

Raḍavī Shrine Position in Safavid Religious policy

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Abstract

The rise of the Safavids and the subsequent formalization of the Shiism in Iran created a lot of cultural changes that still remains to this day. The Safavid kings used several tools in this way, one of which was the development of Shi'i religious sites. Undoubtedly, the most important religious place in Iran was the holy shrine of Imam Riḍā (as).

The shrine of 'Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (as), considering that it was within the borders of the Safavid realm, and the Safavids attributed themselves to the Prophet (pbuh) through Imam Mūsā Kāzim (as), therefore, the shrine of Imam Riḍā has faced with a special position in relation to the other Imams' graves (as). Hence, the Safavid kings paid much attention to this sacred threshold and took advantage of the capacities of that place to promote Shiism.

This study attempts to explain the role of Raḍavī shrine in the context of the Safavid religious policy to promote Shiism, as a case study of the functions of this place in the development of Shiism.

In this paper, the position of this place in the historiography of Safavid era will be reviewed in order to achieve a good understanding of this issue. Historical reports indicate the great attention of the Safavid kings to this holy shrine, and pilgrimage, entreat (tawassul), worship and retreat ('Itikaf) and burial in the shrine, etc. are among the issues that are of interest to the historians.

Keywords: Raḍavī Station, Holy Mashhad, Shiism, Safavid kings, Religious policy.

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