

## Translators and commentators of Nahj al-Balagha in Kashan from the 6th to the 10th Centuries of Hijri

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### Introduction

The tradition of translating and commenting on authentic religious texts has been common since ancient times. Commentary on Nahj al-Balagha has also had a special place. Researchers have considered the 6th century as the period of Shi'te scientific stagnation. But in the same century, commentaries on Nahj al-Balagha increased due to these goals: a) the protection of Shi'te heritage, b) an explanation of difficult words, c) the description of theological and philosophical foundations, d) the explanation of historical events, e) an emphasis on literary and rhetorical points, f) the expansion of spirituality, g) a criticism of previous commentators, h) a documentary review of narrations. From the sixth to the tenth centuries, the region of Kashan was an important area in the development and promotion of Nahj al-Balagha education. Scholars such as Seyed Abu al-Reza Ziauddin, Fazlullah Hosseini Ravandi, Qutb al-Din Ravandi, and Mullah Fatahullah Kashani were of among them. Seyed Fazlullah Rawandi and Qutb al-Din Rawandi were among the first people who became well-known for their first translations of Nahj al-Balagha. Abu al-Reza Ravandi's commentary on Nahj al-Balagha in the sixth century is the first commentary on Nahj al-Balagha. Qutb Ravandi's book, *Minhaj al-Bara'ah*, from the same century and Mullah Fathollah Kashani's book from the 10th century were other documents explaining Nahj al-Balagha in other centuries. Qutb Rawandi's *Minhaj al-Bara'ah* was used by other commentators in the transmission of Shi'te theological ideas and in the development and promotion of wisdom. Mullah Fathollah Kashani also wrote the first Persian commentary on Nahj al-Balagha, which played a great role in the flourishing of Islamic civilization.

### Materials and Methods

This article examines the works and biographies of the translators and commentators of Nahj al-Balagha with a descriptive and analytical approach. A comparative study was done with the a descriptive method focusing on works from the 6th to the 10th centuries of Hijri with an emphasis on commentators from Kashan. For this purpose, the sources and old manuscripts available in the library of Ayatollah Murashi Najafi were used. Also, manuscript sources included two books from Ibn Belko from Astan Quds Razavi library. A copy from Ibn Nazwayh Qomi who wrote a copy of Sheikh Tusi's *al-Istbasar* in 569 was also used. The second version of Nahj al-Balagha by Abu al-Reza, which contained additional

different parts was also used. The works of famous scholars, considered among the pioneers and wrote commentaries on Nahj al-Balagha in the 6th to 10th centuries of Hijri were used. The Qazi Abdul Jabbar Mu'tazili (415-359 AH), Seyed Fazlullah Rawandi (570 AH), Qutb al-Din Ravandi (573 AH), Ibn Abi Al-Hadid (586-656 AH), Ibn Maithamse books included those by Bahrani (636 - 699 AH) , Alama Hali (648-726 AH), and Mullah Fathullah Kashani (988 AH). It also used books by the later writers who wrote descriptions or lists on Nahj al-Balagha such as: Seyed Habib-Allah Khoi (1324 AH), Mullasaleh Qazvini (1271 AH), Muhammad Abdo (1323 AH), and Muhammad Hassan Nael Mirsafi (1935 AH). By analyzing and comparing these sources, the method to validate the first Nahj al-Balagha by scholars in Kashan from the sixth the to tenth centuries was obtained.

### Results and Findings

The results and findings of this article were: a) the first description of Nahj al-Balagha [according to the brief descriptions on the lines] belonged to Ab al-Reza Fazlullah Kashani; b) commentaries of Qutb Rawandi and Mullah Fathullah Kashani had significant role in the development and promotion of religious, literary, and rhetorical doctrines from the sixth to the tenth centuries.

### Conclusion

Commentary has always played a great role in the flourishing of Islamic civilization. Kashan has played a significant role in Nahj al-Balagheh due to great scholars such as Seyyed Abu al-Reza Fazlullah Rawandi, Qutb al-Din Ravandi, and Mullah Fatehullah Kashani. From the 6th to the 10th centuries, despite the political restrictions, the city of Kashan was an important domain in the development and promotion of Nahj al-Balagha education. Abu al-Reza Ravandi's description of Nahj al-Balagha in the sixth century is the first description of Nahj al-Balagha because his short explanations at the end of the lines were descriptions. Qutb al-Din Ravandi's *Minhaj al-Bara'ah* was the focus of other commentaries in the transmission of Shi'te theological ideas in the sixth century. Seyed Fazlullah Rawandi and Qutb Rawandi are known as the first translators of Nahj al-Balagha. The foundations of commentary were laid by Seyed Fazlullah Rawandi and Qutb Rawandi in the sixth century. In the 6th century, there were prominent commentators of Nahj al-Balagha. Beyhaqi Kidari, Webari Khwarazmi, Fakhr al-Din Razi, Saghani, Ibn Abi Al Hadid, Ibn Maitham Bahrani; the commentators in the seventh century included Allameh Hali, Taftazani, Ibn Ataqi, Elahi Ardabili. In the 10th century, the valuable book *Tanbiyyah al-Ghaflin wa Tazkirah al-Arifin* was written by Mullah Fatullah Kashani as the first Persian explanation of Nahj al-Balagha. Mullah Fathullah Kashani tried not only to spread the knowledge of Nahj al-Balagha in his description but also to develop it using the political conditions of his time.

**Keywords:** Nahj al-Balagha, commentators and translators of Kashan, Seyed Fazlullah Rawandi, Qutb Rawandi, Molfatullah Kashani.