

A Jurisprudential Exploration of the Hadiths on Ihya' al-Amr and the Challenges of Its Application on the 7th of Safar

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Received: 2024/10/29

Accepted: 2025/01/19

Abstract

Based on a jurisprudential-ijtihādī analysis of the hadiths concerning Ihya' al-Amr (the revival of the rights) of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), this study examines these traditions as a coherent hadith cluster from two perspectives. First, it seeks to uncover the deeper layers of their meaning and demonstrate that reviving the rights is not limited to teaching and disseminating knowledge; it also includes holding ceremonies in accordance with the occasions of joy and mourning associated with the Ahl al-Bayt (as). Second, it examines the practical challenge arising from the concurrence of two reported occasions on the 7th of Safar: the birth of Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (as) and the martyrdom of Imam Hasan (as). Holding both celebratory and mourning ceremonies on the same day, particularly in public media, may be difficult or impracticable. Among the two reports, the report concerning the martyrdom has greater historical authority according to the study. Attention to this issue can help resolve the practical challenge of applying the hadiths on reviving the rights to this occasion. The present study employs a descriptive-analytical method and library research to address these two dimensions.

Keywords: Reviving the rights, Imam Hasan (as), Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (as), 7th of Safar, martyrdom.

Extended Abstract

Introduction

One of the most significant approaches to Hadith studies is the jurisprudential-ijtihadi approach, which has long held great importance as a method of legal deduction in Imami jurisprudence. Applying this method to the realm of Hadith studies—even in areas that have received less attention in jurisprudential texts—can demonstrate the immense potential of this sophisticated technique for grasping the essence of Sharia; furthermore, it can yield significant insights by uncovering the inner, hidden layers of meaning within these noble traditions.

The noble traditions concerning the "revival of the rights of the Ahl al-Bayt (as)" face serious practical challenges amidst the constraints of historical circumstances—particularly regarding the organization of mourning gatherings and celebratory events on occasions such as the martyrdom anniversaries and birthdays of the Ahl al-Bayt (as).

These traditions regarding the revival of the rights of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) have been narrated using various expressions, thereby acquiring a multifaceted content.

Content and Methodology: This study organizes various traditions concerning the "revival of the rights" (ihya-ye amr) into a specific hadith cluster. It examines diverse historical accounts regarding the birth of Musa ibn Ja'far (as) and the martyrdom of Imam al-Mujtaba (as), evaluating their historical plausibility. Through a critical analysis, the study addresses the issue of balancing celebration and rejoicing with grief and mourning—within the framework of "reviving the rights"—by applying ijtihad-based criteria and the operational principles governing cases of conflicting obligations (tazahum).

Results and Findings: Based on the research and inductive analysis conducted, the relevant traditions can be classified into five categories; the fifth category effectively explains and clarifies the meaning of "reviving the rights" (ihya-ye amr). This category serves as a contextual guide for interpreting all the previously mentioned traditions regarding the conceptual scope of the "rights of the Ahl al-Bayt (as)" and its revival. It demonstrates that the mere act of remembering and commemorating them constitutes a revival of their Cause and a revival of their remembrance; thus, the concept should not be restricted to a specific context—such as the teaching of knowledge—even though the teaching and dissemination of their knowledge and teachings are among the most prominent manifestations of reviving the rights.

The implications of these hadiths regarding the observance of gatherings—spanning the spectrum from religious occasions of joy and celebration to those of grief and mourning—sometimes give rise to a conflict of observance. However, a meticulous examination of historical records regarding the 7th of Safar resolves this long-standing issue; it removes the matter from the realm of conflicting observances altogether, rendering the conflict moot. Regarding the 7th of Safar, reports exist for both the martyrdom of Imam al-Mujtaba (as) and the birth of Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (as).

All accounts regarding the birth occurring on the 7th of Safar trace back to—and rely upon—the report of Ibn Fattal al-Nayshaburi. Not only did none of the early scholars or primary historical sources designate this day for the Imam's birth, but prominent figures such as Thiqat al-Islam al-Kulayni, Sheikh Mufid (in Masar and Irshad), and Sheikh Tusi (in Tahdhib)—by failing to mention it—effectively disregarded this view. The author of Jawahir also implicitly rejected this opinion by omitting any reference to it, given that he explicitly cites historical reports regarding the births of the Infallibles (as) whenever he deems them reliable. Furthermore, a tradition transmitted by Ibn Jarir al-Tabari al-Shi'i from Imam al-Askari (as)—stating that the birth of Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (as) took place in the month of Dhu al-Hijjah—serves as additional grounds for questioning the validity of the report by Ibn Fattal (who died in the first decade of the sixth century).

However, the historical account placing the martyrdom of Imam Mujtaba (as) on the 7th of Safar carries sufficient credibility to warrant recognizing this date—alongside other dates cited for his martyrdom—as a valid historical observance; consequently, out of respect for the mourning of this noble Imam, one should abstain from joy and celebration on this day—even for occasions such as the birthdays of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), although the claim that a birthday falls on this specific day has not been historically established.

Conclusion

Holding ceremonies to commemorate the Ahl al-Bayt (as) and strengthening the emotional bond between the people and them constitutes "reviving the rights"; this significant undertaking is not limited merely to disseminating teachings, imparting knowledge, or adhering to commandments—though all of these are indeed instances of reviving the rights of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). Organizing gatherings for the Ahl al-Bayt (as) varies in nature depending on whether the occasion is one of joy or mourning; the requirements of celebratory gatherings differ from those of mourning assemblies, even though the essence of "reviving the rights" remains a singular concept. Differences in the nature of these occasions can sometimes lead to practical challenges regarding how the rights is revived—such as the debate surrounding the 7th of Safar—yet such challenges can be resolved by examining historical evidence. No convincing evidence was found to support the observance of Imam Musa ibn Ja'far's (as) birthday on this day; however, the historical report placing this event in the month of Dhu al-Hijjah is credible. Similarly, regarding the martyrdom of Imam al-Mujtaba (as), the report citing the 7th of Safar holds historical validity.