



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

A Historical Inquiry in the Essential Knowledge for the Concept of “Rafīḍī”

Hashem Andisheh^{1*}, Mohammad Ridha Payvandi²

1. * PhD Student in Department of Quran and Hadith, Osool-e ddin University, Qom, Iran, (Corresponding Author)

2. Assistant Professor in Department of History, Faculty of History and Islamic Civilization, Imam Sadegh Research Institute, Qom, Iran, payvandy@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 13 August 2020

Revised 10 September 2020

Accepted 05 November 2020

Key Words:

Rafīḍia

Alavi

Shia

DOI:

10.22034/IMJPL.2020.5339

DOR:

20.1001.1.26767610.2020.7.24.5.7



Abstract

SUBJECT AND OBJECTIVES: The key word “Rafīḍī” in historical sources comes in the form of “Rafīḍia”, “Rafīḍian” and “Rafīḍis” and it is derived from the word “Rafīḍī” meaning to leave, and in the theological term of the opponents of the Imamiyya denomination, it is a title that refers to all Shia sects and sometimes to a specific group and sect of Shia and sometimes to those who express love for the family of the Prophet, is applied.

METHOD AND FINDING: In this research, which has been done by library method and review of documents, various sources of Shia and Sunni hadiths have been used and an attempt has been made to point out their role in Islamic history and civilization by explaining the concept of Rafīḍī. The importance of the discussion is especially evident from the fact that the Rafīḍī discussion has caused ambiguity among Muslims, so the main question of the article was where did the origin of this naming start and what period does it go back to?

CONCLUSION: In order to answer this basic question and the subject that helps to clarify the ambiguities in this area, this article was conducted with a historical approach to expressing the problem and exploring the nature and explanation of the discussion to reach the basic question of the research.

* Corresponding Author:

Email:

hashem.andisheh@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-4462-8292

Article Address Published on the Journal Site:

http://p-l.journals.miu.ac.ir/article_5339.html

NUMBER OF REFERENCES 19	NUMBER OF AUTHORS 2	NATIONALITY OF AUTHORS (Iran)
----------------------------	------------------------	----------------------------------

Introduction

It may occur to some that in the religion of Islam there was a third branch called the “Rafīḍian”, which has been neglected in historical sources; because many do not know which of the two branches Shiites or Sunnis belong to the “Rafīḍian”.

The advantage of this research over other previous researches can be considered as expressing the difference between “Rafīḍia” and Shia synonymous words. Accordingly, the present study includes semantics, lexical and idiomatic meaning of “Rafīḍia”, “Rafīḍia” beliefs and the difference between Shia synonymous words.

Theoretical and Idiomatic Foundations of “Rafīḍia”

The keywords “Rafīḍia”, “Rafīḍian” and “Rafīḍis” have the following meanings:

1. Rafḍh

- leave working
- Doing scattered works
- Gathering in camel pasture; as people gather to travel
- Disrupting the order of camel pastures, when the

wind gathers them in places and separates them.

- The disappearance of tears in the eyes, Disturbed eyes

2. Rafīḍia

- There is a strong tendency towards denominations and turning away from other denominations, which is common in the common language.

3. Rafīḍian (Rafīḍis)

- The soldiers who left their leader and went, every group of them is rejecting, and they are the ones who also have ideas and arguments called “Rafīḍia”, and their relationship is “Rafīḍia”. (*Farahidi, 1990, Vol. 7: 29*)
- It is the name of a group of Shiites who abandoned their commander during the war and left him alone. (*Bustani, 1997, Vol. 1: 416*)

Therefore, the keyword “Rafīḍia” is an Arabic word and a sarcastic nickname for a

group of Zayd ibn Ali ibn Hossein army who left him alone in the war. Some Sunnis ironically call all Shiites Rafidis; because they believe that they have abandoned the belief in the caliphate of three caliphs.

In general, the word comes from the root “Rafdh” meaning rejection, and for the first time the Zaydis called the Shiites other than themselves “Rafidiya”; because the Imamate of Zayd ibn Ali was rejected and it seems that this is where the name came from for the Shiites.

On the other hand, the general Shiites do not like the use of this word; because it has gradually deviated from its original meaning and has been considered an allusion to abandoning religion. In other words, the person in question has turned away from religion and is a synonym for the word “Khawarij” given to a group of Muslims. (*Ibn Khaldun, 1967*)

Throughout history, Islamic groups and denominations have always used obscene titles to expel their opposition

groups, such as the lack of awareness of the masses in the Umayyad era and the policies of the rulers of that era, which has fueled this issue. Accordingly, the attribution of “Rafdh” and “Rafidiya” is one of such titles that some writers have attributed to the “Imamiyyah”.

Terminologically, the meaning and concept of “Rafidiya” is used in the following interpretations:

So, that is why “Rafidiya” said that they abandoned religion. (*Ash'ari, 1980: 89, Footnote*) “Rafdh” means abandoning the revelation and returning to the myths and superstitions of idolatry, and in other words, returning to the works and values of ignorance that a person named Abdullah ibn Saba and his followers have attributed; because he considered Imam Ali ibn Abi-Talib as a prophet and with this idea he rejected the religion of Islam. (*Dar al-Madani and al-Zuabi, Bita: 8-9*)

Some believe that the words “Rafdh” and “Rafidiya” were used from 122 AH during the

time of Zayd ibn Ali; as Baghdadi writes: The Zaidiyyah denomination is called “Rafīḍia”. (*Baghdadi, 1948: 21*)

In Khwarizmi “Mafatih al-Ulum” it is stated: The group that pledged allegiance to Zayd ibn Ali and then left him has been called a “Rafīḍia”.

In “Al-Misbah al-Mounir” he writes: “Rafīḍia” is a group of Shiites in Kufa who left Zayd ibn Ali, then this title is applied to those who exaggerated the innocence of the “Sheikhein” and allowed mockery of the companions. (*Fayoumi, 1964*)

Over time, this title was also used about the “Imamiyyah” and was recorded in books of “Religions and Denominations”; as Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ash'ari writes: “They were called “Rafīḍia” by the “Imamiyyah”, because they rejected Abu Bakr and Omar”. (*Ash'ari, 1980: 89, Footnote*)

Al-Dhahabi and Hafez in “Tahzib”, have referred to those who have mocked the “Sheikhein”.

Baghdadi, after introducing the “Saboiiyyah” as a “Rafīḍia”, calls several other groups such as the “Imamiyyah” and the “Zaidiyyah” by this name; then he writes: The “Imamiyyah” and “Zaidiyyah” denominations are among the groups and denominations that are within the Islamic Ummah; but the “Saboiiyyah” denomination is not one of the denominations of the Islamic Ummah, because Imam Ali has been called God. (*Baghdadi, 1948*)

This statement is used that the ratio of “Rafḍh” to “Imamiyyah” and “Zaidiyyah” is not correct; because they are among the Muslims and the “Rafīḍia” is one who is outside of Islam and the Islamic Ummah. In the books of denomination and religions, “Rafḍh” and “Rafīḍia” have been attributed to a group called “Saboiiyyah”; then this title has been applied to groups such as “Zaidiyyah”, “Imamiyyah”, “Kaysanites” and “Ghulat”.

Allameh Baghdadi says in “Al-Farq bayn al-Firaq” about “Saboiiyyah”:

“Saboiiyyah” was a group of followers of Abdullah bin Saba who had no external reality.

Asqalani writes:

“The one who puts Ali before Abu Bakr and Umar is a “Rafidiya” and the one who is interested in Ali and considers him one of the best and superior companions is a Shia”. (Asqalani, 1934: 333)

The word “Rafidiya” was also applied to those who loved and affection the Ahl al-Bayt; as Imam Shafi'i has said:

“If the love and affection of the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet is “Rafidh”, then people and fairies should be witnesses that I am a “Rafidiya”. (Fakhr Razi, 1934)

This indicates that whoever loved the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet, although it is Sunni, was given the title of “Rafidiya”. Also quoting Beyhaqi, when Imam Shafi'i was told that a group of the Ahl al-Bayt did not like him and whoever quoted anything in this regard, he was called a “Rafidiya”, he composed this poem:

“When we consider Ali superior, we are accused of “Rafidiya” in the eyes of those who are ignorant of the truth”. (Shabrawi Shafi'i, 2003: 27; Shablanji, 1965: 115)

On the other hand, Qazvini Razi quoted a quote from Badi Hamadani in which he said at the shrine of Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha:

“Although I am ideologically Sunni; but I am a “Rafidiya” in your friendship and even if I am busy with the righteous caliphs, I will not be unaware of you Ahl al-Bayt”. (Qazvini Razi, 1358: 218)

Therefore, if the meaning is that because of the superiority of Ali over Abu Bakr and Umar of the word “Rafīḍia” is applied to Shia, it is clear that superiority does not cause abandonment of religion; because the superiority of Imam Ali over Abu Bakr and Umar among the Shiites is due to the reasons that make him superior to the caliph; as has been confirmed by some Sunni scholars, the virtue of the Majesty has been confirmed; like the scholars of Baghdadion, including Bushr ibn Mu'ammār, Abu Ja'far al-Skafi, Abu al-Hasan Khiya Mahmoud Balkhi and his students. Also, Juba'i from Sunni scholars said: “If the narration narrated by Taer is correct, Ali is better. (*Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Vol. 1*)

He narrates that the Prophet asked God to bring the best person to his table, then Ali entered and both of them wanted heavenly food together.

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr has also said that the predecessors differed in the superiority of

Abu Bakr and Ali; people such as Salman, Abu Dharr, Miqdad, Jabir, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri and Zayd ibn Arqam, Imam Ali is considered superior to others.

Therefore, if we consider superior as a criterion of “Rafḍh”, we should consider the most of the predecessors and narrators of the hadith as “Rafīḍia”, and this kind of approach is only due to prejudice; as one of the Sunni writers has said in this regard after quoting the virtues and perfections of Imam Ali:

Ali virtues cannot be denied and the denial of virtues and the relation of “Rafḍh” to its believers can not be done except from the fanatics.

He also says: “If the narration of the Ali virtues is based on “Rafḍh” and abandonment of the Sunnah, nothing can be found from the narrators and the wisdom of the hadith, so avoid prejudice in religion and accept what is true and certain”. (*Taftazani, 1957: 230*)

Some Sunni writers, in justifying this title, have relied on a narration that is considered by experts in the hadith studies to be false. The content of this narration is as follows: The Holy Prophet said:

At the end Time, a people whose name is "Rafīḍī" will be revealed and they will reject Islam.

This narration is not reliable because of two reasons: It is not correct according to the document, as Al-Dhahabi, one of the Sunni scholars, says: This narration is fabricated and also Abu Aqil Yahya ibn Mutawakkil considered it weak and false and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr also stated that this hadith is weak for all All scholars of the biographical evaluation. (*Al-Beirut al-Shafi'i, 1957: 115*)

Assuming the authenticity and soundness of the hadith, the Prophet did not specify a specific group to be considered a "Rafīḍī" group, Perhaps the meaning of the Prophet is the same as what is stated in

another narration that appears from the land of Hejaz "Century of Satan" (*Taftazani, 1957*) and they are the ones who create sedition and corruption and invite Jews and infidels to the holy land of Islam and reject the true Islam.

The result of the discussion is that to clear that the relation of "Rafḍh" and "Rafīḍī" to the "Imamiyyah" is not correct; because the Shia have chosen no other way than the way of the Quran, Sunnah and Sireh. in this regard, Imam Sadiq said:

What happened to them with you, what do they want from you, and why do they take fault and call you a "Rafīḍī"? Yes! I swear by God, you rejected the lie and followed the truth. (Mu'izzi Malayeri, 1995, Vol. 1: 10)

It is clear here that the divisive hands among the Muslim Ummah promote such titles in order to change and tarnish the image of the school of the Ahl al-Bayt of the

Prophet.

Therefore, the word “Rafīḍī” has also been applied to those who have loved the Ahl al-Bayt; as an example was quoted from Shafi’i.

In general, it should be noted that this term does not appear in the hadiths of the Prophet and is a title given by one group to another.

Opinions of the Rafīḍīs

In order to show the incorrect of the relation of “Rafīḍī” to the Shia, it is necessary to briefly refer to some of the beliefs that have been expressed in the written works of “Religions and Denominations” as the beliefs of the Rafīḍīs; because the “Imamiyyah” do not believe in any of these beliefs; But rather consider them to be false beliefs.

Baghdadi describes the Rafīḍīs views as follows:

1. The relation of a prophet to Ali and the relation of error in conveying the revelation by Gabriel in such a

way that the Quran was revealed to Ali and Gabriel mistakenly read it to the Prophet.

2. Exaggeration about Ali ibn Abitaleb; so much so that they doubted his death and said that Ali had hidden and ascended to heaven like Isa ibn Maryam and thought that he was God and this belief spread to others such as Kaysanites and Khattabiyya and they considered Mohammad ibn Hanafiyyah and Imam Sadegh as God (*Dar al-Madani and al-Zuabi, Bitā: 8-10*)
3. Prohibition of camel meat. (*Dar al-Madani and al-Zuabi, Bitā: 16; Baghdadi, 1948: 223*)

In a general summary, and considering the study of historical documents, it can be clearly concluded that the “Imamiyyah” are separate of the beliefs expressed, and in this regard,

the school of Ahl al-Bayt was oppressed and historians and writers of “Milal wa Nihal”, have not been observed justice in this regard.

The Difference between “Rafīdī” and “Shia” Synonyms

The word Shia is a general concept that by accepted definition, includes all Shia denominations and groups such as the Zaidiyyah, the Kaysanites, and the Isma'ilism; but there are other words that differ from this general concept. The following are some synonymous words and their differences with the word “Rafīdī”:

1. Rafīdī

“Rafīdī” means rejecting and leaving something. Shia opponents often use the word to denounce and slander. (*Ameli, 1960: 43*)

It has been said about this word: Since the Shiites rejected the caliphate of the first two caliphs, they are called Rafīdī. (*Ash'ari, 1980: 16*)

Some also believe that Rafīdī refers to Shiites who left his camp due to Zayd

relatively flexible stance on the first two caliphs during his uprising. (*Mashkour, 2011: 59*)

Whichever of the two meanings is accepted, the word “Rafīdī” is not synonymous with Shia in the general sense; because this word does not include groups of Zaidiyyah.

2. Ja'fari

Imam Ja'far Sadiq, with his great efforts, gave a special jurisprudential and theological identity to the Shiites who believe in the leadership of the infallible Imams; hence, the Shiites who benefited from his teachings became known as “Ja'fari”. Today, the word “Ja'fari” is synonymous with the “Twelver” Shiites; but according to some, the Isma'ilism are also included, because they believe in the Imamate of Imam Sadiq.

3. Imamiyyah

In the time of each of the infallible Imams: The Shiites who believed in his Imamate from the children of Fatimah bint Mohammad and continued

this trajectory until the Twelfth Imam, were called “Imamiyyah”. Imamiyyah in his historical course according to different times, had other meanings such as synonyms with Shia in the time of Imam Ali; but today it has the equivalent meaning of “Twelver”. (*Shahrestani, 1956, Vol. 1*)

4. Proper

This word is mostly used in jurisprudential texts and it is in contrast to the popular word meaning the majority of Muslims and means Shia. The more special meaning of this word in the jurisprudential texts of the “Twelver” or “Imamiyyah” is that they derive their jurisprudence from the twelve infallible Imams.

5. Alawi

It seems that this word sometimes referred to the Shia theological tendency in the sense of believing in the superiority of Imam Ali; but later it was used more in the relative sense, which is the expression of the relative dependence of individuals on Imam Ali .

6. Fatemi

This word is mostly used in a relative sense and is used to explain the distinction between the children of Imam Hasan and Imam Hossein from the children of Mohammad ibn Hanafiyyah, to whom those who attributed themselves; because Mohammad ibn Hanafiyyah was not one of the children of Fatimah bint Mohammad, although he was among her children.

7. Talebi

This word has a relative meaning; but its scope is more than the previous two words. “Talebi” means the children of Abotaleb, whose children are included through other than Imam Ali. The exact understanding of this word is obtained by studying the book “Maghatel Al-Talebin” by Abolfaraj Isfahani, in which he mentions the uprisings of all the Taliban, including the uprisings of the sons of Ja'far ibn Abotaleb.

Conclusion

During the life of the Holy Prophet, there were no religious differences among the Muslim Ummah; however, after his death and from the very first day, the dispute over the caliphate and Imamate divided the Muslim ummah into two branches, Shiites and Sunnis.

Therefore, the vacuum of authority and belief leader accepted by all Muslims is the first reason for the differences and the emergence of various denominations, including the Rafidīs, and the origin of it.

List of References

1. Ameli, Syed Mohsen Amin (1960). **Shiites in their Historical Path**. Qom: Encyclopedia of Islamic Jurisprudence.
2. Ash'ari, Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Ismail (1980). **Maghalat al-Eslamiyin wa Ekhtelaf al-Mosallin**. Translated by Mohsen Moayedi. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Publications.
3. Baghdadi, Abdul-Qahir ibn Tahir (1948). **Al-Farq bayn al-Firaq**. Tehran: Haghghat Bookstore.
4. Al-Beirut al-Shaffi, Mohammad ibn Darvish (1957). **Asna al-Matalib fi Ahadits Muhtalifah al-Maratib**. Beirut: Dar al Kotob al Ilmiyah.
5. Bustani, Fouad Afram (1997). **Arabic-Persian Dictionary (Translated of "Al-Monjid")**. Translated by Ridha Mahyar. Edition 2. Qom: Islamic Publications Office.
6. Dar Al-Madani, Hashim al-Daftar. and Mohammad Ali al-Zuabi (Bita). **Who are the Rafidians?** Translated by Aliridha Khosravani. Qom: Taban Publications.

7. Fakhr Razi, Mohammad ibn Umar (1934). **Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir (Mafatih Al-Ghayb)**. Beirut: Dar Ehya' at-Turath al-Arabi.
8. Farahidi, Khalil ibn Ahmad (1990). **Kitab al-'Ayn**. Edition 2. Qom: Hijrat Publication.
9. Fayoumi, Ahmad ibn Mohammad (1964). **Al-Misbah al-Mounir**. Edition 3. Qom: Dar Al-Hijrah.
10. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, 'Abd al-Hamid bin Hibat-Allah (1984). **Sharh Nahj al-Balagha**. Qom: Ayatollah Marashi Najafi Library.
11. Ibn Hajar Asqalani, Shahab al-Din (1934). **Hadyu al-Sari Muqaddimah Fath al-Bari**. Beirut: Dar El-Marefah.
12. Ibn Khaldun, Abdul-Rahman ibn Muhammed (1967). **Muqaddimah**. Translated by Mohammad Parvin Gonabadi, Tehran: Scientific and Academic Publishing.
13. Mashkour, Mohammad Javad (2011). **History of Shia and Denominations of Islam up to the Fourth Century AH**. Edition 9. Tehran: Ishraqi Publications.
14. Mu'izzi Malayeri, Ismail (1995). **Jame Ahadith Shia fi Ahkam al-Sharia**. Qom: Al-Sohof Publications.
15. Qazvini Razi, Abdul-Jalil ibn Abul-Hosseini (1961). **Al-Naqz**. Tehran: Published by Mir Jalal-ed-Din Mohaddes.
16. Shablanji, Mo'mena ibn Al-Hasna (1965). **Nūr al-Abşār fi Manaqib Al al-Bayt al-Nabi al-Mukhtar**. Beirut: Dar al-Qalam Publication.
17. Shabrawi Shafi'i, Abdullah ibn Mohammad (2003). **Ettehaf Behobb al-Ashraf**. Qom: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyah.
18. Shahrestani, Abu al-Fatah Mohammad ibn Abd al-Karim (1956). **Al-Milal wa al-Nihal**. Translated by Afdal al-Din Sadr. Tehran: Taban Publications.
19. Taftazani, Sa'ad al-Din Masud ibn Umar (1957). **Sharh-ul Aqaid in Nasafiyye**. Beirut: Dar al Kotob al Ilmiyah.

AUTHOR BIOSKETCHES

Andisheh, Hashem. PhD Student in Department of Quran and Hadith, Osool-e ddin University, Qom, Iran.

✓ Email: hashem.andisheh@gmail.com

✓ ORCID: 0000-0002-4462-8292

Payvandi, Mohammad Ridha. Assistant Professor in Department of History, Faculty of History and Islamic Civilization, Imam Sadegh Research Institute, Qom, Iran.

✓ Email: payvandy@gmail.com

✓ ORCID: 0000-0002-7426-3124

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Andisheh, Hashem. and Mohammad Ridha Payvandi (2020). A Historical Inquiry in the Essential Knowledge for the Concept of “Rafīdī”. *International Multidisciplinary Journal of PURE LIFE*. 7 (24): 93-105.

DOI: 10.22034/IMJPL.2020.5339

DOR: 20.1001.1.26767610.2020.7.24.5.7

URL: http://p-l.journals.miu.ac.ir/article_5339.html

