

The Cultural Strategies of Imam Riḍā (as) in Finding Islamic Unity During the Succession Period in Iran

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Abstract

The activities of armed groups and heterogeneous religious sects in the first Hijri centuries and by claiming to follow Islam, had caused the world of Islam in cultural aspects, to become a hotbed of discord, arrogance and violence among different Muslim groups and caliphate systems in place at the time. This trend reached its peak at the threshold of Māmūn Abbasi's caliphate period. The enforcement of the successor position upon Imam Riḍā (as) by Māmūn and his presence in Iran, established a good opportunity for Imam (as) for pursuing and implementing the valuable ideals of unity in a society full of chaos. This research, using the analytical-descriptive method while relying on narrative and historical sources and data, attempts to answer, and find the cultural strategies in question that were presumably used by Imam Riḍā (as) to create unity among Muslims as a scholar and a religious leader. The findings of this paper indicate that the Imam (as), based on the guidelines of the Holy Qur'an and Prophetic Sunnah and tradition in his new position at the capital area of Iran, had made the best progress in reaching unity among Muslims by adopting targeted and efficient cultural strategies. His Majesty (as) had considered the essence of the society's way of thinking and attitude to be the most important element and organized his cultural strategies accordingly. In this context, conversations between Muslims and non-Muslims was pursued instead of ordering the killing of religious opponents. The role and the position of Imam (as) became especially evident in this framework; the focus was put on raising awareness among the scholars and the general public about religious truths and not the illusions of the deviants, and finally, good manners, respect, and the inherent dignity of human beings were further emphasized in all situations.

Keywords: The Holy Qur'an, Imam Riḍā (as), Islamic Unity, Cultural Strategies, Iran.

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