



KETĀB AL-NAQẒ

KETĀB AL-NAQẒ (or *Ketāb-e naqẓ*), a Twelver Shi'ite polemical work in Persian produced in Ray in the third quarter of the twelfth century (1161-) by Naṣir-al-Din Abu'l-Rašid 'Abd-al-Jalil b. Abi'l-Ḥosayn Qazvini Rāzi.

Qazvini Rāzi was a leading religious scholar of the Twelver Shi'ite community of his birthplace Ray (*Naqẓ*, 1980, p. 34), who presided over at least one *madrasa* (pp. 137-38) and held preaching sessions (*majles*) in different venues in the city (pp. 106, 138, 451). His elder brother Awḥad-al-Din Ḥosayn was also a “*mofti* and the elder (*pir*)” of that community (p. 3). Qazvini was a reputed preacher (*wā'ez*) known for his “captivating discourse” (*kalām 'adb*) as well as an “*oṣuli*” (no doubt in the sense of a theologian, i.e., an expert of *oṣul al-din*) (Rāfe'i, III, p. 132; Montajab-al-Din, p. 87). He is known to have authored five works other than the *Naqẓ*, none of which is known to be extant, namely: *al-Barāhin fi emāmat Amir-al-Mo'menin* (written in 537/1142-43); *Tanzih 'Ā'eša* (written in 533/1138-39); *Meftāḥ al-rāḥāt fi fonun al-ḥekāyāt* (called *Meftāḥ al-taḍkir* in Montajab-al-Din, p. 87; see *Naqẓ*, editor's Introd., p. xvii); *al-So'ālāt wa'l-jawābāt*, in 7 volumes; and a small polemical work against the Isma'ilis (written in Persian “a year before” the *Naqẓ*; *Naqẓ*, pp. 115, 177, 239, 295, 376, 475, 641; Montajab-al-Din, p. 87)

As its title indicates, the *Naqẓ* (Refutation) is a refutation against a polemical work impugning the Twelver Shi'ites, entitled *Ba'ẓ faẓā'eḥ al-Rawāfeẓ* (some of the ignominies of the Shi'ites). Since Qazvini cites sections of the *Ba'ẓ faẓā'eḥ* and refutes it one by one, the *Naqẓ* is in fact a composite text that comprises not only Qazvini's own refutation but also what seems to amount to a large



portion of the *Ba'z fazā'eḥ al-Rawāfeẓ*. The *Ba'z fazā'eḥ al-Rawāfeẓ* was written also in Ray by an anonymous author who was a defector from the Twelver Shi'ite community (*Naqẓ*, 1980, p. 14; see p. 373 n. 2, for the falsehood of the identification of the author with a certain Šehāb-al-Din Tawāriki Šāfe'i of the Maššāt family; the author's legal and theological affiliations will be discussed below). Qazvini knew the identity of his opponent (*Naqẓ*, pp. 5, 141 n. 1), but kept him anonymous throughout his refutation, calling him mockingly by such appellations as “K^vāja-ye Now-Sonni” (Master New Sunnite, “K^vāja-ye Now-mosalmān” (Master New Muslim), or “K^vāja-ye Enteqāli” (Master [Allegiance] Switcher; see, e.g., *Naqẓ*, pp. 52, 63, 69). The *Ba'z fazā'eḥ al-Rawāfeẓ* was completed in Moḥarram 555/Jan.-Feb. 1160, and Qazvini was writing his refutation already in 556/1161 (*Naqẓ*, pp. 36, 646) as the representative of the Twelver Shi'ite community of Ray, at the suggestion of the Naqib Šaraf-al-Din Moḥammad b. 'Ali Mortazā, “the leader of the *sayyeds* and the Shi'ites” (*moqaddam-e sādāt wa Ši'a*) of the city (*Naqẓ*, pp. 5-6, 35). In the text itself, Qazvini simply calls his work a refutation (*naqẓ*) (p. 646) and mentions no title as such. However, already during the second half of the twelfth century, Montajab-al-Din b. Bābuya in his *Fehrest* called the book *Ba'z maṭāleb al-Nawāseḥ fi naqẓ Ba'z fazā'eḥ al-Rawāfeẓ* (Some of the disgraces of the haters of the Prophet's Family in refutation of some of the ignominies of the Shi'ites), fuller and rather widely known “title” whose origin is not known (Montajab-al-Dīn, p. 87; see also Kanturi, p. 586).

Both the *Ba'z fazā'eḥ al-Rawāfeẓ* and Qazvini's refutation were composed in the context of an intense factional strife as shown, for example, by Qazvini's frequent use of such strong phrases as “*Kākaš be-dahān!*” (May he be stifled!) in his refutation. Moreover, it is evident that the intended audience of both works included the common people to whom they were expected to be read aloud; Qazvini clearly states this regarding the *Ba'z fazā'eḥ al-Rawāfeẓ* (*Naqẓ*, pp. 2, 3; cf. p. 100). Correspondingly, the subjects disputed over in the two texts are by no means limited to scholastic topics in theology, but cover a wide range of topics pertaining to political and social life of the time.

The basic strategy of the author of the *Ba'z fazā'eḥ* in his polemics is to speak as the representative of Sunnism as a whole and to represent the Twelver Shi'ites as a misguided sect to be set against it (e.g., *Naqẓ*, pp. 4, 117; see also p. 613 for Qazvini's sarcasm about this stance). Against that, Qazvini highlights the Ash'ari identity of his opponent (e.g., *Naqẓ*, pp. 20, 102-3, 505-6; the opponent's affiliation to the Shāfi'i school of law, on the other hand, is not



problematized as such; see, e.g., pp. 105, 455). He lumps the Ash‘aris with the traditionalists, calls them “the people upholding predestination and anthropomorphism” (*ahl-e jabr wa tašbih*), and opposes them altogether to “the people upholding [God’s] justice and oneness” (*ahl-e ‘adl wa tawhīd*), by which he means groups adhering rationalist approaches to key dogmatic questions (e.g., *Naqẓ*, pp. 8, 490; see also pp. 238, 550-51). At the same time, Qazvini identifies himself only with the rationalist “*oṣuli*” trend within the Twelver Shi‘ism, represented as forming a part of the “people upholding justice and oneness,” and dissociates himself from the traditionalist *Aḳbāris* (also called *Ḥašwis* pejoratively) within his own sect (e.g., pp. 235, 272, 501, 529; he even curses the *Aḳbāris* along with the ones he calls “*Mojabberān*” [the proponents of predestination] on p. 619). Qazvini thus deliberately shifts the nature of the polemics from those between the Sunnites and Twelver Shi‘ites to those between the traditionalists (including the *Ash‘arites*) and the rationalists (including the *oṣuli* Twelver Shi‘ites). Qazvini’s redefinition of the parties of the polemics was clearly motivated by the relatively recent memory of the persecutions of the *Ash‘arites* by the Saljuq authorities during the reign of Sultan Mas‘ud (r. 1134-52), in which anti-rationalist aspects in *Ash‘arism* were problematized from a rationalist standpoint (see Madelung, 1971, pp. 131-36 for the persecutions; Qazvini mentions them on pp. 142-43, 206, 449-51, 550). Defining his opponent as *Ash‘ari* and himself as rationalist, Qazvini poses as representing a theological position purportedly authorized by the Saljuq authorities (see Shimoyama for further details about the positioning of the two polemicists).

The order in which different subjects are disposed in the *Ba‘ẓ faẓā’eḥ al-Rawāfeẓ* (as preserved in the *Naqẓ*) appears to be based merely on association, at the best. This also applies to the latter portion of the text (*Naqẓ*, pp. 481 ff.), where the author enumerates sixty-seven “ignominies” of the Twelver Shi‘ites in a row. Since Qazvini also tends to switch the focus of argument in his counter-arguments, the *Naqẓ* as a whole lacks any clear overarching logical structure and its different subjects are dispersed rather randomly throughout the text.

Dogmatic, constitutional, and juridical issues disputed over by the two polemicists are many and diverse. The status of ‘Ali b. Abi Ṭāleb and other Twelver Shi‘ite imams (e.g., *Naqẓ*, pp. 167-84, 531-34, 639-44); that of Abu Bakr, ‘Omar b. al-Ḳaṭṭāb and other Companions as well as the Prophet’s wives (e.g., pp. 114-16, 234-61, 293-301, 481-82); the Mahdi (e.g., pp. 463-81); differences in



jurisprudence and Hadith (e.g., pp. 29-31, 38-41, 597-602); *taqiya* (dissimulation of one's faith; e.g., pp. 18-22, 460-62); and temporary marriage (pp. 553-55) are some of the issues that are disputed over. At the same time, Qazvini's above-mentioned strategy to counterpose the traditionalists against the rationalists resulted in his insistence on returning to and highlighting the dogmatic differences between the two groups on the slightest pretexts. The differences Qazvini thus emphasizes again and again include those concerning the question of free will versus predestination, of reason versus revelation, and of God's justice, especially if God imposes on humans anything that is beyond their ability (e.g., see pp. 8-9, 105, 143, 393; Madelung, 1971, pp. 134-35, esp. n. 67).

Some of the attacks by the author of the *Ba'z fazā'eḥ* concern the situations of the Twelver Shi'ite communities in the past and at his own time. In some places, he mocks the Twelver Shi'ites for the lowly social backgrounds and despicable morals of their members (e.g., *Naqẓ*, pp. 436, 582-84, 587-88, 593). In others he warns his audience of the recent surge in the power of the Twelver Shi'ites who, he claims, had been kept insignificant by the wise policy of the earlier Saljuq (and other) authorities (e.g., *Naqẓ*, pp. 31, 34, 63, 78-79, 113). Both lines of attack spur Qazvini to enumerate illustrious families and personages in the past and at his own time that were purportedly affiliated to his sect (rulers: pp. 214-16; viziers and state officials: pp. 216-21; *sayyeds*: pp. 223-26, 398-400; scholars: pp. 39-41, 144-46, 209-13; poets: pp. 227-32, etc.), as well as the sect's achievements such as founding *madrasas* (pp. 34-38) or writing books (pp. 38-39). Further, the criticisms of Twelver Shi'ite *manāqebk'āns* (reciters of virtues) by the author of the *Ba'z fazā'eḥ* not only offer precious information about those propagandists who eulogized 'Ali and other Shi'ite figures on the street, but also invite Qazvini's no less useful counter criticisms of *fazā'elk'āns* (reciters of merits), the Sunnite counterparts of the *manāqebk'āns* (pp. 64-65, 74, 108-12, 577).

Both authors make reference to the dogmas, practices and situations of the third parties when discussing various issues. References to the Isma'ilis are the most substantial among them (e.g., *Naqẓ*, pp. 117-39, 301-17), since a tactic that Qazvini and his opponent shared is to highlight the purported affinity their respective opponents had with the Isma'ilis in general and the Nezāris in particular, whom both polemicists regarded as the heretical group par excellence. References to the practices of a third party also include the references that Qazvini makes to those contemporaneous Sunnites who



performed the mourning rituals on the day of ‘Āšurā’ and those who made the visitations to ‘Alid shrines (*Naqẓ*, pp. 370-73, 587-90, 592). Repeated mentions of the geographical distribution not only in Ray but also in Iran at large (and occasionally beyond) of different confessional groups (including the Twelver Shi‘ites) are yet another feature of the *Naqẓ*, which makes this text rich in toponyms and other geographical information of the time (e.g., pp. 194-202, 436-38, 458-60; see Karimān for a work that has used such data).

Qazvini’s flattering references to the Saljuqs as the protector of the true religion (e.g., pp. 37-38, 393), along with his basic strategy mentioned above, show that he found it relevant to pay homage to the authority of the Saljuqs as the ruling dynasty even in the context of an intra-urban factional strife as late as in the 1160s (see also pp. 82, 201; note, however, that Qazvini’s treatment of the Saljuqs is not necessarily consistent, see, e.g., pp. 52, 335, 390, 474). Qazvini’s characterization of the Turks more generally as the *ḡāzis* (pp. 63, 108, 166), *Hanafis*, thereby implying their adherence to one or another form of rationalism (pp. 137, 550), and even as the soldiers of the *Mahdi*’s army on his return (p. 477) also indicates that he was mindful of the power of Turkish warlords and tried not to antagonize them at least. The author of the *Ba‘ẓ faẓā’eh*, on the other hand, does not appear to be appreciative of the attitudes of the Turkish ruling class of his days; he appears even critical of it in some places (*Naqẓ*, pp. 63, 113; see also Shimoyama, p. 134). Likewise, the ways they evoke the attitudes of the earlier Saljuq sultans and dignitaries towards the Twelver Shi‘ites are contrastive. While Qazvini highlights their favorable attitudes and implies the enduring cordial relationship between the Saljuq authorities and the Twelver Shi‘ites, his opponent emphasizes their efforts to check the power of the Twelver Shi‘ites as the desirable practice discontinued in his days (e.g., *Naqẓ*, pp. 34-38, 108, 141-42, 261-62).

A number of major urban centers on the Iranian Plateau in the late Saljuq period experienced violent internal strife between (or among) factions with confessional labels. Yet, little is known about the concrete circumstances of those disturbances. The *Naqẓ* is unique in this context as an internal source that not only documents the contents and milieu of a dispute in a concrete and detailed manner but also offers an insight into how the religious scholars presented the points of dispute (some of them quite abstract) to incite the lay followers of their factions.

As a source for the study of the history of Twelver Shi‘ism, the *Naqẓ* can be regarded as a text that documents the outlook and situations of the rationalist



wing of the sect about one to one and a half centuries after it had gained the upper hand of the traditionalists at the time of scholars such as Shaikh Abu ‘Abd-Allāh Mofid (d. 413/1022), Šarif Mortazā (d. 436/1044), and Shaikh Ṭusi (d. 460/1067; Madelung, 1980, pp. 20-21; Qazvini himself states that the traditionalists are only a marginal existence in his days, see pp. 286, 568-69). The exceptionally rich variety of the subjects it comprises makes the *Naqẓ* a rare treasure trove helpful for elucidating religious, political and social situations of the Twelver Shi‘ites at the time.

That said, it must also be noted that the *Naqẓ*, because of its polemical nature, requires especially cautious handling of the information it presents. It cannot be naively expected that the purported facts the two polemist present as the basis of their attacks and counter-attacks can always be trusted to be real facts. This difficulty, unfortunately, becomes exacerbated especially when the *Naqẓ* offers unique information, exactly because of its uniqueness.

The *Naqẓ* was edited and published twice by Jalāl-al-Din Ḥosayni Moḥaddet Ormavi. The first edition was published on the basis of five manuscripts in 1952, and the second edition on the basis of eight manuscripts (including the five used for the first edition) in 1980. An earlier project by Moḥammad Qazvini and ‘Abbās Eqbāl to publish an edition of this text was forestalled by the Iranian government because of Moḥammad-Rezā Pahlavi’s marriage in 1939 with the Sunnite princess of Egypt, Fawzia Fo’ād (*Naqẓ*, intro., p. 30 n. 1). The recent Qom edition published on the occasion of a conference commemorating Qazvini (Kongra-ye bozorgdāšt-e ‘Abd-al-Jalil-e Rāzi Qazvini) in book and digitized formats reproduces the text of Moḥaddet’s second edition, with some amendments, new paragraphing, indices, etc. Moḥaddet also published studies and commentaries on the book on different occasions. His work in this area culminated in the publication of the *Ta’liqāt-e Naqẓ* (in 2 vols., 1980), a condensed version of which is appended to the recent Qom edition.



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