

الشهيد الصدر ودور علماء الدين في التحولات السياسية والاجتماعية: دراسة استقرائية مع التركيز على العصر المعاصر

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الملخص

معلومات مقال

نوع مقال:	هدف البحث: يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل وإعادة قراءة الكيفية التي استطاع من خلالها الشهيد السعيد آية الله السيد محمد باقر الصدر إعادة صياغة موقع ومسؤولية العالم الديني في الشأن العام والتحولات السياسية والاجتماعية في العراق خلال القرن العشرين، مع الحفاظ على أصالة المرجعية الدينية وصيانتها من الذوبان في الاستبداد السياسي.
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الكلمات المفتاحية:	نتائج البحث: كشفت نتائج البحث عن نجاح الشهيد الصدر في بناء منظومة سياسية إسلامية متكاملة تركز على المسؤولية الأخلاقية، والخلافة الإلهية للإنسان، والمشاركة الشعبية، ورفض التبعية الفكرية والجمود التقليدي، وجعل العدالة غاية الحكم والشرعية ميزانه. كما شكل استشهاده مع أخته الفاضلة بنت الهدى وقوداً للوعي الثوري ومقاومة الطغيان.
السياسة العراقية، علماء الشيعة، التحولات الاجتماعية والسياسية، الفكر السياسي الإسلامي، الشهيد السيد محمد باقر الصدر.	الخاتمة والاستنتاج: تخلص الدراسة إلى أن تراث الشهيد الصدر وسيرته يقدمان رؤية ملهمة ومستدامة للمجتمعات المعاصرة في مواجهة التسلط وأزمة القيادة الأخلاقية، مؤكدة الدور البناء والحضاري لعلماء الدين في قيادة مسيرة الإصلاح والتغيير المجتمعي المستنير.

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المقدمة

يقدم الدين الإسلامي الحنيف رؤية كونية شمولية تنتظم كافة مناحي الوجود الإنساني، وتتجاوز حصر الدين في زاوية العبادات الفردية أو الشعائر الطقسية لتشمل صياغة النظم الكلية للمجتمع في ميادين الحكم، والاقتصاد، والقضاء، والتربية، وتوزيع الثروة، وتكريس العدالة الاجتماعية. وانطلاقاً من الرؤية التوحيدية للقرآن الكريم، فإن بعثة الأنبياء والرسول لم تكن مجرد بلاغ نظري مجرد، بل كانت حركة رسالية كبرى تستهدف تحرير الإنسان من أغلال الاستعباد والطاغوت، وتطهير النفوس، وإقامة القسط والموازن العادلة في الأرض.

وعلى هدي هذه السلسلة النبوية وتأكيد النصوص القطعية والحديث الشريف بأن «العلماء ورثة الأنبياء»، تصبح وظيفة الفقيه والمصلح الديني استمراراً للوظيفة الرسالية في قيادة الأمة، ونصرة المستضعفين، ومواجهة الظلم الاجتماعي والسياسي. وتبعاً لذلك، فإن دعاوى الفصل بين الدين والسياسة تمثل مشروعاً استعماريّاً خبيثاً لتجريد المجتمعات المسلمة من رصيدها القيمي، وتغيب الوعي الرسالي، وعزل المرجعية عن قيادة الجماهير.

وفي القرن العشرين، واجه العراق تحديات جسيمة تمثلت في التعددية المذهبية والقومية في ظل أنظمة ملكية وجمهورية اتسمت بالنزعة التسلطية والانقلابات العسكرية، وصولاً إلى استبداد حزب البعث وسيطرته الأمنية القمعية الشاملة، بالتوازي مع اجتياح التيارات الإلحادية والماركسية لصفوف الشباب. في هذا المفصل التاريخي الخطير، برز المرجع المجدد والمفكر الإسلامي الفذ آية الله العظمى الشهيد السيد محمد باقر الصدر ليعيد صياغة دور الحوزة العلمية والمؤسسة الدينية، ووضاً أسس النهضة الفكرية والسياسية المعاصرة.

منهجية البحث

اعتمدت هذه الدراسة على المنهجية النوعية الاستقرائية، التحليلية والنقدية المقارنة. وتمت معالجة الإشكالية البحثية من خلال القراءة الفاحصة للنصوص التأسيسية الصادرة عن الشهيد الصدر، وفي طليعتها مؤلفاته المرجعية الكبرى كـ «فلسفتنا»، و«اقتصادنا»، و«الأسس المنطقية للاستقراء»، و«دروس في علم الأصول»، وسلسلة «الإسلام يقود الحياة». كما شمل التحليل الوثائقي بياناته ونداءاته التاريخية، وفتاواه المصيرية، ومسيرته الجهادية في مواجهة آلة القمع البعثي، ومقاربتها بالسياق التاريخي لحركة المرجعية الدينية والتحولات الجيوسياسية المعاصرة في العراق والعالم الإسلامي.

نتائج البحث والتحليل الاستقرائي

أسفرت الدراسة التحليلية المستفيضة عن استخلاص خمسة محاور مفصلية كبرى:
أولاً؛ الواقع الاجتماعي والسياسي للعراق في عهد الشهيد الصدر: تميز العراق بتركيبته السكانية المتنوعة التي يشكل فيها المسلمون الشيعة الأغلبية إلى جانب المسلمين السنة والمكونات الأخرى كالمسيحيين والقوميات الكردية والتركمانية. وقد عانى هذا المجتمع بعد نيل الاستقلال من توالي الانقلابات العسكرية وهيمنة الحكومات الفردية، حتى استأثر حزب البعث بالسلطة وفرض نظاماً شمولياً مارس التمييز الطائفي والتنكيل المنظم بالعلماء والحركات الدينية وتكريس الفقر في المناطق المحرومة. وجاء انتصار الثورة الإسلامية في إيران ليمثل إشعاعاً ألهم حماس الجماهير ووعبها الديني، مما دفع السلطة البعثية إلى التصعيد الأمني الأعْمى لسحق كل حركة إصلاحية.

ثانياً؛ السيرة العلمية والمسار الجهادي والاستشهاد: ولد الشهيد السيد محمد باقر الصدر في مدينة الكاظمية لأسرة علمية عريقة تنحدر من سلالة الإمام موسى الكاظم. وتجلت عبقريته الفذة بنيله مرتبة الاجتهاد المطلق واستنباط الأحكام وهو في سن السابعة عشرة. وفي الحوزة العلمية بالنجف الأشرف، تتلمذ على كبار الأعلام كالسيد الخوئي والشيخ آل ياسين، ودرس الفلسفة الإسلامية والحكمة المتعالية. وقد أحدث ثورة معرفية بتأسيسه علم الاقتصاد الإسلامي، وتفكيكه أسس الفلسفة المادية والماركسية، وابتكاره نسقاً جديداً في المنطق الاستقرائي وتجديد علم الأصول، إلى جانب تربيته لأجيال من العلماء والمجاهدين. وقد تصدى لظلم الطغاة بثبات أسطوري، حيث تعرض للاعتقال المتكرر والتعذيب والإقامة الجبرية الطويلة رفقة أخته الكاتبة والمجاهدة الفاضلة بنت الهدى. وعندما أصر على مواقفه المبدئية في رفض التنازل للطاغوت أو التراجع عن مناصرة الثورة الإسلامية، أقدمت السلطة على إعدامهما في نيسان عام ألف وتسعمائة وثمانين، ليخلدا رمزاً للتضحية والفداء في تاريخ الإسلام الحديث.

ثالثاً؛ النظرية السياسية وأصالة الحكم الإسلامي: شخص الشهيد الصدر مآزق النظم الوضعية في عجزها عن إدراك حقيقة الإنسان. وطرح نظريته المركزية في «خلافة الإنسان وشهادة الأنبياء والعلماء»، مبيناً أن الحاكمية التكوينية والتشريعية هي لله تعالى وحده، وأن الله استخلف بني الإنسان ومكنهم من الإرادة والاختيار للمشاركة المتساوية في تدبير الشأن العام والمسؤولية السياسية. فالعدالة هي غاية الحكم وجوهر مشروعيته، والشرعية هي الإطار التشريعي الحاكم، في حين تمثل ولاية المرجع والفقهاء الصالح صمام الأمان الإشرافي والرقابي الذي يضمن انسجام الدولة مع القيم الإلهية ويحميها من الانزلاق نحو الاستبداد، في تكامل بديع بين السيادة الإلهية والشورى الشعبية.

رابعاً؛ الفاعلية الميدانية وقيادة التحولات السياسية: نقل الشهيد الصدر الحوزة العلمية من العزلة والجمود إلى قلب التفاعل والمسؤولية المجتمعية. وساهم فكرياً وتنظيمياً في تأسيس وتوجيه حزب الدعوة الإسلامية ليكون إطاراً حركياً ينظم طاقات الشباب في مواجهة التغريب والإلحاد. وتوج مواقفه الشجاعة بإصدار فتواه التاريخية الحاسمة بحرمة الانتماء لحزب البعث، مما جرد السلطة من أي شرعية دينية أو أخلاقية. كما أعلن دعمه المطلق لثورة الإمام الخميني معتبراً وحدة الأمة الإسلامية فريضة كبرى، مما أسس لنهضة سياسية تجلت ثمارها في صمود الشعب العراقي وإسقاط الطغیان لاحقاً.

خامساً؛ العبر والدروس المعاصرة: يؤكد تراث الشهيد الصدر أن ممارسة العمل السياسي بمعزل عن الضوابط الأخلاقية والدينية تقود حتماً إلى الطغیان والفساد. ويقدم مفهوم الاستخلاف حلاً لأزمة التوفيق بين المبادئ الإسلامية والمشاركة الشعبية الرشيدة، مشدداً على ضرورة وجود علماء رساليين يجمعون بين غزارة العلم الفقهي والشجاعة الميدانية والاستجابة لتطلعات الأمة.

الخاتمة والاستنتاج

تؤكد نتائج هذا البحث أن حياة الإمام الشهيد السيد محمد باقر الصدر، وفكره التجديدي، واستشهاده البطولي، تمثل النموذج الأسمى لدور عالم الدين المصلح الذي كسر قيود التبعية والاستبداد، وأعاد للأمة ثقتها بهويتها الحضارية، مبيناً أن مسؤولية الفقيه لا تنفصل عن قضايا العدالة والحرية الإنسانية؛ وهي رؤية تظل حية وضرورية لمسيرة الأمة في عصرنا الحاضر.

Shahīd al-Ṣadr and the Role of Clergy in Socio-Political Transformations: An Investigation with a Focus on the Contemporary Era

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ABSTRACT

Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr (Shahīd al-Ṣadr) stands as a pivotal figure in the socio-political landscape of 20th-century Iraq and a significant contributor to broader transformations within the Muslim world. This article examines the role of Shahīd al-Ṣadr in socio-political transformations through clerical engagement in twentieth-century Iraq, with particular attention to its relevance for the contemporary era. Against the backdrop of Iraq's authoritarian political environment, the study situates Shahīd al-Ṣadr's intellectual and activist trajectory as a principled response to political repression, social injustice, and the dominance of competing secular ideologies. The objective of the research is to analyse how Shahīd al-Ṣadr reconceptualised the role of the religious scholar in public life and contributed to political transformation without collapsing religious authority into unchecked political power. Employing a qualitative and analytical methodology, the article draws on Shahīd al-Ṣadr's writings, historical accounts, and secondary scholarly literature to examine his political thought, praxis, and martyrdom. The findings reveal that Shahīd al-Ṣadr articulated a coherent framework of Islamic political engagement grounded in moral responsibility, popular participation, and ethical governance, while rejecting both political quietism and ideological dependency. The article concludes that Shahīd al-Ṣadr's legacy offers enduring insights for contemporary societies grappling with authoritarianism and crises of moral leadership, underscoring the constructive and principled role of the clergy in socio-political change.

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Introduction

Islam presents a holistic way of life, extending far beyond devotional practices to encompass every facet of human existence. It strives to provide a complete and perfect framework for individuals, promoting justice, responsibility, and a harmonious relationship with both humanity and the natural world. Therefore, in an attempt to foster a balanced and virtuous life, Islam offers guidance in areas ranging from ethical conduct and economic transactions to family law, governance, health, and education. This inclusive approach positions Islam not simply as a religion but as a comprehensive guide towards a fulfilled and purposeful life (Khomeini, 2008: 4-5).

The institution of Prophethood (*Nubuwwah*) fundamentally signifies a divine appointment intended to guide and liberate humanity from the shackles of bondage. Throughout history, Prophets of God (peace be upon them) have served as pivotal agents of change, guiding communities towards righteousness and reshaping societal structures. Similarly, the story of the life of the Imams provides enough evidence to show that they paid special attention to the interests of the Ummah and dedicated their whole life to the guidance of society (Şadr, 1982: 95; Saliu, et al. 2023: 12).

The Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions (Hadith) provide a foundational understanding of the role of Prophets and portray them not merely as messengers of divine revelation, but as reformers, moral guides, and agents of justice who actively shape the social and ethical fabric of their respective communities. For instance, the Prophets are chosen by God to invite people to monotheism and confront and dismantle false beliefs and harmful practices prevalent in their societies (Mousavi, 2018: 11-12).

This universal purpose is elucidated in the verse: *"Certainly We raised an apostle in every nation to preach: 'Worship God, and shun satanic entities'"* (Qur'an 16:36). In the interpretation of the verse, Allamah Ṭabāṭabāī in *Tafsīr Al-Mizān* writes: *"...This statement affirms that the sending of a messenger is not exclusive to any specific nation; rather, it is a divine tradition established among all people, given their need for it. ...And His statement 'Worship God, and shun*

satanic entities' clarifies that the essential reality of sending the divine messengers is none other than calling them to worship Allah and avoid Taghūt." (Ṭabāṭabāī, 1970: 12/242)

Prophets are fundamentally dispatched as divine agents to purify societies that have been corrupted by immorality, serving as the primary catalyst for moral and ethical reform. The Qur'an explicitly highlights this purifying purpose, stating, *"It is He Who sent to the unlettered people an apostle from among themselves, to recite to them His signs, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom"* (Qur'an 62:2). Thus, one of the significant objectives of the mission of the Most Noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his household) is the purification of the soul, the edification of the human being, and the crystallization of praiseworthy morals within his existential reality. Indeed, it can be posited that the recitation of verses and the teaching of the Book and Wisdom, alluded to in the first blessed verse, serve as a preamble to the purification of the soul and human edification, which in turn constitutes the fundamental objective of ethical science (Makārim Shīrāzī, 2007:1/10)

Prophets of God have consistently served as unwavering champions of social justice and economic equity, advocating for the rights of the marginalised and vulnerable while condemning systems of exploitation and greed. This divine mission seeks to ensure the fair distribution of resources and prevent the accumulation of wealth at the expense of the needy. For instance, the institution of Zakat (Qur'an 2:43; 19:31; 21:73) in all divine religions (Qara'ati, 2009: 3/446) holds immense significance in society as it serves as a vital mechanism for social justice and economic balance. By redistributing wealth from the affluent to the needy, it alleviates poverty, reduces class gaps, and fosters a spirit of solidarity and empathy among members of the community (Ibid, 3/448).

Ultimately, the mission of the divine Prophets was never confined to the private sphere of individual spirituality; rather, it inherently encompassed the comprehensive governance of society. By establishing a bond between religion and politics, the Prophets sought to organise social affairs and administer justice based on Divine laws. Their role was fundamentally political in the sense that they actively

opposed tyranny and rebellion, striving to build a community grounded in peace and ethical order. Consequently, viewing their leadership as separate from political engagement contradicts the historical reality of their struggle for social justice and human salvation (Khodadadi, 1390 SH: 20).

Imam Khomeini, in rejecting the slogan of the separation of religion from politics, states: " This slogan of the separation of religion from politics and the demand that Islamic scholars should not intervene in social and political affairs have been formulated and propagated by the imperialists; it is only the irreligious who repeat them. Were religion and politics separate in the time of the Prophet (s)? Did there exist, on one side, a group of clerics, and opposite it, a group of politicians and leaders? Were religion and politics separate in the time of the caliphs—even if they were not legitimate—or in the time of the Commander of the Faithful (a)? Did two separate authorities exist? These slogans and claims have been advanced by the imperialists and their political agents in order to prevent religion from ordering the affairs of this world and shaping Muslim society, and at the same time to create a rift between the scholars of Islam, on the one hand, and the masses and those struggling for freedom and independence, on the other. They will thus been able to gain dominance over our people and plunder our resources, for such has always been their ultimate goal" (Khomeini, 2008: 16-17)

Meanwhile, drawing upon the popular hadith that religious scholars (Ulama) are the heirs of the Prophets (Kulaynī, 2008:1/77; Ibn Babaweyh, 1983:1/65), their role in socio-political transformations becomes intrinsically linked to the prophetic mission of guidance and reform. As inheritors of prophetic knowledge and responsibility, the religious scholars are expected to interpret and apply divine teachings to contemporary challenges, advocating for justice, ethical governance, and the well-being of society. They serve as moral compasses, offering critiques of unjust systems, promoting social responsibility, and inspiring movements for positive change while upholding Islamic principles and striving to build communities grounded in piety, knowledge, and equitable practices—effectively continuing the transformative work initiated by the Prophets of God themselves.

In a speech of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei, with the Sunni and Shia Ulama in Kurdistan, he reiterated on this vital point: *"In Islam, Ulama are the pioneers of progress and rectification. This is a duty that religious scholars have been entrusted with. There is a sermon in Nahjul Balaghah which says: **"And Allah made scholars promise that they should not remain silent about the greed of oppressors and hunger of the oppressed."** This means that religious scholars should not stay silent about oppression, injustice, and encroachment upon the rights of others. Impartiality is meaningless in these cases. As ulama, your duty is not only to explain religious issues and the principles of sharia to the people. The duty of ulama is similar to that of prophets. **"Surely, Ulama are heirs to the prophets."** [Kafi, chapter 1, p. 32] The duty of prophets was not only to explain religious issues to the people. If the only duty of prophets was to help people differentiate between halal and haraam, no one would have opposed them."* (Khamenei, 2009)

In light of this, the role of religious scholars in shaping socio-political landscapes has been a subject of enduring scholarly interest, particularly within the Muslim world. This study, therefore, investigates the life, thought, and actions of Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, a highly influential Shia cleric whose activism and intellectual contributions significantly impacted Iraq's turbulent 20th century and continue to resonate within contemporary debates on governance and social justice.

Prior research has explored various facets of Shahīd al-Ṣadr's legacy. However, a comprehensive analysis of his role within the broader context of Iraqi political transformations and the lessons his experiences offer for contemporary Muslim societies remains comparatively underdeveloped. This research aims to address this gap by examining Shahīd al-Ṣadr's political thought, analysing his engagement with Iraqi society, and assessing the impact of his martyrdom on subsequent political developments.

This investigation employs a qualitative methodology, drawing upon primary sources such as Shahīd al-Ṣadr's writings, speeches, and legal rulings, alongside secondary literature on Iraqi history, Shahīd

al-Ṣadr, Shia political thought, and the dynamics of religious activism in the Middle East. The study seeks to contribute to a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between religious authority, political mobilisation, and social change in a context marked by authoritarianism and sectarian tensions. Ultimately, it aims to illuminate the enduring relevance of Shahīd al-Ṣadr's legacy for contemporary discussions on the role of religious actors in promoting social justice and democratic governance.

The Social and Political Situation of Iraq during the Time of Shahīd al-Ṣadr

The social and political situations in Iraq during the time of Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr can be examined across several key areas:

Iraq is a country with significant religious and ethnic diversity. About 95% of the population is Muslim. Shi'a Muslims form a majority of 60–65%, consisting mainly of Arabs, along with Turkmen, Faili (Shi'a) Kurds, and others. Sunnis account for 32–37% of the population, including 18–20% Sunni Kurds, 12–16% Sunni Arabs, and 1–2% Sunni Turkmen. The remaining 5% comprises Christians, Yezidis, Sabeen-Mandaeans, Baha'is, Shabaks, Kaka'is (Ahl-e Haqq), and a small Jewish community (The Association of Religion Data Archives, 2025).

After gaining independence from Britain in 1932 (Moriji, 2008: 28), Iraq witnessed a succession of governments that were often characterized by strong nationalist orientations and authoritarian practices, a pattern that became especially pronounced during the rule of Brigadier General Abdul Karim Qasim between 1958 and 1963 (Louis, 1984: 309) and an uprising was led by Abd al-Wahab al-Shawaf in Mosul against Qasim; however, the revolt was swiftly suppressed by government forces.

In February 1963, Qasim was overthrown in the Ba'athist which brought Colonel Abdul Salam Arif to power, and after he died in 1966, he was succeeded by his brother, Abd al-Rahman Arif. The 17 July 1968 Revolution returned the Ba'ath Party to power under Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, during whose presidency Saddam Hussein steadily

consolidated authority (Coughlin, 2005: 46–48). On 16 July 1979, Saddam formally assumed the presidency and the chairmanship of the Revolutionary Command Council (Karsh, 2002: 15–22, 25).

While exercising comprehensive control over state institutions, the military, and society through an extensive and often repressive internal security apparatus, this government systematically suppressed political opposition, including religious parties, in order to maintain power. Iraq's religious and ethnic diversity consistently generated political and social tensions, and the policies pursued by successive Iraqi governments, particularly under the Ba'ath regime, fueled widespread discontent and resentment among Shia Muslims.

The Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 had a profound impact on Iraq, increasing political and religious awareness among Iraqi Shia Muslims (Mousavi, 2004: 50). The Ba'ath regime viewed this revolution as a threat to itself and attempted to suppress Shia movements to prevent the spread of Iranian influence. Al-Da'wah supported the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and Shahīd al-Ṣadr wrote a series of books, such as *al-Islām Yaqūd al-Ḥayāh* (Islam is the guide for life), in six volumes, in this regard (Qulizadeh, 1372 SH: 89-91).

Furthermore, the Iran–Iraq War (1980–1988) constituted a critical phase in this evolution, as it had devastating consequences for Iraq, resulting in widespread casualties and material damage, and exacerbating religious and ethnic tensions within the country (Sassoon, 2012: 99–100). During this period, the party apparatus became central to the production and dissemination of state propaganda and to the suppression of internal opposition and religious parties, notably al-Da'wah Party and the Badr Organisation.

In these circumstances, Iraq faced numerous economic problems. Poverty and inequality, particularly in Shia-dominated areas, were widespread, which caused public discontent and anger. Thus, Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr played a significant role in Iraq's development. By founding the al-Da'wah movement, he sought to secure the rights of Shia Muslims and pressure the Ba'ath regime to implement reforms through peaceful means (Ranstorp, 1997: 27). He also contributed to the elucidation of Shia thought and responded to

contemporary questions by authoring jurisprudential and philosophical works. Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr's activities increased his popularity and influence among the people of Iraq, which provoked the anger of the Ba'ath regime and ultimately led to his martyrdom (Aziz, 1993: 220).

Life and Martyrdom of Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr

Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr (1935-1980) is from the noble descendants of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his household) through a pure lineage traced back to the seventh Imam of the Shia, Imam Musa al-Kāẓim, peace be upon him (Biniaz et al, 2011: 12).

Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr was born on Dhu al-Qa'dah 25, 1353 AH (equivalent to March 1, 1935) in Kadhimayn City, Iraq, into a family with a distinguished tradition of Shia scholarship (Husayni Ha'iri, 1375 SH: 35) with a long history of service to religion and society. His father, Sayyid Haydar al-Sadr, was among the prominent religious jurists and respected personalities of his time. His beloved mother was the daughter of 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Āl Yāsīn, one of the prominent scholarly and religious figures of Iraq, and she was a pious and devout woman who played a significant role in the upbringing of her children (Biniaz et al, 2011:11).

Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr began his formal schooling at the age of five and completed his elementary education by the time he was eleven. From an early age, he displayed a strong inclination toward religious learning and a desire to carry forward the scholarly legacy of his father and forefathers (Ibid, 12). Acting upon the guidance of his two uncles, who were jurists—al-Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā Āl-i Yāsīn and al-Shaykh Murtaḍā Āl-i Yāsīn—he embarked upon the study of the religious sciences. He commenced his seminary training by studying *Ma'ālim al-uṣūl* under the supervision of his brother, al-Sayyid Ismā'īl, and within a short period completed several intermediate-level texts of the Islamic seminary curriculum (Ibid, 12-13).

In 1365 SH/1946, at the age of twelve, al-Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir relocated to Najaf alongside his brother al-Sayyid Ismā'īl to pursue advanced studies under the city's renowned scholars. There, he studied

Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) and principles of jurisprudence (*Uṣūl al-Fiqh*) with al-Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim al-Khu'ī and al-Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā Āl-i Yāsīn (Mousavi, n.d: 9). He also undertook the study of Islamic philosophy, particularly Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Asfār*, with al-Shaykh Ṣadrā Bādkūbī'ī (Qulizadeh, 1372 SH: 29).

In addition to jurisprudence and philosophy, he also devoted many years to study and research in other disciplines of the Islamic sciences—such as ḥadīth, biographical evaluation (*Rijāl*), *Dirāyah*, *Kalām*, and *Tafsīr*—attaining a high level of mastery and scholarly perfection (Biniaz et al, 2011: 14). It is further reported that he demonstrated exceptional talent and intelligence in his studies, quickly reaching the level of Ijtihād (independent legal reasoning) and the ability to derive religious rulings at a remarkably young age of 17 (Ibid, 13).

The scholarly legacy of al-Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr is marked by originality, depth, and methodological innovation across multiple fields of Islamic thought. His works span history, philosophy, jurisprudence, economics, Qur'anic studies, and socio-political theory (Mousavi, n.d: 10-12). He is best known for groundbreaking texts such as *Our Philosophy (Falsafatunā)*, *Our Economy (Iqtisādunā)*, *The logical foundations of induction (al-Usus al-Manṭiqiyya li-l-Istiqrā')*, and *Durūs fī 'Ilm al-Uṣūl* (al-Ḥalaqāt), which introduced innovative methods in logic, legal theory, and Islamic responses to modern ideologies. His writings also address key Shi'i doctrines, Qur'anic interpretation, worship, and contemporary social and economic issues, alongside important legal commentaries and practical juridical manuals. Together, his works reflect a comprehensive and creative effort to present Islam as an intellectually coherent and life-guiding system in the modern world.

In addition to his prolific scholarly writings, Shahīd al-Ṣadr played a pivotal role as a teacher and mentor in the Islamic seminaries. After completing his advanced religious studies in the Ḥawza of Najaf, he began teaching at the remarkably young age of twenty-five, quickly gaining recognition for his intellectual depth and innovative pedagogical methods. Over the course of nearly three decades of continuous teaching, Shahīd al-Ṣadr trained a large number of students

who later emerged as prominent scholars, thinkers, and activists. His teaching covered key disciplines such as *ʿIlm al-Uṣūl*, jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), philosophy, Qurʾanic studies, and contemporary ideological critique, and was distinguished by its analytical rigour, clarity of structure, and engagement with modern intellectual challenges (Biniaz et al, 2011: 14-16).

Beyond formal instruction, Shahīd al-Ṣadr personally nurtured his students intellectually, spiritually, and socially, encouraging responsibility toward the Muslim community and resistance to injustice. Many of his students went on to continue his intellectual, political, and social project, playing influential roles in religious scholarship, Islamic movements, and public life, thereby extending the enduring impact of his teaching far beyond the walls of the seminary.

Shahīd al-Ṣadr's influential writings and teachings drew the hostility of the Baʿth Party, resulting in his repeated arrest and harsh treatment, including torture during imprisonment (Aziz, 1993: 220). Nevertheless, each time he was released, he resumed his scholarly and activist work without retreat. In 1977, following his arrest by the Baʿthist authorities, his sister Amina al-Ṣadr, known as Bint al-Huda, delivered a powerful speech at the Imam ʿAli Mosque in Najaf, calling on the public to protest. Her appeal sparked widespread demonstrations, which compelled the regime to free Shahīd al-Ṣadr, although he was subsequently kept under strict house arrest (Biniaz et al 2011: 20) that lasted nine months (Qulizadeh, 1372 SH: 125).

Throughout this period, regime representatives repeatedly attempted to pressure him into abandoning his principled stance, particularly his steadfast support for Imam Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution of Iran; however, these efforts proved unsuccessful (Ibid, 128, 135). On Saturday, 19 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1400 AH (5 April 1980), al-Ṣadr was arrested by the head of the Security Organisation and transferred to Baghdad, and the following day, his sister, Bint al-Huda al-Ṣadr, was also detained (Biniaz et al, 2011: 20).

Despite explicit threats from senior security officials, including a demand that he publicly denounce Imam Khomeini in exchange for his release, Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr resolutely refused, declaring his readiness for martyrdom and his rejection of all anti-

religious demands. When the regime realised that neither intimidation nor coercion could break their resolve, it brutally executed both Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr and his sister, Bint al-Huda al-Ṣadr, on Tuesday, 23 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1400 AH (9 April 1980), sealing their legacy as enduring symbols of faith, resistance, and sacrifice in the modern history of Islam (Qulizadeh, 1372 SH: 141).

The martyrdom of Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr and his sister marked a watershed moment in Iraqi history, transforming the execution from an attempt to silence dissent into a powerful catalyst for resistance against the Ba'athist regime. While initially met with severe repression, the event galvanised the Shī'a community and fueled religious activism by serving as a potent symbol of state brutality and persecution.

Sayyid al-Ṣadr's legacy of social justice and economic empowerment resonated deeply with marginalised populations, providing a rallying point for opposition that ultimately influenced the rise of Shī'a political parties and militias in post-Saddam Iraq. Consequently, his sacrifice not only created political awareness but also fundamentally shaped the political discourse and priorities of the modern Iraqi state.

Shahīd al-Ṣadr's Political Thought

Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr developed a distinctive and comprehensive political theory grounded in a rational analysis of modern ideologies and an Islamic worldview. He held that the fundamental crisis of contemporary political and intellectual systems lies in their failure to offer a sound interpretation of human reality. Thus, he conceives government as an institution rooted in the Prophet's divinely sanctioned authority of general governance, rather than as a product of historical or social evolution. He rejects prevailing theories that explain the origin of government in purely historical or material terms. In terms of function, al-Ṣadr advances an Islamic model of governance that avoids the extremes of individualism and collectivism, seeking instead a balanced order that harmonises the rights of individuals and the interests of society through the implementation of divine law (Ṣadr, 1982: 82).

Central to Shahīd al-Ṣadr's political vision is the concept of human vicegerency. He affirmed that human beings possess reason, freedom, and authority over their collective destiny, and that all individuals are equal in their right to participate in political life. Any form of inherent political superiority is therefore illegitimate (Jamshīdī, 2008: 9). Politics and governance, in his view, are instruments for achieving human felicity, but only when firmly bound to ethics and divine law, which protect political power from deviation and oppression (Ibid, 3). During the era of the occultation of the Twelfth Imam, Shahīd al-Ṣadr assigned a supervisory and guiding role to the general religious authority (*marja' iyya*), tasked with safeguarding the Islamic character of governance and ensuring that public authority serves both the common good and the interests of Islam (Ṣadr, 1982: 81).

Shahīd al-Ṣadr conceived the Islamic state as both a religious and civilizational necessity, essential for the full flourishing of human potential (Ibid, 2008: 175–176). His political thought is grounded in a theocentric conception of governance that integrates divine sovereignty with popular responsibility. He affirms that ultimate authority belongs exclusively to God, while Islamic law constitutes the foundational framework for legislation. Within this framework, the people, as God's viceregents, exercise parliamentary and executive authority, reflecting a form of popular participation bound by Islamic norms. The jurist endowed with religious authority functions as the guardian of Islamic legitimacy, validating political actions to ensure their conformity with Islam. Together, these principles articulate a model that combines divine sovereignty, constitutional legality, popular agency, and clerical oversight within an Islamic political system (Ibid, 1982: 75-80).

Regarding the form of government, Shahīd al-Ṣadr maintained that legitimacy requires both justice and law: justice defines the aims and values of governance, while law—rooted in reason and Sharī'ah—structures its authority and functions. While he upheld the principle of designated Imamate as a fixed doctrinal foundation, he explored multiple models of governance during the occultation, including consultative (*shūrā*-based) governance, the guardianship of a qualified

jurist (*Wilāyat al-marja*'), and a composite model combining popular consultation with juristic supervision. His later writings reflect a clear shift toward the theory of *Wilāyat al-Marja* ' or "Guardianship of the Jurist" (Ḥakīm, 1988: 1–2), a position often compared with Imam Khomeini's doctrine of *Wilāyat al-Faqīh* (Guardianship of the Jurist).

Shahīd al-Ṣadr's political thought was not merely theoretical but deeply engaged with contemporary realities. In Iraq, he sought to counter secular and materialist ideologies by revitalising the Ḥawzah (The Islamic Seminary), promoting political awareness, and helping to establish Islamic movements such as *Hizb al-Da'wah* and *Jamā'at al-'Ulamā* ' (Menhaj, 2004: 7). His support for the Islamic Revolution of Iran marked the culmination of his political trajectory, as he increasingly emphasised the unity of the ummah, revolutionary leadership, and religious legitimacy.

Finally, grounded in rational principles, realism, and a critical examination of prevailing political ideologies and contemporary global conditions, Shahīd al-Ṣadr sought to lay the foundations for a new philosophy within Islamic political thought. From his perspective, the central crisis of modern political thought stems from the absence of a comprehensive socio-political system, a deficiency rooted in contemporary political models' failure to rest upon an accurate understanding of human life and reality. Collectively, Shahīd al-Ṣadr's political thought presents Islam as a morally grounded, participatory, and justice-oriented system capable of guiding modern governance while remaining faithful to its theological foundations.

Shahīd al-Ṣadr's Role in Iraqi Political Transformations

Shahīd Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr played a decisive role in shaping modern political transformations in Iraq through a combination of intellectual leadership, organisational initiative, and direct political engagement. Living in a context marked by monarchy, republican rule, and ultimately Ba'ṭhist authoritarianism, he recognised the growing attraction of Iraqi youth—especially among the Shi'a—to secular and non-Islamic ideologies. In response, Shahīd al-Ṣadr sought to redirect society toward an Islamic political consciousness by offering practical solutions rooted in religious thought and social realities (Ibid).

A central aspect of his political impact was the revitalisation of the Ḥawzah of Najaf. Through institutional and intellectual reforms, he transformed the seminary from a largely passive body into an active force engaged with contemporary social and political issues. Alongside this, he encouraged clerical participation in public affairs and authored influential works aimed at raising political awareness among both scholars and the wider public, countering the appeal of communist and nationalist movements (Pūrgorjī, 2021: 106–108).

Organizationally, Shahīd al-Ṣadr played a key role in the formation and support of Islamic movements, most notably the Islamic Da‘wah Party (*Ḥizb al-Da‘wah al-Islāmiyyah*), founded in 1957. The party sought to counter the influence of Marxism and secular ideologies among Iraqi Shī‘a, establish an Islamic polity and government, and build a modern, disciplined political movement to propagate Islamic beliefs (Jabar, 2003: 78–79). This party became one of the most influential Shī‘a political movements in Iraq and the wider region, playing a key role in mobilising religious youth and embedding Islamic political activism within Iraqi society. Through these efforts, Shahīd al-Ṣadr helped initiate a sustained Islamic movement that reconnected large segments of Iraqi society with Islam and laid the groundwork for long-term political opposition to the Ba‘thist regime (Menhaj, 2004: 10).

The Islamic Revolution of Iran (1979) marked a turning point in Shahīd al-Ṣadr’s political activity in Iraq. Inspired by Imam Khomeini’s leadership, Shahīd al-Ṣadr openly supported the revolution and encouraged Iraqi Shī‘a to follow its example. He suspended his teaching sessions, organised and inspired mass demonstrations in Najaf and other cities, and guided religious sentiment toward the goal of Islamic governance in Iraq. His book *al-Khilāfah wa al-Shahādah* reflects this evolution in his political outlook, moving from consultative models of governance toward a framework emphasising the ummah and guardianship [*Wilāyah*] (Mousavi, 2004: 50).

In parallel, Shahīd al-Ṣadr intensified his opposition to the Ba‘th Party. He issued a landmark fatwa explicitly declaring membership in

the Ba‘th Party impermissible, a move unprecedented among senior religious authorities and a severe ideological blow to the regime (Nāzīmīān, 2000: 47–48). The Ba‘thists, recognising both his personal influence and the organisational capacity of the Da‘wah Party, launched widespread repression: arresting party members, executing supporters, and eventually detaining Shahīd al-Ṣadr and his sister, Bint al-Huda.

Despite brutal suppression — including mass arrests, executions, and forced deportations — al-Ṣadr’s movement had enduring consequences. Many members of the Da‘wah Party emigrated, particularly to Iran, where they continued political activity and later assumed leadership roles. Decades after his martyrdom, the political developments in post-Ba‘th Iraq and the rise of Shī‘a political leadership are widely regarded as long-term outcomes of the movement initiated and inspired by Shahīd al-Ṣadr.

Lessons for the Contemporary Era

The life and legacy of Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr offer valuable insights for understanding the role of religious figures in contemporary socio-political transformations, particularly within Muslim-majority societies grappling with authoritarianism, economic inequality, and sectarian tensions. Examining his experiences provides a nuanced perspective on the potential for religious actors to both challenge oppressive regimes and contribute to the pursuit of social justice.

Shahīd Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr’s thought offers enduring lessons for contemporary political and intellectual challenges, particularly in societies grappling with ideological confusion, authoritarianism, and moral fragmentation. He identified the core crisis of modern political ideologies as their failure to provide an accurate and meaningful interpretation of human reality. In response, he emphasised the necessity of a coherent worldview grounded in Tawḥīd, integrating divine sovereignty, universal moral law, and genuine human freedom. This framework provides a principled alternative to secular ideologies that sever politics from ethics and transcendence.

A key contemporary lesson in Shahīd al-Ṣadr's thought is the inseparability of politics, morality, and law. He argued that governance detached from ethical and divine constraints inevitably degenerates into oppression, even when it claims popular legitimacy. By articulating the concept of human vicegerency (*istikhlāf*), Shahīd al-Ṣadr affirmed both popular participation and accountability before God, offering a model that reconciles democracy with moral responsibility. This balance directly addresses modern tensions between authoritarian control and unrestrained populism.

Shahīd al-Ṣadr's insistence on justice as the criterion of legitimacy, alongside law as its structural safeguard, highlights the need for political systems that serve human dignity rather than power interests. His evolving engagement with models of governance during the period of occultation—ranging from consultative systems to juristic guardianship—demonstrates intellectual flexibility and responsiveness to social realities, a vital lesson for contemporary Islamic political thought confronting changing political contexts.

Finally, Shahīd al-Ṣadr's intellectual courage—manifested in confronting dominant ideologies, resisting tyranny, and linking scholarship with social responsibility—offers a timeless lesson: meaningful political transformation requires scholars and thinkers who combine rigorous theory with ethical commitment and social engagement.

Conclusion

This article has explored the role of Shahīd Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr in shaping socio-political transformation through clerical engagement in twentieth-century Iraq. Situating his life and thought within Iraq's repressive political environment reveals that his intellectual and activist project emerged as a principled response to authoritarianism, social injustice, and ideological domination. His martyrdom marked a critical moment that underscored the perceived threat posed by ethically grounded religious leadership to oppressive regimes.

An examination of Shahīd al-Ṣadr's political thought demonstrates a coherent framework rooted in Islamic epistemology, moral responsibility, and social justice. Rejecting both political quietism and ideological dependency, al-Ṣadr articulated a model of clerical involvement that emphasised ethical governance, popular responsibility, and principled resistance without conflating religious authority with absolute political power.

Moreover, Shahīd al-Ṣadr's influence extended beyond theory into tangible political transformation through his guidance, organisational initiatives, and confrontation with state repression. The lessons drawn for the contemporary era highlight the enduring relevance of his vision, particularly for societies facing authoritarian rule and crises of moral leadership. Shahīd al-Ṣadr's legacy thus remains a vital reference point for understanding the constructive role of the clergy in socio-political change within modern Muslim contexts.

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