

Shi'ite Books on the History of the Prophets

<"xml encoding="UTF-8?>

Accounts of the divine Prophets were carried out as part of Islamic historiography by various scholars in books entitled al-Mubtada' which means the beginning or the origin. These works deal with the history of mankind since the beginning or the creation of Adam till the time of the last divine messenger, Prophet Muhammad (S).

In this field also the Shi'ites did not lag behind. Part of the book al-Mubtada' wa al-Mab'ath wa al-Maghāzī by Abān bin 'Uthmān Ahmar Bajallī, the extant portions of which we have published as mentioned earlier in this article, indicates that the recording of such traditions also existed among the Shi'ites, although, as we have said in the introduction to this book, it contains certain narrations from Israelite sources, which are of course not acceptable.

Among Shi'ite sources, the section dedicated to the history of the Prophets is found scattered and sometimes in detail. 'Allāmah Majlisī has mentioned these narrations in volumes 11 to 14 of Bihār al-Anwār. Most of these are found in the works Shaykh Saduq, in Tafsīr 'Alī bin Ibrāhīm Qummī, in Tafsīr al-'Ayyāshī, Tafsīr Majma' al-Bayān and similar books, and as we said, these narrations have been borrowed from the Sunnis who related from such persons as Ka'b al-Ahbār, 'Abdullāh bin Salām, and especially Wahab bin Minbah.

Ibn Tāwus has quoted an excerpt in Faraj al Mahmum from a book entitled Qasas al- Anbiyā' which he considers was written by Muhammad bin Khālid bin 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Barqī.¹ But apparently, no one else among the Imāmī bibliographers have mentioned this book.

However, from among the books exclusively written on the history of Prophets, reference can be made to the Qasas al-Anbiyā' of Qutb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī, which has been published by the Foundation for Islamic Research by Professor Ghulām Rizā 'Irfāniyān. This work, in addition to being the history of Prophets, has a section that includes their miracles (chapter 19, p. 280 onwards), while chapter 20 deals in brief with the life of Prophet Muhammad (S).

The author has not mentioned his sources for the accounts of the Prophets and most of the chain of narrators which he has mentioned do not clearly indicate the source. It is likely that a major part of Chapter 20 is based on Tafsīr 'Alī bin Ibrāhīm Qummī.

After al-Rāwandī's work, the book al-Nur al-Mubīn fī Qasas al-Anbiyā' by Sayyid Ni'matullāh al-Jazā'irī (d. 1112 AH) deals elaborately with the history of Prophets.

Part of the historical books of the Shi'ites is those which have been written to record the miracles performed by the Infallible Imams ('a) in proof of their Imamate. Naturally in these

works different aspects of the lives of the Imams ('a) have also been recorded. Among the most ancient books in this regard is the *Dalā'il al-A'immah* by Muhammad bin Mas'ud 'Ayyāshī the Shi'ite scholar of the late 3rd and early 4th centuries who lived in Samarqand. His works, including this one, have been mentioned by Ibn Nadīm.² This book however has not survived and is presumed to be lost. Another work in this field is *al-Dalā'il wa al-Mu'jizāt* by Abī al-Qāsim Kufī who is accused of exaggeration. He has also written a book on this subject titled *Tathbīt Nubuwwah al-Anbiyā'*.³

Here, mention could also be made of *Dalā'il al-Nabī* (S) written by Ahmad bin Yahyā bin Hakīm 'Uday Sufī al-Kufī,⁴ and *al-Ihtijāj li Nubuwwah al-Nabī* (S) by Ismā'īl bin 'Alī bin Ishāq bin Abī Sahl bin Nawbakht.⁵ Two books with the same title *Kitāb al-Dalā'il*, have also been written by Abu al-'Abbās 'Abdullāh bin Ja'far Himyarī and Abu 'Abdullāh Muhammad bin Ibrāhīm bin Ja'far al-Nu'mānī.⁶

Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-Bāqī bin Muhammad al-Basrī, a Shi'ite 'ālim of the 6th century is the author of the book entitled *Dalā'il*, and another book entitled *al-Hujaj wa al-Barāhīn fī Imāmah Amīr al-Mu'minīn wa Awlādihi al-Ahad 'Ashar A'immah al-Dīn Salawāt Allah wa Salāmuhi 'Alayhim Ajma'īn*.⁷ Another book that has been published is *Dalā'il al-Imāmah* by Muhammad bin Jarīr Tabarī, a contemporary of Shaykh Tusī. Although *al-Kharā'ij wa al-Jarā'ih* by Qutb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī elaborates in detail on the miracles of the Prophet and Imams, the author has unfortunately not mentioned his sources. This book has been summarised and translated under the title *Kifāyah al-Mu'minīn*. The Arabic version of *al-Kharā'ij* has been published in 3 volumes with the efforts of the Imam al-Mahdī ('a) Foundation.

Another early Shi'ite work at hand is the book *al-Thāqib fī al-Manāqib* by Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin 'Alī, known as Ibn Hamzah (d. after 552). This book contains narrations on the miracles of several Prophets, including Prophet Muhammad (S), as well as the miracles of Hazrat Fātimah and the Imams ('a). One of the sources of this work is *Mafākhir al-Rizā* ('a) by Hākim Nayshāburī.

Sunni scholars have also written books on this subject such as *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah* which is the title used by both Bayhaqī and Abu Na'īm Isfahanī for their works. The book *Tathbīt Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah* by Qāzī 'Abd al-Jabbar Hamdānī also follows this method, except that it has presented the discussion in kalāmī or theological form.

Notes

1. Kohlberg, Etan, *A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work - Ibn Tāwus & his Library*, pp. 308, 309.

2. Ibn Nadim, *al-Fihrist*, p. 245.

3. Al-Najāshī, al-Rijāl, p. 266.

4. Ibid, p. 81.

5. Ibid, p. 32.

6. Kohlberg, Etan, A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work – Ibn Tāwus & His Library, pp. 138, 139;

Arbilī has also quoted extensively from Himyarī's Dalā'il, refer to 'Alī bin 'Isā Arbilī and Kashf al-

Ghummah, p. 109.

.7. Muntajab al-Dīn, al-Fihrist, p. 76