

INVASION OF THE SAFAVIDS

by:

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Transliteration key

أ - 'ā	د - d
آ - ā	ط - ṭ
ب - b	ظ - ṣ
ت - t	ع - 'c
ث - th	غ - gh
ج - j	ف - f
ح - ḥ	ق - q
خ - kh	ك - k
د - d	ل - l
ذ - dh	م - m
ر - r	ن - n
ز - z	و - w, ū
س - s	ه - h
ش - sh	ي - y, ī
ص - ṣ	

Foreword

All praise is for Allah, we glorify Him, seek His assistance, and His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Him from the evil of ourselves and actions. Whoever is guided by Allah, cannot be led astray and whoever is led astray cannot be guided. I testify that there is no God but Allah and I testify that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims [in submission to Him].¹

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed, Allah is ever, over you, an Observer.²

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا

1 Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān: 102.

2 Sūrah al-Nisā’: 1.

*O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice. He will [then] amend for you your deeds and forgive you your sins. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly attained a great attainment.*¹

After the fall of Baghdad at the hands of the Americans, the term ‘Safavids’ and ‘New-age Safavids’ appeared on the television, radio, and in the papers.

It should be noted that most, if not all, intellectual and other segments of the Muslim society were unaware of this term. Some thought the Safavids were a party or the name of a militia in Iraq. They assumed Ismā’īl al-Şafawī was someone like ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Ḥakīm and Muḩtadā al-Şadr.²

I thus wished to present a study that would clarify this term and contextualize it in a historical backdrop. Drawing on Arab, Iranian, Turkish, and other foreign sources I have compiled this book, omitting replications that appeared across the board. This study is in reality a book that I have opted to summarize in order to assist the reader in uncovering the truth. It will also draw attention to the happenings of present-day Iraq, Lebanon, and the rest of the region. And the pleasure of Allah is the ultimate aim and He guides to the straight path.

‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Şāliḩ al-Maḩmūd.

Jumād al-Ākhirah 1428 AH.

1 Sūrah al-Aḩzāb: 70.

2 Translators note: Both Iraqi politicians.

Safavid Origins

The Safavid name is credited to al-Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ardabīlī [650 – 735 AH]. He was initially from amongst the followers of al-Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn al-Zāhid al-Kīlānī; a ṣūfī preacher of the Shafīī school of thought at Ardabīl.¹

He established a ṣūfī order called al-Ikhwān which spread much in the regions of Azerbaijan. After his death, the order—called the ‘Safavid Order’—was led by his son Ṣadr al-Dīn Mūsa [704 – 794 AH]. At the death of Ṣadr al-Dīn, his son Khawājah ‘Alī became the head of the movement and remained so for 36 years, passing away in Palestine in the year 830 AH. His grave is well known in Yāfā as the grave of ‘Alī al-‘Ajmī. Khawājah had many encounters with Tīmūr Lank (Tamerlane), the Mongol Shīī, and had an inkling of an inclination to Shīism, though by no means an extremist. Some researchers suggest that his inclination to Shīism was a result of Tīmūr Lank’s influence, who had gifted him the city Ardabīl and its surrounds as an endowment to him and his sons. Another point of note is that since Khawājah ‘Alī brokered the freedom of some tribes held captive by Tīmūr Lank, they became his ardent supporters and an integral part of his army.

After him, his son Ibrāhīm—titled Shaykh Shāh, i.e., the Shaykh King—took his place at the head of the movement. His title was based on his affinity for kingship rather than leading a ṣūfī movement. He passed away the year 851 AH. His affinity to Shīism, and more so Twelver Shīism was quite apparent considering the skirmishes his followers had with the Ahl al-Sunnah at Dagestan under his instruction.

1 A city previously within the Azerbaijan region, now north eastern region of Iran, close to the Caspian Sea.

He handed over the reins to his leadership to his youngest son, Junayd who paid much attention to the monarchy and its advancement. Due to his ambitions and the many followers he had garnered, the other kings of the region were apprehensive of him and so they aligned themselves against him, forcing him to relocate to Aleppo and then to Diyār Bakr, where his relationship with Ḥasan Ūzūn flourished.

This Junayd was an ardent and extremist proponent of Shi'ism who fought against the Ahl al-Sunnah. His ṣūfī order, thus, became an amalgamation of Taṣawwuf and Shi'ism. They were the mystics, whilst the Twelve Shī'ah Imāms were deemed their leaders. Junayd made clear and unambiguous declarations that he had completely disassociated himself from the Ahl al-Sunnah and had become a Shī'ī. He then waged war against the Kings of Turkmenistan, of Aq Qoyunlu and Qara Qoyunlu, as well as the Ottomans. When faced by insurmountable odds he made a pact with the Sulṭān of Aq Qoyunlu, Ḥasan Ūzūn, but was soon killed in one of his wars at the city of Shirvan the year 861 AH. He was succeeded by his son Ḥaydar who had been married off to Martha, the daughter of Ḥasan Ūzūn¹. Her mother was Catherine daughter of John IV of Trebizond² and Bagrationi.

Ḥaydar was the first to be given the title of 'Sulṭān' in ṣūfī royalty. He instructed his followers, the 'Darāwīsh'³, to adopt the scarlet headgear

1 He established the Aq Qoyunlu state which ruled over north eastern Iran.

2 A city which is now within the Turkish borders on the shores of the Black Sea. It was at that time a Christian state.

3 The mystical path of Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ardabīlī and his son Ṣadr al-Dīn which was of the Ahl al-Sunnah, gradually, evolved into a tradition with some Shī'ī thoughts and then went on to becoming an extreme Shī'ī ideological powerhouse. Taṣawwuf has unfortunately been the target of Shī'ī influence on many an occasion. *continued...*

of 12 gores, commemorating the Twelve Imams, which led to them being designated by the Turkish term *Qizilbash*, meaning “Red Head”. His followers were ardent believers in him and held extreme views regarding their spiritual guides. They paid very little attention to worship, focusing on poetry, praise, and an extreme dogma in relation to the holiness of their spiritual leaders.

Ḥaydar campaigned against the King of Shirvan in avenging his father’s death but was killed in the year 893 AH. He had three sons, ‘Alī, Ibrāhīm, and Ismā’īl. The then leader of the Aq Qoyunlu, Ya‘qūb was apprehensive of them and had them imprisoned; though they were later freed after his death. In the interim, both ‘Alī and Ibrāhīm were killed whilst the third, Ismā’īl relocated to Gilan which lay along the Caspian Sea, south of Ardabil, where he was taken care of by the ṣūfī leaders.

From a young age, his education consisted of an extreme Shī’ī dogma and he, from a tender age, made inroads with the Qizilbash mystics arousing a movement of vengeance for his father and grandfathers murder. His efforts were realized and he led a campaign against the Aq Qoyunlu state the year 907 AH, killing its leader. He sat at his throne after all the tribes of Turkmenistan pledged fealty to him; tribes which were sympathetic to the ṣūfī path.

He then founded the Safavid Dynasty.

continued from page 4

Dr Kāmil Muṣṭafā, the Shī’ī author, has written on this in his books *al-Fikr al-Shī’ī wa al-Nāza’āt al-Ṣūfiyyah* and *al-Ṣilah bayn al-Taṣawwuf wa al-Tashayyū’*. This has also been inferred to by the orientalist Brown where he states, “Tashayyū’ and Taṣawwuf were weapons of war for the Arabs and Persians.” See, *A Literary History of Persia*, pg. 410.

Shāh Ismā'īl, first King of the Safavid Dynasty

[907 AH, 1501 CE]

As explained, Shāh Ismā'īl killed the leader of Aq Qoyunlu and established the Safavid Dynasty. He nominated the city of Tabriz as its capital. One of his first actions, was the proclamation of the Twelver sect of Shi'ism to be the official religion of his newly formed state, the Safavid Dynasty. He then focused on spreading Shi'ism to all the regions which makes up current day Iran. When he was advised that his decree would be rejected **since the Iranian people were of the Shafi'i school of thought and thus formed part of the Ahl al-Sunnah**, he said:

اني لا أخاف من أحد ... فان نطق الرعية بحرف واحد فسوف امتشق
الحسام ولن أترك احداً على قيد الحياة

I fear no one. If the public were to oppose my decree by saying one word, I will unsheathe my weapons and leave not a single one alive.¹

He then minted coins with the following inscription:

لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله علي ولي الله

There is no God but Allah, Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah, 'Alī is the vicegerent of Allah.

He also inscribed his name onto the coin.²

He instructed the clerics of the Masjids to revile the three Rightly Guided Khulafā' whilst at the same time to go above and beyond in

1 Muḥammad Jawād Mashkūr: *Tārīkh Iran Zamān*, pg. 267.

2 Dr Badī Muḥammad Jumu'ah: *Al-Shāh 'Abbās al-Kabīr*, pg. 10.

preaching the holiness of the Twelve Imāms. The Ahl al-Sunnah suffered a woeful tragedy in Iran and were forced to adopt the Imāmī creed after Shāh Ismā'īl killed a million Sunnīs in a matter of a few years.¹ He would test the Ahl al-Sunnah by way of various methods. For instance, he would ask a Sunnī to revile the Khulafā' and if the person obliged, he would ask him to revile them even more. If the person did so, he would be let go and in the case of refusal he would immediately decapitate him. He passed a decree to have the Ṣaḥābah and Khulafā' reviled in the streets, markets, and on the pulpits. Warnings would also be issued to the Ahl al-Sunnah of decapitation.²

How did Shāh Ismā'īl manage to take control of all of Iran?

Prior to the Safavid Dynasty, Iran and Iraq were ruled by the Aq Qoyunlu Empire and before that the Qara Qoyunlu Empire. Both of whom held roots in Turkmenistan. Ismā'īl al-Ṣafavī and his forefathers also lived under this Turkmen rule; however, 'Sufism' and blind following result in their acceptance of Shi'ism. They thus became the *Ṣūfī Shī'ah* and were known as the Qizilbash as noted previously. The followers of Ismā'īl were primarily from the tribes of Shāmlū, Qājār, Takkalū, Dhū Qadr, Afshār, and Rūmlū. These tribes formed a vicious militia as the *Ṣūfī Shī'ah* and later became a murderous army for Shāh Ismā'īl. They murdered the Shafī'ī folk of the Ahl al-Sunnah, as well as those of the Ḥanafī school of thought throughout Iran. The Safavids impacted their followers on a metaphysical level. Consider the following:

1 Dr. 'Alī al-Wardī: *Lamaḥāt Ijtimā'īyyah min Tārīkh Iraq*, vol. 1 pg. 43.

2 Dr Kāmil Muṣṭafā: *Al-Fikr al-Shī'ī*, pg. 415; Dr. 'Alī al-Wardī: *Lamaḥāt Ijtimā'īyyah*, vol. 1 pg. 59.

Some Persian Shī'ī sources recount Shāh Ismā'īl on a hunting trip with his ṣūfī followers in the region of Tabriz when they passed by a river. He crossed the river by himself and entered a cave. After some time, he emerged with a sword and informed his traveling companions of having met al-Mahdī in the cave who spoke to him and said, "The time of emergence has drawn close." He further stated, "The Mahdī then held him by his back and raised him up three times, then placed him on the ground. He then pulled Shāh Ismā'īl by his belt, and placed a dagger in the belt and told him, "Go forth for I have authorized you"¹

Shāh Ismā'īl remained worried and in a state of uncertainty after that, until he claimed that he saw 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام in a dream. He told him, "Son! Do not let these worries confuse your thoughts ... Bring the Qizilbash with their complete weaponry to the Masjid of Tabriz and order them to surround the people ... If the people express any objection during the sermon which will be given in the name of the Ahl al-Bayt, the soldiers will end the matter."²

The Shāh did as he was ordered during the Friday gathering, and brought along his followers from among the Qizilbash. He surrounded the Masjid of Tabriz and announced the authority of the Twelver branch under the rule of the Safavid State.

The reason behind this call, was to detach and divert away from the beliefs and the concepts of *Taqiyyah* and *Intizār* (waiting for the arrival of al-Mahdī), which the scholars of the Shī'ah had for long carried as one of their fundamental principles, which entailed the abandoning

1 *Tārīkh Shāh Ismā'īl*, pg. 88. Markaz Taḥqīqāt Fāris Publication, Iran; and Pakistan, Islamabad; *Ālam Ṣafavī*, pg. 64.

2 Roger Savory: *Iran Under the Safavids*, pg. 64

of Jihād and armed conflicts until the arrival of al-Mahdī. When they wanted to diverge from these beliefs, they came up with another set of beliefs and tales to justify their departure from these core positions of their school. In essence, they held erroneous beliefs and then fashioned others that were even more deviated.

In his analysis, Roger Savory highlights that the Safavids relied on the belief of a divine right given to the Iranian kings before Islam, by around 7 000 years, and that they were the rightful inheritors of this right. When Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī عليه السلام married the daughter of the Persian King Yazdegerd after the Battle of al-Qādisiyyah, and she gave birth to Imām Zayn al-‘Ābidīn ‘Alī, two rights converged; the right of the descendants of the Ahl al-Bayt in the khilāfah (as per the view of the Twelver Shī‘ah), and the right of the Iranian Kings (as per the view of the Iranians).¹ In addition to this, they saw themselves as being appointed by the Mahdī and his authorized representatives.

This is in regards to Shī‘ī Iranian influence on the movement and its effect.

In regards to the ṣūfī influence on the movement, then it had supplemented the Safavid with reliance on visions and dreams. The Safavids mention that one of the ṣūfī Shaykhs, namely Shaykh Zāhid al-Kīlānī, who taught their grandfather Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ardabīlī, foretold following a dream seen by Ṣafī al-Dīn Aal-Ardabīlī, that “The descendants of this master will overtake the world, and elevate day after day, until the time of the awaited Mahdī.”²

1 Ibid., pg. 26.

2 Ibid., pg. 29. *Continued....*

Visions and inspirations had a magical influence in those ṣūfī circles, which is why this prophecy had a great effect on the Qizilbash, who believed that the rule of the Safavids will remain until the emergence and arrival of the Maḥdī. For this reason, their belief was profoundly shaken after the Battle of Chaldiran between Shāh Ismāʿīl and the Ottoman Sulṭān Salīm in the year 920 AH/1512 CE and the subsequent defeat of Shāh Ismāʿīl. As a result of this defeat, conflicts erupted between the Qizilbash, and internal fighting emerged between them after this battle, a result of the quavering of this belief in their minds.¹

There was also another influence at play here. The ṣūfī order of Iran and the Baktashiyeh order in Turkey were both orders that held extreme views in relation to the holiness of mortals just as the extreme Bāṭiniyyah.²

Shāh Ismāʿīl was a conglomerate of sectarian intolerance, extremism, takfīr, and he also had thirst for blood.³

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However, the author of *ʿUnwān al-Majd*, Ibrāhīm ibn Ṣibghah Allāh Ḥaydarī (1882 CE), who is a descendant of the Safavids who remained upon Sunnī Islam and fled from the Shīʿī Safavids mentions another interpretation to this dream, and says that this dream means that their scholars shall continue to remain till the Day of Judgment. And Praise be to Allah, for neither this interpretation was fulfilled nor the first one.

1 Ibid., pg. 49.

2 *ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Mudarris: Al-Taqrīb al-Qurʿānī fī Ḍawʾ al-Ṣirāʾ al-Ṣafawī al-ʿUthmānī*, pg. 9.

3 That is what is happening today in Iraq, and in Baghdad specifically, where extreme fanatic Takfīrī Shīʿī positions are emerging, which were being planted in a concentrated manner among the Shīʿah in the 90s after the American sanctions on Iraq, the results of which became apparent after the fall of Baghdad and the invasion of the Americans. Shīʿī militias started forming which tortured Sunnīs in manners which were unprecedented in the history of Iraq. *continued...*

His close friend, Ibrāhīm ibn Şibghah Allāh Ḥaydarī¹ in “*Unwān al-Majd*” (pg. 119) narrated about him that, he excessed in his killings to the point that he killed the King of Shirvan, and ordered his body to be placed in a large pot and cooked!²

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They killed Sunnīs and exiled them in vicious cleansing campaigns, causing thousands, if not millions, of Sunnis to flee. Mistaken is he who thinks that those extreme Shī'ah committed these acts spontaneously after the invasion, rather these ideologies were being carried by the general mass of the Shī' scholars. Even those who presented themselves to the people as moderate, such as, the students of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Şadr (who was executed by Saddam): Ibrāhīm al-Ja'farī and Jawād al-Mālikī, members of the Da'wah Party, who were seen by some of the Sunnīs as the most moderate; yet these massacres occurred during their time and rule! Similarly, the father of Muqtadā al-Şadr, Muḥammad Şādiq al-Şadr, who was seen as a moderate, yet here are his followers, the “Mahdī Army”, whose crimes are well documented. They committed crimes that the region had not witnessed for centuries. Even before them we have the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, who were raised upon the ideas of Khomeini and Khamenei, and everyone knows what they committed in Iraq from unprecedented bloodshed, which was not even committed by the Jews, and this is no exaggeration! Yet, after all this, we see those who do not know anything about Shī'ism except its name, and then issue rulings, void of any knowledge, about *Taqrīb* (i.e. rapprochement) of the different schools of thought; a result of nothing more than their ignorance about Shī'ism, its beliefs, history, and developmental stages. We mention among them specifically the scholars from Egypt (al-Azhar), its intellectuals, and preachers. This is a general trend though; yes, there are those in Egypt too who fully understand the dangers of Shī'ism.

1 The scholar Ibrāhīm ibn Şibghah Allāh Ḥaydarī (1882 CE) has made a splendid effort in his book in documenting Shī'ah history in relation to its tribal clans. He also has authored another book entitled, *al-Nukat al-Shanī'ah fī Bayān al-Khilāf Bayn Allah Ta'ālā wa al-Shī'ah*. I have annotated it and is to be published by Maktabah al-Imām al-Bukhārī. May Allah ease its publication. [Translators note: This book has been published. And all praise is for Allah].

2 These sorts of crimes against humanity are happening today in Iraq. *continued...*

He also mentions that Shāh Ismāʿīl did not head to any town in Iran, except that he committed extremely shocking atrocities, from killing to looting and torture. He also killed the great scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah and burned their books, until many scholars retreated to the Kurdish Sunnī areas in the north of Iraq, and among them was the grandfather of the author of *ʿUnwān al-Majd* himself. Shāh Ismāʿīl killed 20,000 Sunnīs from the city of Tabriz alone.

Shāh Ismāʿīl then ordered his soldiers to prostrate to him.

His thirst for blood was such that he used to dig up the graves of the Sunnī scholars and burn their bones. Whenever he would kill a leader of the Ahl al-Sunnah he would make that leader’s wife and wealth lawful for one of his followers. His followers used to revere him, and believe that he was unbreakable and could not be defeated, and that none could overpower him.¹

That is an overview of Shāh Ismāʿīl, the founder of the Safavid State,

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They immolated a young Sunnī boy in front of his home. The most heinous of crimes committed by the Badr Militia and the “Mahdī Army” is the report of them having grilled a small Sunnī child in an oven and sending the charred remains to the mother. This incident is well documented by the people of Baghdad in the al-Amīn district on the east side of Baghdad. They meted out a similar fate to a young man named ʿUmar on Palestine street, east Baghdad. They hacked him and sent his remains to the family in a dish. They also burnt the faces off Sunnī preachers in acid attacks together with drilling into their bodies and gouging their eyes. The incident of Abū ʿUmar al-Mashhadānī is also well known. He was thrown into a bread oven and burnt alive. The British Channel 4 also aired a report on its program ‘Dispatches’ regarding some of these despicable atrocities. This episode was aired in January 2007.

1 Al-Ḥaydarī: *ʿUnwān al-Majd*, pgs. 119-120.

which is considered the foundational state for every Twelver Shī'ah state to come after it.

Shāh Ismā'īl expanded throughout Iran pursuing the territories of the Aq Qoyunlu dynasty. He went to the south of Tabriz, to the city of Hamadan conquering it and defeated Murad-Beq the leader of the Aq Qoyunlu tribes, who escaped to Shiraz.¹ Shāh Ismā'īl continued on until he ended the rule of the Turkmen Sunnī over Iran in the year of 909 AH.²

Shāh Ismā'īl then took over Persia, Karman, Khuzestan (i.e., Arabistan), Mazandaran, and Astarabad.³

Thereafter, Shāh Ismā'īl headed east towards Khorasan and conquered it in 916 AH, and took over the city of Mashhad. During the same year, he headed towards Merv in the North-Eastern part of Iran and slaughtered more than 10,000 of its inhabitants from among the Sunnīs who refused to adopt Shī'ism.⁴

He then tried to expand to the land of the Uzbeks in 918 AH, and sent one of his generals for this purpose, but that general was defeated and killed. This resulted in weakening his front in this region. The Uzbeks waged their own attack against him, and were close to claiming Khorasan, but Shāh Ismā'īl was able to win it back.

1 A city presently in south central Iran across the Arabian Gulf from Kuwait.

2 Dr Muḥammad Waṣfī Abū Mughlī: *Iran Dirāsah 'Āmmah*, 1985, Jāmi'ah Baṣrah.

3 Persia is on the opposite side of the Arabian Gulf. Karman is between Pakistan and Persia. Khuzestan is Arabistan which lies north of the Arabian Gulf. Mazandaran is to the north east of Tehran, south east of the Caspian Sea. Astarabad is north of Tehran and south of the Caspian Sea.

4 Dr Muḥammad Waṣfī Abū Mughlī: *Iran Dirāsah 'Āmmah*, pg. 247.

Shāh Ismā'īl Entering Iraq and Taking over Baghdad

It is well known to all that Baghdad was the capital of the Abbasid Empire which fell to the Mongols in the year 656 AH. After the Mongols began ruling over Iraq, they established a khanate and called it the Ilkhanate. This was until the Jalayirid Sultanate followed by the Qara Qoyunlu and then the Aq Qoyunlu which began its reign from the year 806 AH and lasted up to the rule of its last Sulṭān, Sulṭān Murād, who ruled the year 903 AH. In the year 914 AH Shāh Ismā'īl intended capturing Baghdad and thus sent his commander, Ḥusayn Bek Lālah. The governor of Baghdad, Bārīk Beg was defeated and Muḥammad Kamūnah, the shrine keeper of Najaf, was freed the very same day. He had been imprisoned by Bārīk Beg, governor of Baghdad, since he had been awaiting the army of the Shāh and had been feeding the people of Baghdad, and greater Iraq, false hopes and deceptive ideas of Shāh Ismā'īl being a just ruler. This was at a time when the people of Baghdad and the other regions of Iraq were in an upheaval, lacked a sense of social security, and were on the lookout for a leader who would quell their anxieties.

When Ḥusayn Bek Lālah entered Baghdad without any fight and liberated Muḥammad Kamūnah from prison, he warmly welcomed him and exalted him. Both of them then travelled to Shāh Ismā'īl, who was in Iran, to deliver the good news of the conquest of Baghdad.¹

1 This has been the condition of the Shī'ah in Iraq of old. They are forever set on receiving the Shī'ah of Iran. After the Khomeini revolution of 1979, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr wrote to Khomeini informing him of their awaiting his arrival to Baghdad. The Shī'ah of Iraq have held unwavering support for the overlords of Iran throughout the ages. Today, one finds the Shī'ah of Iraq, Bahrain, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia heralding support for Iran. This is why the former Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak said, "The Shī'ah in the Arab states are loyal to Iran." His statement is a reflection of a reality that cannot be denied.

Shāh Ismā'īl then came to Baghdad and honoured Muḥammad Kamūnah, granting him a lofty post. He then visited the cities of Karbalā' and al-Najaf, honouring its residents and embellishing the cities with golden chandlers, and valuable silky drapes and carpets. During this period, he also chastised some of the Southern Clans.¹

This is the gist of his undertakings in Iraq.

Now we return back to the discussion of the perpetrations carried out by Shāh Ismā'īl at Baghdad and to its people. The (Sunnī) populous of Baghdad did not resist the Shāh, since Muḥammad Kamūnah had recited tales of his justice and impartiality, whilst they themselves were going through a period of turmoil and upheaval under the reign of Aq Qoyunlu. He fed them tales so they may aspire for a turn of leadership, a new leader, that will save them from the mayhem they faced. Shāh Ismā'īl though, instructed his commander Ḥusayn Bek Lālah to demolish the city of Baghdad and to murder the Ahl al-Sunnah, specifically, the pious amongst them. This was not all, he then turned his attention to the graveyards of the Ahl al-Sunnah, exhumed the dead, and burned their bones.

He began subjecting the Ahl al-Sunnah to torments and torture whilst also resorting to handing them over to the Shī'ah. The Shī'ah would plunder their wealth and then kill them; an effort to have them convert to Shī'ism. He razed the Masjid Abī Ḥanīfah al-Nu'mān to the ground

1 Most of the Southern clans of Iraq were Sunnī during this period, barring the populous of Karbalā', Najaf, and some of the residents of Ḥillah, with a few other scattered pockets. The majority of the South were Sunnī, adhering to the Mālikī, Ḥanafī, and Shafī'ī school. We have a treatise entitled, *Tārīkh al-'Ashā'ir al-'Iraqiyyah al-'Arabiyyah*. We ask Allāh to ease its publication.

in the Adamiyah neighbourhood. He further desecrated the grave of the Imām and had it dug up. He demolished the Ḥanafī madrasahs and destroyed many Masjids.¹ He also killed all those who were known to be from the progeny of Khālīd ibn al-Walīd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ in Baghdad, for no other reason than them hailing from his progeny. He was truly cruel and merciless in his killing.²

The Shī'ah have documented this era and in particular these incidents in their own works. One of their historians, known as Ibn Shadqam has in his book, *Tuḥfah al-Azhār wa Zilāl al-Anhār*, which has been published in Iran in four volumes, stated:

فتح بغداد وفعل بأهلها النواصب ذوي العناد ما لم يسمع بمثله قط في
سائر الدهور بأشد أنواع العذاب حتى نبش موتاهم من القبور

He conquered Baghdad and dealt with its people, the Nawāṣib, in a manner unheard of before. He subjected them to various methods of torture to the extent of digging their graves and exhuming their bodies.

1 See, *Tārīkh al-Aḥzābiyyah* of Walīd al-Aḥzābī, pg. 113. Though the Shī'ah have always bore enmity for the Ahl al-Sunnah, they have been specific in cursing Abū Ḥanīfah al-Nu'mān. History appears to be quite cyclical with the Jaysh al-Mahdī militia and armed factions of the Badr Organization under the patronage of the Ja'farī and Mālikī government shelling Masjid Abī Ḥanīfah in the Adamiyah neighbourhood of Baghdad.

2 The books of the Shī'ah have, from time immemorial, hurled much hate against the Khālīd ibn al-Walīd, the unsheathed sword of Allah. Ibn Taymiyyah has refuted their suspicions by which they surround him in his book, *Minhāj al-Sunnah*. Shāh Ismā'īl had translated these feelings into action by committing atrocities against the progeny of this eminent Ṣaḥābī and great leader. Historically, the Shī'ah held similar vices in relation to Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām and Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubayd Allah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

We note here they call the Ahl al-Sunnah, the *Nawāṣib*, simply because they do not adhere to the beliefs of the Shī'ah and as such are *Nawāṣib* and by extension deserve to be killed.¹

This ideology of Shāh Ismā'īl was not singularly of his own making. Rather, it was a thought that developed from the Shī'ī scholars whom he had galvanized and united from Lebanon, al-Najaf, and various other regions. They, together, developed the idea of fueling deep seeded hate against the Ahl al-Sunnah. In other words, wherever you find this group, you will find the Shī'ī scholars behind them.

1 The Shī'ah have adopted a peculiar art in adapting terminologies that fuel the Shī'ah laity against the Ahl al-Sunnah. Consider the term, “*the Nawāṣib*”. This term was coined by the Ahl al-Sunnah in reference to a sect that reared its head in the second and third century marked by the salient feature of hating ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام. This sect no longer exists and there is no single individual amongst the Ahl al-Sunnah who perpetuates hate against ‘Alī عليه السلام. In fact, every person of the Ahl al-Sunnah believes loving ‘Alī عليه السلام forms parts of the Sunnah and harbouring hatred for him is deviancy and innovation. The Shī'ah have taken this term and have applied it to every person who does not believe ‘Alī to be the God-appointed successor after the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم; a dogma that no one from the Ahl al-Sunnah ascribes to. If this term is taken in this meaning, then all of the Ahl al-Sunnah form part of the *Nawāṣib*. The Shī'ah have ran with this, their books filled with apostatising the *Nawāṣib* and citing them to be worse than the Jews and the Christians. They state it incumbent to kill the *Nawāṣib*. This dogma is of old and continues to this day. All one has to do is to look at the newspapers and magazines of Iraq and their satellite channels such as the Al Forat Network which falls under the jurisdiction of Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution headed by ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Ḥakīm. This individual has described the Ahl al-Sunnah as the *Nawāṣib* and has called their killing a judicial killing. Judicial by way of the Shī'ah sharī'ah. Our friend, ‘Abd al-Malik ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Shafi'ī has authored a book titled, *Maḥqif al-Shī'ah al-Imāmiyyah min Bāqī Firaq al-Muslimīn* which has been published recently in Egypt from the al-Riḍwān Publishing House. He has, in this book on page 307, introduced a brilliant chapter entitled, Highlighting the Imāmiyyah Tactics.

Many of the Ahl al-Sunnah fled from the city, escaping the atrocities. Amongst those who fled, was the Gīlānī family who fled to Egypt and to the Levant, after Shāh Ismā'īl had desecrated the grave of 'Abd al-Qādir. They escaped and informed the Muslim world of the Shī'ah Safavid atrocities at Baghdad and unto its people.¹

News of the great massacre of the Ahl al-Sunnah reached the Ottoman Empire at Anatolia. This was after they had already come to know of the Ahl al-Sunnah being forcibly converted to Shī'ism in Iran and the murder of thousands of others. Add to this the bold insolence of Shāh Ismā'īl in sending a call to his cause to the heart of the Ottoman Empire; the result was a meeting convened by Sulṭān Salīm I in the year 920 AH/1514 CE with the influential men of the state, its judiciary, scholars, and politicians. They passed a resolution deeming the Safavids a threat to the Muslim world and specifically to the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the Sulṭān declared jihād against the Safavids. The initial measures adopted were as follows:

1. Sulṭān Salīm sent a letter to Shāh Ismā'īl employing a harsh tone and strong language.
2. He cleared his metropolis (Turkey) of those Shī'ah who were adherents to the Safavid Shāh. They served as a fifth column to Shāh Ismā'īl.

With Shāh Ismā'īl not responding to the correspondence of Sulṭān Salīm I by way of submitting, the Sulṭān resolved to march with his

¹ The atrocities of Shāh Ismā'īl at Baghdad is scattered throughout the historical records of Sunnī, Shī'ah, and other sources. Refer to the book, *Al-'Irāq Bayn Iḥtilālayn* of the historian, 'Abbās al-'Azāwī and *Arba'ah Qurūn min Tārīkh al-'Irāq al-Ḥadīth* authored by Stephen Hemsley Longrigg.

army, bolstered by the remnants of the Aq Qoyunlu house. When Shāh Ismā'īl came to know of their intent, he attempted to delay the war to the winter; a tactical decision seeking the self-destruction of the Ottoman Army through hunger and the frigid cold.

Sulṭān Murād, however, pushed on with his army at which point Shāh Ismā'īl sensed the gravity of the situation and sought an armistice. The Sulṭān though, continued on to the Chaldiran Plain, north of Tabriz where he reached in 920 AH/1514 CE and crushed the Safavid army in their own land. Shāh Ismā'īl fled leaving behind all his wealth. His wife was captured and the betrayer, Muḥammad Kamūnah who had gone to Tabriz with the Shāh was killed. And, thus, Shāh Ismā'īl was defeated with his image suffering a terrible blow in front of his army, the Qizilbash. Baghdad though remained under the occupation of the Safavids.

Shāh Ismā'īl, well aware of his weak position, sought out allies to assist him against the Ottomans. The Portuguese, a super power in the Arab lands, had ambitions of capturing the Gulf region with their fleets in the Arabian sea and Arabian Gulf; their general, Afonso de Albuquerque captured the Strait of Hormuz.

These developments deluded Shāh Ismā'īl into forming an alliance with the Portuguese against the Ottoman Empire. His mother, Martha and her mother, Theodora—the Christian Greek—were frankly instrumental in forming this alliance. Hereunder we reproduce the correspondence sent by Albuquerque to Shāh Ismā'īl the Safavid:

إني أقدر لك احترامك للمسيحيين في بلادك، وأعرض عليك الأسطول
والجند والأسلحة لاستخدامها ضد قلاع الترك في الهند، وإذا أردت

أن تنقض على بلاد العرب أو تهاجم مكة فستجدني بجانبك في البحر الأحمر، أمام جدة أو في عدن أو في البحرين أو القطيف أو البصرة، وسيجدني الشاه بجانبه على امتداد الساحل الفارسي وسأنفذ له كل ما يريد

I extend my appreciation to you for the veneration you have shown to the Christians in your state.¹ I am sending fleets, armies, and weapons that you may bring into use against the Turkic naval force in India. When you intend to rise up against and attack the Arab lands or Makkah, then you will find me by your side at the Red Sea, Jeddah, Aden, Bahrain, al-Qaṭīf, or at Baṣrah. The Shāh will find me by his side along the Persian coast and I will carry out all he intends.²

And thus, a coalition was signed between the Christians of Portugal and Shāh Ismā'īl, granting them sovereignty over the Hormuz Strait in lieu of assisting the Shāh in invading Bahrain and al-Qaṭīf. They also came to an agreement in dividing Eastern Arabia with the Safavids occupying Egypt and the Portuguese, Palestine.³

1 This is exactly what is being done by the Islamic Republic of Iran in the reverence they display to the non-Muslims; the Zoroastrians, the Jews, and the Christians. They erect places of worship for them. However, no such treatment is afforded to the Ahl al-Sunnah in Iran. In fact, they are treated the worst and have the least amounts of Masjids. Notwithstanding this, outside of Iran, they raise the slogans of bridging the gap between the Ahl al-Sunnah.

2 Dr Zakariyyā Ibrāhīm: *Qirā'ah Jadīdah fī Tārīkh al-'Uthmāniyyīn*, pg. 63. 1411/1991.

3 **The Safavid Empire:** The first Shī'ah Imāmiyyah dynasty that had a significant amount of influence and power. The previous Shī'ah states, the Fatimids of the Ismā'īliyyah or the Buwayhids of the Shī'ah Zaydiyyah (Jarūdiyyah) did not hold a similar influence. It should also be noted that the Safavids were the first Shī'ah Persian state that agreed on the notion of selling Palestine to the west.

This dream of theirs, by the grace of Allah and the efforts of the Ottomans, did not come to fruition.¹ The Ottomans uncovered the correspondence of conspiracy between the Safavids and the Mamlūks in invading Egypt. They made haste in entering Egypt and quelled the Mamlūks, even though this was one of the reasons that delayed Sulṭān Salīm in defeating Shāh Ismāʿīl and his dynasty.²

Yes, the Portuguese did seize control of the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf.

Shāh Ismāʿīl continued his stay at Hamdān, returning to Tabriz after the passing of the Ottoman Sultan the year 926 AH/1520 CE.

He met his end not long after, the year 930 AH/1524 CE.

1 *Qirā'ah Jadīdah fī Tārīkh al-'Uthmāniyyīn*, pg. 63.

2 'Abd al-'Azīz Sulaymān: *Al-Shu'ūb al-Islāmiyyah*. 1991.

Innovations of the Safavid Era

Shāh Ismāīl introduced a number of innovations within the Shī'ah faith that became a standard of the Shī'ah thereafter. Amongst these are:

Blasphemy coupled with sectarian persecution

He had adopted cursing the three Rightly Guided Khulafā' as a method of testing the Iranians. He instructed such curses be broadcasted along the roads, in the market places, and upon the pulpits.¹ Cursing and slander can be found amongst the early Shī'ah and within their books. However, it was never broadcasted in such a heinous manner and upon the pulpits until the Safavid era.

Self-mutilation and Muḥarram practices.

Staging annual celebrations in commemoration of the death of al-Ḥusayn رضي الله عنه together with hitting and slicing themselves with cleavers and axes and lashing their own backs with chains. They also slap their faces and chests. This is coupled with wearing black clothes

1 The Shī'ah of present—Iranian, Iraqi, Lebanon, Bahraini, Saudi, Kuwaiti, Pakistani, and those from other areas wherein the Shī'ah exist—all passionately curse and revile the three Rightly Guided Khulafā, the Ṣaḥābah, and the Mothers of the Believers. Further, when they gain political power, as they did in Iraq, they compel those of the Ahl al-Sunnah under persecution to curse too. The security service of Iran deal in the very same way with the Ahl al-Sunnah that reside in Iran. Today, one of the secular Shī'ah in Iraq has admitted to the Badr Corp stopping passers-by in the south of Baghdad during the early days of the collapse of Baghdad and forcing them to spit on depictions of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in an attempt to portray the Ahl al-Sunnah as enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt. Whoever did not comply were killed. All praise is to Allah who has exposed them from their very ilk. This is the Iranian Shī'ah treachery.

from the beginning of Muḥarram. These events begin with the month of Muḥarram and continue till the 10th, the day Ḥusayn was killed. They also prevent marriages from taking place in Muḥarram.

These innovations had reared their head in a mild form during the Buyid dynasty; however, Shāh Ismā'īl saw to its development and evolution in a manner that resembled mourning, in an attempt to rouse emotion and for it, to become a Shī'ah propaganda tool.

Beginning around the years 907–930 AH to this date the Shī'ah of Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and Pakistan deem such practices as an integral part of their faith and present it in a favourable light to their followers. Further, when any person or institution seeks to prevent them from such, they accuse such persons or institutions as anti-Shī'ah. This they do whilst fully aware that Shāh Ismā'īl was the first to introduce such innovation in order to spread Shī'ism.

Dr. 'Alī al-Wardī—a Shī'ah—states:

أن الشاه إسماعيل اقتبس هذه المراسيم من النصارى حيث كانوا يقومون بطقوس دينية عن مصاب المسيح والحواريين، لذلك كان يدعو النصارى لحضور مواكب التعزية

Shāh Ismā'īl had adopted these practices from the religious rituals of the Christians, specifically that of self-flagellation. It is for this reason that he would invite the Christians to the 'condolence parades'.¹

1 *Lamaḥāt ijtimā'iyah min Tārīkh al-'Irāq*, vol. 1 pg. 51.

Placing the third ‘shahādah’ in the adhān, i.e. *Ashadu Anna ‘Alī Walī Allāh*

This innovation was introduced by a Shī‘ī sect in the fourth century AH.¹ The Shī‘ī scholar Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī has mentioned this act of theirs and heaped curses on them. One of the more famed Shī‘ī scholars, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī vehemently opposed them and refuted them in his book *Al-Nihāyah fī Mujarrad al-Fiqh wa al-Fatāwā*.

Shāh Ismā‘īl, however, instructed that the adhān be given with this addition notwithstanding the opposition of the general consensus of the Shī‘ī scholars in his own era. This innovation did not enter Iraq until the year 1870 CE. It was introduced by Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh upon his visit to al-Najaf during the era of the Ottoman governor Midhat Pasha². From then up to the present day, this adhān has become the standard across the board for the Shī‘ah in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and all the other Shī‘ī Masjids throughout the world. Their scholars have chosen to remain silent though fully aware that their early scholars had cursed those who adopted it and that it was an introduction of the extremist Mufawwiḍahs.

Thus, the ideas of an extreme rejected Shī‘ī sect became an integral part of their faith during the era of Shāh Ismā‘īl and it continues to this day.

1 This sect is the Mufawwiḍah sect who held the belief that Allah created the soul of ‘Alī عليه السلام and his children and handed over the world to them. They then created the heavens and the earth. See, Dr Kāmil al-Shībī: *Al-Ṣilah bayn al-Taṣawwuf wa al-Tashayyū‘* pg. 156. The Imāmiyyah went to war with this sect in the fourth century when they introduced the third shahādah in the adhān. All the Shī‘ī scholars vehemently opposed this. A notable book in this regard has been authored by ‘Alā al-Dīn al-Baṣīr entitled *Al-Shahādah al-Thalāthah fī al-Adhān Haqīqah am Iftirā’*. It has been published by Maktabah al-Riḍwān, Cairo in 2005.

2 *Lamahāt Ijtimā‘iyyah min Tārīkh al-‘Irāq*, vol. 2 pg. 159.

All of the Shī'ah clerics have adopted silence on this matter. When the Islamic Revolution came in Iran, it revived all of the Safavid practices after some of the Shī'ah had done away with these innovations.

Prostrating on the Turbah Ḥusayniyyah

This is a piece of clay upon which the Shī'ah prostrate instead of the earth, which they call the Turbah Ḥusayniyyah. Up to this day, it has become part and parcel of their faith. It is merely a way to differentiate the Shī'ah from those that are not. Shāh Ismā'īl gave prominence to it such that it became an integral part of their creed.

The necessity of being buried in al-Najaf

Decaying corpses would be brought from across Iran to be buried at al-Najaf. A number of professional services were set up for this reason in Iran. They would remove the skin from the bones, desecrate the dead, and transport them to the graveyard at al-Najaf after this innovation began. To this day, this innovation continues to the extent that the Shī'ah of Iraq are buried in al-Najaf.

Altering the Qiblah of the Masjids in Iran

This is done on the basis that the Qiblah of the Ahl al-Sunnah is erroneous. Thus, the Shī'ah to this day perform their ṣalāh in a direction that is not in line with that of the Ahl al-Sunnah.

Permission to prostrate to humans.

This was an innovation introduced by Shāh Ismā'īl for the Qizilbash. He would instruct them to prostrate to him. Today, the scholars and noblemen are honoured in extreme ways. As for prostration itself, this

continues to be practiced by the Ismā'īlī Bohra Shī'ah. Yes, all the Shī'ah prostrate to graves, though it may not even be in the direction of the Qiblah. They state this to be a prostration of honour, not worship.

Stipulating huge, bloated salaries for the Shī'ī scholars

This included giving them fiefdoms, farmlands, and special endowments; a manner of buying off the scholars so they would pass rulings according to the wish of the Sulṭān. And, thus, aspirations of gathering wealth grew amongst the scholars. Today, the scholars of the Shī'ī seminaries, the Ḥawzah, are the wealthiest of people, the Al-Khoei Foundation London has a net worth of millions of dollars, and Khomeini had amassed a colossal fortune in Iraq. When he relocated to France after being exiled, he transferred large sums of money. Today too, figures like 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Ḥakīm, Muqtadā, and others are worth millions. This is a Persian innovation to which the Shī'ī poet, Aḥmad al-Ṣāfi, has paid homage to saying:

وكيف يسوغ الشحذ للرجل الشهم	عجبت لقوم شحذهم باسم دينهم
لذلك فإن الجهل خير من العلم	لئن كان تحصيل العلوم مسوِّغاً
لتعطي بذل بل لتؤخذ بالرغم	لئن أوجب الله الزكاة فلم تكن
ولم تكن في أبناء يعرب من قدم	أتانا بها أبناء ساسان حرفة

*I am perplexed at those who beg in the name of their faith,
How can begging be tolerated for an astute man?
If attaining knowledge was a justification,
For that, then ignorance is better than knowledge.
If Allah has ordained giving alms, it was not,
To be given with disgrace, but to be taken despite.*

*The sons of Sāsān¹ have brought it about as a profession,
And among the sons of the Arabs this was not.*

Shāh Ismā‘īl, thus, gave prominence to the idea of scholarly worldly splendour despite history being replete with the abstinence of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and the Ahl al-Bayt. Today, the most prosperous are the Sādāt² and their money related scandals are well documented.

These are some of the innovations and revolutions introduced by Shāh Ismā‘īl. For further reading on this subject, refer to those books which discuss this in greater detail.³

The orientalist, Dwight Ronaldson who lived in Iran for 16 years has hit the nail on the head in his well-known book *‘Aqīdah al-Shī‘ah*, by linking extremist ideologies as well as excommunication to the Safavid era as an inseparable phenomenon.

1 By Sāsān, he means the Persians. An attribution to the Sassanid Dynasty. The poet himself attests to this being a Persian, Iranian, Safavid innovation.

2 A term used by the Shī‘ah for those who attribute themselves to the Ahl al-Bayt.

3 See, Dr ‘Alī al-Wardī: *Lamaḥāt Ijtimā‘iyyah min Tārīkh al-‘Irāq*; ‘Alī Ḥusayn al-Jābirī: *Al-Fikr al-Salafī ‘inda al-Shī‘ah al-Ithnay ‘Ashariyyah* 1977; *Al-Muta‘āmirūn* an Iranian book translated 1981; Michael M. J. Fischer: *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution* 1980; and Carl Brockelmann: *History of the Islamic Peoples*.

The Era of Shāh Tahmasp

After the death of his father, Shāh Tahmasp took to the throne of the Safavid dynasty at the age of 11. This was in the year 930 AH/1524 CE. Though he was leader in name, he was in fact a stooge for the Qizilbash who actually controlled the dynasty. Taking advantage of this, the Sunnī Uzbeks attacked Khorasan and took hold of it the year 933 AH defeating the commanders of Tahmasp; however, Khorasan was taken back in 935 AH.

Shāh Tahmasp kept up the alliance between Iran and Europe in opposing the Ottomans. He sent ambassadors to the Hungarian King and to the Austrian Emperor, Charles VII. The impetus for this alliance was the emergence of the Ottoman Sulṭān, Sulaymān the Magnificent, the year 1525 CE. The Persian court of the Safavids were terrified of him and began inciting the Shī'ah of Turkey against the Ottoman Empire. Sulaymān the Magnificent heralded awe in the European world to the extent that it is said, the churches would halt their bells when they would hear his naval fleets pass by.

This inciting led to the rebellion of Yazgot in the year 1526 CE. This rebellion was led by Bābā Dhū al-Nūn together with three or four thousand Shī'ah. They seized control of the area, instituted a tax, and defeated some of the Ottoman commanders. The Sulṭān in turn, crushed them and quelled the rebellion.

A greater uprising was born out of Konya and Kahramanmaraş under the leadership of Kalender Çelebi who had some 30 000 Shī'ah in his band. The central theme of this group was to kill the Ahl al-Sunnah. Their ideology stemmed from the following chant:

من قتل مسلماً سُنِّيًّا ويعتدي على امرأة سُنِّيَّة يكون بهذا قد حاز أكبر الثواب

Whoever kills a Sunnī Muslim or rapes a Sunnī women, will attain the greatest of rewards.¹

They were able to kill the Ottoman commanders, with the likes of Behrām Pāshā and others facing their end. The Sultān, however, sent his Grand Vizier, Ibrāhīm Pāshā who battled them and quashed the uprising.² During this time, Sulaymān the Magnificent had laid out plans for the expansion into and conquest of Europe, some of which he accomplished.

The return of Tahmasp to Iraq

When Shāh Ismā'īl suffered defeat at the Battle of Chaldiran, his influence in Iraq weakened. However, the Iranian business interests

1 The Mahdī Army of Iraq adopted the same practices. They would kidnap and rape Sunnī women. These are the same people who call themselves followers of the Ahl al-Bayt! Is rape legislated according to the creed of the Ahl al-Bayt?

2 Dr Muḥammad Ḥarb: *Al-'Uthmāniyyūn fī al-Tārīkh al-Ḥaḍārah* pg. 91. The Muslims should take lesson from these historical actualities. The existence of the Shī'ah within any demographic is central to a movement dictated by Iran. Who mobilized the Ḥizb Allāh in Lebanon? Who drives the Shī'ah of Iraq today? And the Shī'ah of Bahrain? In Saudi? The Houthi movement in Saada, Yemen? Who assists them? Is this not Ḥizb Allāh and Iranian wealth? What of every other Shī'ī movement in Egypt and Africa? This is history on repeat. The loyalty of every Shī'ī is to their neo-Safavid overlords. Whoever does not realise this reality has not understood the background behind the warnings of the Ahl al-Sunnah. Such people have not taken lesson from history. In fact, I swear—and I will not be taking a false oath—and say, “There are leaders of Islam and callers to the Islamic cause from every background who have absolutely no idea of the Safavid Dynasty and their conspiracies against the Muslim world.” May Allah guide and assist us.

in Iraq continued with traders travelling to and from the region, since the leadership remained Safavid. This continued until Dhū al-Fiqār ascended the leadership of Iraq in the year 930 AH capitalizing on the death of Shāh Ismā'īl. He did not pay fealty to Shāh Tahmasp and attempted to broadcast his loyalty to the Ottomans. Tahmasp, attacked Baghdad but failed. Subsequently, he plotted treachery and enticed Dhū al-Fiqār's sister into killing him, which she did. And thus, Baghdad and Iraq returned to the Shāh. He then appointed overseers to the governors of Iraq and returned to his seat at Qazwīn.

The laity of Baghdad hurriedly sent correspondences to Sulṭān Sulaymān the Magnificent since they were Sunnī and had not forgotten the treachery of Shāh Ismā'īl. The intent of their correspondence was to free themselves of the Safavid occupation.

Sulṭān Sulaymān the Magnificent made preparations to retake Baghdad. He started by sending warnings and threats to Tahmasp. This terrified the Iranians and they sent pleas of assistance to the Hungarian King to join forces with them against the Ottomans. Sulaymān the Magnificent sent a message to Tahmasp stating he would annihilate every Iranian Shī'ah home, blood would flow on the earth, and Tahmasp would flee.

Subsequent to this the Hungarians prepared to attack the Ottomans and so the Sulṭān turned the attention of his forces to them first. He sent an army to retake Tabriz and to restore loyalty to those who had rebelled. This army entered Tabriz without any resistance and captured the entire Azerbaijan region.

Sulṭān Sulaymān then turned to Baghdad and defeated its governor who was loyal to Tahmasp. Thus, Sulaymān the Magnificent entered Baghdad as conqueror and retook Iraq under the flag of the Ottoman

Empire. He restored the tomb of Abū Ḥanīfah—it is said the remains of Abū Ḥanīfah were found intact in his shroud and he was returned to his grave—and built a dome above it. He also visited the grave of Mūsa al-Kāzīm, Karbalā', and Najaf. He also saved the city of Karbalā' from floods and built dams.

Further, he liberated the entire Iraq, Bahrain, and al-Qaṭīf.¹ All of this was accomplished in the year 941 AH/1534 CE. And so, Iraq was liberated from the Safavid nightmare after being subject to their oppression for 27 years.² His capture of Tabriz was complete in the year 944 AH and the Safavid seat moved to Qazwīn.

With the army of Tahmasp drained and weary, he sought an armistice with the Ottomans and in 961 AH/1555 CE and a settlement known as the Peace of Amasya was signed.

After this, Tahmasp sought an alliance with England. The English thought of entering the lands of the Safavids and sent a trade party with a letter from Queen Elizabeth I the year 965 AH/1558 CE. This trade party though were in fact spies.

The European nations, in particular the ambassador of Venice, continued impressing upon Tahmasp to rise against the Ottomans. Tahmasp, however, was more interested in wealth, pomp, women, drinking, and music. His cities became corrupt and bribery became the order of the day. It is said, one of his wives poisoned him and so he met his end.³

1 Ibid., 35-41.

2 The people of Iraq will once again be freed from the neo-Safavid nightmare by the will of Allah, no matter how long it may take. Falsehood appears but it is the truth that remains.

3 Dr Muḥammad Waṣfī: *Iran Dirāsah 'Āmmah*, pg. 149.

Important Developments of the Tahmasp Era

Invitation of the famous Shī'ī scholar of Lebanon, Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-'Ālī al-Karakī

It would not be hyperbole to say that al-Karakī¹ played a most evil role, to the extent that his ideologies were met with severe refutations from the Shī'ah themselves.

From amongst those who opposed him were, al-Shahīd al-Thānī (911-966 AH), al-Muqaddas al-Ardabīlī (d. 993 AH), Ibrāhīm al-Qaṭīfī, Mullā Muḥammad Amīn al-Astarabādī, Mullā Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qummī, and others.² Al-Karakī, however, continued on his crusade to validate all vile Safavid acts. He authored books that sought to endorse all of their innovations. He wrote a book about the Turbah Ḥusayniyyah and the permissibility of prostrating to humans. He also wrote a book that sanctions cursing and vilifying the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم entitled, *Nafaḥāt al-Lāhūt fī La'n al-Jibt wa al-Ṭāghūt*. Jibt and Ṭāghūt being a swipe at Abū Bakr and 'Umar رضي الله عنهما. He gave preference to cursing the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم over daily litanies of Allah's remembrance. He also authored a booklet validating the change of Qiblah. His Shī'ah opponents referred to him as *Mukhtari' al-Shī'ah*, as he innovated and gave credence to all the Safavid evils.

Designating the Safavid leader to be a deputy of the hidden Imām

The most perilous act of his was to designate the Safavid leader a

1 Notwithstanding this, the Shī'ī scholars of Lebanon take pride in him being instrumental in spreading Shī'ism in Iran. See. Muḥammad Taqī al-Faqīh: *Jabal 'Āmil fī al-Tārīkh*, pg. 109.

2 Aḥmad al-Kātib: *Taṭawwur al-Fikr al-Shī'ī*, pg. 385.

‘deputy of the hidden Imām’.¹ This was the inception of the concept of *Wilāyah al-Faqīh*. Al-Karakī went to Iran during the era of Shāh Ismā‘īl in the year 916 AH to gain an understanding of the situation and returned to al-Najaf to impart these novel ideas. The dogma of the Shī‘ah had always been *Taqiyyah* and to not be involved in any jihād until the emergence of the Mahdī. The new situation in Iran, however, contradicted their dogma and so a new ideology had to be invented.

He thus fabricated the idea of ‘general deputization for the jurists’, i.e. *Niyābat ‘Āmmah li al-Fuqahā*, on behalf of the Mahdī. This deputization, however, was not for the Shāh. Tahmasp thought to secure the support of al-Karakī so that the power of the jurists be under his own influence. He also sought to distance himself from the Qizilbash who had ruled when he was young. He therefore gave over the power of legislation to al-Karakī and in turn al-Karakī gave him formal powers. The Qizilbash, however, had al-Karakī killed and he died as a result of being poisoned the year 940 AH.² This has been the habit of the Shī‘ī scholars. They invent and legislate according to the whims and fancies of the rulers and pacify their desires. Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى states:

اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

*They have taken their rabbis and monks as lords besides Allah.*³

1 Muḥammad al-Bandārī: *Al-Tashayyu‘ Bayn Mafhūm al-A‘immah wa al-Mafhūm al-Farsī*, pg. 62.

2 *Taṭawwur al-Fikr al-Siyāsī al-Shī‘ī*, pgs. 319-382.

3 Just as al-Sistani had done for the Americans by issuing a verdict not to oppose them. He also passed other verdicts in line with American Shī‘ī interests. Bremer has made this clear in his study. See, Bremer vs. Sistani.

Shāh Ismā'īl the Second

After the death of Shāh Tahmasp by poisoning, a conflict arose regarding the throne. This culminated with the ascension of his son Ismā'īl who had been imprisoned by his own father for a period of 25 years. The first thing he did was to kill his brothers one after another. He also killed the courtiers of the palace and gouged out their eyes; so it has been related.

Others have stated that these actions have been attributed to him, since he intended reforms in Iran by re-introducing the creed of the Ahl al-Sunnah.

His reign did not last long though. After some time, a group of men killed him in the year 985 AH. It is said, he distanced himself from the scholars, did not ascribe to the concept of deputization of the jurists, and believed the scholars fooled his father. The scholars, thus, accused him of becoming a Sunnī and they killed him. Some have stated this is a reflection of the reality.¹

¹ Ibid., pg. 382; *Tārīkh Iran Zamīn*, pgs. 272-273. Some researchers have asserted that the allegations levelled against him of bloodshed are contrary to reality. They are merely false accusations that were levelled against him because he returned to the creed of his forefathers, that of the Ahl al-Sunnah.

Shāh Muḥammad Khudābandā

He is the son of Tahmasp who ascended the throne the year 985 AH. His eyesight was weak and he was close to being blind. He was, however, tyrannical. He killed his sister, since she was highly influential in the palace. He also killed his maternal uncles and his brother's, Ismā'īl the Second, small children. A war between him and the Ottomans broke out during the reign of Sulṭān Murād the third. The Qizilbash attempted to manipulate the dynasty and place on the throne one who would suite them.

His son 'Abbās who was 17 years of age at the time, realised this. He thus garnered a huge tribal army and deposed his father in the year 955 AH/1587 CE.¹

¹ *Iran Dirāsah 'Āmmah*, pgs. 149-250.

The Era of Shāh ‘Abbās the Great

Although Shāh ‘Abbās was young, he was shrewd and cunning. He was an ‘ends justify the means’ type of person. He thus killed his mentor and the best of his commanders. His reign lasted 42 years from the year 996 AH/1038 CE. The very first order of business he attended to was to enact a peace treaty with the Ottomans even though this meant he was required to retreat from many lands and halt cursing the three Rightly Guided Khulafā’, which had become a practice in Iran. He accepted these demands and left his brother as guarantee in the hands of the Ottomans. In short, he accepted all the conditions placed within the treaty.¹

The Sunnī Uzbeks had taken charge of Khurāsān, Mashhad, and Sabzevar the year 1002 AH. However, the death of the Uzbek king, ‘Abd Allah Khān and the murder of his brother ‘Abd al-Mu’min made it easy for Shāh ‘Abbās to attack the city of Herat and expel the Uzbeks from the region in the year 1006 AH.

After this, Shāh ‘Abbās made contact with England seeking a weapons expert which the English were happy to provide and sent Sir Anthony Shirley and his brother Sir Robert Shirley. They agreed to build a new army that would arm themselves with guns instead of arrows and swords. They also introduced artillery and built arms factories. He also formed a tribe which he called the ‘Shāhsūn’, i.e. friends of the king, who were chosen for their loyalty and not their proximity or familial relationship.²

1 Dr Maḥmūd Jawād Mashkūr: *Tārīkh Iran Zamīn*, pg. 275.

2 Sykes: *A History of Persia*, vol. 2 pg. 271; *Iran Dirāsah ‘Āmmah*, pg. 252.

He also assisted the English in diminishing the influence of Holland in the Arabic Sea and instating English influence. They also joined alliances in order to carry out this mission. Their wars continued until 1034 AH.

The wars of Shāh ‘Abbās against the Ottomans began when the Shāh assessed his strength and found himself strong enough to oppose and face them at battle. He began by rolling back on the treaty with regards to giving up Tabriz. He also attempted an invasion of both Shirvan and Diyarbakır, finally turning his attention to Baghdad.¹

Shāh ‘Abbās was plainly sectarian. The most heinous of his sectarian manifestations was his attempt to convince the Iranians to abandon their pilgrimage to Makkah and suffice on going on pilgrimage to the grave of the eighth Imām, ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā, at Mashhad. He deemed it a nationalistic duty to avoid travel through the Ottoman lands and pay them ‘crossing fees’. He would encourage men of faith to place great importance to visiting al-Riḍā whilst he himself took on journeys to his tomb. In fact, he once walked over 1300 kilometres to his grave.²

He also treated the Sunnī Kurds horribly. He asked them to enter the Shī‘ī faith which they refused and so Shāh ‘Abbās killed or exiled them to Khorasan, so they may serve as a barrier between him and the Uzbek Sunnī populous. In just a few days he killed 70 thousand Kurds and exiled 1500 Kurdish families.³

1 Wādālā: *Khalīj Fāris ‘Aṣr Isti‘mār* translated by Shafī‘ Jawādī, pgs. 42-43; *Tārīkh Iran Zamān*, pg. 277.

2 Dr Badī Muḥammad Jumu‘ah: *Al-Shāh ‘Abbās al-Kabīr*, pgs. 101-102.

3 Muḥammad Amīn Zakī: *Khulāṣah Tārīkh al-Kurd wa Kurdistan min Aqdam al-‘Uṣūr al-Tārīkhiyyah Ḥattā al-Ān*, pgs. 207-211. Translated by Muḥammad ‘Alī al-‘Awnī; *History of Persia*, vol. 11 pg. 174.

continued...

He would at times mutilate the scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah, cutting their ears and noses. He would further amputate their limbs and force feed it to the common Sunnī masses.¹

He would habitually kill Ottomans and Uzbek prisoners, and if he did not kill them, he would gouge their eyes out. Yes, if they left their faith then they would be spared.² At times he would lay siege to an entire city in search for a single individual. If they did not hand him over, he would kill the entire village as he did at Hamdān.³

On the other hand, he revered the Christians, whether they were of Iranian decent or of the European lands. In fact, he showed much respect to the Christian missionaries in Iran. He built a city for the Armenians close to Isfahan called Julfa. He would go above and beyond in showing reverence to them. This resulted in many traders of the far-off lands in Europe traveling to Iran. He also enacted laws that exempted them from tax and prevented the Shī'ah men of faith from inconveniencing them or debating them. He would present to them gifts of pork and instructed all the members of the royal court to sip on wine with the Christians, be it in the month of Ramaḍān. He built

Continued from page 38

In this there is lesson to be taken by the Kurds, especially the Kurds of Iraq. Their forefathers had remained firm on their faith no matter the atrocities of Shāh 'Abbās. Today though, the Kurdish leaders of Iraq, Talabani and Barzani have opted to cooperate with the Shī'ah and trust Iran. At the end of the day, they are Sunnī and an intelligent person is he who takes heed from the plight of others.

1 *Al-Shāh 'Abbās al-Kabīr*, pg. 103.

2 *'Ālam Ārāy 'Abbāsī*, pg. 103

3 *Ibid.*, pgs. 103-104. This is not dissimilar to the Americans and their cooperation with the Badr Corps at Fallujah.

churches for them and joined them in their festivities and sermons. His engagement was to the extent that some priests were emboldened into trying to converting him to Christianity, which he politely declined.¹

A Synopsis of His Entry into Baghdad

One of the Ottoman commanders of Baghdad, Bakr Şubāshī, rose up in opposition to the governor of Baghdad and rallied a rebellion. Fearing the backlash of the Ottomans, he sent a correspondence to Shāh ‘Abbās seeking his support and in return he would hand him Baghdad. Shāh ‘Abbās welcomed this and made it a catalyst for recapturing Baghdad and being able to make pilgrimage to al-Najaf and Karbalā’ with all the cities coming under his control.

He marched on Baghdad and when he came close to Baghdad, he sought the keys of the city from Bakr Şubāshī. The latter refused, fearing treachery. Nonetheless, he was able to capture Baghdad and seize the cities of Mawşil and Karkūk. He also captured most of Iraq and headed to al-Najaf.

What did Shāh ‘Abbās do at Baghdad?

He desecrated its sanctity, widowed its women, orphaned its children, wasted away its fortunes, destroyed its masjids, and razed it to the ground. He both levelled and looted its shrines. Amongst the shrines he levelled were that of Abū Ḥanīfah and ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. He punished and oppressively dealt with the various tribes.

Shāh ‘Abbās deceived the people of Baghdad. He promised them safety if they laid down their weapons; however, once done, he began killing

1 *Al-Shāh ‘Abbās al-Kabīr*, pg. 106-107; *Tārīkh Iran Ba’d Islām*, pg. 671.

and punishing thousands. Many of the inhabitants of Baghdad refused to change their faith and preferred death over Shīism, be it even a pretence of it. He took their children and women and sold them into slavery to Iran and they became a lost generation. His intent was to exterminate the Ahl al-Sunnah from Baghdad and so he requested the custodians of Karbalā' to prepare a list of both the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī'ah so he may exterminate the Sunnī demographic. He turned the Islamic institutions into stables and destroyed the Masjid of Abū Ḥanīfah and 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. He then appointed a governor and left for his city. This occurred in the year 1033 AH.

In the year 1038 AH, Shāh 'Abbās died.

After his death, Shāh Ṣafī the first ascended the throne in the year 1038 AH. During his era, specifically in the year 1048 AH the Ottomans liberated Baghdad and all of Iraq. After this the Safavids were unable to occupy Iraq. They were also aware that the only neighbouring country they may resort to was Iran. Iran which has always sought to capture Iraq. The hostilities and attacks of Iran against Iraq are well documented.

Innovations During the Era of Shāh 'Abbās

1. He established birthday celebrations at the birth date of all the Twelve Imāms. He also established days of mourning on their death date. He specified eight days for 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in Ramaḍān.¹
2. He retained and gave support to the innovations of Shāh Ismā'īl.

1 Zindakānī Shāh 'Abbās al-Awwal, vol. 3 pg. 6.

3. He gave special considerations to visiting al-Riḍā.
4. He called himself 'the dog of the 'Alī's threshold' or 'the dog of the custodian's threshold'. He had this engraved onto his ring.¹

1 Ibid., vol. 3 pg. 17.

The Safavid Dynasty After Shāh ‘Abbās

The Safavid Dynasty remained after him for almost a hundred years, coming to its end in the year 1148 AH. The Safavid leaders had no interest in religiosity. All of them murdered their own family members, a son, a sister, a nephew; their killing wanton and their punishments barbaric. Further, drinking wine had become commonplace. These were the hallmarks of the First Twelver Shī‘ah Dynasty. These atrocities were covered by erecting ‘Ḥusaynī’ monuments in support of the Ahl al-Bayt. Within this spectrum there emerged a Shaykh al-Islām of the Safavids, Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī 1037 – 1111 AH. He authored the largest Shī‘ī encyclopaedia entitled *Bihār al-Anwār*. He collated all the earlier Shī‘ī reports and saying in this book, which has been published time and again in more than a hundred volumes.

Some moderate Shī‘ah opine that this book has painted Shī‘ism in a bad light since it gathered all types of statements, true and false. It includes reports that exposes Shī‘ism as an ideology based on extremism, excommunication, and bloodshed. As such this book has become a focal point for criticizing the Shī‘ah, with preachers of the Ḥusaynī pulpits exploiting the reports of extremism and spreading it amongst the masses.¹

We don’t accept the assertion of the moderate Shī‘ah. Instead, we believe that the Shī‘ah tradition had been exclusively accessible to its scholars whilst this book allowed the layman exposure to its underbelly; secrets which the scholars hoped would not come to light and for which they adopted Taqiyyah. This book exposed every secret of theirs.

1 *Lamahāt Ijtīmā‘iyyah*, vol. 2 pg. 78.

The Safavid Dynasty in the East (Afghanistan)

The Safavids captured Kandahar in the south of Afghanistan in the year 947 AH. The Sunnī Uzbeks, however, recaptured it. Then the Mongols of India captured it in the year 1021 AH and subsequently handed it over to the Safavids in the year 1038 AH. The Safavids were eventually able to occupy the entire Afghanistan and they appointed a Georgian governor to oversee its affairs. However, Amīr Mīr Uways, a Sunnī, emerged to oppose the Safavids in the year 1120 AH. He expelled them from Kandahar and began liberating Afghan city after city. Sadly, he died in the year 1127 AH. When his son, Mīr Maḥmūd, grew up he expelled the Safavids with the cooperation of the Sunnī Uzbeks. His campaign against them saw him march onto Iran and crush the Safavid Dynasty, capturing their capital Isfahan. The Safavids were left with a small patch of land in the North of Iran which managed to escape destruction at the hands of Mīr Maḥmūd, by a Russian alliance. The Safavids preferred to split what remained of their dynasty with the Russians than broker an alliance with Mīr Maḥmūd. It should be noted how the Shī'ah here too, at their weakest, preferred an alliance with the Christians over the Muslims.

Mīr Maḥmūd fell ill and the Russians began capturing Safavid cities. Mīr Maḥmūd retreated somewhat and then died leaving behind his uncle, Ashraf, as leader. The Safavid Dynasty finally fell with the emergence of Nādir Khān, though a Shī'ī he had a propensity for moderation. He deposed the last members of the Safavid Dynasty and founded the Afsharid Dynasty the year 1148 AH.

During the era of Nādir Shāh, the first efforts of closing the gap between the Sunnīs and Shī'ahs were made, with cursing the Khulafā'

being banned. Although some progress was made, he was murdered in the year 1160 AH, the specifics of which is beyond our study.

The Afghan people were able to protect and keep to their Sunnī creed. Today, the Shī'ah in Afghanistan make up no more than 10% and are primarily of the Hazaras and some Persian Nationalists.

Epilogue

This was the Safavid Dynasty which lasted about 240 years from 907 AH to 1148 AH. The very first Shī'ah Imāmiyyah Dynasty. By this I mean, a meaningful and large dynasty unlike those lesser ones like the Musha'shi'yyīn (Musha'sha') at Hoveyzeh which existed between the years 789 AH and 1117 AH, or the Sarbadāriyyah at Khorasan between the years 738 AH and 782 AH, or the Sādah al-Mar'ashiyyah at Mazandaran between the years 795 AH and 1001 AH. All these were Shī'ah Twelver Dynasties but they were small and wielded limited influence. As for the earlier substantial dynasties such as the Fatimids and the Buyids, the former was an Ismā'īlī Shī'ī dynasty and the latter a Zaydī Jārūdī dynasty.

One piece of information we forgot to mention was that the Safavids did not only cooperate with the English and the Portuguese but they also formed alliances with the French in the year 1708 CE, during the reign of Shāh Ḥusayn al-Ṣafawī. The French sent a fleet and eased the occupation of Muscat, Oman.¹ We have already discussed their cooperation with Tsarist Russia.

The Safavid Dynasty stretched from Iran to Afghanistan and Iraq. However, the Afghan people were able to keep their lands pure and remain Sunnī. Iran continues to plot against Iraq and Afghanistan since they were unable to convert them to Shī'ism.

The Safavid Dynasty was the first Shī'ah Imāmiyyah dynasty that forcibly converted Iran to Shī'ism. The Shī'ah only made up roughly 10% of Iran, however, this number increased during the era of Khudābandā,

1 Maḥmūd Shākīr: *Al-Tārīkh al-Islāmī*, vol. 18.

the Mongol, and sat between a quarter to a third of the population. With the arrival of the Safavids it increased further and today they make up 65–70%.¹ Though the Ahl al-Sunnah make up 30–35%, they bear no influence in Iran. In fact, the Christians, the Armenians, the Jews, the Zoroastrians, and the Bahā'ī who collectively make up about 2% of the population enjoy more religious and other freedoms in Iran compared to the Ahl al-Sunnah. In Iraq, the Shī'ah populous cannot be more than 37-45%. The rest of the Iraqis are Sunnī of different demographics, Arab, Kurdish, Turkmenia.

After the fall and occupation of Iraq, the Shī'ah attempted to displace the Ahl al-Sunnah and import Persians from Iran in order to change the population demographic of Iraq. This is a part of the neo-Safavid project which was birthed together with the emergence of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the arrival of Khomeini. They attempted the same in Lebanon and in the Gulf States, i.e. increasing the proportion of the Shī'ah population in preparation for taking a larger role which will be a catalyst for domination over these areas.

At the inception of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, which is the only Shī'ah state in the world, they drew up a constitution. Article 12 of the constitution states:

The official religion of Iran is Islam and the Twelver Ja'farī school of [Shī'ī] religion.

This principle shall remain eternally unchangeable.

The Shī'ah method has throughout time remained the same as it stems from a single source. All their works call towards hatred, torture, and

¹ Ibid.

killing the Ahl al-Sunnah, whom they call the Nawāṣib. When they find themselves weak and without power, they resort to Taqiyyah and when they find themselves in positions of power they adopt the most heinous methods to kill and excommunicate the Ahl al-Sunnah. When in power, they lose their persecution complex and feelings of being wronged; derangements engendered and taught to their followers just as Jewish leaders continue provoking paranoid delusions and persecution complexes amongst their masses. All this in turn generates a vicious cycle of deep seeded hatred and envy. They have become like slaves, yielding under the whip and rebelling the moment it is lifted.

The Shī'ah have been raised with this complex for more than 13 centuries and all, for differing reasons, have internalised this complex. This is why when the Shī'ah do gain any influence, the actions they perpetrate are shocking and shameful. Those of the Ahl al-Sunnah who haven't co-existed with the Shī'ah may not believe this, since they are unaware of the true motives of the Shī'ah.

The point I want to make is that the hatred of the Safavid Dynasty was not solely against the Ottoman Empire and neither was it against a given nationality. Rather, the hatred included all the Ahl al-Sunnah, whether they were Iranian, Iraqi, Afghani, Uzbek, or Turkish. All were guilty of being part of the Ahl al-Sunnah which was enough for them to be subjected to torture and murder.

وَمَا نَقَمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ

*And they resented them not except because they believed in Allāh, the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy.*¹

1 Sūrah al-Burūj: 8.

The words of Allah ring true:

إِنَّهُمْ إِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْجُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُعِيدُوكُمْ فِي مِلَّتِهِمْ وَلَنْ تُفْلِحُوا إِذَا أَبَدًا

Indeed, if they come to know of you, they will stone you or return you to their religion. And never would you succeed, then, ever.¹

Yes, this is what happened in the past and what is happening today in Iraq with the Ahl al-Sunnah. People are being killed only because they are from the Ahl al-Sunnah. Scholars, intellectuals, and politicians that call this ‘sectarian strife’ between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī‘ah cannot justify the atrocities being perpetrated. The Shī‘ah leadership in Iraq today have shown their true colours and have displayed their true creed which was curated, developed, and instituted by the Safavid Dynasty.

Ḥizb Allāh in Lebanon will do the same, given the opportunity, as their overlords in Iraq have done. In Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi the very same atrocities will be perpetrated in following the Shī‘ah model adopted against the Ahl al-Sunnah in Iraq.

Look at ‘Ḥizb al-Da‘wah al-Islāmī’ in Iraq. Many of the Muslim Brotherhood in and out of Iraq opined them to be students of the Shī‘ī scholar Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr and as such are moderates, not extremists like others. Well, what did they do when they came into the seat of power? Ibrāhīm al-Ja‘farī and Jawād al-Mālikī are both disciples of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr. When they rose to power in Iraq they

1 Sūrah al-Kahf: 20.

killed, slaughtered, forced change, upended the education system, and wished to change every landmark of Iraq and Baghdad.

In fact, the spokesperson of Jawād al-Mālikī, ‘Alī al-Dabbāgh mentioned several times on the satellite channels that the Shī’ah have been oppressed for 14 centuries and now was the time for them to reclaim their rights. Iyād Jamāl al-Dīn who campaigned for a secularist and liberal Iraq regurgitated the same sentiments many times over the satellite channels. How true is the speech of Allah in saying:

أَتَوَصَّوْا بِهِ ۚ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَآغُوتٌ

Did they suggest it to them? Rather, they [themselves] are a transgressing people.¹

When a delegation of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood travelled to congratulate Khomeini on the successful Islamic Revolution circa. 1979 CE, his representative said to them, “You i.e., the Ahl al-Sunnah ruled for 14 centuries and now the time has come for the Shī’ah to rule over the Muslim world.”

1 Sūrah al-Dhāriyāt: 53.

Why the Safavid Dynasty?

Perhaps one may ask, Iran has been ruled by a myriad of dynasties. The Anshāriyyah, the Qājāriyyah, the Bahlawiyyah, the Zindiyyah, and others; all Shī'ah dynasties. Why single out and discuss the Safavid Dynasty? Is the focal point Iran as a hostile state to Iraq, or is the Iranian Shī'ah? In other words, is the focus, a religious dimension or a nationalist dimension?

The Safavid Dynasty was the first in the history of Shī'ī thought—from the 4th century Hijrī—to be able to practically realize and implement a theory which remained unrealized for 6 centuries. Even though many Shī'ī dynasties had appeared in pockets throughout history such as the Fatamids in the East and Egypt, before them the Buwayhids in Iraq and the Persian lands which made a shell of the Abbasids, and a number of smaller Shī'ī states; however, none of these carried out mass executions and displacements as the Safavids had done. The Safavids were responsible for forcible conversions, introducing new dogmas, resurrecting extreme ideologies, and creating sectarian hatred that lives on to this day.

More than twenty years after the Iranian Revolution, it has become abundantly clear that that this revolution and its resulting state has been built upon resurrecting the Safavid ideologies of old. At the very beginning they attempted to export this revolution, but failed due to the Iran-Iraq war. After the war and the weakening of Iraq, the 50-year plan of Shī'ah expansion in the region by way of missionaries emerged. The Ahl al-Sunnah rulers and masses remained oblivious of this and of the Western-Iranian cooperation. Their plan then changed and, no holds barred, they reverted once more to the bloody Safavid ideology.

This was a conglomerate of a Shī'ah and Persian dream to reinstate the magnificent Persian Empire. If it wasn't for the news outlets and satellite channels which exposed their practices, the bloodshed today would have been far worse compared to what we have already seen and heard.

Historians and thinkers may become lethargic to this truth and would perhaps seek to explain it away in a manner that does not reflect the reality. Or they might attempt to become blind to historical actualities and pursue an alternative justification that is not in line with what is. This will continue until the Safavid thought is not understood. A thought that wishes to marry nationalist—populist—ambition upon the drivetrain of Shī'ah hatred.

Advice to all the Ahl al-Sunnah

Ignorance to the Shī'ah creed, their Safavid Dynasty, and its atrocities throughout the Muslim world is something held in common by most of the scholars, preachers, intellectuals, and politicians. If you want evidence for my claim of ignorance, ask anyone you will, "What do you know of the Safavid Dynasty?" and you will hardly find a single person with an answer.

Most Muslims have neglected the creedal works of Ahl al-Sunnah that have been authored by our scholars. Works of creed that expose the Shī'ī ideology and by avenue of which our forefathers remained impervious to the Shī'ī ideology. Yet today we find most of the Muslim world, as a result of neglect to the early works of our scholars, unaware of the danger posed by Shī'ism. Many claims are made in justifying this neglect.

Some say, "The Shī'ah of today aren't the Shī'ah of yesterday."

Others claim, "The danger posed by the Christian and Zionist enemies are graver and more imminent than any other danger. As such there is no need to expand our effort in studying Shī'ī beliefs and history."

They have forgotten the historical coalitions and alliances between the Safavids and the European Christians; the Portuguese, the English, the French, the Russians, and the Hungarians in attacking the Ottoman Ahl al-Sunnah. They have also forgotten the Iran–Contra affair in the 80s.

Today the Shī'ah of Iran created alliances with America and Britain in order to facilitate the fall of Afghanistan and Iraq which resulted in the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

The Shī'ah masses in Iraq of Jaysh al-Mahdī and others have adopted the catchphrase '*The Jews are better than the Ahl al-Sunnah*'. Where might such a phrase emanate from and how does the common man become privy to such ideas?

Go to the Ḥawzah of Qum and Najaf, go to the south of Lebanon, to Bahrain, and to Qaṭīf. See the hatred being taught by the Shī'ī scholars to their followers. You will find daily brainstorming sessions of stratagems that seek to change the region and drag it into Shī'ah polemics and politics. They are well trained in Taqīyyah, chanting slogans such as 'national unity', 'religious unity', and 'supporting Palestine'. Iran and Ḥizb Allāh repeatedly claim that they are enemies of the great Satan state, America, yet they form alliances with the same Satan in hopes of bringing about the collapse of Afghanistan and Iraq! They claim to assist the Palestinians and their cause, yet they kill Palestinians in Iraq and rape their women!

All this is laid out as clear as day. So, how is it that the Ahl al-Sunnah are still oblivious of the Shī'ah reality? This is a result of a systematic flaw in the education model of the contemporary Muslim and being unaware of the cyclical nature of history.

From a historical study point of view, there has been much interpolation and fabrication from the intellectual fraternity based on current nationalist trends. For instance, they promote the Safavid Dynasty to have had political differences with the Ottomans, whilst both were invaders and occupiers of the Arab lands [from a nationalistic point of view]. They opine the issue was not a religious one nor a sectarian one. In fact, it was all a political ploy whilst religion was the pawn.

Education of this sort which is not a reflection of historical actualities results in generations being raised without the truth and by extension being unable to understand current day issues.

All the Islamic groups have in some way or another contributed to this, as a result of which their followers are painfully unaware of Shīism and its reality. The situation can be analysed as follows:

The Muslim Brotherhood

Most of its members are unfamiliar with Shīism. Their approach discounts all discussions of sects and groups, though such discussions are required. As for the Safavid Dynasty, they are completely in the dark except for a few scattered individuals. It is quite sad that Mohammed Mahdi Akef, head of the Muslim Brotherhood has likened Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ayyūbī! Does he not know that Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh shuns such similitude to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn? In fact, they blindly hate Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. The Lebanese Shīī thinker, Ḥasan al-Amīn has authored a book in criticism of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. Similarly, Aḥmad Rāsīm al-Nafīs, a Shīī of Egypt has written a piece in the Cairo paper that criticises and attacks the personage of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn.

Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr

They are preoccupied with their political organisation and in analysing the international political landscape. However, it should be noted that some of their theoreticians of old in Lebanon are Shīah. A number of its members are also activists of Ḥizb al-Da‘wah in Iraq. They were amongst the early delegations to Khomeini after the revolution and have stated his constitution to be sectarian and not Islamic. Yet, they opine that the happenings in Iraq are American and British, not

Iranian. Perhaps in the future they will come to realize the truth. Considering they are proponents of the khilāfah and share an affinity with the Ottomans, why don't they study what the khilāfah had done to the Safavids?

Şūfī Movements

They have no issue with the Shī'ah, rather their efforts have been directed to opposing the Wahābiyyah. It seems quite peculiar that the Iraqī scholar who annotated the work of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, *al-Ghunya*, in the 80s removed the sections wherein Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir sharply censured the Shī'ah. The annotator is a well-known Şūfī of Iraq.

In the 80s and 90s they followed the Ahl al-Sunnah in Iraq by making their prime opposition those youths who adopted Wahhabism. At times, they were explicit in claiming Wahhabism to pose a greater threat than Shī'ism. Today, it has become quite evident which group poses a greater threat and commits far worse atrocities.

Unfortunately, today, they themselves are introducing Shī'ism in Egypt and Yemen. Ibrāhīm al-Ja'farī had attempted to create an alliance with the Qādiriyyah order of Iraq but was unsuccessful due to the influence the Ahl al-Sunnah wielded in Iraq and their awareness to the Shī'ah ploy. And all praise is for Allah.

The Şūfī brothers should be well aware that the Şūfī master of old, the likes of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, and others vehemently opposed Shī'ism. If it wasn't for the efforts of the Kurdish scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah, most of whom were of the Şūfī order, most of the Kurds would have become Shī'ah. The Ottoman scholars

too were almost all of the Ṣūfī orders and they had deep knowledge of the Shī'ah and passionately opposed them.

The survival of Islam in Turkey after Atatürk is owed to the Ṣūfī movements with the likes of al-Nūrsī رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ and others.

The Tablīghī Movement

It is absolutely necessary for them to educate themselves to this threat. This is more so important considering it was the Ḥanafī scholars رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ who played a mighty role in the Indian Sub-Continent and Afghanistan in opposing Shī'ism, and it was these scholars who laid the foundation to this movement. They should include within their movement an education drive that creates awareness to Shī'ism and its perils.

The Salafī Movement

Although they are quite aware of the perils of Shī'ism through the grace of Allah and by way of the works of Shaykh al-Islam, Iḥsān Ilāhī Ṣāḥib, Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, and others, the movement as a whole is not as well versed as those who came before them.

In any case there are a great many pitfalls of each group which can be summarized as follows:

- Some have become so preoccupied with either *Iḥjā'* [non-excommunication] or *Takfīr* [excommunication] that their works are confined to this and their preaching; dissolved.
- Some are so far removed from understanding the Shī'ah problem that the security services of the Islamic Lands are more aware of the Shī'ah danger than they are.

- Others are involved in producing written works and are preoccupied with only the apparent show of guidance.
- And amongst them there is a difference of opinion. Should Ḥizb Allāh be supported in their wars or not?

All of the groups that form the Ahl al-Sunnah, be it the Brotherhood, the Taḥrīriyyah, the Tablīghīyyah, the Ṣūfīyyah, the Salafīyyah, or others should be well aware that the Iranian Shī'ah Safavids do not differentiate between them. They paint them all with the sin of being part of the Ahl al-Sunnah (Nawāṣib) whether they like it or not! Even though the Shī'ah of today have made the Salafīs their focal point and suggest that their enmity is solely for the “Wahābīyyah” thereby submitting they have no dispute with the rest of the Ahl al-Sunnah; however, it becomes painfully and plainly clear that this is far from the truth. Their attacks upon Shaykh al-Qarḍāwī when he gently opposed them in Qatar at the last dialogue conference is testament to this.

Re-read history in general, specifically the history of the Ottoman Empire, go back and revisit the beliefs of its scholars, what stance did they subscribe to? Be it the Ashā'irah, the Māturīdiyyah, the Ṣūfīyyah, the Salafīyyah, or any other group; what was their religious stance in relation to Shī'ism?

Bear in mind that the Ahl al-Sunnah were never two groups. The Shī'ah lived under the Ahl al-Sunnah in peace throughout the reign of the Ahl al-Sunnah. A reign that boasted justice with all of the Islamic sects and those who adhered to non-Islamic beliefs. Even in the eras where Islamic justice disappeared, they did not resort to killings, mutilations, and mass displacements as the Shī'ah had done during the Safavid era. Today the Ummah is becoming painfully aware of what they are doing

in Iraq and what the Shī'ah wish to do to the entire Islamic world. Their influence is not only in Iran and Iraq. In Lebanon they incite anarchy and form alliances with the Christians in order to dismantle Lebanon. The Shī'ah buying up large tracts of land and homes of the Ahl al-Sunnah, the Druze, and the Christians in all parts of Lebanon has been widely reported; an attempt to change the demographics of Lebanon.

In Bahrain after they won the elections, they sent delegations to Lebanon to learn the art of mass strikes in order to create tensions between the general populous of Bahrain.

In Syria, they took advantage of the Alawite rule and Shī'ism began to openly take hold in the various regions of Syria. They began by first converting the Alawites to Shī'ism, whom they previously passed verdicts of disbelief on—which Khomeini had ditched for political reasons. Go to Zaynab, a suburb of Damascus and see the life of the Iraqis, Iranians, and Lebanese.

Their efforts in Egypt too are plainly clear. Similar is the case in Jordan, Morocco, and Africa. Their efforts have sounded the alarms of the security services of those countries too. Their coalition with the French in Comoros resulted in the propping up of a Shī'ī president.

Their investments in the Emirates, Bahrain, and Oman are also clear and evident.

Will anyone then take heed?

Conclusion

In conclusion, we draw the attention of all thinkers, religious individuals, intellectuals, politicians, and policy makers to not be duped by hyper focusing on Shīʿī politics any more than Shīʿī thought. Shīʿī thought is a far greater threat and is the bridge to Shīʿī politics. The Shīʿī thought is an ideology that is politically charged to subvert any leadership of the Ahl al-Sunnah. This should also serve as a motivation to the Shīʿah of Arabia in familiarizing themselves with the danger at hand. A Persian Safavid danger that will become a black hole for Shīʿism itself. It will breed hatred for the Ahl al-Sunnah to levels that they will be unable to bear its consequences. Perhaps the westerners have understood this threat better than our own people have; Fernando of Austria, the orientalist said, “If it wasn’t for the Safavids of Iran, we would be reciting the Qur’ān in Belgium and France as we do in Algeria.”

And Allah is the guide to the Straight Path. I ask of Allah for this research and exposition to be a motivation for all Muslims in coming to grips with this danger.

I ask Allah for acceptance and Allah is always the ultimate objective.