

## Representation of the Political and Personal Status of the Infallible Imams in the Seventh and Tenth Grade Textbooks of Afghan Schools

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### Abstract

The representation of historical figures in textbooks, especially in multicultural and multi-religious societies, plays a strategic role in shaping the historical and religious identity of the next generation. This study aims to carefully examine how the individual and political status of the Shia Imams, particularly Imam Ali (AS), Imam Hassan (AS), and Imam Hussein (AS), is represented in the content of history textbooks for grades seven and ten in Afghan schools. This study was conducted using qualitative content analysis of a documentary type, and its data were collected and analyzed by referring to credible educational sources published by the Afghan Ministry of Education. It is worth mentioning that this research emphasizes the necessity of a critical review of Afghanistan's textbooks in order to achieve a more comprehensive and fairer narrative of Islamic history. In this regard, although the representation of the Imams is placed within the framework of the Sunni narrative and the caliphate of Imam Ali (AS), and a respectful image of them is presented, the results indicate that the key issue of the Prophet's succession at the event of Ghadir Khumm has been completely silenced, and in the reports of the wars, bias toward some Companions is evident. The findings also show that the martyrdom of Imam Hassan and Imam Hussein (AS) has been narrated with a respectful tone, and Imam Hassan's peace treaty has been interpreted as a wise measure to preserve unity among Muslims.

**Keywords:** : The Infallible Imams (AS), Afghanistan's Textbooks, Individual Status, Political Status.

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**Introduction**

History has always served as a mirror of lessons for human societies, and history textbooks, as the most important tool for transmitting this precious heritage to future generations, play a central role in shaping historical memory and national identity. In multicultural and multi-religious countries like Afghanistan, the importance of this issue is doubled, because the way religious and historical figures are represented in educational texts can provide the ground for national cohesion or, conversely, lead to alienation and the intensification of religious gaps. Therefore, examining and analyzing the content of textbooks from the perspective of how figures respected by followers of different religions are reflected is an unavoidable necessity for understanding the current situation and drawing a clearer horizon for strengthening peaceful coexistence.

Among the influential figures of the Islamic world, the Shia Imams, especially Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (AS), Imam Hassan (AS), and Imam Hussein (AS), hold a high and unparalleled position. Imam Ali (AS) is known not only as the fourth caliph of the Rashidun in the view of Sunnis, but also as the first Imam and the immediate successor of the Prophet (PBUH) in the belief of Shias. This duality in the view of his position causes the manner of introducing and narrating the lives of these noble figures in the textbooks of countries with Sunni-majority populations to always be accompanied by particular sensitivities. Afghanistan, with its rich historical and cultural background and a population consisting of followers of the Hanafi and Ja'fari schools, is a clear example of such societies, and studying the representation of the Infallible Imams in its educational system can yield significant results.

The present article, which is the result of a careful analysis of history textbooks at different educational levels in Afghanistan (grades seven and ten), seeks to answer this fundamental question: How is the political and individual status of the Shia Imams represented in these texts? Focusing on three main axes—"individual and spiritual status," "political role and the period of caliphate," and "fateful events related to them"—this research analyzes the content of the aforementioned textbooks and attempts to draw a clear picture of the Afghan educational system's approach to Shia history and its prominent figures.

A study of the mentioned textbooks shows that the authors of these texts have tried to mention Imam Ali (AS) with a respectful and sometimes admiring view. Titles such as "Karram Allahu Wajhahu," "Asadullah," "Haydar," and "Bab al-'Ilm," along with references to his historical sacrifices in the Battle of Khaybar and Laylat al-Mabit, all indicate the high position of this figure in the eyes of the authors. However, what draws attention here is the selective view of some historical events and the passing over of some undeniable facts that have been mentioned in the sources of both sects. For example, the event of Ghadir Khumm and the prophetic tradition "Whoever I am his master, this Ali is his master," which is considered one of the most important historical documents for proving the immediate succession of Imam Ali (AS), has not been reflected in any of the history

textbooks of Afghan schools. This meaningful silence raises fundamental questions about this country's educational approach to the controversial history of early Islam.

In addition, the manner of narrating the battles of Jamal and Siffin, and especially the arbitration event, is another noteworthy point in these books. In these narratives, an attempt has been made to avoid any explicit judgment about the positions of the conflicting parties with a somewhat neutral expression. Although this approach may have been adopted with the aim of avoiding religious tensions, it sometimes leads to a kind of historical storytelling in which the role of some prominent figures of Islamic history is accompanied by ambiguity. On the other hand, the tragic event of Karbala and the oppressed martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) and his loyal companions have been narrated with a touching and respectful tone, which expresses the authors' deep respect for the Prophet's household.

Overall, it can be said that Afghan history textbooks have tried to present an acceptable and respectful image of the Shia Imams that does not openly conflict with the beliefs of the Sunni-majority society. However, this effort has in some cases come at the cost of ignoring some fundamental Shia beliefs or full-fledged narratives of events. The present research seeks to analyze these representations accurately and provide the ground for constructive criticism and suggestions for compiling more comprehensive and fairer texts in which, while preserving national unity, all dimensions of the personalities of these models of Islamic history can be addressed, free from sectarian views.

### **Research Background**

The study of educational texts and how religious figures are represented in textbooks is one of the important areas of interdisciplinary studies in history and sociology. Despite numerous studies conducted on the content analysis of history textbooks in various countries, so far no systematic and independent study has specifically addressed "the representation of the individual and political status of the Infallible Imams in the history textbooks of Afghan schools." Existing research in Afghanistan has mainly focused on general Islamic history, the Rashidun caliphs, or the contemporary period, and has paid less attention to the analysis of religious discourse in educational texts and how figures respected by Shias are reflected. Therefore, the present research, in terms of its focus on the representation of Shia Imams in the educational system of a Sunni-majority country, is unique and unprecedented in its kind and can open a new window for researchers to understand educational policies and sectarian approaches in Afghan textbooks.

### **Research Questions**

1. With what components and linguistic and narrative signs have Afghan school history textbooks represented the individual and spiritual status of Imam Ali (AS) and other Shia Imams?
2. How does the narration of important historical events related to the Shia Imams (such as the caliphate of Imam Ali (AS), the battles of Jamal and Siffin, the peace of Imam Hassan (AS), and the event of Karbala) in Afghan history

textbooks depict their political legitimacy and social status in the post-Prophetic era?

3. Given that Afghanistan is a country with a Sunni-majority population, have the history textbooks of this country addressed the status and personality of the Shia Imams? If so, with what quality, to what extent, and using what approach has this representation been made?

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. It seems that Afghan school history textbooks, by emphasizing commonalities among Islamic sects (such as justice-centeredness, courage, knowledge, and sacrifice of Imam Ali (AS)), have tried to present an acceptable and respectful image of the Shia Imams that does not conflict with the beliefs of the Sunni-majority society; however, this representation has in some cases been accompanied by silence or narrative selectivity (such as the event of Ghadir).
2. It seems that the narration of the early Islamic battles and especially the issue of the caliphate and succession of the Prophet (PBUH) in the mentioned books is accompanied by a neutral or biased approach toward some historical figures, as a result of which the Shia Imams (except Imam Ali (AS) as the fourth caliph) find a secondary role in the structure of political power, and their historical legitimacy in the dominant discourse is defined under the narrative of the Rashidun caliphate.
3. It seems that Afghanistan, despite being Sunni-majority and the dominance of the Sunni discourse in its educational system, has paid respectful and noteworthy attention to the individual and social dimensions of the Shia Imams in its history textbooks. Although this representation is quantitatively more limited compared to the three caliphs, qualitatively it is accompanied by an admiring tone and highlighting of the moral, religious, and human virtues of these noble figures, which indicates a kind of inclusive and unification-oriented attitude in compiling educational texts of Islamic history.

### **Textbooks of the Afghan Ministry of Education: Structure, Content, and Educational Approaches**

#### **Overview of the Educational System and the Process of Compiling Textbooks in Afghanistan**

Afghanistan's educational system has undergone significant changes over the past two decades. After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the Afghan Ministry of Education, in cooperation with international institutions, began a fundamental review of curricula and textbooks. In 2002, the ministry approved a new national curriculum framework designed with the aim of promoting child-centered learning strategies for the future generation of Afghan schools (Woo and Simmons, 2008: 293). In this process, a group of international curriculum consultants was hired to facilitate the production of new curricula and textbooks (ibid.: 295).

Afghan textbooks act as one of the appropriate tools for instilling cultural identity (national, ethnic, and religious) in the course of education, and there is no doubt that one of the most important aspects of individuals' identity in any society is their ethnic and religious identity (Qasemi, 2021: 12). Appropriate and timely reflection of the cultural characteristics, religious and national identity of

different ethnic groups in Afghan textbooks can affect national unity and eliminate the feeling of marginalization of ethnic groups (ibid.: 15). These books also represent ethnic, identity, cultural, and social diversity (Nazari, 2024: 45).

Afghanistan's educational policies have undergone fundamental changes in different historical periods. An examination of three important periods—the Mujahideen, the Taliban, and the post-2001 era—reveals historical differences affecting educational content. The Mujahideen era was characterized by "jihadi" textbooks that, by eliminating non-Islamic views, fueled extremism. The Taliban era witnessed oppressive restrictions on women's education, which led to secret efforts to learn (Amiri, Hashemi, and Ramazan, 2024: 98).

### **Structure of History Textbooks and Educational Content**

History textbooks in Afghan schools for different educational levels (grades seven to twelve) are authored and published by the textbook authors' group of the History Department of the Curriculum of the Ministry of Education. These books are in Dari and are printed by the Communication and Public Awareness Directorate of the Afghan Ministry of Education. Among the sources used in this research, one can mention the history book of grade seven (Authors' Group, 1399), the history of grade eight (Ansari and others, 1396), the history of grade ten (Authors' Group, 1398), and the history of grade twelve (ibid., 1398), all published by the Afghan Ministry of Education.

A review of the content of these textbooks shows that these texts are mainly focused on ancient and early Islamic history.

### **Individual and Political Status of Shia Imams in Afghan School History Textbooks**

#### **1. Textbooks of Grade Seven**

##### **1-1. The Status of Imam Ali (AS) among the First Believers**

In the history textbook of grade seven, reference is made to the first individuals who believed in the Prophet (PBUH): "Among the men, Abu Bakr Siddiq (may God be pleased with him), from the adults, Ali (Karram Allahu Wajhahu), and from the slaves, Zayd ibn Harithah were the first to believe and were honored with the blessed religion of Islam" (Grade Seven, 1399: 62).

**Analysis:** Although this historical report is brief, it contains important points about the individual status of Imam Ali (AS). His name appears among the first believers, although being in the category of "adults" indicates his precedence in accepting Islam and his companionship with the Prophet (PBUH) from the beginning of the mission. This narration implicitly confirms the pioneering status of Imam Ali (AS) in Islam as one of the first pillars of the formation of the Islamic community. This classification, although looking at the age of Imam Ali (AS) at that time, can somehow imply his distinction in status compared to other Companions, which has been mentioned in the textbooks of Afghanistan.

##### **1-2. Period of Caliphate and the Center of Kufa**

In continuation, this book has discussed the period of the caliphate of Imam Ali (AS) in two pages, referring to the events of his caliphate, the battles of Jamal and

Siffin, the emergence of the Kharijites, and finally his martyrdom. At the beginning of page 71 of the grade seven history textbook, a picture of the Kufa Mosque is presented, which is considered the center of Imam Ali's caliphate.

The text of the book states: "Ali (Karram Allahu Wajhahu), son of Abu Talib, was from the Banu Hashim clan and from the Quraysh tribe. In addition, he was the son of the uncle of Muhammad Mustafa (PBUH) and was also his son-in-law. He was born in Mecca twenty-one years before the Hijra. In the year of the famine of Mecca, Ali (Karram Allahu Wajhahu) was with Muhammad Mustafa (PBUH). After the Prophet (PBUH) was sent on the mission, Ali (Karram Allahu Wajhahu) was ten years old when he was honored with the blessed religion of Islam" (Grade Seven, 1399: 71).

**Analysis:** This section of the textbook highlights the individual and relative dimensions of Imam Ali (AS). The emphasis on the close kinship relationship (son of the uncle) and affinity (son-in-law) with the Prophet (PBUH) shows his privileged position in the Prophetic family. Also, the reference to Imam Ali's (AS) companionship with the Prophet (PBUH) in the year of the famine of Mecca indicates his sense of responsibility from childhood. The inclusion of the image of the Kufa Mosque as the center of the caliphate reveals the political dimensions of the Imam's personality and shows that he moved the center of the caliphate from Medina to Kufa after years, which itself indicates a new approach in administering the Islamic realm and relying on a different social base. This image symbolically introduces Kufa as the center of Alawi caliphate.

### **1-3. Challenges of the Caliphate and the Beginning of Wars**

After the martyrdom of Uthman, Muslims chose Ali (Karram Allahu Wajhahu) as caliph. Imam Ali's caliphate faced many problems and obstacles, and his period of caliphate faced numerous wars (ibid.: 71).

**Analysis:** This passage links Imam Ali's (AS) caliphate with difficulties and numerous crises. The reference to his selection by Muslims after Uthman's martyrdom emphasizes the legitimacy of the caliphate through public allegiance, but immediately points to the challenges ahead. This narrative presents a realistic picture of the short but eventful period of Imam Ali's (AS) caliphate and shows that he took the reins of affairs in critical and crisis-ridden conditions. Although the statement of this point indicates the difficulties of this period, it implicitly places the Imam on a position of stability and perseverance in the face of crises.

### **1-4. The Battle of Jamal and the Presence of Aisha**

"This battle took place in Basra. In this battle, Aisha (may God be pleased with her) was one of the ladies of Muhammad Mustafa (PBUH) and also participated. Because she was on a camel, this war was also called the Battle of the Camel" (ibid.: 71).

**Analysis:** The narration of the Battle of Jamal in the textbook, with a relatively neutral expression and far from any value judgment, refers to Aisha's presence in this battle. The phrase "participated" and the justification for naming the battle due to her riding a camel is a historical report, but a deeper analysis of the causes and consequences of this battle and the positions of the two sides shows a cau-

tious approach. This cautious approach indicates the sensitivity of the Afghan educational system to dealing with events that occurred among the Prophet's Companions. Nevertheless, the mention of this event indicates its importance in Islamic history and the necessity for students to be aware of this event.

#### **1-5. The Battle of Siffin and the Issue of Arbitration**

This battle took place in a place called Siffin in the year 37 AH, between the supporters of Ali (Karram Allahu Wajhahu) and Muawiyah (may God be pleased with him). The war lasted seven days and nights, after which the war ended and two people were appointed for negotiations: Ali (Karram Allahu Wajhahu) appointed Abu Musa Ash'ari as his representative, and Muawiyah appointed Amr ibn al-As as his representative. In the course of the negotiations, both reached the conclusion that both Ali (Karram Allahu Wajhahu) and Muawiyah should be removed and another person should be chosen for the caliphate. Amr ibn al-As said to Abu Musa: "We have decided that both Ali (Karram Allahu Wajhahu) and Muawiyah should be removed and we will choose another Muslim as caliph for ourselves." Abu Musa accepted. Then Abu Musa Ash'ari stood up and said: "O people, you heard that I removed Ali (may God be pleased with him) from the caliphate and I appoint Muawiyah as caliph." In this way, Muawiyah's supporters turned the course of negotiations in their own favor (Grade Seven, 1399: 72).

**Analysis:** The narration of the Battle of Siffin and the arbitration event is one of the most detailed and precise parts of these textbooks. In this narration, while maintaining apparent neutrality, the two sides are faced with a narrative that shows how the arbitration process took shape and ultimately gives a simple picture. The noteworthy point in this narration is the emphasis on the intelligence of Amr ibn al-As, which is entirely to the detriment of Imam Ali's (AS) front. This narration, although not directly defending Imam Ali (AS), portrays the result of the negotiations as a "tactical defeat" for his front. Also, the use of the phrase "supporters of Ali" and "supporters of Muawiyah" instead of "Shians of Islam" and the like emphasizes the two-sided nature of this battle. This detailed narration shows the importance of this event in Islamic history and its impact on the fate of the caliphate.

#### **1-6. The Emergence of the Kharijites and the Martyrdom of Imam Ali (AS)**

After the end of the Battle of Siffin, the formation of the Kharijites was one of the events (ibid.: 72). The Kharijites were one of the political and social groups that played an important role in the political history of Islam. They were among the companions of Ali (Karram Allahu Wajhahu) who were present in the Battle of Siffin. They objected to the arbitration that led to the removal of Ali (AS) from the caliphate. Ultimately, due to this reason, they became known as Kharijites. After the martyrdom of Ali (Karram Allahu Wajhahu), five years after his caliphate in the year 40 AH, one of the extremist Kharijites named Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljam Muradi reached martyrdom (ibid.: 72).

**Analysis:** This section of the textbook, while introducing the Kharijites as one of the influential groups in Islamic history, analyzes the roots of their formation. It emphasizes the point that the Kharijites were initially among the companions

of Imam Ali (AS) and then separated from him due to their objection to the arbitration. This shows the complexity of the political situation of that era and the difficulties of preserving the political unity of the Islamic community. This narration, while not explicitly taking a position, shows the emergence of the Kharijites as a consequence of the arbitration and the political crisis of that era.

### **1-7. Consequences of the Martyrdom and the Event of Karbala**

After the martyrdom of Imam Ali (Karram Allahu Wajhahu), Muawiyah came to the caliphate in the year 41 AH. After the death of Muawiyah, his son named Yazid came to the caliphate. And in the year 61 AH, "the tragic event of Karbala took place. In this war, the grandson of Muhammad Mustafa (PBUH), Hussein (may God be pleased with him) and his companions were martyred" (Grade Seven, 1399: 74).

**Analysis:** This passage of the book, although brief but emphasizing key points, addresses the transfer of the caliphate to Muawiyah and then Yazid and the event of Karbala. The expression "tragic event" to describe the event of Karbala expresses an emotional and respectful view of this event. The emphasis on the point that Imam Hussein (AS) is the grandson of the Prophet (PBUH) indicates his high status and takes his martyrdom beyond a purely political event and gives it emotional and spiritual dimensions. The silence of the textbook about the details of this event and also about the personality of Yazid may be due to religious sensitivities and avoiding the intensification of differences, but this brief mention indicates the importance of this event in Islamic history and the necessity for students to be aware of it.

## **2. Textbooks of Grade Ten**

### **2-1. The Role of Imam Ali in the Battle of Khaybar**

The Battle of Khaybar took place in the month of Muharram in the year 7 AH between Muslims under the command of the Prophet of Islam and the Jews; Ali, son of Abu Talib, played an important role in the victory of the Muslims and they were able to conquer the fortresses of Khaybar and ultimately led to the victory of the Muslims over the Jews (Grade Ten, 1398: 115).

**Analysis:** The reference to the role of Imam Ali (AS) in the conquest of Khaybar is one of the prominent points in representing his military and combative status. The Battle of Khaybar is considered one of the most important early battles of Islam, and the role of Imam Ali (AS) in this conquest highlights his bravery, military power, and loyalty to the ideals of Islam. This narration, while portraying the Imam as a powerful commander and influential in the battlefield, also highlights his personality in terms of spiritual and scholarly dimensions.

### **2-2. Silence about the Event of Ghadir**

In the discussion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, where the issue of the Prophet's succession should be raised, no mention has been made of this important issue in the history textbooks of Afghan schools. This subject has been ignored (Grade Ten, 1398: 119-120).

**Analysis:** The meaningful silence of the textbooks about the event of Ghadir Khumm and the prophetic tradition "Whoever I am his master, this Ali is his master" is one of the weakest points in representing the position of Imam Ali (AS)

from the Shia perspective. While the sources of both sects have recorded this event as one of the important events of the Farewell Pilgrimage, ignoring this subject shows a selective approach in compiling textbooks that has forced the ignoring of some fundamental Shia beliefs. This silence, although probably with the aim of avoiding religious differences, has led to the deletion of one of the most important documents of the Shia regarding the succession of the Prophet (PBUH).

### **2-3. The Consultative Council for the Caliphate after Umar**

At the end of the caliphate of the second caliph, a decision was made to choose his successor through a consultative system. In this council, six people were chosen: Uthman ibn Affan, Ali ibn Abi Talib, Talha ibn Ubaydullah, Zubayr ibn al-Awwam, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf, and Abdullah ibn Umar. After three days of discussion and debate, Uthman was chosen as the caliph of the Muslims (Grade Ten, 1398: 129).

**Analysis:** This section of the textbook confirms the presence of Imam Ali (AS) in the six-member council for determining the caliph after Umar. This presence indicates his prominent position among the Companions and his eligibility to assume the caliphate. However, the non-election of him and the selection of Uthman is a narrative that the textbook, without any analysis or reference to its reasons, has merely stated the result. This approach, although seemingly neutral, misses the opportunity to analyze the political and social conditions of that era and the positions of Imam Ali (AS) regarding this council.

### **2-4. Comprehensive Image of Imam Ali's Personality in the Grade Ten History Book**

The narration of the grade ten history textbook of Afghan schools has provided a comprehensive image: "Ali (may God be pleased with him), son of Abu Talib, was the son of the uncle and son-in-law of the Prophet (PBUH). His blessed title was Asadullah and Haydar, and he was also known by the kunyas Abu al-Hasan and Abu Turab. He was born in Mecca 21 years before the Hijra, and he was ten years old when he was honored with the religion of Islam. He spared no sacrifice and selflessness in the way of Islam. On the night of the migration of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), he slept in his bed so that those infidels who had besieged the Prophet's house would be deceived and ensure that the Prophet (PBUH) had not gone anywhere and was sleeping in his bed. Ali (Karram Allahu Wajhahu) was the gate of knowledge and wisdom, and in the pact of brotherhood, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) gave him his hand of brotherhood" (Grade Ten, 1398: 131).

**Analysis:** This passage from the grade ten history book is one of the most complete and positive descriptions of the personality of Imam Ali (AS) in all textbooks. The use of titles such as "Asadullah," "Haydar," "Abu al-Hasan," and "Abu Turab" emphasizes various dimensions of his personality. The reference to his sacrifice and selflessness on the night of the migration (Laylat al-Mabit) shows one of the most prominent manifestations of Imam Ali's (AS) loyalty and self-sacrifice toward the Prophet (PBUH). The expression "gate of knowledge and wisdom" is taken from the prophetic tradition "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate," which emphasizes the high scholarly status of the Imam. Also, the reference to the pact of brotherhood (brotherhood) between the Prophet (PBUH) and

Imam Ali (AS) indicates the closest possible relationship between them. This set of descriptions provides an almost complete picture of Imam Ali (AS) as a multi-dimensional figure—relative, devotional, combative, scholarly, and moral.

### **2-5. Wars during the Caliphate**

After the murder of Uthman by rioters, in Medina the people decided to choose Ali as caliph. During the caliphate of Ali, Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan and some other influential Muslims demanded the punishment of the killers of Uthman. But finally, a bloody war took place between Ali (AS) and his army and the supporters of Uthman's retaliation. In this war, a number of Companions such as Talha and Zubayr were killed, and Aisha, the wife of the Prophet (PBUH), rode a camel in this war and fought against Ali, and finally, the result of the war ended in favor of Ali (Grade Ten, 1398: 131).

**Analysis:** This narration, while confirming the allegiance of the people to Imam Ali (AS) after the murder of Uthman, refers to the most important challenge of his caliphate, namely the demand for the punishment of Uthman's killers by Muawiyah and some Companions. The expression "bloody war" indicates the intensity and importance of this battle. The reference to the killing of Talha and Zubayr from the prominent Companions and also the presence of Aisha against the Imam's army confirms the depth of the gap and difference in the Islamic community of that era. The emphasis that the result of the war ended in favor of Ali, although it is a historical report, implicitly indicates the legitimacy of his position or at least his military victory.

### **2-6. Justice-Centeredness of Imam Ali (AS)**

Imam Ali "advanced his caliphate with perfect justice, fairness, compassion, and kindness toward the subjects" (Grade Ten, 1398: 132).

**Analysis:** This short but meaningful sentence highlights one of the most important individual and political dimensions of Imam Ali (AS), namely justice-centeredness. The emphasis on "perfect justice, fairness, compassion, and kindness" shows the Imam's model of governance in which justice and ethics are at the top of affairs. This description provides an image of an ideal ruler who is not only committed to justice but also treats his subjects with compassion and kindness. This statement, although general, can draw a model of governance for students.

### **2-7. The Islamic World after the Martyrdom of Imam Ali**

In the grade ten history textbook of Afghan schools, the period after the martyrdom of Imam Ali is narrated as follows: "After the martyrdom of Ali (may God be pleased with him), Muslims chose his elder son Hassan (may God be pleased with him) as caliph. After discussion and investigation, he concluded that for the sake of preserving the lives and property and unity of Muslims, he should abandon enmity and competition with Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan and give up the claim of the caliphate. This caused him to establish a relationship with Muawiyah and relinquish the caliphate in his favor, and they agreed that Muawiyah should after himself leave the affairs of the caliphate to the Muslims themselves so that they could freely choose their caliph, and in this way, an agreement was reached and the caliphate was transferred to the Umayyad dynasty" (Grade Ten, 1398: 132).

**Analysis:** This narration of Imam Hassan's peace treaty has a completely positive and constructive approach to this event. The emphasis that Imam Hassan (AS) withdrew from the caliphate "for the sake of preserving the lives and property and unity of Muslims" indicates his rationality, foresight, and responsibility toward the Islamic community. This narration interprets Imam Hassan's peace not as a defeat, but as a wise choice to avoid bloodshed and preserve the unity of Muslims. The expression "discussion and investigation" for reaching this conclusion emphasizes his deliberation and reflection. This manner of narration, while maintaining respect for Imam Hassan (AS), presents a positive and constructive image of him as a unity-oriented and peace-seeking figure.

### **2-8. The Epic of Karbala**

During the caliphate of Yazid, son of Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, the epic of Karbala took place, in which Imam Hussein, son of Ali, and 72 of his companions were martyred in a place called Karbala in Iraq (Grade Ten, 1398: 136).

**Analysis:** The repetition of the Karbala event in the grade ten book with the expression "epic" emphasizes the proud and lasting aspects of this event. The word "epic" has a positive semantic load and introduces the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions not as a defeat, but as a great and inspiring event. The emphasis that he is the son of Imam Ali (AS) highlights the link between these two great figures. The mention of the number 72 indicates the multitude of Imam Hussein's loyal companions and confirms the greatness of this collective sacrifice. This brief narration, with the choice of positive and respectful words, establishes the high status of Imam Hussein (AS) in Islamic history.

### **3. Difference in Titles and Expressions about Shia Imams and the Rashidun Caliphs**

In the history books of Afghan schools, the Rashidun caliphs Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman are written with the title "may God be pleased with him," but about Imam Ali, the word "Karram Allahu Wajhahu" has been used. The name of Abu Bakr is given as Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (may God be pleased with him), Hazrat Umar as Hazrat Umar Farooq, and Uthman as Hazrat Uthman (may God be pleased with him) (Grade Ten, 1398: 123-130). The title Siddiq for Abu Bakr was given by the Prophet (Grade Ten, 1398: 123). Hazrat Uthman in history has been titled Dhul-Nurayn (Grade Ten, 1398: 129). But Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib has been titled "Karram Allahu Wajhahu" (Grade Ten, 1398: 131).

**Analysis:** The difference in titles and expressions used for the Rashidun caliphs contains subtle points about the religious approach of the textbooks. The use of "may God be pleased with him" for Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman is a common expression among Sunnis indicating God's satisfaction with them. But regarding Imam Ali (AS), the use of "Karram Allahu Wajhahu" (may God honor his face) is a special and different expression. Although this expression is not exclusive to Imam Ali (AS), in historical and religious texts it is mostly used for him and emphasizes his dignity and inherent nobility. This difference in expression, although it may be due to common traditions of historical writing, implicitly indicates the distinction of Imam Ali's (AS) status in the eyes of the authors of these texts. The special titles of other caliphs (Siddiq, Farooq, Dhul-Nurayn) also each

emphasize a particular virtue of theirs, but the title "Karram Allahu Wajhahu" for Imam Ali (AS) focuses more on his spiritual aspects and inherent dignity.

### **Conclusion**

An examination of the history textbooks of Afghan schools (grades seven and ten) shows that the representation of the Shia Imams, especially Imam Ali (AS), Imam Hassan (AS), and Imam Hussein (AS), in these texts follows a mainly respectful, positive, and at the same time selective approach. Afghanistan's educational system, despite the dominance of the Sunni discourse, has tried to present an acceptable and defensible image of these prominent figures of Islamic history that is not in open conflict with the beliefs of the majority of society and also satisfies the feelings of Shia followers as much as possible.

The points accepted by both sects, such as being among the first believers, sacrifice on Laylat al-Mabit, the determining role in the Battle of Khaybar, courage, knowledge and wisdom (being the gate of knowledge), kinship with the Prophet (PBUH), and most importantly, justice-centeredness during the caliphate, have been reflected with special emphasis and praise. Titles and expressions such as "Karram Allahu Wajhahu," "Asadullah," and "Haydar" also indicate his inherent dignity and high status in the eyes of the authors.

However, the selective and cautious approach in dealing with controversial events of Islamic history, especially the issue of the Prophet's succession, is one of the noteworthy points in these books. The meaningful silence about the event of Ghadir Khumm and the prophetic tradition "Whoever I am his master, this Ali is his master," which is one of the basic historical documents for proving the immediate succession of Imam Ali (AS), indicates a kind of content filtering aimed at avoiding the intensification of religious sensitivities. Also, in the narration of the battles of Jamal and Siffin and the arbitration event, while maintaining apparent neutrality, no clear conclusion was made about the legitimacy of the parties, although in some cases the intelligence of the opposing front in shaping the results of the negotiations in its favor has been mentioned.

On the other hand, the representation of Imam Hassan's peace as a wise measure to preserve the unity of Muslims and avoid bloodshed, and also the narration of the Karbala event with expressions such as "tragic event" and "epic," expresses the positive and emotional view of the authors toward these events and their central figures. This approach, especially in describing the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) as the grandson of the Prophet (PBUH), while avoiding controversial details, emphasizes the trans-sectarian and human aspects of this epic.

Overall, Afghan history textbooks have tried to present a unification-oriented and relatively inclusive narrative of Islamic history by emphasizing commonalities and highlighting the moral and religious virtues of the Shia Imams. However, this effort has in some cases come at the cost of ignoring some fundamental Shia beliefs and full-fledged narratives of events. Therefore, a critical review of these texts, with the aim of achieving a more comprehensive, fairer, and more balanced narrative of Islamic history that, while preserving national cohesion, addresses all dimensions of the personalities of these models of Islamic history free from sectarian views, seems an undeniable necessity.

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