

# SHI'ITE AUTHORITIES IN THE AGE OF THE MAJOR OCCULTATION

## PART II: SAYYID RADI

ALI NAGHI ZABIHZADEH<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** Abu al-Hasan Muhammad ibn al-Husayn, known as Sayyid Radi, was a highly distinguished Muslim scholar and poet. His brilliance blossomed under the celebrated Shaykh Mufid as well as other prominent scholars. Sayyid Radi demonstrated proficiency in various Islamic sciences and had mastered the Arabic language as well. He was also the founder of Dar al-'Ilm, a large school held for various lectures, meetings, and academic debates. Due to his pure faith and intellectual capability, Sayyid Radi was appointed as the Chief of the Shi'ites during his era, the head of the High Court, and the supervisor of the Hajj pilgrimage. This article presents a brief account of his life, his teachers, and students, as well as his services and achievements that attested to his great influence during his era as well as years to come.

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### *Childhood*

Abu al-Hasan Muhammad ibn Husayn al-Musawi, also entitled 'Raḍī', was a descendant of the Prophet (s) and a Shi'a Muslim scholar and

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poet who lived in Baghdad. His brief life (359 AH/970 CE – 406/1015) coincided with the era of the Buyid Dynasty,<sup>2</sup> the golden age of Arabic literature.

Sayyid Radī was born in a renowned household directly descended from the Prophet Muhammad (s). His father, Abū Ahmad, was a well-respected man, renowned for his purity, honesty, sincerity, and faithfulness. Bahā' al-Dawla, son of 'Aḍud al-Dawla, titled him 'the good-natured' (*al-Ṭāhir al-Awjad*) and 'the possessor of all honorable attributes' (*Dhu al-Manāqib*). He was given political responsibilities such as chieftainship of the Shi'ites, organizing manager of the Hajj pilgrimage, and supervisor of the Courts of Justice, the highest rank in the High Court of Appeal. Because the great authorities of religion trusted him, he often exchanged confidential letters between the 'Abbasid Caliphs, the Buyid kings, and the Syrian rulers (Āle Ḥamdān).

His mother, Fatima, also a descendant of the Prophet (s), was the daughter of Nāṣir Ṣaghīr and granddaughter of Nāṣir Kabīr, the conqueror of Mazandaran and Gilan. She was known for her chastity, virtuousness, and knowledge. Sources report that Shaykh Muḥīd wrote the book *Aḥkām al-Nisā'* for her, mentioning her name in the introduction and describing her as a knowledgeable and respectable woman.<sup>3</sup>

From his childhood, when his father lived in exile, Sayyid Radī and his elder brother, Sayyid Murtaḍā, began learning the arts and sciences, two common subjects at that period, which consisted of Arabic syntax, grammar, recitation, jurisprudence, hadith, theology, poetry, and literature. He was educated by his mother and other prominent scholars,

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<sup>2</sup> 334-447/946-1056

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Sayyid Muḥsin Amīn, *A'yān al-Shi'ah*, vol. 9, pp. 216, 220 & 221; 'Abd al-Malik Tha'ālibī, *Yatīmat al-Dahr*, vol. 3, p. 131, quoted from Ali Davānī, *Mafākhir-e Islam*, p. 3, pp. 266 – 270; Muhammad Ibrāhīm Nijād, *Sayyid Raḍī bar Sāhil-e Nahj al-Balaghah*, pp. 15, 16.

such as Shaykh Mufīd, Abū 'Abdullāh Marzbānī, Qāḍī 'Abdul Jabbār, Abū Sa'īd Sīrāfī, Hārūn ibn Mūsā Tal'ukburā, Abū Bakr Khārazmī, Abū 'Alī Fārsī, and Abul Faṭḥ ibn Janbī.<sup>4</sup>

From the accounts of Yāfī'ī and Ibn Khallakān, Sayyid Raḍī was highly intelligent from the time he was a child.<sup>5</sup>

### *His father's imprisonment*

In 367 AH, 'Aḍud al-Dawla Daylamī, the strongest king of the Būyid dynasty, attacked Baghdad. He disposed Bakhtīyār, son of Mu'izz al-Dawla, and took his place. Since 'Aḍud al-Dawla thought that Abū Aḥmad, Sayyid Raḍī's father, might cause him trouble, Abū Aḥmad was arrested and exiled when Sayyid Raḍī was only ten years old. Since then, Sayyid Raḍī was deprived of his father's care and affection for many years. From then on, life was a struggle for him and his brother, Sayyid Murtaḍā.

Abū Aḥmad's imprisonment lasted throughout the rest of the governance of 'Aḍud al-Dawla and the reign of his son Ṣamṣām al-Dawla over Baghdad. His imprisonment ended when Sharaf al-Dawla, another son of 'Aḍud al-Dawla who ruled over Ahwaz, traveled to Baghdad through Kerman with the intention of overthrowing his brother's government. Sharaf al-Dawla released all the prisoners who had been imprisoned by his father, and took them to Baghdad.<sup>6</sup>

Sayyid Raḍī composed an ode to Sharaf al-Dawla and sent it to the court to thank him. His show of appreciation established good relations with the Būyid dynasty, which resulted in the return of all the previously confiscated property of his father.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, vol. 9, p. 221; cf. Sayyid Ibrāhīm, Sayyid 'Alawī, *Yādnāmeḥ-ye 'Allāmeḥ Sharīf Raḍī*, speech of 'Alī Davānī, p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Yāfī'ī, *Mir'āt al-Jinān*, vol. 3, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Ibid.* p. 217.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Sayyid Raḍī' bar Sāhil* ..., pp. 22-23.

## *Sayyid Radi's roles*

### *1. Chieftainship*

Chieftainship can be defined as the guardianship of Abū Ṭālib's descendants (the chieftainship of Ṭālibites). Regarding chieftainship, the late 'Allamah Amīnī writes in *Al-Ghadīr*:

Chieftainship was a position established to protect the dignity of families so that they would not engage in disputes with immoral people.

Chieftainship was a responsibility assigned by the people who spontaneously surrounded a prominent, amiable, and virtuous scholar and acknowledged his guardianship and authority. After some time, in an effort to gain popularity, caliphs and kings began to order people to do so. According to *Al-Ghadīr*, this position existed since the time of Imam al-Riḍā (a) and the chief guardian was called 'Chieftain of all Chieftains.' Ma'mūn gave this position to Imam Riḍā (a), which seems to be the origin of the Shi'a ('Alawi) chieftainships. Because the people passionately loved Imam Ali and his family, Ma'mūn feared an Alawite rebellion. In order to gain popularity in his political plots, Ma'mūn called the Imam (a) 'Chieftain of all Chieftains' simultaneous with or after nominating the Imam (a) as his successor. Gradually, this position was established within the society, and during the reign of Mu'taḍid 'Abbāsī (279 A.H), it was generally accepted in the public sphere. People began to consider it a socio-political principle to show respect to the Alawī community and to appoint a guardian for them, as they believed this position worthy for a renowned and honorable person.<sup>8</sup>

Since the Alawites rebelled many times in the past, they were escaping in some areas. The greatest among them would become their guardian,

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Commemoration of 'Allāmeḥ Sharīf Raḍī*, speech of Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Parvar, a brief look at positions of 'Allameḥ Sharīf Raḍī, p. 36.

organizing and gathering them under an independent power rather than under the Caliph's government, even though the government issued decrees for guardianship, possibly similar to a party which is opposed to the government but gains license for its activities from that same government.

Caliphs were never satisfied with these circumstances although they were aware of the power of Alawite rebellions and their overthrow of the government in Mazandaran and Egypt in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Since ignoring them could lead to destruction of the 'Abbasids, the 'Abbasid Caliphs inevitably accepted the chieftainship and appointed Sharīf RaḌī. After his father, Abū Aḥmad, Sayyid RaḌī accepted the chieftainship of Alawites in order to return their rights.<sup>9</sup>

During his father's life, Sayyid RaḌī's father held the position of vicegerent. However, towards the end of his father's life and after he died, Sayyid RaḌī held this position himself. Yāfi'ī wrote:

His father was the guardian of the scholars (of religious sciences) and was an authority among them. He was the authority of the High Court and the supervisor of the Hajj pilgrimage. In 380 A.H, when Sayyid RaḌī was at the age of 21 and his father was still alive, he took over these responsibilities under the approval of Ṭā'ī 'Abbāsī.<sup>10</sup>

## **2. Head of the High Court of Justice<sup>11</sup>**

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Commemoration of 'Allāmah Sharīf RaḌī*, speech of Sayyid Jamāl al-Ddīn Dīn Parvar, pp. 35 – 37.

<sup>10</sup> Ibn 'Atabah, *'Imād al-Ṭālib fi Anṣāb Āl-e Abī Ṭālib*, p. 193; cf. *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, vol. 9, p. 216; *Majālis al-Mu'minīn*, vol. 1, p. 504; cf. Ibn Ḥalkān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, vol. 4, p. 414; Tha'ālibī, *Yatīmat al-Dahr*, vol.3, p. 132; cf. 'Abdulhussein Amīnī, *Al-Ghadīr*, vol. 4, p. 209. Quoted from Ibrāhīm Sayyid "Alawī, *Ibid*, pp. 118 – 120.

<sup>11</sup> Since this position was the supreme position of the court, it demanded a person in charge who was not only a jurisprudent with authority, but was also the most knowledgeable jurisprudent who knew the different jurisprudential and legal rulings so he would be able to answer questions of the followers of different Islamic schools. 'Abd al-Hussein Ḥillī, in his

The head of the High Court of Justice is a position comparable to that of a public prosecutor in today's judicial system. Establishing such a position was necessary because each town in the 'Abbāsīd territory had a judicial system that worked to resolve the complaints of its people. A judge held the foremost position of this system to pass verdicts, although several towns together also had a magistrate. If a case was beyond the capacity of all of them, then it was referred to the Central Court. The caliph himself made the final decision or would assign it to a religious jurist, the head of the High Court. Therefore, to achieve position of the head of the High Court, besides having interpretive reasoning (*ijtihād*) and expertise, one must have been a social figure, pious, and devout, all qualities of which Sayyid Raḍī possessed.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. *Supervisor of the Hajj Pilgrimage*

In addition to the above-mentioned positions, because of his superior status in scientific and spiritual matters, Sharīf Raḍī took charge of looking into the problems of the Hajj pilgrims and supervising their affairs.<sup>13</sup> Since hajj is a religious duty of all Muslims, it could not be exclusive to the 'Abbāsīd government. Because of the great number of pilgrims who lived in the Fatimid territories and other Shi'ite

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introduction to *Haqā'iq al-Ta'wīl*, where he describes different dimensions of Sharīf Raḍī's personality, wrote: "Caliphs and kings held levee two or three days a year in which they investigated complaints and directly listened to the words of (religious) authorities. After a while, due to social changes, a special court was established that continuously worked and was presided over by religious leaders, conscientious people, and those who have no grounds for slander." This position was similar to the head of Supreme Court or High Court of cassation in today's judicial system since those complaints that were investigated and whose sentences were passed by judges were to be resolved. Accordingly, the head of Supreme Court must be the most virtuous and learned judge and must be competent in the jurisprudences of all Islamic schools. (*Haqā'iq al-Ta'wīl*, introduction 85, quoted from Sayyid Ibrāhīm, Sayyid 'Alawī, Ibid, p. 118)

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Sayyid Muḥsin Amīn, Ibid, p. 216; Ibrāhīm Nijād, Ibid, pp. 34-35.

<sup>13</sup> After quoting from Māwardī (the author of *al-Aḥkām al-Sultānīyyah*) about the position of authority of the High Court and the Supervisor of the Hajj pilgrimage, 'Allāmah Amīnī quotes from *Iihāf al-Warā bi Akhbār al-Qurā* that Sharīf Murtaḍā and Sharīf Raḍī made a pilgrimage to Mecca in 389 A.H. and Ibn al-Jirāh Ṭā'ī blocked their way. They paid nine thousands Dinars from their own possessions and unblocked the way for pilgrims (cf. *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 4, p. 209, quoted from Sayyid 'Alawī, Ibid, p. 119).

governments, in addition to Muslims of the 'Abbasid territory, gathered at the great congress of Hajj, it was necessary for the 'Abbasid Caliph to appoint someone who was known throughout the Islamic world. Sayyid Raḍī was a good choice, even though he lived in Baghdad and his political views radically differed with that of the 'Abbasid's. Another reason for this selection, as has been mentioned, was the existence of the Buyid's Shi'ite government in the capital city of the 'Abbasids.

### ***Sayyid Raḍī's Political Position and His Goals***

Sayyid Raḍī had an intimate relationship with Ṭā'ī 'Abbāsī. Sayyid Raḍī also had gained a pre-eminent position during the time of Qādir 'Abbāsī, though he never considered their caliphate legitimate. He considered the 'Abbasid Caliphs as usurpers and expressed his disgust with the oppressive government of Qādir 'Abbāsī in his poems.

Sayyid Raḍī entered into politics with the purpose of administering justice and protecting the oppressed. He used these positions as a bridge to reach his ideals as defined in the following verses:

*Surely my hope is that you be a way for my will  
and guide me to my wishes.  
I only intend to do what I suppose you are its entry  
for I know that some suppositions are not wrong.*

His high positions never caused him to act arrogantly. When necessary, he would oppose the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs openly, as evident in one of his famous poems that he addressed to Qādir 'Abbāsī:

*Why should I endure humiliation while I have  
a sharp sword and a high rank? Just like a wild bird, my  
dignity flees from lowliness and oppression.  
Should I endure humiliation in territory of my enemies*

*while the caliph of Egypt is of the Alawites?*<sup>14</sup>

To fulfill his religious duties, Sayyid Raḍī accepted these positions during the lives of his well-known father, Ṭāhir dhul-Manāqib, his honorable brother, and his distinguished teachers, such as Shaykh Muḥīd - the most knowledgeable religious authority of his time - and other great leaders. In addition to holding these influential positions, he would teach, write, and compose fine books and poetry.

In spite of his many occupations, Sayyid Raḍī founded *Dār ul-'Ilm* (House of Knowledge). He did so eighty years before the Niẓāmīyyah School of Baghdad, which was established by Niẓām al-Mulk Ṭūsī on a large sum of government money. It is likely that Niẓām al-Mulk imitated the Dar al-'Ilm founded by Sayyid Raḍī and Sayyid Murtaḍā. Sayyid Raḍī also made time to run Dār al-'Ilm. He also wrote many great works, the most famous of which is *Nahj al-Balāghah* which he compiled six years before his death in 400 (A.H). He also wrote some other books, such as *Khilāf al-Fuqahā'*, on the judges of Baghdad, *Haqā'iq al-Ta'wīl fī Masābih al-Tanzīl*, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'an*, *Majāzāt al-Āthār al-Nabawīyyah*, a commentary on a book of his teacher, Abū Ali Fārsī, and *Khaṣā'iṣ al-A'imma*. He also made time for teaching.

Sharīf Raḍī took up these positions to serve people and religion. Therefore, when the 'Abbasid Caliph dismissed him from all three of his jobs because of the poem he composed praising the Fatimid Caliph, he proudly wrote the following ode:

*I was dismissed from these jobs, but I did not lose my  
dignity  
Nor my great status.  
And if I remain alive, you will see that it is if I am  
Several thousand people confronting you.*

<sup>14</sup> Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, vol. 9, pp. 217-218.

His odes to the Caliphs were generally in response to their kindness. He never wrote poetry to flatter the Caliphs or for the purpose of using them to serve him. He addressed Muhallabī, the minister, in an ode saying:

*This is my praise through which I do not want to pile up  
wealth  
for my pride and dignity restrain me from praising  
another to achieve my goals.*

In another ode he wrote:

*I have been offered worldly goods many times  
but I declined each time.<sup>15</sup>*

As mentioned before, when Sayyid RaḌī took an extreme political position, referring to the caliphate of Egyptian 'Alawites in his poem, he mentioned the difficult conditions of life under the power of the 'Abbasid Caliph. When Qādir 'Abbāsī learned of it, he was extremely angry and called a meeting, to which he invited Sharīf RaḌī's father and brother, Shaykh Mufīd, and other Shi'ites and Sunnis. He wanted Sharīf RaḌī to explain the cause of his hatred towards 'Abbasid government, but Sayyid RaḌī courageously declined the Caliph's invitation and did not attend the meeting.

In that meeting, Sayyid RaḌī's father tried to make it appear as though the poem did not belong to him, but the Caliph did not accept his excuses or explanations. The Caliph ordered someone to take notes of their meeting and in them the rulers of Egypt were cursed. The minutes were brought to Sayyid RaḌī to sign, but he refused.<sup>16</sup> According to the

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<sup>15</sup> C.f. Sayyid 'Alawī, *Ibid*, speech of Ali Davanī, pp. 25 – 26.

<sup>16</sup> *Dā'iratul Ma'ārif al-Qarn al-'Ishrīn* [Encyclopedia of the Twentieth Century], vol. 4, p. 253; c.f. *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, vol. 9, pp. 217 – 218.

author of *Rīyāḍ al-'Ulamā*, Sayyid Raḍī attended the meeting but refused to sign the minutes.

Abu al-Hassan al-Ṣaḥābī and his son, Gharas al-Ni'mah Muhammad, wrote in their book of history that one day Qādir 'Abbāsī invited Abū Aḥmad Ṭāhir Mūsawī, and his son, Abu al-Qāsim Murtaḍā, and a number of judges, witnesses, and jurists, and held a meeting in which he read poems composed by Sayyid Raḍī. Then he told Abū Aḥmad, the chieftain:

What offence has our government committed against your son, and what has the ruler of Egypt done to him that, despite appointing him as the chieftain, head of the High Court, and supervisor of the Hajj pilgrimage, he has composed such a poem?

Qādir wanted him to compose a poem and deny his relationships with the Egyptians, but Sayyid Raḍī refused. Qādir dismissed him from his chieftainship and appointed Muhammad ibn 'Umar instead.<sup>17</sup>

Sharīf Raḍī waited for an opportunity to eliminate despotic and tyrannical rulers with the aim of forming an Islamic government that would administer Imam Ali's (a) justice. He expressed his revolutionary thoughts to his close friends, including Abū Ishāq Ṣābī, in private meetings through epic poems. Abū Ishāq admired them and advised him to take care of his family when he attained power. Through an ode, Sayyid assured him that he would fulfill this promise when he was successful.<sup>18</sup>

Sayyid Raḍī did not see any superiority of the Caliph over himself. In an ode he said to the arrogant and conceited Qādir:

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<sup>17</sup> Afandī, *Rīyāḍ al-'Ulamā*, vol. 5, p. 81.

<sup>18</sup> Sayyid Ali Khān Madanī Shīrāzī, *al-Darajāt al-Rafī'ah*, p. 471.

Beware the commander of the faithful! We both are descended from one holy family and we are both proud of them, so your dignity is not more than mine. Certainly there is no difference between us (since we both have great roots) except the Caliphate that you hold. You have worn the necklace of the Caliphate, while I have been deprived of it.

This ode made the Caliph furious. However, because of the Sayyid's popularity, the Caliph could not punish him.<sup>19</sup>

Sayyid Raḍī displayed hatred only towards the 'Abbasid government and so asserted his superiority over the kings when able. In the meantime, he continuously reminded them of their usurpation of the Caliphate.

One day, he was sitting by al-Ṭā'i Billāh, ignoring the Caliph, and was drawing his beard up towards his nose. To boast about his great power, the Caliph said, "I think that you smell the Caliphate!" With utmost dignity and bravery, Sayyid Raḍī replied, "Maybe I smell prophethood!"<sup>20</sup> With this witty remark, not only did he question the political legitimacy of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate, but he also reminded the Caliph that the Shi'ites are those who hold the right to rule owing to prophecy and guardianship (*wilāyah*), not him.

In an inauguration of the Millenium conference held in 1986 to commemorate the 1000<sup>th</sup> demise of Sayyid Raḍī, Hujjat al-Islam Hāshimī Rafsanjānī brought up a historical question: "How could someone who considered the caliphate of the 'Abbāsīds as illegal be given the authority over three important governmental positions (chieftainship, supervision of the Hajj pilgrimage, and direction of the High Court)?" In response, disproving of any kind of compromise,

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<sup>19</sup> C.f. Ibid, p. 470; *Tārīkh Ādāb al-Lughah al-'Arabīyyah*, vol. 1, p. 567.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 470.

Hujjat al-Islam Hāshimī Rafsanjānī described the special political conditions of the Islamic world and Shi‘ites’ rule. He clarified that the ‘Abbasid Caliphs were afraid of the Fatimid government in Egypt and the powerful Shi‘ite government of the Buyids, and the Abbasid Caliphs’ fear led to the support of intense political activities of Sayyid Raḍī, his father, and his brother. He insisted that although Sayyid Raḍī never accepted political compromise, the weak ‘Abbasid Caliphs had to offer these positions to him and his family.

Twelver Shi‘ites, under the guidance of the Imams (a) and the struggles of their followers as well as the determination of Imam Hasan’s (a) children, the children of Zayd ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn and the Ismā‘īlītes formed a very strong elite community. In scattered regions, particularly in north of Iran and Khorasan, they disseminated Islamic culture and gradually made their way into politics as well. Because Shi‘ite culture and politics dominated other cultures and politics at that time, Shi‘ism in Baghdad was under the protection of the Shi‘ite powers around the world. Thus, the Caliphs were obliged to protect them. At that time, the reign of the Fatimids in Egypt spread from the Atlantic Ocean in western Africa to the Red Sea in the East, including a part of the Arabian Peninsula. The entire southern coast of the Mediterranean Sea was controlled by the Fatimids, who rejected the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs.

The Twelver Shī‘ite Buyids had gathered in various regions of Iran, such as Fars and Isfahan. Their main settlement was in Baghdad, which was occupied by Mu‘izz al-Dawlah 334 – 336 AH, and the ‘Abbasid Caliphs were their pawns.

Sayyid Murtaḍā and Sayyid Raḍī’s births in 355 AH and in 359 AH were many years after the Buyid entered Baghdad. Even at that time, their father, Abū Aḥmad, was a highly respected chieftain. The Caliph had a formal position and collaborated with the Buyids. He played the role of a ruler, but had no power. Even Sayyid Raḍī, as previously mentioned, got away with treating the Caliph harshly.

The Sayyid would not accept the gifts sent by Fakhr al-Mulūk, the minister of Bahā' al-Dawlah, even though he was a fellow Shi'a.<sup>21</sup> At the birth of Sayyid Raḍī's child, minister Abū Muḥammad Mahlabī sent him one thousand Dinars. The Sayyid rejected the gift, claiming that the minister knew he would not accept it from anyone.<sup>22</sup>

He was constantly stimulated by great ideas and although he would compose his thoughts into poetry, he never had the opportunity to make them a reality.

### *His Accomplishments*

Sayyid Raḍī and his brother, Sayyid Murtaḍā, were pupils of the great jurisprudent, Shaykh Mufīd, and reached a high level of religious authority. Although Sayyid Raḍī's fame from his poetry and literature have overshadowed his other scientific dimensions, as historians often introduce him as a master in poetry, his scientific position is comparable with it. He was a man of literature, a great exegete, and a prominent religious authority. According to some scholars:

During the absence of Sayyid Raḍī, Sayyid Murtaḍā would be the master of poets; and in absence of Sayyid Murtaḍā, Sayyid Raḍī was the most knowledgeable and the best of jurists.<sup>23</sup>

Sayyid Raḍī wrote a book on jurisprudence called *Ta'līq 'alā Khilāf al-Fuqahā'*. His jurisprudential debates with scholars and jurisprudents of his time are also recorded in his works. Additionally, he was a judge

<sup>21</sup> C.f. *Yādnāme-ye 'Allāmah Sharīf Raḍī*, pp. 10 – 13; Ibn Abi al-Ḥadīd Mu'tazilī Madā'inī in the preface of *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 1, writes about the great personality of Raḍī, saying that: "He never accepted gifts or rewards from anyone, even from his father. This suffices to show us his dignity. Buyid kings made every effort to convince him to accept their gifts, but he always refused." (C.f. *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 1, p. 31, quoted from Tustarī; *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 9, p. 228)

<sup>22</sup> *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, vol. 9, p. 217; c.f. Sayyid Ali Khān, *Ibid*, p. 473.

<sup>23</sup> *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, vol. 9, p. 218.

and the head of the High Court. These jobs certainly require one to have *ijtihād* (interpretive reasoning) and proficiency in jurisprudence, indicating that Sayyid Raḍī was a prominent jurist.

Sayyid Raḍī wrote three great commentaries of the Holy Qur'an:

1. *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān 'an Majāzāt al-Qur'an*: In this book he presented his studies of those Qur'anic verses whose understanding depended upon other Qur'anic and non-Qur'anic sciences. The subject of this commentary is figurative language in the Qur'an, i.e. those verses whose actual meaning is different from their literal meaning.
2. *Ḥaqā'iq al-Ta'wīl fī Mutashābih al-Tanzīl*: Scholars believe it was very unique at its time. Unfortunately, only the fifth chapter of this commentary is available today.<sup>24</sup>
3. *Tafsīr al-Qur'an*.

Some of his other books are *Khaṣā'iṣ al-A'immah*, *Majāzāt Āthār al-Nabawīyyah*, and *Ta'liqah*<sup>25</sup> on *Īdāḥ Abī Ali*, which is a compilation of his complete poetical works. His most influential book that has been popular since it was published is *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>26</sup>

In the *History of Baghdad*, Khaṭīb Baghdādī wrote:

*He was the brother of Abu al-Qāsim, known as Murtaḍā. He was a man of literature and knowledge. Aḥmad ibn Rūḥ reported that when Raḍī entered old age he decided to memorize the Qur'an and he did so within a short time. He also mentioned that Raḍī wrote some*

<sup>24</sup> The author of *A'yān al-Shī'ah* wrote that in a book about his teacher, Ibn Junay once said: Raḍī wrote a commentary on the Qur'an that was incomparable.

<sup>25</sup> Comments.

<sup>26</sup> C.f. *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, vol. 9, p. 218; c.f. *al-Darajāt al-Rafī'ah*, p. 467.

*commentaries on the Qur'an that are unmatched in its expertise.*<sup>27</sup>

***His Teachers***

1. Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad Ṭabarī (d. 393 AH): A great jurist and a distinguished writer who taught Sayyid Raḍī the Qur'an at an early age.
2. Abū Ali Fārsī (d. 377 AH): He was famous in science and literature, and the leading expert in Arabic syntax during his time.
3. Abū Sa'īd Sīrāfī (d. 368 AH): A great scientist, famous grammarian, and a judge in Baghdad.
4. Judge 'Abd al-Jabbār Baghdādī: A specialist in Hadith sciences and literature.
5. 'Abd al-Raḥīm Nabātah (d. 374 AH): A famous Shī'ite propagator known as Khaṭīb Miṣrī [Egyptian preacher]. Sayyid learned some poetic structures from him.
6. Abū Muhammad 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad Asadī (d. 405 AH): An educated and virtuous judge.
7. Abu al-Faṭḥ 'Uthmān ibn Junay (d. 392 AH): An expert in grammar and syntax.
8. Abu al-Ḥasan Ali ibn 'Īsā (d. 402 AH): Specialized in semantics, literature, and poetry.
9. Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad Alkanānī: A transmitter of hadith.

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<sup>27</sup> *History of Baghdad*, vol. 2, p. 246, quoted from Tustarī, *Ibid*.

10. Abu al-Qāsim ‘Īsā ibn Ali ibn ‘Īsā ibn Dāwūd ibn Jarrāh (d. 350): A lexicographer, a prominent and authentic transmitter of hadith.
11. Abū ‘Abdullah Marzbānī (d. 384 AH): A famous transmitter of hadith whom Shaykh Ṣadūq trusted.
12. Abū Bakr Muhammad ibn Mūsā Khārazmī (d. 403 AH): A great jurist and hadith scholar.
13. Abū Muhammad Hārūn Tal’ukburā (d. 385 AH): An outstanding and brilliant jurist.
14. Abū ‘Abdullah Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Nu’mān, known as Shaykh Mufīd (d. 413 AH).

### ***His Students***

Among Sayyid Raḍī’s students were great scholars, such as: Sayyid Abū ‘Abdullah Jurjānī, Shaykh Muhammad Ḥalawātī, Shaykh Ja’far Durīyastī (d. 473 AH), Aḥmad ibn Ali ibn Qudāmah known as ibn Qudāmah (d. 486 AH), Abu al-Ḥasan Hāshimī, Mufīd Niyshābūrī (d. 445 AH), Abū Bakr Niyshābūrī, Judge Abū Bakr ‘Ukburā, et al.<sup>28</sup>

### ***Death***

Although Sayyid Raḍī had a short life, his services were numerous. He passed away in 406 AH when his brother Sayyid Murtaḍā was still alive. His death left the Muslim community in grief, as seven years earlier his teacher, Shaykh Mufīd, had also passed away. Two years after his demise, Shaykh at-Ṭā’ifāh from Khurasan went to Baghdad.

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<sup>28</sup> C.f. *A’yān al-Shī’ah*, vol. 9, p. 217; *Mafākhir-e Islam*, vol. 3, pp. 297 – 298; *Yād-nāme-ye ‘Allāmah Sharīf Raḍī*, article of Ali Davānī, p. 31; and Ibrāhīm Nijād, *Ibid*, pp. 50 – 55.

***Conclusion***

The accomplishments of the brilliant and highly distinguished scholar and activist continue to flourish years after his death. Sayyid Radi took on the roles of being a magistrate, establishing educational institutes, leading the Shi'ites, supervising the Hajj pilgrimage, composing persuasive poems, compiling *Nahj ul-Balaghah*, and writing commentaries of the Holy Qur'an. He took up these positions to serve the people and protect the oppressed with the aim of forming an Islamic government that would administer Imam Ali's justice. These positions, which were a bridge to reach his divine goals, rendered Sayyid Radi a distinguished Shi'a scholar.