

## An Analysis of the Therapeutic Role of the Imams (A.S.) with an Emphasis on the Conduct and Teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.)

(Based on the Theological Doctrines of the Imāmī Founders of the Baghdad School)

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### Article info

### Abstract

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One of the topics related to the Imamate is the various functions of the Imams in guiding humanity and other realms. This research, employing a descriptive-analytical method and relying on the theological beliefs of the Imamiyya within the Baghdad Theological School, investigates the validity of attributing the "Therapeutic Function" to the Imams (A.S.) with a particular focus on the conduct (sira) of Imam al-Rida. The Baghdad Theological School, as the rationalist current of Imami theology from the 2nd to the 6th centuries AH, represented by prominent figures such as Shaykh al-Mufid and al-Sayyid al-Murtada, offers a specific definition of the "Function of the Imam." This function is defined as a specific duty necessitated by the station of the Imamate. Within this framework, the therapeutic function has been discussed as a subset of the Imam's epistemic functions. The findings indicate that among Imami theologians, there are differing opinions regarding the scope of the Imam's knowledge and its inclusion of non-religious sciences, such as medicine. From the perspective of the Baghdad School theologians, reason only deems the Imam's comprehensive knowledge of religious tenets necessary for fulfilling the objective of guiding humanity; regarding unrelated sciences like medicine, reason remains silent. Consequently, proving such knowledge for the Imam is contingent upon the existence of authentic narrations. Although narrative sources contain hadiths and treatises such as al-Risalah al-Dhahabiyya attributed to Imam Reza (A.S.) from the viewpoint of this school, even if these narrations are accepted, therapeutics is not considered an inherent and exclusive "Function" of the Imamate, since its practice is possible by others, and the primary duty of the Imam is the spiritual guidance of the people.

**Keywords:** Therapeutic Function of the Imam, Medical Hadiths, Tibb Reza Medicine of al-Rida, Islamic Medicine, Baghdad Theological School.

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## 1. Introduction

The subject of Imamate and its various functions is one of the fundamental discussions in Imami theology. A notable dimension within this field is the examination of the “Therapeutic Function” as one of the potential roles proposed for the Imams (A.S.). This research analyzes the validity of attributing this function to the Imams, focusing on the conduct (Sira) of Imam Reza (A.S.) and based on the intellectual framework of the Baghdad Theological School. The significance of this topic arises from the question, prompted by references to medical hadiths attributed to the Infallibles, of whether therapeutics can be considered an inherent and exclusive “Function” of the Imamate.

## 2. Research Objectives

This research seeks to answer the following fundamental questions:

- Can” healing and medicine “be defined as an exclusive function and specific duty of the Imams peace be upon them?
- Is the act of healing possible for individuals other than the Imam ,or is it exclusively reserved for the station of Imamate?
- Given the Sira of Imam Reza and the attributed medical hadiths ,can an independent and comprehensive system termed” Islamic Medicine “or” Medicine of the Imams“ be extracted from the totality of the Imams ’recommendations?
- What is the position of the rationalist Baghdad School ,represented by Shaykh al-Mufid and al-Sayyid al-Murtada ,regarding the scope of the Imam’s knowledge and its inclusion of non-religious sciences like medicine?

## 3. Methodology

This research employs an analytical method ,relying on primary Imami theological and hadith sources such as the works of Shaykh al-Mufid ,al-Sayyid al-Murtada, and Shaykh al-Saduq. The theoretical framework is based on the teachings of the theologians of the Baghdad Theological School ,who explain the principles of Imamate through a rationalist approach .In this context ,the concept of the ”Function of the Imam “is defined as a specific duty necessitated by the station of Imamate ,whose complete performance is unique to the Imam .In the analytical section ,tools of rational reasoning and intra-religious critique are used to examine the narrative and rational evidence related to the therapeutic function ,contrasting the views of the Baghdad School with tradition-centric perspectives such as the

Qom School .Furthermore ,focusing on the Sira of Imam Reza ,the content of al-Risalah al-Dhahabiyya and the medical debates of Imam Reza peace be upon him have been subjected to content analysis and textual criticism.

#### 4. Findings

**Definition of Function Sha'n :**From the perspective of the Baghdad School ,the "Function of the Imam "is a duty arising from the station of Imamate ,the complete performance of which is exclusive to the Imam.

**Scope of the Imam's Knowledge:** The Baghdad School ,by distinguishing between "Religious Sciences "essential for guidance and" Non-Religious Sciences "like medicine ,maintains that reason only deems the Imam's comprehensive knowledge of religious tenets necessary for fulfilling the objective of guidance ;regarding unrelated sciences ,reason remains silent .Therefore ,proving such knowledge for the Imam is contingent upon the existence of authentic narrations.

**Examination of Medical Hadiths:** Although narrative sources contain hadiths and treatises like al-Risalah al-Dhahabiyya attributed to the Imams peace be upon them, particularly Imam al-Rida peace be upon him ,from the viewpoint of the Baghdad School ,even if these narrations are accepted ,therapeutics is not considered an inherent and exclusive" Function "of the Imamate .The reasons for this are:

**No Impairment to Guidance:** The primary duty of the Imam is spiritual guidance, and a lack of specialization in medicine does not impair this mission.

**Feasibility by Others:** Medicine is among the matters that specialized individuals other than the Imam can undertake.

**Practical Conduct of the Imams:** There are numerous historical instances where the Imams peace be upon them consulted specialist physicians for treatment.

**Specific and Contextual Nature of Recommendations :**The medical advice of the Imams was generally issued considering specific individual ,spatial ,and temporal conditions and cannot be generalized into a comprehensive system.

**Role of the Imams in the Realm of Science :**From Shaykh al-Mufid's perspective, the role of the Imams in non-religious sciences is primarily at the level of providing overarching principles ,being a medium of divine grace ,and giving rational direction to the process of knowledge acquisition ,rather than directly teaching technical details or establishing an operational system.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research” ,healing and medicine “cannot be counted among the” Functions “of the Imam ;because a Sha’n refers to an exclusive duty arising from the station of Imamate ,whereas medicine lacks such exclusivity ,and the main objective of Imamate spiritual guidance does not necessitate it .Even if the medical hadiths are accepted ,these recommendations are largely specific and contextual .Proposing an independent” Islamic Medicine “system from these teachings is not only not substantiated by the conduct and teachings of the Imams peace be upon them but also contradicts their emphasis on consulting specialist physicians. This research shows that from the perspective of the rationalist Baghdad School, the main focus is on spiritual guidance as the central function of the Imamate .Other activities ,including providing medical advice ,are peripheral to this primary mission and are not considered inherent functions of the Imamate.

### Suggestions:

Conduct further research on the validation of the chain of transmission and content of other medical hadiths attributed to the Imams (A.S) Undertake a comparative study of the views of the Baghdad School with other Imami theological schools such as the Qom and Hilla schools on the issue of the scope of the Imam’s knowledge.

Study the role of religious teachings in providing the foundations and overarching directions in the field of health and medicine ,instead of positioning them in opposition to empirical sciences.

**Keywords:** Therapeutic Function of the Imam, Medical Hadiths, Tibb Reza (Medicine of Reza), Islamic Medicine, Baghdad Theological School.