrations of the words and deeds of Ja'far Al-ØÉdiq and his father MuÍammad Al-BÉqir, and very few of them were actually narrated from the Prophet (pbuh).

The definition of *al-ÍadÊth* among the Shi'ite, on the other hand was defined by Al-SyahÊd Al-TsÉnÊ as "words that with them the sayings, deeds and silent approval of the infallibles were transmitted" [10]. For that, we could notice that the definition of *al-sunnah* and *al-ÍadÊth* within Shi'ism is similar and off the same.

B. Accepted Reports among Shi'ism

In the sciences of *ÍadÊth*, reports from the Prophet (pbuh) were mainly divided into two main categories, first, reports that are accepted and widely used in the Islamic law, and second, reports that are not accepted [11]. Among the UÎëliyyÊn of the Shi'te, accepted *ÍadÊth*s were categorized into three categories, and they are *al-ÍíÍ* (authentic), *al-Íasan* (good) and *al-muwasthaq* (reliable). Al-Hurr Al-'ÓmilÊ of the Shi'ite defined *al-ÍíÍ* as "a report that is repoted from a just and reliable Imamate narrator in every stage of the chain of narrators" [12]. Contrary to definition by the Sunnis, "a report which it's chain is continuous through trusted and reliable narrators in every stage of sanad, without any signs of defects or malform" [13], the Shi'ite inserted an extra term, which is all the narrators should be Imamate in faith. In the same time it is noticeable that they took out two terms of al-ÍíÍ i.e. that the report should be free from any sign of defect and malformed. Thus a narration that is contradicting with each other were both accepted, with a choice is given in practicality [14]. Any narrator in the reports from the Shi'ite which is not Imamate in faith will automatically downgrades the report, probably even from an accepted report to a non-accepted. This should be remembered throughout this paper, since it is of the main judging term between the Shi'ite.

Next is *Al-×asan*, which defined by MirdÉmÉd of the Shi'ite as "a report which the chain is continuous to the infallibles through narrators that are praised, but without a clear indication of his just, and this happens only in a single stage of the chain of narrators" [15], and was defined by Ibnu Hajar of the Sunnis as "a report that was narrated through a narrator that just but is a little low on his reliability in compare to the rest of the narrators, without any sign of defect or malformed" [16]. As we can see, this definition also varied, since the shi'ite emphasizes the creed of the narrator which is in the discussion of his just, while the Sunnis considered the reliability of the narrator as the main factor of a *Íasan ÍadÊth*.

The 3rd and final one is *al-muwasthaq*, which is defined by Al-SyahÊd Al-TsÉnÊ as "a report that is continuous in chain through a narrator that has a clear indication that he was just, but at the same time his creed had been compromised vis-à-vis having a different creed other than the Twelvers, even if he was from a Shi'ite sect" [17]. This kind of *ÍadÊth* is exclusive only to the Shi'ite Imamate, and there's no other school of thought that has this category of *ÍadÊth*.

It is essential for us to look at all of these definitions, for us to truly understand the criteria that are required in determining that a report is accepted or not in the Shi'ite school of thought. This is because any report that is not in compliance with one (1) or more of the criteria given above will be counted as non-accepted, thus cannot be used in the fundamental discussion of Islamic creed and practice. Weak *ÍadÊth* among the Shi'ite is defined as "a report that does not fulfill the requirements of an accepted one, for its chain was narrated from narrators that were criticized, or unknown or any cause that is on par with that" [18]. With that being understood well, we shall look an evaluate the reports on one

of the most important and distinguishing creed of the Shi'ite Imamate, also known as the Twelvers, by using their own method among the *U ÎÉliyyÊn*, as to see whether these reports were accepted or not aaccepted, thus testing the legitimacy of this creed as a pillar of their beliefs.

V. Hadêth on the devine Characteristics of the *imÉms*

A. The ImÉms are in Knowledge Whether their Companions Were a Believer or a Non-Believer

Al-Kulaynī reported in Al-Kāfī [19]: "A man came to see *Amīr Al-Mu'minīn* (Ja'far Al-Ødiq) while he was among his companions. The man greeted him and said: "By Allah, I love you and I take you as my leader". *Amīr Al-Mu'minīn* said unto him: "You're lying". The man replied: "No, by Allah I indeed love you and take you as my leader". He repeated it three times, and then Amīr Al-Mu'minīn said: "You're lying, you are not as what you are saying. Verily Allah created the souls 2,000 years before He created the bodies, and then He showed us (the *Imāms*) those who truly dear us, by Allah I did not see your soul amongst the presented, so where were you?" The man silenced, and he never returned after that. In a variation of this narration, Abu 'Abdilla Í (Ja'far Al-Øādīq) said: "He is in the Hellfire".

In the *sanad (*chain of narrators) of this ḥadīth, there is a narrator named Øāli Í bin Sahl Al-Hamdānī, and he was deemed as "a great liar, an extremist, a fabricator of ḥadīth" by Ibnu Al-Gha ḥirī [20]. He then went on commented that "there is no good in him or any of his narrations". Based on that, this ḥadīth is not a sound nor authentic ḥadīth, rather it is a fabricated one, and it cannot be used to present argument for this creed.

B. The ImÉms Knew What Happened and What Will Happened

A narration in *Al-Kāfī* [21] read: "Abu 'Abdillah said: "By the Lord of Ka'bah – three times – if I am with Mūsa and Khi ì I will say unto them that I know more than them, and I will tell them things that they do not possess any knowledge over, that is because Mūsa and Khi ì had only been bestowed with the information of what had happened, not what will happened, and those things will not happen until the Day of Judgement. We (the *Imāms*) inherited that knowledge from the Prophet (pbuh), indeed we inherited from him".

The *sanad* of this ḥadīth contains Ibrāhīm bin Ishāq Al-A Ímarī. Ibnu Al-Gha ḥirī said [22]: "His ḥadīth is weak. He narrated sound ḥadīths as well as weak ones, and he mixed them up". Al-Najāshī [23] said: "He was weak in his narration". Al-ÙËsī commented [24]: "He is weak". Al-×illī [25] also commented: "I did not practice out anything that was narrated through him". Thus this haḍīth is considered as weak, and cannot be used as an argument in the important matter of faith.

C. The ImÉms Had Higher Status then All of the Kings and Angels

Al-Kulaynī reported from Abī 'Abdillah [26]: "It is his (the Imām) secret that he will meet Allah (on the Judgement day) with a true and pure faith in his heart, and he will be dear to Allah and his messenger and those who are in faith, and he will hand in his enemies to Allah, and he will save those who believed in his rank, for his rank is so high that no kings ever reached it, nor any prophets or messengers or anyone alike".

There are three (3) different *sanad* recorded by Al-Kulaynī for this ḥ ḍth. In the first *sanad*, it contained Haf Î Al-Muazzin, and there is not a single record in the books of the Shi'ite that provided any comments on him, be it positive or negative comments. Thus he is categorized as *majhËl* (unknown), and this downgrades the status of the ḥ ḍth to a weak one. The second *sanad* contained Mu ḥammad bin Sanān Al-Zāhirī. His creadibility is uncertain. Al-Kashī [27] reported a story suggesting that he is acceptable in his narration, however in the same book on another page, he reported that Mu ḥammad bin Sanān is a great liar [28]. Al-Najāshī also reported that he is "very, very weak" [29]. Ibnu Al-Gha ḥirī [30] deemed him as "extremely weak in his narration as well as a ḥadīth fabricator. Do not take any of his narration", and Al-ÙËsī said the same thing [31]. In the third and last sanad, it contained Al-Qāsim bin Al-Rabi', which was deemed as "weak in his narration, an extremist in his own school of thought. Do not hold on to his words" by Ibnu Al-Gha ḥirī [32]. Al-×illī [33] said: "Weak in his narration, a fanatic in his own school, do not take his narration and do not uphold him". As such, this narrator also cannot be taken as a valid narrator. Because of all three of these *sanads* contained weak narrators respectively, this ḥadīth cannot be labeled as valid nor acceptable, which also leaves it content impractical and rejected.

D. The ImÉms legalize and Prohibit, a Privilege only Bestowed upon the Messengers

Al-Kulaynī [34] reported from Mu ḥammad bin Sanān: "I was with Abī Ja'far, and I asked him about the dissimilarity among the Shi'ite, he replied: "O Mu ḥammad! Verily Allah stayed alone in His oneness, after that He created Mu ḥammad (pbuh) and 'Alī and Fā ḥimah, and they lived for a thousand years, then He created everything else, and He witnessed upon them all of His creation, and He commanded the creations to obey them, then He authorized all of them upon His creations. For that, they are authorized to legalize whatever they wish and prohibit whatever they wish, and they will never wish for something except that Allah had wished for the same thing".

The *sanad* of this ḥadīth contained Mu ḥammad bin Sanān that had been discussed above, thus rejecting the validity of this ḥadīth as a source of a creed.

VI. Conclusion

The creed of the Imamate is an important characteristic of the Shi'ite. It is what differentiates the Shi'ite from the rest of the Muslims in the world. However, the validiy of this creed should be examined further, by looking at the primary sources that suggested this creed. In this article, one of the main source i.e. the reports from the Prophet (pbuh) from their own sources were all unacceptable, by using their own method in ḥadīth criticism outlined by the scholars of *u Îiyyīn* among them.

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