

The Famous Theologian, Sheikh Mufid

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On 3rd of the Islamic month of Ramadhan in 413 AH, the famous theologian, Mohammad Ibn Mohammad ibn N'uman, known popularly as "Sheikh Mufid", passed away in Baghdad at the age of 77 and was laid to rest in Kazemain in the shrine of Imam Musa al-Kazem (AS), the 7th Infallible Successor of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA).

Over a hundred thousand people, both Shi'ites and Sunnis attended his funeral, the largest ever in Baghdad, with all weeping uncontrollably. The funeral prayer was led by his worthy student and scholastic successor, Seyyed Murtaza Alam al-Huda. He has left behind numerous works in almost all branches of Islamic sciences, some of which are: "al-Irshaad", "Ahkaam an-Nisa", "Aqsaam al-Mowla", "al-Ifsah fi'l-Imamah Amir al-Mu'minin", and "Tashih E'teqadaat al-Imamiyah" – the last named is a critical and edited version of his one-time teacher, Ibn Babwaih Shaikh Sadouq's "al-E'teqad". Here it would not be out of context to relate how he acquired the epithet "Shaikh al-Mufid" or the Most Beneficial Scholar.

It happened that his tutor suggested that he attend the lessons in theology of the Mu'tazalite scholar, Ali Ibn Eisa ar-Rummani. To quote his own words: I entered his class, and was impressed by the great number of students. So I sat at the end of the crowd, managing to creep forward as members of the assembly left. Then I saw a person enter, saying there is someone at the door from Basra who insists on being admitted. On ar-Rummani's permission the man entered, and after a long conversation, asked him: "How do you view the event of "Ghadeer" (the day the Prophet, on God's commandment, proclaimed Imam Ali [AS] as his vicegerent on 18th Zilhijja, 10 AH while returning from the Farewell Hajj pilgrimage) and the report of the "Ghar" (the incident of the cave in which Abu Bakr accompanied the Prophet on the night of Hijrah)?" Ar-Rummani replied that "the report of "Ghar" was a recognised event, while "Ghadeer" was just a narrative; and a narrative is not as mandatory as a recognised event." The man from Basra then left without making any reply. Then I came forward and said: "I have a question," and being permitted, I asked him: "What do you say about the one who fights a Just Imam?" Ar-Rummani said: "Such a person would be an infidel."

Then, after a pause, he rectified himself and said: "He would be a transgressor." I asked: "What do you say about the Commander of the Faithful, Ali Ibn Abi Taleb (AS)?" He said: "I believe he was an Imam." So I asked: "Then what do you say about the Day of Jamal and about Talha and Zubair?" Ar-Rummani retorted that both of them had repented. I said: "The Battle of Jamal is a

recognised event, while their repentance is a mere narrative." Upon hearing this, he said: "Were you present when the man from Basra put his question?" I said "yes." Then he asked: "What is your name and who is your tutor?" I said: "I am known as Ibn al-Mu'alleem, and my tutor is Abu-Abdullah al-Jual." He said: Stay where you are. "Then he entered his room and came out with a letter, instructing me to hand it over to my tutor. When I gave the letter to my tutor, he read it and laughed, saying: What transpired between you in his class? He has asked me to confer".(upon you the title of "al-Mufid" (the Most Beneficial