



## EBN BĀBĀWAYH (2)

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**EBN BĀBĀWAYH** (Bābūya), SHAIKH ŞADŪQ ABŪ JAʿFAR MOḤAMMAD b. Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ... Mūsā Qomī (b. Qom after 305, probably about 311/923; d. Ray, 381/991), author of one of the authoritative four books of Imami Shiʿite Hadith, *Man lā yaḥẓoroḥo'l-faqīh*.

*Life.* Ebn Bābawayh was the most eminent traditionist and jurist of the school of Qom, which in the 3rd-4th/9th-10th centuries opposed both the exaggerations of the extremists (*ḡolāt*) and the Muʿtazilite leanings of the earlier Nowbaktīs. Born into a learned Imami family, he boasted that he had been begotten in answer to the prayer of the Hidden Imam; his father, Abu'l Ḥasan ʿAlī, had received a letter from him to this effect through the *saḡīr* (envoy) Ḥosayn b. Rawḡ Nowbakt. He traveled widely in Persia, Iraq, and Transoxiana, ending his life in Ray, where in circles dominated by the ʿAlid-leaning Muʿtazilite vizier Şāḡeb b. ʿAbbād he composed his *Ketāb al-tawḡīd* in order to show the compatibility of Imamite traditions with God's unity and justice. Finally, according to Tawḡīdī (p. 167), the vizier forced him and other traditionists, both Sunni and Shiʿite, to stop teaching. The immediate source of many of the traditions he recounted is his father, and a list of 252 shaikhs from whom he recounted traditions is given by ʿAbd-al-Raḡīm Rabbānī Şīrāzī (preface to Ebn Bābawayh, *Maʿānī al-aḡbār*, ed. ʿA.-A. Ġaffārī, Tehran, 1379/1959, pp. 37-68). His grave is often visited. Of his numerous disciples the most noted are Shaikh Mofīd (d. 413/1022), Hārūn b. Mūsā Tall'okbarī, ʿAlī b. Moḡammad Ḳazzāz, and Ḥosayn b. ʿObayd-Allāh b. Ġazā'erī.

*Religious views.* In the wake of the Greater Occultation, Ebn Bābawayh



occupied an intermediate position in the evolution of Imami doctrine from the earlier *ḡolūw* (extremist) thought to the later moderate synthesis based on Muʿtazilite ideas. Qom had been a center of opposition to the *ḡolāt* since the previous century, and Ebn Bābawayh's works contain vigorous refutations of anthropomorphic interpretations of the traditions of the Imams (Momen, pp. 78-79). On the other hand, he held that the traditions of the Imams were a sufficient basis for life and action, and that revelation was necessary to attain knowledge of God. Aside from his creeds he expressed his theological views by his choice of traditions and some short explanatory remarks, notably in his *Ketāb al-tawḥīd*. He urged *taqīya* (dissimulation in matters of religion) as a positive duty until the return of the Twelfth Imam and forbade public disputation, which presumably includes *kalām* (*Eʿteqādāt*, chap. 39; *Tawḥīd*, pp. 454-61). Although Ebn Bābawayh is greatly respected as a traditionist and jurist, his pupil Mofīd criticized his choice and explanations of traditions. But Mofīd's criticism stems from his own Muʿtazilite leanings and the fact that he was a *motakallem*, which Ebn Bābawayh was not (Madelung, pp. 13-20).

The following is a summary of Ebn Bābawayh's views on a number of disputed theological issues.

In *Ketāb al-tawḥīd* he represents the anti-anthropomorphist wing of the traditionists, denying independent existence to God's attributes. By them we mean only that God cannot be described by their opposites. He distinguishes God's attributes of essence, which are eternal (Hearer, Knower, Wise, Powerful, etc.), from those of act, which are temporal (Creator, Doer, Willing, etc.). The Qurʾān was produced in time (*moḥdat*), and the text now in the hands of the faithful is complete and uncorrupted, though Suras 93 and 94 and Suras 105 and 106 should be combined.

According to Ebn Bābawayh, the world is composed of bodies and their temporal accidents. He does not speak of atoms. *Badāʾ* for Ebn Bābawayh does not mean that God changed His mind or that new ideas occurred to Him. Rather it merely means abrogation of one command by another, or that God increases or decreases a man's life and nourishment according to his deeds. On God's justice, there is a clear development from the near determinism of *Ketāb al-hedāya* and *Resālat al-eʿteqādāt* to his later *Ketāb al-tawḥīd*, which does not differ fundamentally from the moderate Muʿtazilism of the Baghdad school. He says that God commands justice from man but treats him with something better than justice, namely, *tafaẓẓol* (favor, grace). As for protection from sin and error (*eṣma*), he says that the prophets, apostles, and Imams



were preserved from defilement and great and lesser sins from the beginning of their careers and were perfect in intellect and knowledge. Against his disciple Mofīd, he held that the Prophet was not immune from *sahw* (distraction) at prayer, calling those who thought otherwise extremists.

He defines faith as profession with the tongue, belief in the heart, and action with the limbs. It increases with works and decreases with their omission (*Hedāya*, p. 10). The grave sinner is no longer a believer but remains a Muslim.

The vision of God at the Day of Judgement will be intellectual, not with bodily eyes. While the reward of some of the blessed will be to praise God with the angels, others will find pleasure in food and drink. Mofīd strongly criticizes him for this view.

*Works.* Some 300 works are listed as having been written by Ebn Bābawayh. The most important are:

*Man lā yaḥẓoroḥo'l-faqīh* (Beirut, 1411/1991), composed in Balk after he was asked by his host to compile a handy compendium of *feqh* along the lines of Abū Bakr Rāzī's *Man lā yaḥẓoroḥo'l-ṭabīb*. He read the work, which omits the chains of authority, to the shaikhs of that land in 372/983.

*Kamāl (Ekmāl) al-dīn wa tamām (etmām) al-ne'ma fī etbāt al-ḡayba wa kašf al-ḥayra* (Beirut, 1412/1991), one of the first works on the Occultation and the Twelfth Imam. Visiting Nīšāpūr, he had found the Shi'ites there confused about the matter. Later reminded of his promise in a dream, he compiled this collection of Koranic verses and traditions.

*Ketāb al-tawḥīd* (Tehran 1387/1967), a collection of traditions compiled in Ray to defend the Imamīs against accusations of anthropomorphism and fatalism. The traditions are grouped by subject with occasional explanatory remarks.

*Amālī* or *Majāles* (Beirut, 1400/1980), records of his regular Tuesday and Friday sessions in Nīšāpūr in 367-68/978-79. They consist of miscellaneous traditions, mostly accounts of the virtues of the Imams and moral exhortations.

*'Oyūn akbār al-Rezā* (Qom, 1377/1957), a collection of traditions from and about him which Ebn Bābawayh presented to the vizier Šāḥeb b. 'Abbād when the vizier composed two poems in praise of that Imam.



*E'teqādāt al-Emāmīya* (the latest edition in *Moṣannafāt al-Šaykh al-Mofīd*, Qom, 1413/1993, V, pp. 1-128, as an introduction to Mofīd's very hostile commentary, *Šarḥ 'aqā'ed al-Šadūq aw taṣḥīḥ al-e'teqād*; tr. A. A. Fyzee as *A Shiite Creed*, Oxford, 1942). Ebn Bābawayh wrote three creeds: probably his earliest at the beginning of his *Hedāya* (pp. 2-12), the present work, which is the longest, and another in his *Amālī* (*majles* 93, Friday, 12 Ša'bān 368/14 March 979).

*Elal al-šarā'e wa'l-aḥkām wa'l-asbāb* (Najaf, 1385/1966), traditions giving reasons for particular legal rules, for various events, and for the names of various things.

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