

## Sharîf al-Radî: An Introduction

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Al Sharîf al-Radî<sup>1</sup> was born in the year 359 A.H. / 970 C.E. in Baghdad<sup>2</sup>. His lineage connects him directly with the Prophet's family. He was among the fifth generation of descendants of Hadrat Musa ibn Ja'far, the seventh Shii (Shite) Imam, a direct descendant of Hadrat 'Ali<sup>3</sup> ﷺ. His lineage can be traced as:

Muhammad bin al-Husayn bin Musa bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Imam Musa Kazim bin Jafar bin Muhammad bin Ali bin al-Husayn ibn Ali bin Abu Talib<sup>4</sup>.

One of the distinctions that al-Sharîf al-Radî held was that both his paternal and maternal lineage can be traced back to Prophet's family. Due to this reason, he received the title of *al-Sharîf*, which basically is Persian and Urdu version of *al-Sayyid*<sup>5</sup>. His father was one of the most important persons of *Alawis* of Iraq, who five times enjoyed the position of *Naqîb* (Speaker) of the family of Abu Talib. He received equal honour and prestige during the tenure / Caliphate of Abbâsids<sup>6</sup> and Bani Būwaih<sup>7</sup>.

Al-Tha'âlîbi reports in *Yatimat al-Dahar* that al-Sharîf al-Radî's father held the two offices simultaneously being the *Nazârat Diwân al-Mazâlim* (Headship of the highest court of appeal) as well as the office of the chief of *hujjâj* (pilgrims to the Holy Ka'bah) who was greatly honoured at the courts of Banu 'Abbâs and the rules of al-Dayâlimah, and was entitled as '*al-Tâhir al-'Awhad and Dhû al-Manâqîb*<sup>8</sup>. Bahâ' al-Dawlah al-Daylamî called him *al-Tahir al-Awhad*, which means '*Uniquely purified*'. Besides, performing the role of *Naqîb*, he also occasionally performed

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duties of political significance. This political influence brought him in imprisonment in fort in *Fars*, where he underwent the hardships of prison life for seven years<sup>9</sup>.

His (al-Radî's) mother's name was Fâtimah, who also descended from a respected and noble family. His father Husain bin al-Hasan al-Nâsir was the descendant of the second son of al-Imrân 'Ali ibn al-Husayn عليه السلام. He was Sâhib al-Dîlam (the Prime Minister of Dîlam). Al-Sayyid al-Murtada (Sayyid Radî's brother) writes about the genealogy of his mother Fatima that she was daughter of Abu Muhammad al-Husayn al-Nâsir (al-Saghîr) ibn Abî al-Husayn Ahmad ibn Abî Muhammad al-Hasan al-Nâsir al-Kabîr (the conqueror and ruler of Daylam) ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Umar al'Ashraf ibn 'Alî ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abî Tâlib<sup>10</sup>.

Al-Sharîf al-Radî's maternal grandfather was a great scholar, poet and writer among the Alawîs and was bestowed with the title of *al-Nâsir-Lil Haqq*, i.e., Protector of Truth<sup>11</sup>.

From his mother's side al-Radî belonged to a lineage that was more distinguished for its political activities. His grandfather (maternal) was a pious and respected man. He was held in high esteem and likewise his grandfather (paternal) had been appointed to the office of *Naqîb*. Al-Sharîf al-Radî's great grandfather (maternal) served as a commander in his father's army and was known for both his valour and virtue<sup>12</sup>. The maternal grandfather of Sayyid al-Radî was also the main figure in propagating Islâm among the *Daylamis*, when he himself conquered *Daylam*<sup>13</sup>. He was misunderstood for supporting Dâ'is of the Zaydî rule and being instrumental in laying the foundation of Zaydî dynasty<sup>14</sup>. Thus he was identified as Zaydî by many historians.<sup>15</sup>

**Education:** It has been well said that the first teacher of the child is his mother and same is the case with al-Sharîf al-Radî. His mother Fâtimah bint al-Dâ'î al-Saghîr was a learned and pious lady, who

brought her children (two sons and daughters) up with care and arranged for their proper education during the seven year imprisonment of her husband.<sup>16</sup>

On her demand Shaykh al-Mufid, one of the prominent teachers of al-Sharif al-Radi, wrote a book, *Ahkâm al-Nisâ* on Islamic Law, which served as a guide for women<sup>17</sup> In a way, al-Sharif al-Radi and his elder brother (Al-Sharif al-Murtada) got their primary education from their mother. While extolling her piety Ibn Abî al-Hadîd comments in *Sharh Nahj al-Balâghah* that once Shaykh al-Mufid had a dream in which he sighted Hadrat Fatimah (Prophet's daughter) bringing her two sons, Imâm Hasan and Imâm Husayn to him to teach them. The next morning Fatimah (mother of al-Radi) brought her two sons al-Radi and al-Murtaza to Shaykh al-Mufid's place for education and guidance.<sup>18</sup>

Along with the moral guidance and fine upbringing by such pure and high ranking parents, al-Radi also got teachers who were acknowledged as perfect experts and leaders in their fields. Some of them are mentioned below:

1. *Abû Sa'îd al-Hasan ibn 'Abdullah ibn Marzbân ibn al-Sirâfi* was a perfect teacher in Arabic grammar, language and rhyme from whom al-Radi studied in his childhood<sup>19</sup>.
2. *Ibrâhîm bin Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Tabarî al-Mâlikî*, was a theologian, traditionalist of great standing and patron of knowledge as well as discerner of merit. Under him al-Radi studied lessons in *Qur'ân* in childhood<sup>20</sup>.
3. *Al-Qâdî 'Abd al-Jabbâr al-Mu'tazillî*, under whom he studied *Sharh al-'Usûl al-Khamsah* and *Kitâb al-'Umdah*.
4. *Abû Muhammad al-'Asadi al-'Akfani Abû al-Hasan 'Alî bin 'Isâ al-Rummânî*, *Abû al-Fath 'Uthmân ibn Jinnî* and *Ibn Nubâtah* taught literary sciences to al-Radi.
5. *Muhammad ibn 'Imrân al-'Abbâs al-Marzabânî* and *Abû Mûsâ Hârûn ibn Mûsâ al-Tal'akbarî* taught him Hadîth<sup>21</sup>.

6. *Shaykh al-Mufid* whose original name was *Muhammad bin al-Nûmân bin 'Abd al-Salâm*<sup>22</sup> was the teacher of Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence), and taught both al-Radî and his brother (al-Murtada).

Besides al-Shaykh al-Mufid, *Muhammad ibn al-Abbas al-Khwarizmi* also taught al-Radî the lessons of Fiqh.

7. Abû Hafs 'Umar ibn Ibrâhîm al-Kinânî was al-Radî's teacher who taught him Qira'h and the *Qur'ân*<sup>23</sup>.

His other teachers include:

*Abu Ali al-Hasan ibn Ahmad al-Farsi*, who was a Mutazilli, *Abu al-Hasan al-Karkhi* and *Ali ibn Isa ibn Sâlih al-Rubî*<sup>24</sup>.

In brief, Shaykh al-Radî had the combination of the teachers from different schools of thought. His genius came to the notice of his family and teachers at a very young age. He started composing poetry at the tender age of nine. His wit and alert mind surprised all. He went to different teachers to study various branches of Islamic Sciences<sup>25</sup>.

Most of his teachers were eminent scholars and Arabic writers, whose teachings had a great influence on his mind. Therefore, he started teaching at the young age of seventeen years, when he was studying himself. He completed his education at the age of twenty. Soon, he emerged as a scholar, commentator of the *Qur'ân*, thinker and poet. He was a poet of par-excellence who overshadowed in all other fields<sup>26</sup>.

Al-Radî was an intelligent person who had memorized the *Qur'ân* in a very short period<sup>27</sup>. The scholars and students of that period were capable enough to accommodate the teachers of various schools of thought. This is the logic behind acceptance of Sunni and Mutazilli teachers by al-Radî. Al-Radî had intimate friendly relations of mutual respect and love with eminent contemporary scholars, poets and writers professing different

faiths, which was an indication of his broad humanism and tolerance<sup>28</sup>.

His broadmindedness and tolerance were reflected in his appreciation of both Muslim and non-Muslim scholarship<sup>29</sup>.


**An Honourable Figure:** Al-Sharif al-Radî was characterized by self-respect, large heartedness and great vision. Honesty reflected in his character from the very beginning when he achieved a social position.

Throughout his life, despite extreme insistence of Banu Buwaih, he never accepted any reward or benefit from them, nor did he allow any bending of his soul or diminution in his bearing by rendering himself under anyone's obligation. He even returned all the gifts and pensions which were awarded to his father<sup>30</sup>.


Besides, a house was gifted to him during his father's imprisonment, by his teacher *Abu Ibrahim ibn Ahmad al-Tabari*, a Sunni Maliki *Faqih* (jurist) when the later came to know that his calibrous pupil had no residence of his own<sup>31</sup>. This very self-respect had, even during youth raised him to that pinnacle of prestige and greatness, which is generally the last stage of age long attainment. Hence he won the respect and regard from the rulers at a very young age<sup>32</sup>. In 388 A.H., he was honored with the position of *Naqib* (Speakership of family of Abû Talib and leadership of Hajj) like his father<sup>33</sup>.

During those days either of these positions had been regarded very high, particularly, the position of *Naqib* was so grand and superior that the speaker enjoyed the authority for ordering of punishment, execution of religious, legal decrees, settlement of mutual disputes and other powers of this type. He was further, given the respect from Baha'ud Dawlah by awarding him with the title of *al-Radî* and again with *al-Sharif* in 401 A.H.<sup>34</sup> According to *Hasan Zayyat*, he was later sacked from these positions by Qâdir Billah due to his leaning towards Fatimis<sup>35</sup>.

**Works of Al-Radî :** Despite his short span of life, al-Radî authored books on different subjects covering a vast field of Islamic Studies and literature. He occupied an eminent place in Arabic poetry and played a significant role in the development of Arabic literature. In fact, he was a multidimensional personality, because simultaneously he was a great poet, skilled writer, high ranking orator, expert in grammar with a good knowledge of *Qur'ân*<sup>36</sup>.

His works on *Qur'ân* and Hadith mainly deal with the issues of literary significance such as poetic devices and figures of speech. Even his greatest work *Nahj al-Balaghah* was compiled with a view to put together the best pieces of Hadrat Ali's  writings and sermons from a literary angle<sup>37</sup>.

In brief he was a true scholar of great caliber. He wrote and compiled more than eighteen books on different topics such as *Qur'ân*, Hadith, Fiqh, Literature and History. His major works can be enumerated as:

1. *Khasâ'is al-'A'immah*: It was the first work of al-Radî which deals with the distinguishing qualities and traits of the Twelve 'A'immah (Imams). This book consists of the biography and characteristics of Hadrat 'Ali <sup>38</sup>. He has mentioned this work in his own introduction to the *Nahj al-Balaghah*, where in he affirms that he compiled it in his youth. Regarding this book Radi writes in the preface of *Nahj al-Balâghah*<sup>39</sup>.

In my early age at the dawn of youth I commenced writing a book on the characteristics of Imams (*khasâ'is al-'A'immah*) covering the account of their virtues and masterpieces of their utterances. The purpose of the compilation was started by me in the beginning of the book. Therein I completed the portion dealing with the account of Amîr al-Mu'minîn, but I could not finish that part concerning other Imams due to impediments of the time and obstacles of the days.

There is a manuscript of this book in Raza Library, Rampur<sup>40</sup>.

2. *Talkhîs al-Bayân 'an Majâzât al-Qur'ân*
3. *Majâzât al-'Athar al-Nabawiyah*
4. *Haqâ'iq al-Ta'wil fi Mutashâbih al-Tanzîl*
5. *Ma'âni al-Qur'ân*
6. *Akbâr Qudât Baghdâd*
7. *Ta'liq Khilâf al-Fuqah*
8. *Ta'liqat al-'Idâh*
9. *Mukhtâr Shi'r ibn Ishâq al-Sâbî*
10. *Al-Jayyid min Sh'ir ibn al-Hajjaj*
11. *Al-Ziyadat fi Shir Abi Tammâm*
12. *Al-Tâhir Dhû al-Manâqib*
13. *Diwân Shi'r*

**As a Poet:** So far as his poetic style is concerned, he had a vigorous poetic talent and powerful and effective style. His expression on the whole is clearly dignified even elegant. He used beautiful similies and metaphors.

Apart from Shii 'Ulamâ', who have been paying rich tributes to al-Radî for centuries, Sunni scholars are also among his admirers and have mentioned his name with great honour with particular reference to his mastery of Arabic language and his genius as a poet. His contemporary Sunni scholar, Abu Mansûr Abd al-Malik ibn Muhammad al-Nishaburi al-Tha'alibî, in his book entitled, *Yatimat al-Dahr*, a bibliography of contemporary poets and writers describe al-Radî as a poet in the following words:

Today, he among all his contemporaries is the most learned and unique and noble of both sides, maternal and paternal, among the Sâdât of Iraq. Besides his lineal ascendancy and sterling qualities, he is adorned with good manners and politeness and innumerable excellence. He has got full share in all kinds of laudable qualities and virtues. He is the greatest among the Tâlibiyyin poets of the past and present ages, though innumerable great poets are included in them such as al-Hamârî, Ibn Tabâ Tabâ' and Ibn al-

Nâsir. And if I say that he is the greatest poet of Qurashi, it will not be an exaggeration at all. I cannot name any poet of our age who can compose elegies better than him... His collection of poetry is huge and consists of four volumes, the major part of which is available...<sup>41</sup>

Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, a junior contemporary of al-Radî in his *Tarikh Baghdâd* has mentioned him (al-Radî) as an excellent poet<sup>42</sup>.

Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah is reported to have said on the authority of Abû al-Hasan ibn Mahfûz that a group of literary scholars held that al-Radî was superior to all the poets of the Quraysh. He further adds that undoubtedly Quraysh produced a good number of poets, but their output was small in quantity. Simultaneously, the poet with high authority and being most prolific could not be found except al-Radî<sup>43</sup>. Scholars like Abu al-Farâj al-Jawzi, Ibn Athir al Jazari, Ibn Abi al-Hadid al-Mu'tazili and others have similarly scrutinized al-Radî's great skill and creativity in poetry<sup>44</sup>.

Even the scholars like Ibn Khallikân, who doubted *Nahj al-Balaghâh* being attributed to Hadrat 'Ali عليه السلام, praises al-Radî in his voluminous treasure *Wafayat al-Ayân wa Anbâ' abna al-Zamân* in the following words:

Writing the book on the exposition of the meaning of *Qur'ân* is the proof of the wide span of his (al-Radî) knowledge in Arabic grammar, syntax and lexicography. He also authored a book having unprecedented excellence in its field in the name of *Majazat al-Qur'ân* (Figures of Speech in the *Qur'ân*) praising his poetical works, he (Ibn Khallikan) further adds that scholars attempted to compile a collection of his (al-Radî) poetical works, among them the best one is that which is compiled by Abû al-Hâkim al-Khayrî...<sup>45</sup>


Al-Radî's earlier biographers have mentioned almost his poetical works in four volumes. They also regard al-Radî unique in his Arabic poetry because of his style, which is a synthesis of



artistic beauty and scholarship. Among these biographies, Ahmad Ibn 'Ali Dâwûdi al-Hasanî, author of *'Umdat al-Matâlib*, being himself a descendant of Abu Talib quoting Abû al-Hasan al-'Umari writes:

Al-Radî's poetry is well known. He is the most eminent among the poets of Quraysh. It is enough to know that in the tribe of Quraysh a number of renowned poets were born, including Hârith ibn Hishâm, Hubayrah ibn Abi Wahab, 'Umar ibn Rabî'ah and Abu Dhuhayl, Muhammad al-Jumânî and Ibn Tabâ Tabâ' al-Isfahani<sup>46</sup>.

Literary critics acknowledge al-Radî's elegiacal works as his best, which still remain unsurpassed in Arabic poetry. J. M. 'Abd al-Jalîl, in his *History of Arab Literature*, refers to al-Radî among the choicest of the best poets of the Abbasi period<sup>47</sup>.

**Sharif Radî and *Nahj al-Balaghah*:** Besides all the works compiled by al-Radî, *Nahj al-Balaghah*, ranks the highest, wherein he has put together in one collection the invaluable jewels of Hadrat 'Ali's  sermons, letters and sayings. Some historians like Ibn Khalikan<sup>48</sup>, Ibn al-Athîr, Dhahabî, and Ibn Hajar al-Asqalânî<sup>49</sup> attributed *Nahj al-Balaghah* to Sharîf Murtadâ, the elder brother of Radî and raised the controversy regarding its compiler, though majority of the historians and critics consider al-Radî as its compiler.

In this respect Imtiyaz 'Alî Arshî in his treatise, *Istinad-i-Nahj al-Balaghah* writes that Sharif al-Radî's contemporary historian Najjashi credits the compilation of *Nahj al-Balaghah* to Sharif al-Radî on the authority of latter's two books entitled *Khasâ'is al-'A'immah* and *Majâzât al-Athar al-Nabawiyah*.

Due to the reference of two books, *Khasâ'is al-'A'immah* and *Majâzât al-Athar al-Nabawiyah* given in *Nahj al-Balaghah*, which Najjashî considers as Radî's work<sup>50</sup>.

As far the literary excellence of *Nahj al-Balaghah* is concerned, it is evident from the very title *Nahj al-Balaghah*, which means the way and method of eloquence of speech and clearness

of words. Its number also varies in different editions as Sermons from 238 to 241, letters from 77 to 79 and short sayings or utterances from 463 to 489 respectively<sup>51</sup>.

Al-Radî has given the account of the circumstances that led him to compile the utterances and writings of Hadrat Ali عليه السلام in the introduction of *Nahj al-Balaghah*. This account enlightens that when al-Radî was busy in writing of *Khasa'is al-A'immah*, he planned to devote the last part of the book to the sayings and writings of Hadrat 'Ali عليه السلام. Due to the absorbing and fascinating features of this task carried by al-Radî, his friends inspired him to compile a book covering all the forms of Hadrat 'Ali عليه السلام utterances such as *letters, lectures, counsels, moral admonitions and aphorisms*, for they would prove to be the masterpieces of *eloquence, rhetoric and jewels of wisdom*, probably the best after the *Qur'ân* and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم in Arabic language and literature<sup>52</sup>. Out of 238-241 khutbat (Sermons) about eighty six can be termed as *Mawa'iz*, as these contain a series of spiritual advices. Some of these, however, are elaborate and lengthy, like the *khutbah* (Sermon) 191. It is the lengthiest of the sermons of *Nahj al-Balaghah* and is known as *al-Qasî'ah*<sup>53</sup>. Regarding *Maktubât* (letters) about 25 either completely or partially consist of spiritual or moral teachings. One of the letters i.e., 31 being very lengthy in which Hadrat 'Ali عليه السلام advised his son Imam Husayn عليه السلام and the famous directive sent to Malik al-'Ashtar i.e., letter no 45 and the well-known epistle of Hadrat 'Ali عليه السلام 'Uthman bin Hunayf, his governor in Basrah<sup>54</sup>.

**Offices held by al-Radî:** The father of al-Radî, Abu Ahmad al-Husayn al-Tahir al-'Awhad Dhu al-Manâqib, during this lifetime held three offices of authority, *Niqabah of 'Alawi*, (where he used to represent the family of Abu Talib), the leadership of *Hujjaj* (pilgrims of the Holy Kabah) and headship of *Dîwân al-Mazâlim* (court of appeal). These offices were relinquished in favour of al-

Radî in 380 A.H. / 990 C.E. Al-Radî seems to be chosen for these offices, due to high position in the eyes of the rulers of that time<sup>55</sup>. He also have been got the highly esteemed position of the *Naqîb al-Nuqâbâ* on 6<sup>th</sup> Muharram 403 A.H. / 1012-13 C.E.<sup>56</sup> It was a newly created post which made him responsible for the affairs of all the *Talibiyyîn* living in the Abbasi Empire when he was only twenty one years old. No one after al-Radî was ever appointed to the post of *Niqâb al-Nuqabâ*<sup>57</sup>.

The jurisdiction of *Naqîb*, is described by al-Mawardi, a contemporary of al-Radî in his *Ahkâm al-Sultâniyyah*, in the following few points<sup>58</sup>:

1. A *Naqîb* is a judge, in the disputes arising among the members of the *Talibiyyîn*, and his judgment is considered as final.
2. He is the guardian and the Trustee of the property of orphans among the *Talibiyyîn*.
3. He is responsible to implement the Laws of *Sharî'ah* and to punish the erring *Talibiyyîn* in case of any violation.
4. He is responsible for the maintenance of unmarried and widowed women of the *Talibiyyîn*, with a power to arrange for their marriage.
5. He has to act as the guardian of insane persons among them, who are in need of supervision<sup>59</sup>.

In addition to the qualities of *Naqîb* cited above, al-Mawardi writes that a *Naqîb* should be a Mujtahid and able to conduct the affairs according to the *Sharî'ah* (Islamic Law)<sup>60</sup>.

The office of *Niqâbah* was of two types:

1. *Niqâbah Juz'iyyah*, and
2. *Niqâbah Kulliyah*

**Al-Radî and his School:** Al-Radî established a centre of high learning with a view to impart instruction in all fields of Islamic sciences, known as *Dar al-'Ilm*. This seat of learning had attached

library having thousands of books, belonging to al-Radî's personal collections. His school was a real boost to the students who acquired knowledge there because the needs of students were taken care of and every student was awarded a monthly stipend depending upon his merit and needs<sup>61</sup>.

The generosity of al-Radî could be gauged from this fact that he endowed a considerable part of his private property to meet the expenses of the school<sup>62</sup>. Like *Dar al-'Ulûm Nizamiyyah* founded by Khawajah Nizam al-Mulk al-Tusi, this school seems to be pioneer in the literary field, where students received free instruction along with a reasonable stipend to meet their needs. In fact this school had been established by al-Radî almost a century before Nizam al-Mulk. Later this school was most probably extended by his brother al-Sharif al-Murtada<sup>63</sup>. Sharif al-Radî's generosity was exemplary. He himself never accepted any reward for his works<sup>64</sup>.

**Scholars who received education at Dar al-'Ilm:** Among the scholars who received education under al-Radî at Dar al-'Ilm the prominent were:

- a. Al-Shaykh Jafar ibn Muhammad Dûristi
- b. Abu Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Ali al-Hulwani
- c. Qadi Abu al-Maali Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Qaltamah
- d. Abu Zayd al-Sayyid Abd Allah ibn Ali al-Kiyayaki ibn Abd Allah al-Husayn al-Jurjani
- e. Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn al-Husayn ibn Ahmad al-Nishapuri al-Khuzai
- f. Abu Mansur Muhammad ibn Abi Nasr al-Ukbari
- g. Qadi al-Sayyid Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Bandar ibn Muhammad al-Hashimi
- h. Al-Shaykh al-Mufid Abd al-Rahman ibn Ahmad ibn Yahya al-Nishâbûri<sup>65</sup>.

- i. Mahyar ibn Marzawayh al-Daylami, was one of the most eminent pupils of al-Radi. He was a Zoroastrian, who embraced Islam under al-Radi in 394 A.H. / 1003-1004 C.E. He is better known as Abu al-Hasan Mahyar al-Daylami. Paying tribute to his poetic skill and his unshakeable love for the *Ahl al-Bayat*, he has been mentioned by all the Sunni scholars and Historians<sup>66</sup>.

The name of Shaykh al-Taifah Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Tusi has also been mentioned in a number of books among al-Radi's pupils. He was an indirect student of al-Radi who came from Baghdad in 408 A.H. / 1017 – 1018 C.E. i.e., two years later al-Radi's demise. He actually used to refer to al-Radi's book and often quoted his authority in certain matters, in a way being fond of his (al-Radi's) work<sup>67</sup>.

**Demise of al-Radi:** Al-Radi passed away in 359-406 A.H. / 970-1015 C.E. on Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> of Muharram or Safar in Baghdad at the age of forty-seven years<sup>68</sup>. When his elder brother Sharif Murtada, saw this heart rendering scene bewildered by the intensity of grief, left his house for the tomb of his ancestor Imam Musa ibn Jafar al-Kazim at Kazimayn. Thus the funeral was led by Abu Ghâlib Fakhr al-Mulk, the vizier of al-Buwayh and a friend of al-Radi's family. His funeral was attended by a significant number of the elite, nobles, scholars and judges<sup>69</sup>. Despite his comparatively short span of life, al-Radi made a great contribution to Muslim history and literature. He shone on the bright horizon of the fourth century regarded as the most extraordinary period of all round intellectual and cultural renaissance in the history of Islam<sup>70</sup>.

On the occasion of demise of al-Radi, his junior contemporary scholar, al-Khatib al-Baghdadi in his book, *Tarikh-i-Baghdad* writes, "He was a man of virtue, literature and

scholarship... He started learning the *Qur'ân* at a very young age, and learnt the entire *Qur'ân* by heart in a short time. He authored some books dealing with the meaning of the *Qur'ân*, the like of which are hard to be found"<sup>71</sup>.

Al-Radi left one son behind him. His name was Abu Ahmad Adnan called as Tahir Dhu al-Manaqib after his grandfather i.e., al-Radi's father. He also held the office of *Niqâbah* of the *Talibiyyin* like his father, uncle and grandfather. According to Abu Ahsan al-Umari, Ibn al-Jawzi, Qâdi Nur Allah al-Shushtari and others he was a man of virtue, insight and scholarship, particularly in '*ilm al-'arud* (knowledge of poetics)<sup>72</sup>.

After the demise of al-Murtada, Adnan's uncle, the office of *Niqâbah* was transferred to him till his demise (449 A.H. / 1057 C.E.). Unlike his father, he left no descendants and thus the family of al-Radi came to an end and resulted in the discontinuity of the lineage of al-Radi<sup>73</sup>. Despite all this, al-Radi still lives in the memory of history and inspires scholars through his books and examples of devotion to knowledge and truth.

## References and End Notes

<sup>1</sup> His original name was Muhammad and *kunya* Abul Hasan. He was second son of his father and was younger to his brother al-Murtada by four years.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Tha'alabi, Abu Mansur 'Abd al-Malik, *Yatimah al-Dahar*, Matbah al-Sadah, Egypt, 1377 A.H.; Vol. III; p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*

<sup>5</sup> 'Ali-Dawâni, *Sayyid Radi, Mu'allife Nahj al-Balaghah*, Bunyad-e-Nahj al-Balaghah, Tehran, 1359 A.H., p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Abi al-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah*, Dar al-Kutub al-Arabiah al-Kubra, Egypt, n.d., Vol. I, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Banu Buwaih was a dynasty which controlled Iraq and Persia from 320 AH / 932 CE to 447 AH / 1062 C.E. These were Daylamis, a Turkic people who had settled around the Caspian Sea. They ruled after Abbasids. The chief of Buwaihîd under the title of Amîr al-'Umarâ (prince of princes). The Buwaihids were replaced by other dynasties who divided up the areas formerly under their control; the Saljuqs ruled in the West, and eventually the Ghaznavids in the east. (*The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Ed. Cyril Glasse Stacey International London., 1989, p. 80)

<sup>8</sup> 'Ali Dawâni, *op. cit.*, p. 7

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-11.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> Ibn Abî al-Hadîd, *op. cit.*; p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> 'Ali Dawâni; *op. cit.*; p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> *Idem*

<sup>14</sup> Zaydiyyah is a branch of the Shi'is arising out of the abortive revolt of Zayd bin 'Ali bin al-Husayn in Kufa in 122/740. During the preparations for the revolt, a part of the Kufan Shi'as withdrew their support from Zayd in protest against his refusal to condemn unconditionally the early caliphs Preceding 'Ali and backed Zayd's nephew Ja'far al-Sadiq as their *Imam*. This schism led to a lasting division of the Shi'a into a radical and a moderate wing in terms of their religious break with the sunni Muslim community. The Zaydiyya, as the moderates, did not regard the Sunni Muslims generally as infidels.

(The *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Ed. E.J.Brill, Vol XI, Leiden 2002).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>16</sup> *Idem*

<sup>17</sup> *Idem*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 11-12

<sup>19</sup> Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat al-Ayân*, Vol. II, n.d., 1299, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Ibn Abî al-Hadîd, *Op. cit.*, Vol.I, p.11

<sup>21</sup> 'Alî Dawânî; *op.cit.*; pp. 27-37.

<sup>22</sup> He is regarded as one of the foremost and great scholars of his times. He was a great theologian, traditionalist having the deep understanding of Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence).

He has written around two hundred books on various Islamic sciences.

Ibn Abî al-Hadîd, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> 'Alî Dawânî; *op. cit.*; pp. 27-37.

<sup>24</sup> *Idem*

<sup>25</sup> 'Alî Dawânî; *op. cit.*; p. 24.

<sup>26</sup> *Idem*

<sup>27</sup> Al-Baghdâdî Khâtib; *Tarîkh Baghdâd*, Matba'h al-Sa'adah, Egypt, 1931, Vol. II, p. 246.

<sup>28</sup> 'Alî Dawânî; *op. cit.*; p. 62.

<sup>29</sup> *Idem*

<sup>30</sup> Ibn Abî al-Hadîd; *op. cit.*; Vol. I; p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> 'Alî Dawânî; *op. cit.*; p. 7.

<sup>32</sup> Tha'alibi; *op. cit.*; Vol. III; p. 137.

<sup>33</sup> Ibn Khallikân; *op. cit.*; Vol. II; p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Daira-i-Ma'arif Islamiyah*; Lahore: Danishgah Punjab; 1975; Vol. XII; p. 721.

<sup>35</sup> Carl Brockelmann; *Tarikh al-Adab al-Arabi*, Dar al-Ma'arif; Egypt; 1968; Vol. XII; p. 285.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Khallikân; *op. cit.*; Vol. II; p. 3 and Khatîb al-Baghdadi; *op. cit.*; Vol. II; p. 246.

<sup>37</sup> 'Alî Dawânî; *op. cit.*; pp. 99-102.

<sup>38</sup> *Idem*

<sup>39</sup> *Nahj al-Balâghah*; Eng. trans. Qum 1975; p. 113.

<sup>40</sup> Imtiyaz Ali 'Arshi; *Istinad-i-Nahjal Balâghah*; Urdu; Lahore; 1976; p. 18.



- <sup>41</sup> *Daira-e-Ma'arif Islamiyah*; Vol. XI; p. 722.
- <sup>42</sup> Thalibî; *op. cit.*; Vol. III; p. 136.
- <sup>43</sup> Al-Baghdadi; *op. cit.*; Vol. II; p. 246.
- <sup>44</sup> *Idem*
- <sup>45</sup> 'Alî Dawânî; *op. cit.*; pp. 81-82.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.
- <sup>47</sup> J. M. Abd al-Jalil. *Ta'rikh-i-Adabiyât-i-'Arab*, Persian trans. Dr. Adharnush, Tehran, Intisharat-i-Amir Kabir, 1363 A.H., p. 433.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 190.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibn Khallikân; *op. cit.* Vol.II; p. 423.
- <sup>50</sup> Imtiyaz 'Ali Arshi Khan; *op. cit.* p. 16.
- <sup>51</sup> Sayyid al-Radi, *Nahj al-Balâghah*, Beirut, 1967, p. 33.
- <sup>52</sup> *Idem*, also see M. Phil Thesis of Dr Manzoor Ahmad Bhat, "Ethical Teachings of Caliph Ali عليه السلام ibn Abi Talib with Special Reference to *Nahj al-Balâghah*; p. 84.
- <sup>53</sup> *Idem*
- <sup>54</sup> *Nahj al-Balâghah*, *op. cit.* pp. 113-114.
- <sup>55</sup> *Idem*
- Also see Bhat, *loc. cit*
- <sup>56</sup> 'Alî Dawânî; *op. cit.*; pp. 71-73.
- <sup>57</sup> *Idem*
- <sup>58</sup> *Idem*
- <sup>59</sup> Allama Abu al-Hasan Mawardi; *Ahkam al-Sultanniyah*; trans. Mufti IntizamAllah Shahabi, Matba'h Sa'idi, Qur'ân Mahal Karachi; n.d.; pp. 249-257.
- <sup>60</sup> *Idem*
- <sup>61</sup> 'Ali Dawani; *op. cit.* pp. 73-74.
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.
- <sup>63</sup> *Idem*
- <sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.
- <sup>65</sup> *Idem*
- <sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibn Khallikân, *op. cit.* Vol. II; p. 4.

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<sup>70</sup> 'Ali Dawâni; *op. cit.* p. 5.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 81.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* p. 129.

<sup>73</sup> *Idem*