





Analysis of the Jurisprudential Approach of the Sheikhism School of Karim Khaniyyah Kerman in Comparison with the Akhbari School

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In the history of Shia jurisprudence, the Akhbari school and its ideology emerged before the Usuli school and the Sheikhism school. Throughout the history of jurisprudence, it experienced ups and downs as a result of its confrontation with the Mujtahids and Usulis. When the Sheikhism school emerged alongside the dominance and superiority of the Usuli school over the Akhbari school, the Usulis had the same confrontational stance with the scholars of Sheikhism, particularly due to the specific theological views of Sheikh Ahmad Ahsa'i in certain Shiite doctrinal principles. The method of jurisprudence in the Sheikhism and Akhbari schools is similar in many respects but also differs in some aspects. Sheikhism shares some similarities with the Usuli school but also has significant differences, and it should, in fact, be regarded as an intermediary school between the Usuli and Akhbari schools. This classification is due to a crucial element called "the wisdom of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them)," which has both philosophical and theological dimensions. This concept plays a significant role in the Sheikhism school's jurisprudential principles and serves as the main distinction between the Sheikhism school and both the Akhbari and Usuli schools. This research follows a descriptive-analytical method, with the main focus on the views of scholars from the Karim Khaniyyah Kerman branch, which is considered the most important and famous branch of Sheikhism.

Keywords: *Ijtihad, Hadith, Akhbari, Usuli, Jurisprudence, Sheikhism, Assumption, Knowledge.*

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1. Introduction

The Akhbari school was officially established in the early 11th century AH by a scholar named Mirza Muhammad Amin Isfahani (d. 1036 AH). His most significant work in opposing ijthihad and the Usuli

methodology is the book *Al-Fawa'id al-Madaniyyah fi al-Radd 'ala man Qala bi al-Ijtihad wa al-Taqlaad fi Nafs al-Ahkam al-Ilahiyyah*. However, in the 3rd and 4th centuries AH, the holy city of Qom was the main center for famous hadith scholars, such as Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (d. 329 AH), author of



the first book of the Four Books of Shia Hadith, Al-Kafi. Shaykh Yusuf Bahrani, a well-known Akhbari scholar, refers to al-Kulayni as the "leader of the Akhbaris" (Bahraani, 1984, 2003). Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Babawayh Qumi, known as Shaykh Saduq (d. 381 AH), author of the hadith book *Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih*, is also considered one of the great hadith scholars of the 4th century AH. Martyr Muhammad Baqir Sadr stated regarding the difference between later Akhbaris and earlier hadith scholars: "There is a difference between Akhbarism as a jurisprudential school founded by the late Isfahani and Akhbarism as a stage in the development of jurisprudence. Before Shaykh al-Tusi authored *Al-Mabsut*, Shia jurists would limit themselves to citing the text of the hadiths as the ruling of a matter and never went beyond the text of the hadiths or addressed the ruling of issues outside of the narrations. However, Shaykh al-Tusi in *Al-Mabsut* opposed this method of jurisprudence and reasoning, applying legal reasoning to issues beyond the hadiths and aligning them with general principles" (Sadr, 1977). Throughout history, the Akhbari school has been divided into two distinct groups: the first group consisted of extreme and rigid individuals who rejected all the principles of *ijtihad*, except for the hadiths narrated from the Imams (peace be upon them), such as the late Isfahani and Shaykh Hurr al-'Amili. The second group consisted of moderate Akhbaris who believed that the apparent meanings of the Qur'an and the hadiths of the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) were the foundation for deriving legal rulings. Scholars like the late Fayd Kashani, Shaykh Yusuf Bahrani, and Sayyid Na'matullah al-Jaza'iri belonged to this group (Mohseni, 1992). The term "Akhbari" has two meanings. The first refers to a hadith scholar, applicable to individuals like al-Kulayni and al-Saduq, while the second refers to those opposed to the Usuli school, which is the meaning intended in this paper. After the rise of the Akhbari school and its dominance over the Mujtahids and Usulis, this situation lasted for nearly two centuries until the late Allama Wahid al-Bihbahani (d. 1205 AH), an Usuli and prominent Mujtahid, ended the dominance of the Akhbaris by writing the book *Al-Ijtihad wa al-Akhbar* in opposition to Akhbarism. He also trained great disciples such as Allama Sayyid Mahdi Bahr al-Uloom (d. 1212 AH), Shaykh Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita' (d. 1227 AH), Sayyid Ali Tabatabai (d. 1231 AH), and Mirza Abu al-Qasim Qumi, known as al-Muhaqqiq al-Qumi (d. 1231

AH), thereby solidifying the foundations of the Usuli school. These disciples, in turn, mentored major Usuli scholars such as Allama al-Naraqi (d. 1245 AH) and Shaykh Muhammad Hasan Isfahani, author of *Jawahir al-Kalam* (d. 1266 AH), until the school reached its peak under the leadership of Shaykh al-Azam Ansari (1214–1281 AH), a prominent disciple of these scholars. After Shaykh Ansari, the Akhbari school began to decline (Gorji, 1998).

During the same period, the Sheikhism school, associated with Ahmad ibn Zayn al-Din al-Ahsa'i (1166–1241 AH), emerged. Al-Ahsa'i was born in the village of Mutayrfi in the Al-Ahsa region of eastern Arabia. According to his disciples and followers, he had no specific teacher in various sciences and claimed to have received most of his knowledge through divine inspiration and visions from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) (Ibrahim, 1971). Based on these inner inspirations, he formulated the theological and philosophical principles of Sheikhism, offering specific views on some of the Shia doctrinal principles, which led to opposition from some Usuli scholars. This eventually resulted in his followers being known as the Sheikhis and distinguished from other Twelver Shia. After the death of Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsa'i, his most prominent disciple, Sayyid Kazim al-Rashti (1212–1259 AH), succeeded him and continued to expound upon the principles of Sheikhism. Following the death of Sayyid Kazim al-Rashti, one of his key disciples, Hajj Muhammad Karim Khan Kermani (1225–1288 AH), focused more than any other student on elaborating the theological, philosophical, jurisprudential, and Usuli principles of Sheikhism. After Sayyid Kazim's death, the Sheikhism school experienced schisms, and the branch associated with Hajj Muhammad Karim Khan Kermani became known as the Karim Khaniyyah branch. This branch, founded by his descendants, remains the most important, influential, and well-known branch of Sheikhism.

This paper focuses on examining the jurisprudential method of the Sheikhism school, particularly from the perspective of the scholars of the Karim Khaniyyah branch in Kerman. When comparing the jurisprudential methods of the Sheikhism school with those of the Usuli and Akhbari schools, it is important to note that the Sheikhism school cannot be precisely categorized as part of either the Usuli or Akhbari schools. Despite the views of some scholars in the field of Islamic sectarian history,

it is incorrect to classify Sheikhism as an Akhbari methodology in terms of jurisprudence (Sharif Razi, 1953). Unfortunately, contemporary researchers and theologians have mostly focused on the theological and philosophical aspects of Sheikhism and have addressed the points of disagreement between Sheikhism and the mainstream Twelver Shia in doctrinal matters. However, they have failed to explore the unique and innovative views of Sheikhism scholars on the jurisprudential and Usuli foundations of Shia thought, and no independent scholarly work has been published in this regard. The primary reason for mistakenly considering Sheikhism as an Akhbari school is that researchers have not thoroughly examined the jurisprudential and Usuli works of the scholars of the Karim Khaniyyah branch of Sheikhism. Instead, due to the numerous similarities between Sheikhism and the moderate Akhbaris in jurisprudential principles and methods, they have inaccurately made this assessment. This paper aims to examine the jurisprudential method of the Sheikhism school, particularly as articulated by the scholars of the Karim Khaniyyah branch in Kerman, by focusing on their specialized works and providing a more accurate conclusion.

2. Examining the Views of the Sheikhīyah School on the Four Sources of Jurisprudence in Comparison with the Akhbārīyah School

The jurisprudential foundations of the Akhbārīyah school share many similarities with the Sheikhīyah school. As previously mentioned, these points of convergence are so significant that they have led some researchers to consider the Sheikhīyah school to be of the Akhbārī school in terms of its jurisprudential principles. An important point to note in this regard is that the Sheikhīyah school has many similarities with moderate Akhbārī scholars, but not so much with the extremist Akhbārī figures. The similarities and differences between these two schools can be better understood by examining the issues discussed below, as recognizing these points will also shed light on the methods of jurisprudential reasoning and the way of deriving legal rulings in both schools. In this section, we will explore the perspectives of these two schools on the four sources of jurisprudence (the Book, Sunnah, Consensus, and Reason) and clarify the similarities and

differences in the views of Akhbārī and Sheikhīyah scholars.

2.1. *The Apparent Meaning of the Book from the Perspective of Akhbārīyah and Sheikhīyah*

From the perspective of extremist Akhbārī figures, such as Mohammad Amin Isfahānī, the sources and proofs of legal rulings are limited to the Sunnah, and this group considers only the traditions transmitted through the Imams (peace be upon them) to be authoritative. They do not consider the apparent meanings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) as binding unless they are explained by a narration from the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) (Isfahani, 1984). On the other hand, moderate Akhbārī scholars regard the apparent meanings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Infallibles (peace be upon them) as sources for deriving legal rulings. The late Sheikh Yūsuf Bahrānī quotes the view of the late Fayḍ Kāshānī in the fifth introduction of the exegesis *Ṣāfi*, stating: "Those who claim that the meaning of the Qur'anic verses cannot be understood are, in fact, revealing their own limited intellectual capacity. While their claim is true regarding their own limited understanding, they are certainly mistaken in assuming that others are similarly incapable" (Bahraani, 1984, 2003).

Hāj Muhammad Karīm Khān Kermānī, a prominent scholar of the Sheikhīyah school in Kermān, who is associated with the Karimkhānī branch of the school, wrote a brief Arabic treatise titled *Fā'idah fī 'Ilm al-Qur'ān 'inda Āl Muḥammad (PBUH)*. In this treatise, he argues that in any issue, it is permissible to rely on the apparent meanings of the Qur'an if it has not been specifically rejected by the Infallibles (peace be upon them). He emphasizes that relying on the apparent meanings of the Qur'an is not "interpretation based on personal opinion" but simply understanding the words in their clear, literal sense. He further asserts that when it is said that the knowledge of the Qur'an is with the Infallibles (peace be upon them), this does not mean that one cannot understand the apparent meaning of the Qur'an. Just as the Qur'an is comprehensible to Arabic speakers, all individuals are instructed in the narrations of the Infallibles (peace be upon them) to adhere to the Qur'an, reflect upon its verses, and engage with its meanings. Scholars have also been instructed to compare isolated narrations with the Qur'an to distinguish

between authentic and weak narrations, and in fact, all Muslims are called to adhere to both the Qur'an and the Sunnah together.

Hāj Muhammad Karīm Khān Kermānī affirms that the apparent meanings of the Qur'an are truthful, and relying on these apparent meanings is obligatory. However, he clarifies that this does not make us Qur'anic interpreters; we do not, by our own opinion, divert the meaning of the Qur'an from its apparent text. It is essential to take the Qur'an's apparent meaning as it is. The non-apparent meanings of the Qur'an can only be explained and clarified by the Infallibles (peace be upon them), and they alone determine the abrogating and abrogated verses. Shi'ah followers only take the apparent meanings of the Qur'an. According to Karīm Khān Kermānī, the reliance on the apparent meanings of the Qur'an is appropriate when all Arab linguists and Arabic scholars agree on it, but ambiguous, unclear, or doubtful meanings cannot be taken literally (Kermani, 2015b, 2015c, 2015d, 2015e).

What is evident from these statements is that moderate Akhbārī scholars, such as Bahrānī and Fayḍ Kāshānī, share the view of the Sheikhīyah scholars that the apparent meanings of the Qur'an are valid sources and that the divine legislator has instructed us to adhere to the apparent meanings of the Book.

2.2. *The Position of Tradition among the Akhbari Sect and Shaykhis*

In the previous discussion, we mentioned that the radical Akhbari scholars do not consider the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) as an authority and believe that non-infalsible individuals cannot directly refer to the hadiths and narrations transmitted by the Prophet (PBUH) (Al-Sayed Ghafour, 2005).

Muhammad Amin Isfahani in this regard states: "In the verses of the Holy Qur'an, the topics of abrogation (naskh), restriction (taqyid), specification (takhasus), and interpretation (ta'wil) are discussed, and understanding these matters without referring to the reports and hadiths of the infallible (Ahlul Bayt) is impossible. Similarly, these matters are discussed in the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH), and understanding them without referring to the hadiths of the Imams (Ahlul Bayt) is also impossible. The Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH), like the Qur'an, contains both clear (muhkam) and ambiguous (mutashabih) verses, abrogated

(mansukh) and abrogating (nasikh), restricted (muqayyad) and specific (khass), etc. Just as these matters prevent the apparent meanings of the Qur'an from being authoritative, they also prevent the apparent meanings of the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) from being authoritative." (Isfahani, 1984).

Therefore, according to this group of Akhbari scholars, deriving legal rulings from the apparent meanings of the Prophet's (PBUH) Sunnah is not permissible. However, more moderate Akhbari scholars, such as the late Sayyid Nemat Allah Jazayeri, the author of "Hada'iq," and the late Fayz, did not accept Isfahani's opinion and argued that all narrations, whether from the Prophet (PBUH) or the other infallible Imams (Ahlul Bayt), are authoritative; just as they did not accept Isfahani's stance regarding the apparent meanings of the Qur'an (Mohseni, 1992).

The Shaykhi scholars on this issue are similar to the earlier Akhbari scholars, as they believe that the reports and Sunnah are interpretations of the Book of God (the Qur'an); thus, they are similar in matters like abrogation (naskh), restriction (taqyid), clear (muhkam) and ambiguous (mutashabih), and brief (mujmal) and explanatory (mubayyan), except for the issue of abrogation, which was severed after the death of the Prophet (PBUH). If there is any abrogation in the speech of the Imams (Ahlul Bayt), it is in the Sunnah and recommended acts (mustahabb) and not in obligatory duties (farayid). Haj Muhammad Karim Khan Kermani, the founder of the Kermani branch, has a book titled "Fasl al-Khitab," which is a collection of reports in eight volumes. In this book, he narrates three hadiths on this subject:

1. It was said to Imam Sadiq (A.S): "Why do some people narrate from so-and-so, while they are not accused of lying, yet their narrations contradict yours?" He replied, "The hadith can be abrogated just like the Qur'an."
2. It was said to the Imam: "Tell me about the companions of Muhammad (PBUH). Did they speak the truth about Muhammad (PBUH) or lie?" He replied, "No, they spoke the truth." It was then asked, "Why is there disagreement?" He replied, "A man would come to the Prophet (PBUH) and ask a question. The Prophet would give him an answer. Then later, the Prophet would receive a new answer which would

abrogate the first response. Thus, some hadiths abrogate others."

- From Imam Ali (A.S), it is narrated: "The command of the Prophet (PBUH) is like the Qur'an. It contains abrogating (nasikh) and abrogated (mansukh), specific (khass) and general (aam), clear (muhkam) and ambiguous (mutashabih), just as the Qur'an contains these attributes." (Kermani, 1973).

After citing these hadiths, the Shaykhi scholars argue that it is clear from these three hadiths that some hadiths have been abrogated. However, it must be noted that today, knowledge of abrogation (naskh) and being specific (khass) and general (aam), clear (muhkam) and ambiguous (mutashabih) in the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) is beyond our capacity, except for what has been explicitly shown to us through the Ahlul Bayt. Therefore, it can be said that following the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) is only possible through the hadiths of the Ahlul Bayt. If we follow the Sunnah of the community, it is because of the approval and confirmation of the Imam (A.S) (Ibrahim).

However, in practice and in issuing fatwas, the Shaykhi scholars act similarly to moderate Akhbari scholars and consider both the Prophet's (PBUH) hadiths and the hadiths from other infallible Imams (Ahlul Bayt) as authoritative. They have a broad approach in this matter, and in their Usul (principles) books, they have dedicated a chapter to the topic of the validation of hadiths, which we will review in the next section. Before delving into the topic of hadith validation, it should be noted that the Akhbari scholars believe that all narrations from the Imams (Ahlul Bayt) recorded in the reliable hadith collections, especially in the four major books (Kutub al-Arba'a), are all authentic and unquestionable, and there is no need for examining the chains of transmission of these hadiths. They strongly oppose Allama Hilli's classification of hadiths into four categories: authentic (sahih), good (hasan), reliable (muwathaq), and weak (da'if), considering such a classification as contrary to the methodology of the great companions of the Imams (Ahlul Bayt) and as being borrowed from the Sunnis. (Isfahani, 1984).

The late Allama Majlisi (d. 1070 AH) on the authenticity of narrations from the four major hadith collections stated that the early companions did not limit "sahih" to a specific chain of transmission, and many of the hadiths

narrated by Kulayni, which are considered disconnected (mursal), were actually transmitted by Sadouq and others with proper chains. Hence, "sahih" as used by the early scholars is of a much higher level than the "sahih" classification used by later scholars. Thus, the mursal hadiths of Kulayni and Sadouq, or even all the hadiths narrated by them in *al-Kafi* and *Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih*, can be considered "sahih" because the testimony of these two great scholars is no less significant than the testimony of the companions of the Imams (Ahlul Bayt) (Majlisi, 1993).

Haj Muhammad Karim Khan Kermani, in his treatise *Fawa'id fi Tashih al-Akhbar*, believes that the hadiths found in the hadith collections are authentic, and the opponents of this view have not presented conclusive evidence to refute the accuracy of their stance. The evidence supports the opinion of the Akhbari scholars, and there is no need for further validation of these hadith collections. We can refer to all the hadiths from these collections and base our reasoning on them, as we are under the observation and knowledge of the Imam of the Time (A.S), who is fully aware of this matter, and we rely on the guidance of the Imam (A.S) (Kermani, 1976, 2015a).

In this way, Kermani effectively argues that the Shaykhi scholars have gone further than even the Akhbari scholars who only consider the hadiths of the four major books to be authentic. The Shaykhi scholars argue that not only are the hadiths in the four major books authentic, but also the narrations from the Imams (Ahlul Bayt) found in other hadith collections are valid and trustworthy. The primary reason for this belief is the theory of the confirmation (tasdiq) of the Imam (A.S), which Kermani elaborates on in his works. This will be briefly reviewed in the next section.

2.2.1. *The Correction of Reports as a Fundamental Factor in Explaining the Sheikhism Approach to Jurisprudence*

The term "correctness" in its literal sense means "authenticity, correctness, truth, reality, health, and credibility" (Maalouf, 2006). In the technical sense, it refers to the reasons why the Sheikhism school considers the reports transmitted from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) to be correct and free from flaws. As a result, they act upon these narrations. These reasons or methods are commonly referred to as the "methods of

correcting reports." In this context, correctness refers to legal correctness, with the explanation that worship is to act in accordance with the Islamic legal ruling, not based on ordinary matters or psychological states such as certainty, doubt, or suspicion that may arise involuntarily in the human mind. Therefore, when determining the correctness of the reports transmitted from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), one must refer to their legal rulings and avoid relying on personal psychological states (Ibrahim).

The jurists of Sheikhism consider the scholar's duty to be the recognition of the reliability of a hadith narrator. They believe that the guidance of the transmission of divine rulings down to the last individual who narrates them for the Shi'a is the responsibility of the Imam (peace be upon him). The only obligation upon us is to recognize the reliability of the last narrator and accept whatever they report, without doubt. As Imam al-Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance) mentioned in his esteemed letter: "No excuse remains for any of our followers in doubting what is transmitted by our trusted narrators" (Tusi, 1992, 2003). However, they do not consider the science of rijal (the science of narrators) to be essential, arguing that if it were necessary, the Imams (peace be upon them) would have instructed us to study the conditions of hadith narrators. They view the study of the conditions of narrators as an impossible and unreasonable task, as it is not feasible to gain knowledge about individuals who lived a thousand years ago or to achieve certainty about the opinions of the past scholars of rijal. Furthermore, they argue that if one does not need absolute certainty, then such anxiety and doubt will inevitably persist even without referring to the science of rijal. They claim that referring to the science of rijal does not provide certainty about the narrators (Ibrahim, 1973b).

From the perspective of the akhbari school, the sciences of hadith criticism and rijal have little benefit. The transmission of hadiths is often mentioned in akhbari texts simply for barakah (blessing) and to honor the narrators (Beshteh, 2011). Sheikh Yusuf Bahrani maintains that the hadiths in the major collections, particularly al-Kafi, al-Faqih, al-Tahdhib, and al-Istibsar, have been universally accepted across time and cities (Bahraani, 1984, 2003). Therefore, there is no need to correct them in the present time, as they have reached such a level of authenticity and widespread acceptance

that they cannot be denied. Since the practice of early Muslims was to transmit hadiths in a chain leading directly to the Imams (peace be upon them), he follows this established approach (Beshteh, 2011).

The scholars of the Sheikhism school believe that the method of correcting reports does not require the science of rijal. They argue that the scholar's duty is to take narrations from trustworthy individuals, consider the internal indications of the reports themselves, and compare them with the Quran and Sunnah. This method has been practiced since the early days of Islam and continues to be the standard approach. Additionally, reliance on the Imam's (peace be upon him) approval and confirmation of a narration is crucial, as the Imam would not confirm an incorrect narration. Through this approach, the jurist obtains legal certainty regarding the correctness of the reports. The Sheikhism school views the science of rijal and the classification of hadiths into categories such as authentic, good, reliable, and weak as innovations of the Sunni tradition. They believe the origin of the science of rijal is rooted in the Arab science of genealogy, which was prevalent among the Arabs, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not consider it a legitimate science. Sunni scholars, lacking belief in an Imam who preserves the religion and the reports of the Prophet, resorted to this method. Some Shi'a scholars, starting with Alama Hilli and his teacher Sayyid Ibn Tawus, followed the Sunni approach in this regard. Likewise, the Sheikhism school believes that some Shi'a scholars have adopted the Sunni practice of following presumptive evidence, even though the foundational principle of the Shia sect is the necessity of the existence of an infallible Imam in every era to safeguard the religion from distortion, misinterpretation, and innovation (Ibrahim, 1973b).

Considering the views of the Sheikhism jurists, it can be concluded that the primary reason for obtaining legal certainty about the correctness of reports and narrations is the divine confirmation by the infallible Imam (peace be upon him).

2.2.2. Analysis of Imam's (AS) "Tasdid" Theory from the Perspective of the Shia Shikhis

"Tasdid" in Arabic means affirmation and confirmation (Dehkhoda, 1998). In the terminology of the Shia Shikhis, it refers to the belief that when we are certain that the reports and hadiths transmitted to us through

trustworthy narrators are the same words and rulings that Allah has intended for us, and that they have been preserved and delivered to us by Imam Mahdi (AS)—meaning that they have not been invalidated and no evidence has been presented to question their authenticity—then such reports and hadiths are regarded as confirmed and affirmed by Allah and the Imam (AS). This belief arises from the understanding that we consider the Imam (AS) to be present, observing, and capable of acting in both the material and spiritual realms, and that He is entrusted with preserving the faith throughout all times. We believe that He never neglects this responsibility. Therefore, we deduce that the Imam (AS) oversees the transmission and communication of reports across ages and centuries, intervening when necessary to ensure that the desired reports reach the jurists and believers at any given time. If we accept the reports from trustworthy narrators, ensuring there is no contradiction with the Quran and Sunnah, and knowing that they are under the Imam's (AS) supervision and confirmation, we do not harbor any doubts regarding the authenticity of these reports. In fact, the reason for Tasdid is to achieve certainty in the authenticity of the reports of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS). Without this confirmation, there would be no way to obtain knowledge or certainty about the authenticity of the reports, and the only option would be to act based on doubt, which the scholars of Usul (principles of Islamic jurisprudence) have rejected. Without belief in Tasdid, real confidence and peace of heart about the authenticity of reports cannot be achieved. If we observe the real and existing effects of Tasdid in the world, we will undoubtedly reach religious certainty in our faith (Ibrahim).

According to the Shia Shikhis, some Usuli scholars, relying on the science of Rijal (biographical analysis of narrators), consider many solitary reports (akhbar ahad) to be weak and dismiss them, claiming that important matters such as the principles of faith, religious beliefs, or the virtues of the Imams (AS) cannot be based on them. These scholars assert that such knowledge should be based on mutawatir (consecutive) reports. However, the Shia Shikhis maintain that even solitary reports reaching the Shia may yield certain and firm religious knowledge. The condition for this is that the reports must come from trustworthy narrators and must not contradict the Quran and Sunnah. They present

the confirmation of the Imam (AS) as the most important means and guiding light for authenticating reports. Based on the noble hadith, "As for the incidents that occur, refer to the narrators of our hadith, for they are my proof upon you, and I am the proof of Allah upon them" (Sadouq, 1977), and relying on the Imam Mahdi's (AS) confirmation, Shia Shikhis believe that all reports received through trustworthy narrators, provided they do not contradict the Quran and Sunnah, are authentic and must be acted upon. They base their beliefs on these reports, whether solitary or mutawatir. They also regard the requirement for reports to be accompanied by contextual evidence as fulfilled when the reports come from trustworthy narrators, which serves as sufficient evidence. This belief is also in line with the view of the Akhbari school, which holds that as long as a solitary report does not contradict the Quran and Sunnah, it is believed to be authentic. As long as the narrator is not corrupt, there is no need to search for conflicting evidence. They argue that most of the reports we have today are solitary reports, and the ratio of mutawatir reports, as defined by the Usuli scholars, is less than one percent. If we consider only mutawatir reports as valid, many of the principles and beliefs that are currently accepted by the Shia community would be called into question. How is it that we act upon such solitary reports in jurisprudence, with many subsidiary rulings based on them, but avoid using them in matters of belief and doctrine? Are these types of reports truly valid and capable of providing certainty, or not? And should we acquire the religion of God from multiple sources today? (Ibrahim). In conclusion, the Shia Shikhis assert: "In the time of the occultation of Imam Mahdi (AS), when nothing but these reports remains with us, can we dismiss many of them without sufficient reason, depriving ourselves of even the existing knowledge? Certainly, God's mercy upon His servants is far greater than to deprive them of the essential knowledge of faith. According to the Hadith of Thaqaalayn, after the Prophet (PBUH), the Quran and His family remain among us. But we have no access to the hands of the Imams (AS) today. So, apart from their reports and teachings, what do we have? Moreover, the duty to act upon the reports conveyed by Imam Mahdi (AS) only depends on the trustworthiness of the narrator, and there is no requirement for the report to be mutawatir. As stated in

the famous narration, "There is no excuse for any of our followers..." (Ibrahim).

2.3. *Explanation of the Views of the Shia Shikhis and Akhbaris on the Proof of Ijma' (Consensus)*

There is consensus among the Akhbari scholars regarding the non-authenticity of Ijma' (consensus). Even moderate Akhbaris, such as the late Shaikh Hada'iq, Fayz Kashani, and Sayyid Na'matollah Jazayeri, agree with the view of Istaraabadi. Istaraabadi rejects Ijma' among the Sunni scholars, and he does not accept Ijma' among the Usuli Shia scholars either. He argues that even if Ijma' is accepted as the basis for a ruling, as claimed by al-Muhaqqiq al-Hilli and others, it ultimately returns to a report, not Ijma' as a principle (Mohseni, 1992).

Among the Shia Shikhis, Ijma' is not accepted as an independent source of proof. In fact, Shia Shikhis accept Ijma' only when it is supported by evidence from the Quran and Sunnah. The Shia Shikhis argue that these consensus-based terms, which were established by the early scholars, particularly the Sunni scholars, were intended to provide more grounds for their ijihad (independent juristic reasoning). These terms do not have any basis in the Quran, and there is no text in the Quran that supports them. In the time of the Prophet (PBUH), such terms did not exist, and after the Sunni scholars introduced them, they sought verses from the Quran to justify the validity of Ijma'. They found two verses: 1) "And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has been clear to him, and follows other than the way of the believers, We will give him what he has chosen and drive him into Hell" (An-Nisa: 115) and 2) "And if you disagree about anything, refer it to Allah and His Messenger..." (An-Nisa: 59). These two verses are taken as proof for the validity of a necessary and general Ijma' that all believers agree upon, which reflects the essential beliefs of Islam and is binding. However, the Shia Shikhis argue that the claim of Ijma' in a specific matter must be supported by evidence from the Quran and Sunnah. They emphasize that Ijma' in itself is not binding unless it is supported by such evidence. If Ijma' contradicts the Quran and Sunnah, it is invalid, and if it has no supporting evidence from the Quran and Sunnah, it is not authoritative. The Shia Shikhis stress that only that which is supported by divine revelation and the teachings of the Imams (AS) is authoritative, and no

consensus of scholars, whether or not it is based on Ijma', can contradict these sources (Ibrahim, 1967).

2.4. *Examination of the Position of Reason as Evidence from the Perspective of the Akhbari and Sheikhie Schools*

There is a consensus among the Akhbari scholars, both in the traditional and modern branches, regarding the non-legitimacy of reason. All Akhbari scholars consider the use of reason as evidence to be an innovation (bid'ah) introduced by the Sunni scholars, and they strongly criticize the Usuli scholars for acknowledging the legitimacy of reason. The late Seyed Naematullah Jazayeri stated on this matter: "The view that Akhbaris reject all forms of rational evidence is a correct and valid one; because the Divine Lawgiver has closed the door to reason and has prohibited it from interfering in Divine rulings" (Jazayeri, 2022).

The late Allama Majlisi also holds that reason, when used independently, may lead to error in its inference and must follow the revealed law (Shari'ah) to avoid such errors. He stated: "The infallible Imams (peace be upon them) have closed the door to reason after themselves and have commanded adherence to their guidance in all matters. They prohibited reliance on imperfect reason and emphasized that the term 'reason' in the Qur'an and Hadith refers only to the perfect reason of the infallible Imams, not the imperfect reason of non-infallible individuals" (Majlisi, 1995).

In the Sheikhie school, reason is not considered an independent source of evidence. Sheikhie jurists use the term "rational evidences illuminated by transmitted sources" in their legal reasoning, meaning they accept rational evidence only within the framework and under the guidance of the light of the Imams' teachings. They base this position on the verse: "Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and argue with them in ways that are best. Your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His way and who is guided" (Qur'an, An-Nahl: 125). In their reasoning, they typically present the rational arguments in three categories: 1) wisdom, 2) good advice, and 3) arguing in the best manner. Regarding the legitimacy of reason, they argue that the narrations about the legitimacy of reason can be divided into two categories: first, narrations that indiscriminately support the legitimacy of reason, and second, narrations that provide further interpretation

and clarification, prohibiting reliance on personal opinions and conjecture. They do not accept the legitimacy of partial or independent reasoning by itself. In this context, when a rational person observes the disagreement among scholars, noting that some believe in the absolute legitimacy of individual reason and personal opinion, while others, relying on the second category of narrations, forbid such a view and deny its legitimacy, they notice that the narrations supporting the legitimacy of reason are few, whereas those prohibiting it are numerous and well-established. Given that the rejection of ambiguous or unclear narrations is an obligation, they prefer the specific and detailed narrations over the general and ambiguous ones. As a result, they may doubt the independent legitimacy of partial reasoning and, with further reflection, recognize that following the opinion of those who accept such reasoning may often contradict the Book and the Sunnah. This leads them to accept the position of the opponents (the non-legitimists), as acting on their opinion does not lead to conflict with the divine text, since there is no evidence from God that their opinion is false. They argue that it is not appropriate to challenge this opinion based on a few ambiguous narrations, but the reverse is possible. Therefore, the cautious path is to accept the view of the opponents (Ibrahim).

3. The Non-Legitimacy of Conjecture in the Akhbari and Sheikhie Jurisprudential Schools

The Akhbaris claim that in Divine rulings, reaching knowledge and certainty is necessary and obligatory, and acting based on conjecture, even specific conjectures, is not permissible. They justify this view using numerous Qur'anic verses and especially with hadiths, many of which have been claimed to be mutawatir (widely transmitted) by the late Shaykh Hur al-'Amili. The Akhbari scholars regard conjecture and doubt as forms of uncertainty (shubha), and they believe that precaution and hesitation must be practiced in situations where conjecture arises. They hold that certainty is valid only in situations where it is derived from the hadiths of the Infallibles (peace be upon them), regardless of whether these hadiths are mutawatir or transmitted by single narrators, as long as they are supported by valid external evidence.

The Sheikhie scholars also categorically reject acting based on conjecture, whether it is general conjecture or

specific conjecture close to certainty or resembling knowledge (Kermani, 2016). Unlike the mainstream Usuli view, they do not distinguish between different types of conjecture. They argue that numerous Qur'anic verses prohibit acting based on conjecture, with more than seventy verses considered to explicitly forbid it (Ibrahim, 1973a). They also refer to over twelve hundred narrations from the Infallibles (peace be upon them) that prohibit acting on all forms of conjecture, and they support their stance with reason (as understood in their own terminology) and the consensus of early Imami scholars as secondary and corroborative evidence (Kermani, 1976).

They critique the statement by the late Mirza Qumi, who in discussing rational evidence, said: "When God, through inspiration without the descent of Gabriel, communicated a ruling to His Prophet, and the Prophet obeyed it, it is said that the Prophet fully complied with God's command. Thus, the reason of individuals like us is similar to the Prophet's inspiration" (Qumi, 1431 AH, vol. 2, p. 11). The Sheikhie scholars argue that this view is invalid. They contend that there is no distinction between the reasoning of jurists and others; if the jurists' reasoning were akin to divine inspiration, what then would be the difference between them and the Prophet? Such a claim would allow anyone to assert their reasoning as divine, effectively bringing forth religious rulings from their own opinion. However, God has never commanded obedience to the reasoning or opinions of jurists. They argue that the statement attributed to the author of *Al-Qawanin* suggests a claim of prophetic status without miracles, which is unacceptable in Islamic jurisprudence. On the Day of Judgment, when God asks, "Did Allah permit you, or do you speak about Allah without knowledge?" (Yunus: 59) and "Bring forth your proof if you are truthful" (Al-Baqarah: 111), what answer would be given? (Ibrahimi, n.d., p. 86).

The author of *Al-Qawanin* further claimed: "The statement of what is right or wrong is not restricted to the Messenger of Allah. In fact, God has conveyed many of these matters to us through reason". He continued, "If recognition of the good and the bad is not possible through reason, then it must be recognized through the infallibles". The Sheikhie scholars respond by asserting that the good and bad that one perceives through reason are not inherent in the objects themselves. Nothing has intrinsic prohibition or permissibility. These attributes

arise from the relation of things to one another. For example, a dog is not impure in itself, but it is impure when in contact with humans. Therefore, goodness and badness are relative concepts, and the relationships between things in the world are too numerous to be counted. Each relationship implies a specific legal ruling. They challenge the claim that one can know all relationships and the corresponding rulings. They ask whether, through reason, one can distinguish between the rulings related to usurpation and theft and their respective implications. Even the Prophet himself did not give judgments based solely on his reason, as God stated: "Judgment belongs only to Allah" (Yusuf: 40), and "Judge between people with what God has shown you" (An-Nisa: 105). He also told him: "If he (the Prophet) were to invent lies about Us, We would surely take him by the right hand, and then surely cut off his life artery", and "Whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, they are the disbelievers". Thus, acting on mere conjecture in religion is not permissible, as God has not commanded such a thing but rather prohibited it. One must gain certainty about the principles and branches of religion before acting accordingly (Ibrahim).

4. Position of the Science of Principles of Jurisprudence in These Two Schools

The Akhbari school considers the science of the principles of jurisprudence (Usul al-Fiqh) to be an invention of the Sunni scholars. According to the late Istrabadi, Islam was destroyed twice: the first time when the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) passed away, and the second time when the general principles of Sunni jurisprudence and the terminology of Usul al-Fiqh were introduced into the books of the Imami scholars. According to Sheikh Hussein Karaki, until the end of the Minor Occultation, the jurists did not need the science of Usul al-Fiqh because the principles they needed were already contained in the teachings transmitted from the infallible (peace be upon them). These principles, especially the well-known "four hundred" transmitted by Imam Sadiq (PBUH), were narrations that were directly or at most with a single intermediary, recorded in small Hadith collections in response to various legal questions, and according to the Akhbari, these principles and their narrations were so reliable that the authors of the Four Major Hadith books (al-Kafi, al-Tahdhib, al-Istisbar, and Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih) had used these

principles in compiling their works. Karaki believes that this situation persisted until the time of Ibn Junayd, after which scholars such as Sheikh Mufid, Seyed Morteza, and Sheikh Tusi used rationalist arguments aligned with the Sunnis to debate with the Akhbari, gradually moving away from the methodology of the companions of the infallible (peace be upon them), and Hadith became less prominent among them (Karaki Amili, 2003).

The late Fayz Kashani also holds that the science of Usul al-Fiqh is a technical field based on dialectics and built on weak presumptions, in which consensus is rare (Fayz Kashani, 1992).

Regarding the view of the Shaykhis on the science of Usul al-Fiqh, it is said that Haj Mohammad Karim Khan Kermani wrote a book titled "Sawanih Safar Khurasan" to explain his views on Istrabadi's book *Al-Fawa'id al-Madaniyyah*. In this book, Kermani asserts that in the Qur'an and Hadith, there are terms such as commands, prohibitions, general and specific, abrogating and abrogated, unrestricted and restricted, etc., which must be investigated in terms of their meanings and implications. These issues are the very discussions addressed in Usul al-Fiqh, which both Akhbari and Usuli scholars need. Early scholars collected these issues in books and named them Usul al-Fiqh. Kermani argues that there is no doubt that Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) cannot be understood without the science of Usul al-Fiqh (Kermani, 1969). It is clear that Kermani's view of Usul al-Fiqh is similar to that of the Usuli scholars. He goes on to make a significant claim, arguing that all Imami jurists, whether Usulis or Akhbaris, are "Usulis" in the sense that they need the science of Usul al-Fiqh for understanding Fiqh, and they are also "Akhbaris" in that they need to refer to Hadiths and narrations. He insists that if an Akhbari believes that an Usuli does not refer to Hadiths, he is mistaken, and if an Usuli believes that an Akhbari does not follow the science of Usul al-Fiqh, he is also in error (Kermani, 1973). Kermani, in his response to questions from some residents of Hamadan, also claims that he has not found a case in which an Akhbari has acted on a matter without an Usuli having done the same, and there is no issue on which an Usuli has acted without an Akhbari doing the same, even in the case of acting based on presumptions. He argues that the author of *Hada'iq al-Nadhirah*, although a well-known Akhbari, acted on presumption when he used inductive reasoning, which, in his view, is one of the weakest forms of

presumption, and similarly, when he used imprecise reasoning that is presumed to be incorrect (Kermani, 2015b). In his treatise *Al-Hujjah al-Qati'ah*, Kermani reiterates this point, stating that he has found some of the opinions of the Akhbari scholars among the Mujtahids. For example, some Usuli scholars consider acting based on certain knowledge obligatory and acting based on presumption forbidden, while some Akhbari scholars have been found to act based on legal presumptions (Kermani, 2015a).

Abu al-Qasim Ebrahimi, a descendant of Mohammad Karim Kermani, has a view on Usul al-Fiqh similar to that of the Akhbaris. He believes that the Sunni scholars borrowed the fundamental principles of Kalam and logic from the ancient Greeks, and following the same approach, they established the primary principles of Usul al-Fiqh based on rational principles borrowed from the Greeks, thus dedicating themselves to the compilation of Usul books (Ibrahim, 1967).

Summarizing the views of the Shaykhi scholars on this matter, they argue that the Usul al-Fiqh which the Usulis have considered a condition for Ijtihad, if it refers to the rational principles of presumptions borrowed from the Sunni scholars, should be avoided. This is because contemplating these principles leads to doubts and confusion in the jurist's mind and makes it difficult for them to attain certainty. However, if the Usul in question is based on the true principles taught by the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), there is no doubt that the jurist must know and implement these principles (Ibrahim). They accept many of the principles of Usul, especially those that have a root in the Shari'a and are derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, but they reject some other principles, known as "rational principles," which are not derived from the divine law and have entirely rational foundations, such as the principle of non-existence (Ibrahim). In other words, the Shaykhis accept and practice those principles proposed by the Usulis as long as they are in line with the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt, but they do not consider the rational principles that are independent of the Qur'an and Hadith, nor do they accept consensus that is based on anything other than the words of the infallibles.

5. Ijtihad and Taqleed from the Perspective of the Akhbari and Shaykhi Jurisprudence Schools

This section, based on previous discussions, examines the two important concepts of ijtihad and taqleed from the viewpoints of the scholars of the Akhbari and Shaykhi schools.

5.1. Analysis of the Concept of Ijtihad from the Perspective of the Two Schools

In the previous section, it was mentioned that the Akhbaris believe that the proof of religious rulings requires certainty and knowledge. Therefore, Isfahani criticized the statement of Allama Hilli, who defined ijtihad as the effort of a jurist to gain an opinion (dhann) about a legal ruling. Isfahani argued that since ijtihad is a means of acquiring a probable judgment, it is not valid from the perspective of the divine lawgiver (Isfahani, 1984). The Akhbari scholars can be divided into two groups on this issue. The first group consists of radical Akhbaris who deem ijtihad to be impermissible. Figures such as Isfahani rejected the use of apparent texts from the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) as valid sources of evidence. They limit valid sources to the narrations from the Infallibles (Ahlul Bayt), which, according to them, are supported by numerous corroborative evidence. In contrast, no such supporting evidence exists in the Quran and the Sunnah, making the authority of these sources uncertain. Thus, they believe that any ijtihad based on probable sources, including the apparent texts of the Quran and Sunnah, consensus, reason, and other rational principles, is impermissible (Isfahani, 1984). The second group, the moderate Akhbaris, does not view the concept of ijtihad as inherently forbidden, but they restrict it to the Quran and the Sunnah of the Infallibles.

The late Jazayeri believed that the disapproved form of ijtihad is the deduction of legal rulings through methods of the Sunnis. This is because the Sunni method of legal reasoning involves non-legitimate approaches such as qiyas (analogy) and istihsan (juridical preference). On the other hand, the ijtihad practiced by the Shia jurists, which is based on the Quran and the Sunnah, is not disapproved. He asserts that this ijtihad is essentially the process of deriving rulings from valid legal sources, which is permissible as it leads to acquiring rulings from Islamic texts. Jazayeri emphasized that not all believers are capable of extracting rulings directly from the narrations of the Infallibles (Jazayeri, 2022).

The Shaykhi scholars share a similar view on *ijtihad* to that of the moderate Akhbaris. They do not regard *ijtihad* as absolutely forbidden, but they view *ijtihad* in religious matters and the pursuit of knowledge of divine rulings as obligatory. They specifically reject *ijtihad* based on personal opinion and conjecture, as practiced by the Sunnis in the case of Muawiyah, who is claimed to have exercised personal reasoning and legal deduction. For the Shaykhis, *ijtihad* that involves striving to extract divine rulings from the Quran and the accepted Sunnah is permissible, and they argue that all Shia scholars and Shaykhi elders are considered *ijthadis*. However, they do not accept the definition of *ijtihad* as the effort to derive probable judgments from the four primary sources. Rather, they believe that jurists should work to achieve certainty and not act upon probable rulings (Ibrahim, 1976).

In practice, the Shaykhi method is focused on the narration of the authentic hadiths of the Infallibles and the explanation of their meanings. They avoid all forms of juridical reasoning that deviate from the content of these narrations. Their legal rulings are limited to those derived from authentic narrations, and they emphasize that the *halal* (lawful) and *haram* (unlawful) decrees declared by Muhammad and his family (PBUH) are definitive and cannot be changed by us. This holds true until the Day of Judgment (Ibrahim).

5.2. *Analysis of the Concept of Taqleed from the Perspective of the Akhbari and Shaykhi Schools*

On the issue of *taqleed* (following a jurist), the Akhbari scholars also divide into two groups, similar to their division on *ijtihad*. As previously discussed, radical Akhbaris such as Shaykh Har al-Amili believe that *taqleed*, like *ijtihad*, is impermissible. According to them, one must refer directly to the Infallibles (Ahlul Bayt) or to hadiths narrated by trustworthy individuals from them, which are found in the authentic books. It is clear that referring to narrators of hadith from the Infallibles is not considered *taqleed*. Therefore, from the perspective of these radical Akhbaris, individuals should follow their Imam directly, not the opinions of other scholars or jurists.

However, moderate Akhbaris allow *taqleed* from a jurist whose sources of legal reasoning are limited solely to the Quran and the Sunnah of the Infallibles. They do not permit *taqleed* from jurists who rely on speculative and

probable sources, such as rational principles (Bahraani, 1984, 2003). For this group of Akhbaris, *taqleed* is acceptable only within the framework of the Quran and the Sunnah as understood by the Infallibles.

The view of Shaykhi scholars on *taqleed* is similar to the moderate Akhbari view on *ijtihad*. Abul Qasim Khan Ibrahim clarifies the Shaykhi position on this issue in his work on *ijtihad* and *taqleed*, stating:

"We also use the terms *mujtahid* and *muqallid*, but we intend by them the meanings that are approved by God and His Messenger. The term *mujtahid* applies to one who makes it his practice to gain knowledge of God, to worship Him, to follow His rulings, and to narrate hadiths from legitimate sources. There is no objection to this meaning, as it has been used in the hadiths. The *muqallid*, then, is one who accepts rulings and narrations from such a person, following them not without evidence or reasoning, but with rational proof, after confirming his trust in the scholar. Once such trust is established, the *muqallid* does not question every legal detail because he knows the individual is trustworthy. Thus, the only acceptable *taqleed* is following one's Imam, and *taqleed* of anyone else independently is not permitted and is prohibited by the Shari'ah" (Isfahani, 1984).

Therefore, the Shaykhi scholars accept *taqleed* within the same limited framework as the moderate Akhbaris (Ibrahim, 1973b).

6. **The Wisdom of Ahl al-Muhammad (PBUH): The Main Distinction between the Jurisprudential Approach of the Shaykhis and the Usulism of the Akhbaris**

After discussing the positions of the Shaykhis and the Akhbaris on the previously mentioned issues, it should be noted that the main and most significant difference in relation to the jurisprudential methodology of the Shaykhi scholars, in comparison to the Akhbaris, lies in the influence of the principles of Shiite wisdom, which the Shaykhis refer to as the "Wisdom of Ahl al-Muhammad (PBUH)." These principles are deeply integrated into the jurisprudential foundations and the fundamental rules of the Shaykhi school, blending with the jurisprudential principles like sugar with milk. However, this issue is not considered in the jurisprudential approach of the Akhbaris and is not given attention. Shaykhi scholars believe that the concept of the Wisdom of Ahl al-Muhammad (PBUH) was founded

by Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsai, later explained, interpreted, and elaborated by Sayyid Kazim al-Rashti, and subsequently further developed by Haj Muhammad Karim Khan Kermani. According to Shaykhi scholars, one of the sciences mentioned in the reports of Ahl al-Muhammad (PBUH) is the science of wisdom, which pertains to the understanding of the realities of things, the unseen, the secrets of the origin and the afterlife, the creation of beings, the nature of the barzakh (intermediate state), the hereafter, and the states of creatures in these realms, and similar matters. Concerning this wisdom, Allah the Exalted says: "He grants wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever is granted wisdom has certainly been given much good; but none will be reminded except those of understanding" (Quran, 2:269). Scholars of this science, known as the sages, are aware of these truths, and in them, the capacity to grasp the truth has been realized. They understand the true meanings of the reports concerning the aforementioned matters, and the understanding and interpretation of such reports is their responsibility (Ibrahim, 1973a).

The Shaykhi school does not accept the conventional science of theology (*kalam*) and believes that the preservation of Islam in its scientific aspect is achieved through the tools of wisdom, good counsel, and the best form of debate, not through the verbal disputes of the theologians, who, by their own admission, were unaware of anything beyond the natural world and believed in the concept of multiple gods and polytheism. The Shaykhis argue that, in the process of jurisprudential reasoning and deducing the legal rulings, fundamental and jurisprudential arguments alone are not sufficient; rather, wisdom is necessary—wisdom that has been granted by Allah and obtained through Ahl al-Muhammad (PBUH) (Ibrahim, 1967).

According to the Shaykhis, a jurist who possesses wisdom has a sacred soul, and jurisprudence in its original meaning encompasses more than just the technical understanding of practical legal rulings; it includes knowledge of both apparent and hidden legal rulings. Numerous narrations emphasize the virtue of wisdom; however, what is meant by wisdom is not the philosophy of the Greeks, which is prevalent among certain modern thinkers. Even philosophers themselves believe that their philosophy is a non-religious science, which need not align with divine law. The Shaykhis assert that such philosophy is not wisdom, but folly, and

adhering to it would lead to the denial of God and His Messenger (PBUH). The scholars of the Shaykhi school state that the true wisdom, as practiced by their masters, is derived from the reports of Ahl al-Muhammad (PBUH), and its meaning is knowledge and worship. All of divine law is a commentary on wisdom, and this is the wisdom that the Prophet (PBUH) taught to his community, as stated in the verse: "And He teaches them the Book and the Wisdom" (Quran, 62:2) (Ibrahim).

According to the Shaykhis, when the followers of such a sage, who has acquired wisdom from Ahl al-Muhammad (PBUH) and gained knowledge of their virtues and acknowledged those virtues by acting in accordance with them, recognize him, they should follow him. By doing so, their hearts will be attuned to what Allah desires for them, and they will become aware of God and His Messenger, love Him, His allies, and become enemies of His enemies (Ibrahim, 1973a). These sages are, in fact, the jurists described by Imam al-Askari (PBUH) who stated: "Any jurist who preserves his religion, keeps his soul free from the influence of base desires, opposes his own whims, and obeys the command of his master, the common people may follow him" (al-Hurr al-'Amili, 1993, Vol. 18, p. 94). According to the Shaykhi interpretation, the meaning of imitation (*taqlid*) in this noble hadith refers to taking narrations from them, which is in essence returning to the Imam (PBUH) and accepting his teachings. It is not about following the personal views of these jurists. When such individuals exist, their pure souls are suited for the affirmation, validation, and support of the Imam (PBUH), and their fatwas, which are essentially narrations of the reports of Ahl al-Muhammad (PBUH), are the same rulings that Allah the Exalted has chosen for people, and which the Imam of the Time (PBUH) affirms and supports. The hearts of these jurists will be like mirrors; after they seek guidance from the Imam (PBUH) regarding their inner purification, they will not deviate from the meanings of the narrations and texts. The same rulings that are beneficial to them and others will certainly reach them, and they will extract the judgment of Allah from the authentic reports. This is, in fact, the affirmation and validation of the Lord, which is conveyed through the Imam (PBUH), and the Imam will also confirm and validate the true scholars, so that the people receive the divine ruling (Kermani, 1969).

Based on the Shaykhi theory of wisdom, a jurist who does not believe in the full manifestation of the divine names and attributes and the esoteric and exoteric authority of the Imam of the Time (PBUH), which includes the powers delegated by Allah, the ability to intervene in the realm of creation and the metaphysical, and the infallibility and divine knowledge of the Imam, will never accept the validation of reports from the Imam (PBUH). Such an individual will inevitably fall into the trap of epistemic closure and will be compelled to act based on mere conjecture due to necessity, and none of his actions will be based on certainty because he fundamentally lacks certainty in the authenticity of the reports. The Shaykhis believe that the intercession of the infallible Imams in the execution of all divine decrees is an absolute and established fact, meaning that every movement and stillness in the realm of possibility occurs through their intercession. They cite the noble signature from Imam al-Zamana (PBUH) in *Misbah al-Mutahajjid*, which states: "Through their intercession, You filled Your heavens and Your earth, until it became clear that there is no god but You" (Tusi, 1992, 2003). This implies that the infallibles (PBUH) are not a small or limited part of creation, as some opponents of the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt believe. Rather, they encompass the entire structure of the universe, and there is no time or place in which they are absent, opening the door to thousands of wisdoms for those who are worthy (Ibrahim, 1973a).

Therefore, with these explanations, it becomes clear how deeply the concept of wisdom discussed by the Shaykhis is embedded in the structure and foundations of their jurisprudential system.

7. Critique and Review

In the introduction section, it was mentioned that the Usulis seriously confronted the Akhbari school during the time of the late Wahid Behbahani. Mr. Behbahani, with the writing of his books *Al-Ijtihad wal-Akhbar* and *Al-Fawaid al-Ha'iriya*, and his prominent disciple, Sheikh Jafar Kashif al-Ghita, with the distinguished book *Kashf al-Ghita' an Mubahamat al-Shari'a al-Ghara*, responded to all the doubts raised by the Akhbari school. In fact, the issues discussed in this research regarding the specific characteristics of the Akhbari school and the points of commonality between the Akhbaris and the Sheikh school have been addressed by these two prominent Usuli scholars in their important works. In this research,

because the title of the paper was a comparative study of the Sheikh school of jurisprudence versus that of the Akhbari school, and because the discussion of the Usuli scholars' views on the Akhbari school would extend the paper beyond reasonable length, we refrained from addressing Usuli perspectives in detail.

Regarding the conflict between the Imami scholars and the Sheikh school, it must be noted that the majority of Imami Usuli scholars consider the Sheikh school to have doctrinal errors regarding the fundamental Islamic and Shiite beliefs. They do not accept the explanations and views of Sheikh Ahmad Ahsa'i and his successors on issues such as bodily resurrection, the nature of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) ascension (Mi'raj), the Fourth Pillar, the categorization of the principles of faith, the concept of a single speaker (Natiq Wahid), and other similar matters. They do not consider Sheikh scholars to be correct in their beliefs and have written many books criticizing the Sheikh school from a theological and doctrinal perspective. However, they have not scientifically explored or reviewed the Sheikh school's jurisprudential and Usuli principles. We cannot directly or indirectly quote the views of the Imami Usuli scholars on the Sheikh jurisprudential and Usuli principles, as no independent books, articles, or research were found on this subject. Nonetheless, since the views of Sheikh jurists on jurisprudential reasoning closely resemble those of the moderate Akhbaris, the responses that Usuli scholars offer against the jurisprudential principles of moderate Akhbaris could also be applied to the Sheikh jurisprudential principles.

8. Conclusion

Sheikh jurists are in agreement with moderate Akhbari jurists in most areas, and this strong similarity has led some researchers to conclude, while critiquing the theological and doctrinal views of the Sheikh school, that Sheikh jurists are followers of the Akhbari school. However, as explained in various sections of this research, it has become clear that Sheikh jurists use rational evidence illuminated by transmission of texts from the Imams (PBUH) in their legal reasoning and accept reason as a dependent, non-independent source tied to the guidance of the Infallible Imams, which contrasts with the Akhbari stance that rejects the absolute authority of rational evidence. Additionally, regarding the science of Usul al-Fiqh, Sheikh jurists,

unlike most Akhbaris, believe that the science of Usul al-Fiqh, if based solely on the Qur'an, Sunnah, and narrations from the Infallible Imams, is acceptable.

The key and fundamental distinction of the Sheikhi school from the Akhbari school and even from the Usuli school lies in the incorporation of Sheikhi doctrinal discussions into their jurisprudential and Usuli foundations. This interconnection is so deep that a complete separation of doctrinal discussions from the jurisprudential principles of the Sheikhi school is impossible. This essential feature highlights the unique and distinct method of jurisprudence and legal deduction employed by Sheikhi jurists compared to the Akhbari jurists. However, considering that the majority of Imami Usuli scholars do not regard Sheikhi jurists as correct in their beliefs, along with the critiques leveled against moderate Akhbaris, which also extend to the Sheikhi school due to the considerable similarities between the two schools, it can be said that Usuli scholars certainly reject the Sheikhi school's doctrinal principles in areas of disagreement. Consequently, they do not accept the interference of these disputed doctrinal principles in the Sheikhi jurisprudential system.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

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Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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