

# Mawsū'at al-mar'ah al-Muslimah

## Dār Usāmah - al

**Muslim WORLD**

Protecting the Citadel of Islam in the Modern Era: A Case of Shi'i Mujahids and the Najaf Seminary in Early Twentieth-Century Iraq

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**Abstract**

The concept of protecting the Citadel of Islam (*Bayt al-Islam*), is common in the lexicon of Shi'i political jargon. It refers to those Islamic principles and traditions, which were believed to be under threat during the period of the Occultation Era. Shi'i mujahids, as general deputies of the Hidden Imam, are believed to have been instrumental in the development of the concept. The history and applications of the concept have been evolved throughout the Shi'i history. A noteworthy case of protecting the citadel of Islam is the position of Sayyid Abu'l Hasan al-Hilli (1050-1126) in his book *Bayz al-Ulum*. In this book he discusses the concept of the citadel of Islam and the newly established Hāshimī dynasty in early twentieth century. This paper aims to shed light on the concept of the citadel of Islam, its implications in Shi'i political thought, and contemporary applications.

**Introduction**

In one of his speeches given in 1960, Ayatollah Khomeini addressed a group of clerics and said that as clerics they were preserving of Islam and preserving of the Citadel of Islam (*Bayz al-Ulum*). "Citadel of Islam" is a metaphorical term of Shi'i political jargon. It refers to those Islamic principles and traditions, which were believed to be under threat during the period of the Occultation Era. It appears as an exceptional principle known as *ayāt al-Bayz al-Ulum* that has shaped the jurisprudential reasoning (ijtihād) of qualified Shi'i jurists (mujtahids) throughout the history of Islam.

\* R. Khawaja, Sabih al-Dawāwī, Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works, 2010, vol. 17. All translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own.

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