

Shi'ite Authorities in the Age of Minor Occultation

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During the minor occultation, several Shi'ite scholars engaged in religious, political, and cultural activities. For example, Abu Sahl Nawbakhti wrote thirty seven books and treatises and had debates with opponents of Shi'a Islam.¹ Also, some of the Four Specifically Appointed Deputies (*al-Nuwwāb al-Khāssah*) of the Imam Mahdi (aj) were among the scholars and the narrators of hadiths. However, amongst the numerous Shi'a scholars, only some held the position of religious authorities. Others were not referred to as religious authorities and in the case of the Four Specifically Appointed Deputies, they more often acted as intermediaries between the people and the Twelfth Imam (A). This means that they did not answer people's letters personally, but they received the responses from Imam (A) and passed them on to the people.² Therefore, in what follows, we will study the life and socio-political role of two well-known Shi'ite jurists i.e. Ibn Bābiwayh Qumī and Mohammad ibn Ya'aqub Kulayni who were referred to by the people in the age of occultation and resolved people's religious problems according to the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The socio-political situation during the Minor Occultation

I The caliphate of Abu al-'Abbās Ahmad al-Mu'tamid Billāh (256-279 A.H):

After Al-Muhtadi, the 'Abbasid caliph, was killed in 256 A.H., Mu'tamid, the son of Mutawakkil, succeeded him. Al-Mu'tamid

changed the capital of Iraq from Samarra to Baghdad.³ Historians report that al-Mu‘tamid spent much of his time in chasing after pleasure.⁴ Therefore, his brother Talha, known as al-Muwaffaq, took control of the affairs. With Muwaffaq’s assistance, the caliph cruelly established his power. With the rebellion of the dark-skinned people in Basra, ‘Ali ibn Muhammad, known as Sāhib al-Zanj, claimed descent from Zaid ibn ‘Ali (A), assembled the slaves of Basra, led a rebellion against the caliph in 225 A.H, and took control over the southern part of Iraq, including Basra. In this invasion, they killed many people and robbed their properties. They were also at war with the rulers and generals of the caliphs for 15 years. They defeated the caliphs' armies several times and killed and pillaged the Muslims. Finally, Al-Muwaffaq heavily defeated Sāhib al-Zanj in a place near Ahwaz. He was killed while escaping.

At this time, the Sogdiana region was captured by the Samanids, Egypt by Tulunids, Hyrcania by ‘Alawis, and Sistan, Khorasan, Kerman, and Fars were captured by Saffarids.⁵ Accordingly, all the mentioned regions were no longer under the control of the ‘Abbasid caliphs.

The Karmathians, as a branch of Isma‘ilite sect, also emerged from the second half of the third century A.H to the late fourth century. They killed and plundered with great brutality.⁶ Their wrongful acts led the caliphate government to arrest the Shi‘ites and torture them on the charge of being like the Karmathians.

Like his father Al-Mutawakkil, Al-Mu‘tamid was hard-hearted. According to Suyūṭī in *Tārīkh al-Khulafā’*, Al-Mu‘tamid killed three hundred thousand people in one day.⁷ Among those he murdered was Imam Hasan ‘Askarī (A).⁸ Ibn Bābiwayh and Kulayni lived during this time period. After murdering Imam ‘Askarī (A), he ordered that the properties of Imam's (A)

inheritors be inspected and any pregnancy in Imam's house to be checked. All such measures portrayed his fear of the Imam (A) since he shuddered to think of the existence of Imam Mahdi (A).⁹

During this time, since the caliphate government was actively investigating to find out about the birth of Imam Mahdi (A), the Shi'ites and the Network of the Agents (*wakils*) kept his birth hidden and the Imam's (A) representative would even prevent Shi'ites from asking about his name, so that the government would suppose Imam 'Askarī (A) left no successor.¹⁰

During his twenty-three-year caliphate, Al-Mu'tamid continued his pleasure-seeking habits until he died in 279 AH as a result of excessive wine drinking.¹¹

II The caliphate of the 'Abbasid Al-Mu'taḍid (279- 289 AH):

After Al-Mu'tamid's death, his nephew Al-Mu'taḍid succeeded to the throne. At the beginning of his caliphate, a messenger came to the caliph with some gifts from 'Amr ibn Layth. Consequently, his emirate of Khorasan was reinforced.¹² 'Amr then asked the caliph for the ruling of Sogdiana and the deposal of Samanid Amīr Ismā'īl. Out of fear, the caliph accepted though he secretly intrigued Amīr Ismā'īl against him so that in 287 AH, a bloody war broke out between them. 'Amr was defeated, sent to the caliph in captivity, and died in the caliph's prison.¹³

Al-Mu'taḍid brought the oppositions and the Turks under his control with a better policy. The caliph had a slave named Badr who helped him suppress the rebellions. Rulers obeyed him, though his only problem was the disobedience of the Karmathians who had intensified activities. Even Abu Sa'īd Janābi threatened Kufa and Basra in 286 AH after forming the first Ismā'īlī government in Bahrain.¹⁴ During the second deputy's time, the Twelver Shi'ites lived in fear and taqiyyah.¹⁵

According to *Tārīkh-e Tabarī*, the caliph, unlike his predecessors, expressed his interest in the descendants of ‘Ali (A) and ordered that Mu‘āwīyah be cursed. He drafted a charter about it based on a version that Ma‘mūn had written in his time on the legitimacy of the immediate caliphate of ‘Ali ibn Abi Tālib (A) and ordered that it must be read, the Umayyad family must be cursed, and the virtues of the Household of the Prophet (A) must be mentioned on the pulpits.¹⁶

This action was the result of activities done in taqiyya by the Network of Agents to convince the caliph that Imam Hasan al-‘Askari (A) had passed away leaving no successor for himself, in a manner that this belief was spread among the Sunnite scholars like Abu al-Qāsim Balkhī d. 300 AH. In a report on his doctrine of Imamate, he wrote:

In our time, Hasan ibn ‘Ali (A) passed away and he had no son.¹⁷

In such a situation, the caliph adopted Ma‘mūn's policy of expressing devotion to the Household of the Prophet (S) in order to gain the trust of the Shi‘ites and the followers of the Household (A), and he pretended to be devoted towards the Household (A). Mu‘taḡid’s amiability towards the ‘Alawites did not last long because the ill-intentioned companions had him worried that the Sunnis might revolt against him and the ‘Alawites might take the reins of government from his hand. Therefore, his pretense was over after a while.¹⁸

III The caliphate of Muktafī Billah (289 - 295 AH):

After the death of Mu‘taḡid, the prime minister secured allegiance for his son, Muktafī. At the beginning of his government, Muktafī ordered that all prisons be destroyed and some mosques be constructed in their places. During Muktafī's

time, the Karmatians¹⁹ rebelled in Syria and captured some parts of it. Then, they went to Hejaz, killed many of the pilgrims (*hāajis*)²⁰ on the Day of 'Arafah, and plundered their properties. They also blocked the route to the Kaaba in order to prevent the pilgrims from going there, but ultimately they were defeated and killed by the caliph's army.²¹

At this time, Shi'ite movement had great power and influence. The Fātimids²² took the political leadership role of the Shi'ites and the Hamdānids disobeyed them in Mosul.

IV The caliphate of the 'Abbasid Muqtadir (295-320 A.H)

At the time of his role as the prime minister, Mūnis was considerably influential. During the caliphate of Muqtadir, the country was completely chaotic because of interference of his mother, wife, and servants in affairs of the state while all affairs of the caliphate were managed by the same people. Their influence increased to the extent that a lady-in-waiting of the caliph's mother, known as Athmal Qahramāna, was appointed as the head of court of justice.²³ Incapability of state officials gave rise to the people's discontent. In 316 A.H, a conflict arose between Hārūn ibn Gharīb, Muqtadir's famous commander and the head of police officers of caliph's palace in Baghdad and many followers of the head police officer were killed. The servant Mūnis entered Baghdad from Syria and in 317 AH, expelled Muqtadir from the caliphate and chose one of Mu'taḍid's sons, nicknamed al-Qāhir Billah, as the caliph. His caliphate lasted two days and he was confronted with the uprising of the people. However, the hostility between Mūnis and the caliph increased, and in 320 A.H, Mūnis and a group of army generals went to Mosul out of his fear of the caliph and after reinforcement returned to Baghdad where the caliph was killed in a war.²⁴

The Karmatians took advantage of the political crisis and in 318 A.H, they entered Mecca on the Day of Tarviyah, killed many pilgrims, plundered their properties, threw the dead into the Zamzam well, took the Black Stone of the Ka‘bah to their territory in Bahrain and kept it for longer than twenty years until the caliphate of al-Muti‘u li’llāh in the year 339 A.H, they returned the stone to Mecca²⁵. Then it was put in its place by the very respectable Shaykh Ibn Qulawayh Qummī, Shaykh Mufīd’s teacher, who was making pilgrimage to Mecca that year.

These actions of the Karmatians led the ‘Abbasid caliphs to be more sensitive toward the activities of the Network of Agents and led the Twelvers' leaders to face some difficulties in their activities.

Political hardships of the network of Agents in the age of minor occultation

The ‘Abbasids were informed of the existence and the activities of Imam Mahdi (A). They intended to find his place by discovering the contacts between him and the Shi‘ites and martyr him. Therefore, the Twelvers were subject to attacks by the ‘Abbasids. It was among the duties of Imam ‘Askari’s (A) agents to conceal the name and residence of Imam Mahdi (A) not only from the enemies, but also from the Shi‘ites. However, it was the representatives’ duty to prove the blessed presence of the Imam (A) to his true followers, who were trustworthy. Kulayni narrated that one day ‘Abdullah ibn Ja‘far Himyari asked the first agent whether he had seen the successor of the eleventh Imam (A) or not. ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd ‘Amri confirmed that he had seen him (A). But he added that people are prohibited from inquiring about his name for if the regime discovered his name, they will certainly try to arrest him (A).²⁶

The second specific agent of Imam Mahdi (A) was Muhammad ibn ‘Uthmān, to whom the Imam offered his condolences for the death of his father, through a letter in which Imam expressed his good wishes for him and entrusted all responsibilities of the agency to him. Like his father, he was among the trustworthy ones and intimate companions of Imam al-‘Askarī (A). It is narrated from Imam ‘Askarī (A):

Amri and his son both are trustworthy and reliable. So whatever they conduct is on my behalf and whatever they say is my word. Listen to them and follow them, since they are the trustworthy and loyal ones of mine.²⁷

Studying the life of the second agent shows that there has been an atmosphere of terror created against the Twelvers, and the second deputy was trying to keep the blessed existence of Imam Mahdi (A) hidden from the ‘Abbasids until the early years of Mu‘taḍid's government. Like his father, he also pretended to be an oil salesman and was called Sammān [oil salesman].²⁸ “Samman” conducted intense activities in secret through his agents and visited them in different villages of Baghdad. During the caliphate of Mu‘taḍid, the agents from remote provinces such as Qum got in contact with the second deputy and sent him money and goods through merchants who knew nothing about what relation existed between the senders and Abu Ja‘far, the second deputy of Imam (A). So they transported the goods to Abu Ja‘far from Qum.²⁹ The second deputy was very careful about his contacts with his agents not to give government officials any clue and in order to guard his and the Imam's life against danger. Abu Ja‘far did not have direct contact with the agents from the remote provinces. He ordered those who brought him goods and money to put them in a particular place and did not give them any receipt in return.³⁰ Within the complicated system of the agency between

him and other agents from the Shi'ite regions, he communicated by symbols and secret codes in a way that even the messengers were not aware of its content.³¹

According to Shaykh Tūsī, Abu Ja'far had some pieces of writing on hadiths which were received by Husayn ibn Rūh and later by Abu al-Hasan Saymurī.³²

The role of other Shi'ite groups during the Minor Occultation

During the Zanj rebellion between 225 and 270 AH, the condition of the Twelvers deteriorated. The rebellion leader, 'Ali ibn Muhammad, descended from Zaid ibn 'Ali, the brother of Imam Bāqir (A). A large number of 'Alawids joined him in his rebellion in 257 AH.³³ Officials of the government considered this rebellion linked to the 'Alawids as a whole, and according to Tabarī, the suppression of the Zanj rebellion³⁴ in 270 AH was followed by government propaganda against the 'Alawids.

The other factor in the straining relations between the Twelvers and the 'Abbasids was discovering subversive activities of the two Isma'ilite parties³⁵ - the original Isma'ilites and the Karmatians.

Like the Twelvers, Isma'ilites narrated some hadiths from the Holy Prophet (S) as:

Mahdi (A), the Upriser, will hide to be prepared for the uprising.

However, they gave an explanation for some hadiths so that they could confirm their attempts of gaining immediate access to positions in Morocco. They also applied other Twelvers' hadiths about Imam Mahdi (A) to their hidden leader who had organized

his followers in an effective hidden movement and ordered them to extend their activities to new regions by means of military forces to prepare for the rising of the Mahdi (A).

On the other hand, according to Sa'd Ash'arī's report, the number of Karmatians was increasing in the villages adjacent to Kufa. According to Nawbakhti, they recruited around a hundred thousand partisans in those villages. After using their propaganda in the western coasts of the Gulf and in Yemen, a large number of Arabs responded to their invitation and consequently their uprising occurred in Kufa villages in 278 A.H.³⁶

The Karmatians allowed their followers to kill their opponents and to confiscate their properties.³⁷ Since the Twelvers and the Karmatians both were counted as Shi'a from the 'Abbasids' point of view, and both expected the advent of Imam Mahdi (A), then it was likely that the Bani 'Abbās accused the Twelvers of the manner of Karmatian and simply eliminated them. The Twelfth Imam (A) intended to keep the Shi'ites away from the Karmatians' influence and to impel the government to distinguish between the Karmatians and his adherents. Perhaps for this reason he (A) cursed Muhammad ibn Abi Zaynab and his followers in a letter to his second agent. The second agent spread the Imam's letter among the Twelvers through his agent, Ishāq ibn Ya'qūb.³⁸ Kulayni also wrote *Refutation of the Karmatians*.³⁹

Mu'taḍid carefully inspected the Shi'ites' hidden meetings and in 282 A.H discovered that Muhammad ibn Zayd, the head of the Zaydi government of Tabaristan, annually sent 320,000 dinars to Muhammad ibn Ward al-'Attār to distribute among the 'Alawids of Baghdad, Kufa, and Medina.⁴⁰ Mu'taḍid's constant inspections led to the arrest and assassination of many 'Alawids. According to Abu al-Faraj Isfahāni, they were not at all Karmatians, though they were wrongly convicted for this claim. As the result of these

actions, the governmental authorities ascertained that the Twelvers had an organization of their own. According to Kulayni, the spies who worked for ‘Ubaydullah ibn Sulaymān, the prime minister, discovered that the Twelvers still had an Imam who led their activities in secret. Kulayni narrates:

Husayn ibn Hasan ‘Alawi says: “The two intimate friends of Badr Hasani (the caliph's courtier) were speaking with each other and one of them said: Why does he (the Twelfth Imam) collect money and have agents? Then they mentioned names of all agents and submitted this information to ‘Ubaydullah ibn Sulaymān, the anti-Shi‘a prime minister, who was attempting to arrest Imam (A). But Mu‘taḡid told them that they must search for his (Imam’s) place, because it is an important issue. ‘Ubaydullah ibn Sulaymān said: “Let the agents be arrested! But the caliph said: No, send some secret spies among them in order to give money to the agents; then arrest whoever would accept the money.” After his failure in obtaining information from the spies, the caliph inquired the pilgrims of the shrines of Imam Husayn (A) and the other Imams (A) in order to determine the place of the Imam of the time (A) through them.⁴¹

The ‘Abbasids' hostile attitude towards the agents of the second deputy of Imam continued after the death of ‘Ubaydullah ibn Sulaymān in 288 AH. His responsibility was entrusted to his son Qāsim. Qāsim was well-known for his hostility towards the Twelvers and towards Shi‘ites in general. During his office, he followed his father's policy and showed even more hostility

towards them. According to a story narrated by Shaykh Tūsī, Shaykh Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah Qummī, who had an inclination towards the Shi‘a and had visited the hidden Imam (A), was sued by Qāsim and fled to Egypt.⁴²

Because of the influence of his family, Bani Nawbakht, in the ‘Abbasid government, Ibn Rūh (the third deputy of the Imam) gained popularity. However, armed conflicts of other so-called Shi‘a groups, especially the Karmatians, put him in a critical situation. His opponents linked these actions in order to arrest him. In 311 A.H, after the Karmatians attacked the pilgrims’ caravan, in which a few relatives of the caliph existed Shi‘a enemies such as Nasr Hājib linked this action with the Shi‘a and used it as a powerful weapon against the Shi‘a prime minister, Ibn Furāt. In 312 A.H, Ibn Furāt and his son Muhsin were disposed and killed on the charge of provoking the Karmatians into that attack.⁴³ In 312 A.H, Ibn Rūh was arrested on the charge of conspiring with the Karmatians in their attempt to occupy Baghdad. He spent five years in Muqtadir’s prison and was released in 317 AH.⁴⁴

Kulayni and his pupil Nu‘māni narrated some signs for the rising of the Mahdi (A). These signs led to the denial of claims of an Isma‘ilite leader who called himself Mahdi after the revolt in 296 AH. These signs also led the Twelvers to avoid engaging in those activities in which the network of Agents was not involved.⁴⁵

‘Ali ibn Bābiwayh Qummī

I His scientific status and social services:

Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali ibn Husayn ibn Mūsā ibn Bābiwayh Qummī (d. 329 AH) was a Shi‘ite jurist, a narrator of hadith, and a religious authority leading the people of Qum.⁴⁶ It is quoted from Abu ‘Ali, son of Shaykh Tūsī, that:

His [ibn Bābiwayh] status in jurisprudence and narrating hadiths was so high that Shi'ite scholars referred to his opinion in the Sharāyi'e book (religious laws) when there was no associating hadith available or there were doubts in the text of hadith.⁴⁷

Some scholars considered his opinion as authentic as the text of traditions themselves, and presupposed that he must have had a hadith which has been the source of his opinion.

There is no information about Ibn Bābiwayh's life except but a few cases. Other than those cases, the information about his life is limited to Imam Hasan 'Askari's (A) letter to him, Ibn Bābiwayh's meeting with Husayn ibn Mansūr Hallāj (d. 309 A.H), and his travels to Baghdad.

To find out about his social position, it would be enough to know that when he met Hallāj in Qum, Hallāj introduced himself as the agent and deputy of the promised Imam Mahdi (A) and claimed that he has special dignities and marvels. This angered Ibn Bābiwayh and since he was not truthful by his claim, Ibn Bābiwayh banished him from Qum.⁴⁸

At least three of his journeys to Iraq have been reported. The first journey was apparently shortly after the death of Muhammad ibn 'Uthmān (304 or 305 A.H). As reported by Tal'ukbari, his second journey was in 326 AH. In his last journey to Baghdad in 328 AH, he gave permission to Abu al-Hasan 'Abbās Kluzāni to narrate from all of his books.⁴⁹

When the Abbasid dynasty sought to block the Twelfth Imam (A), Ibn Bābiwayh held discussions on the wilayah of the infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A) and tried to promote Shi'a education. Reliable authorities have narrated a treatise from him in which he

debates Muhammad ibn Muqātil al-Rāzī in Rey over proving the Imamate of Imam Ali (A). ‘Ali ibn Bābiwayh established the facts for him in this debates, and this discussion led Muhammad ibn Muqātil to convert to Shi‘i Islam.⁵⁰

II ‘Ali ibn Bābiwayh's writings

Ibn Bābiwayh was a scholar who had many written works. Ibn Nadīm has seen a manuscript of Shaykh Sadūq (Ibn Bābiwayh’s son) in which he had granted permission to someone to quote a hundred pieces of his father’s books.⁵¹ Najāshī mentioned his books like: *Al-Wūḍū’*, *Al-Salāt*, *Al-Janā’iz*, *Nawādir Kitāb al-Mantiq*, *Kitāb al-Ikhwān*, *Kitāb al-Nisā’ wa al-Wildān*, *Kitāb al-Sharāi’* which he sent to his son, *Kitāb al-Tafsīr*, *Kitāb al-Nikāh*, *Kitāb Manāsik al-Hajj*, *Kitāb Qurb al-Asnād*, *Kitāb al-Taslīm*, *Kitāb al-Tib*, *Kitāb al-Mawārīth* and *Kitāb al-Mi‘rāj*.⁵²

In the book *Al-Fihrist*, Shaykh Tūsī wrote about ‘Ali ibn Bābiwayh:

... He was a great and trustworthy jurist and compiled many books... Muhammad ibn ‘Ali (Shaykh Sadūq) narrated all his books and his traditions to me, Shaykh Mufīd, Husayn ibn ‘Ubaydullah al-Ghaḍā’irī from his father.⁵³

‘Ali ibn Bābiwayh was in the same position as Shaykh Kulayni, Safwāni, Tal‘ukbari, and Muhammad ibn Quluwayh. He quoted from Shaykh Kulayni’s teachers such as Muhammad ibn Yahyā al-‘Attār, ‘Ali ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, Ahmad ibn Idrīs al-Ash‘arī, and from other individuals such as ‘Abdullah ibn Ja‘far al-Humayrī, the author of *Qurb al-Asnād* and Sa‘d ibn ‘Abdullah al-Qumī et al.⁵⁴

III His spiritual qualities

Before the age of occultation, ‘Ali ibn Bābiwayh lived in the age of Imam Hasan ‘Askarī (A) for a while and had a high position before the Imam (A). One of his received honours was a letter that Imam Hasan ‘Askarī (A) wrote to him and honored him with some advice. The letter is as follows:

Bimillah. O’ The honorable and my trustworthy one! Oh jurist. Oh Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn Qummī! May God bless you to do praiseworthy deeds in his sight and may God generate from you – out of His mercy - pious children.

I advise you to be wary for sake of God, pray, and give alms –since prayer is not accepted from those who do not give alms.

I also advise you to overlook the others' sins, control your anger, observe bonds of relationship, sympathize with your brothers and to fulfill their needs, either in difficulties or at ease, acquire knowledge, think deeply and understand religion and learn it, and be determined in your duties, take an oath to the Qur’an, be open-hearted, and enjoin the good and to prohibit the evil, because God, the Exalted states: “There is no good in much of their secret talks, except him who enjoins charity or what is right or reconciliation between people...” (4:114) and to avoid all the evil. You should perform the midnight prayer, as the Holy Prophet (S) advised Imam ‘Ali (A), saying: "Oh ‘Ali! You should practice the midnight prayer! You should practice the midnight prayer! And you should practice the midnight prayer! Those who consider

the midnight prayer trivial are not among us. So put my advice into practice and direct all my Shi‘ites to act accordingly.

You should have patience and expect the deliverance (*faraj*) [of the Imam (A)] because the Holy Prophet (S) said: “The most preferable deed of my Umma is the expectation of the deliverance.” My Shi‘ites will constantly be in sorrow and grief until my son who the Prophet (S) has promised about, returns, where he said: “He (A) will fill the earth with justice and equity, as it is full of injustice and cruelty.”

Then, Oh great [scholar]! Be patient and direct all of my Shi‘ites to have patience: “The earth indeed belongs to Allah, and He gives its inheritance to whomever He wishes of His servants, and the outcome will be in favor of the Godway” (7: 128).

May God’s hail, mercy, and blessings be upon you and upon all our Shi‘ites! God is sufficient for us. He is an excellent help, the best master, and the best helper...⁵⁵

‘Ali ibn Bābiwayh had a special position before Imam Mahdi (A). He got in contact with Husayn ibn Rūh Nawbakhti, the third deputy of Imam, in Iraq and wrote a letter to Imam Mahdi (A) asking him to pray to grant ibn Bābiwayh children. The Imam (A) responded, saying: “I asked God and He shall give you two sons.” After a while, God granted ‘Ali ibn Bābiwayh two sons who became great jurists. One of them was Shaykh Sadūq. Thus, Shaykh Sadūq felt proud of the grace of his birth and used to say: “I was born by blessings of Imam of the age (A).”⁵⁶

The day when ‘Ali ibn Bābiwayh passed away in Qum in 329 A.H, ‘Ali ibn Muhammad Saymurī, the fourth deputy of Imam (A), was sitting with a group of people in a meeting in Iraq. Then he suddenly turned to them and informed them of the passing of ‘Ali ibn Bābiwayh. They recorded the time of his passing and 17 or 18 days later, they received news from Qum that he had passed away right in the recorded time.⁵⁷

Ibn Bābiwayh originated a lineage of scholars whose members were well-known until the late six century, and the last scholar of this family, Muntakhab al-Dīn had the same nickname and name of Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali ibn Bābiwayh. Bahrāni has written biographies of the members of this family in *Fihrist of the Būyid wa ‘Ulamā al-Bahrain*.⁵⁸

¹ Cf. Iqbāl, ‘Abbās, *Nawbakhtī Dynasty*, pp. 116-123.

² Cf. Muhammad Sadr, *Tārīkh Al-Ghaybah al-Ṣuḡhrā*, p. 372.

³ Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali ibn Husayn Mas‘ūdi, *Al-Tanbīh wal Ishrāf*, pp. 317- 318.

⁴ Mas‘ūdi, *Murawwij al-Dhahab*, vol. 5, p. 126; *Al-Tanbīh wal Ishrāf*, p. 318.

⁵ Muhammad Javād Mashkūr, *Farhang-e Feraq-e Islami*, pp. 292- 294; cf. Sayyid Ahmad Khezri, *History of ‘Abbasids Caliphate from the Beginning to the End of Buyid Dynasty*, p. 115.

⁶ Muhammad Javād Mashkūr, *ibid.* p. 358; cf. Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūti, *Tārīkh al-Khulafā’*, p. 416.

⁷ Suyūti, *op cit.* p. 413; actually this number seems to be exaggerated.

⁸ Cf. Abu al-Qāsim Sahāb, *The Lives of ‘Askariyayn (A): Imam ‘Ali al-Naqi (A) and Imam Hasan ‘Askari (A)*, p. 101; and Sayyid Ahmad Reza Khedri, *op cit.* p. 115.

⁹ Muhammad Sadr, *A Research in the life of Imam Mahdi (AJ) and an Approach to the History of Minor Occultation*, pp. 202-203.

¹⁰ Jasim Husayn, *ibid.* p. 145.

¹¹ To know more about the events of Mu‘tamid's time, refer to *Tabarī's History*, vol. 9, continue after page 474; ‘Iz al-Din ibn Athīr, *Al-Kāmil [fī Tārīkh]*, vol. 4, pp. 429- 559; Mas‘ūdi, *Murawwij al-Dhahab*, vol. 5, pp. 107-

136; *Ya'qūbi History*, vol. 2, pp. 541- 546; 'Aziz al-Allah Bayāt, *History of Iran from the Advent of Islam to Deylamites' time*, p. 134; 'Ali Akbar Fayyāz, *History of Islam*, pp. 229- 230.

¹² *Tārīkh-e Tabarī*, vol. 10, p. 30.

¹³ Hasan Pīrniya, 'Abbās Iqbāl, *History of Iran*, the chapter(s) of History of Islam, p. 211.

¹⁴ *Al-Kāmil [fi Tārīkh]*, vol. 4, pp. 592-594.

¹⁵ Dissimulation of one's belief in the event of danger.

¹⁶ *Tārīkh-e Tabarī*, vol. 10, pp. 54- 62.

¹⁷ Cited from Jāsim Husayn, *ibid.* p. 146.

¹⁸ Cf. Tabarsī, *op cit.* p. 63; and Fayyāz, *op cit.* p. 231.

¹⁹ Qarmatah, the founder of the Karmatians, whose name and origin were matters of dispute is mostly known as Hamdān al-Ash'ath. It is said that he was nicknamed by the mentioned name because he was short and walked stepping his feet near each other. This sect is a branch of the Isma'ilites which emerged around 280 AH. Among the Dā'īs or missionaries of this sect are Zakariyah ibn Mahrūyah and Abu Sa'īd Janābī. The Karmatians believed that Muhammad ibn Ismā'il was the seventh Imam and the Lord of the Time. They believed in rising with swords and killing their opponents from other Islamic sects. To go on pilgrimage, to kiss the stone of the Kaaba, and to have faith in the external aspects of religion were prohibited in their sect. As for religious law, they believed in special type of interpretation and their motto (like the Isma'ilites) was the white flag (On this subject, refer to Ibn Khaldūn, *Al-'Ibar Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn*, vol. 3, p. 14.).

When the first Isma'ilite Dā'īs settled in Ahwaz and began their Isma'ilite mission (eg. da'wa or invitation) to summon for the Imamate of Muhammad ibn Ismā'il and his descendants, they sent one of their missionaries, named Husayn Ahwazī, to the rural district of Kufa. There, he met a man named Hamdān ibn al-Ash'ath known as Qarmat. Hamdān soon responded to the Bātinīs' invitation and helped him with this cause. He put such an effort into this work that Husayn Ahwazī left his da'wah activities to him in the rural district of Kufa. Then he chose "Kilwāzā", a suburb in Baghdad, as the centre of his da'wah which was spread and responded in 276 AH so quickly that he engaged in buying weapons and forming an army. They soon began bloodshed and killing of their opponents, and struck utter terror in the hearts of Iraqi Muslims. Fearing their lives, many people responded to their call. In 277 AH, Iraqi Karmatians built a great castle named "Dār al-Hijrah" for their own in the suburb of Kufa. Thereafter, Hamdān proceeded to make financial regulations and social rules expedient on his citizens and obligated everyone to buy their own weapons. Hamdān's son-in-law, named 'Abdān Kātib, was one of his adroit dā'īs. In around 280 AH, a disagreement occurred between Hamdān and 'Abdān with the Isma'ilite centre of mission in Ahwaz. Consequently, a new sect by the name of Karmatian was formed (cf. *Mo'īn Dictionary*, vols. 5 and

6, proper names and places section, under the title of Karmatians and Hamdān al-Ash‘ath; and *Farhang-e Feraq-e Islami* by Muhammad Javād Mashkūr, p. 358).

²⁰ The pilgrims of Mecca.

²¹ Cf. Bayāt, op cit. p. 135. On this subject, cf. Khezri, op cit. p.123. Cited from Petroshevski, et al. *Islam in Iran*, p. 311.

²² The Fātimid caliphs, the ‘Ubaydi caliphs, the ‘Ubaydite and the ‘Alawi caliphs (from 297/909 to 567/1171 AH/AD), were a great dynasty which founded a powerful empire in Egypt, and subsequently expanded it in Syria and a part of Africa. This dynasty was called Fātimid, because its caliphs traced their ancestry to Lady Fātima (A), the daughter of the Prophet (S). The Idrisids, who also claimed descent from Lady Fātima (A), paved the way for the Fātimids to advance their cause because during their time, numerous dā‘is influenced the Barbarians (residents of North Africa) and spread Shi‘a doctrines among them. When ‘Ubaydallah called himself "Mahdi" and gave himself the title of Caliph and Amīr al-Mu‘minin, these earlier actions facilitated his advance. In 297 AH/ 909 AD, he eliminated the last vestiges of the Aghlabid rulers and quickly took possession of North Africa except the regions possessed by the Idrisid rulers in Morocco. The Fātimid caliphs are called ‘Ubaydid’, because of their family relationship to ‘Ubaydallah. The son of ‘Ubaydallah, named Muhammad ibn ‘Ubaydallah, who the Sunnites know as a descendant of ‘Ubaydallah ibn Meymūn Qaddāh and the followers of the Isma‘ilites know him as a descendant of Ismā‘il ibn Ja‘far al-Sādiq (A). He is considered to be the original founder of the above-mentioned dynasty. Half a century later, the Fātimids annexed Egypt and Syria to their territory. In 356 AH/ 969 AD, Jawhar, their commander, took the reign of Egypt from Amir Saghīr Akhshīdī’s hand and built Al-Qāhira castle in the Nile valley. This castle became the origin for the present-day city of Cairo. At the same time, South Syria was also conquered and Aleppo was annexed to the Fātimid dominions in 381AH/ 991 AD. During this time, their state was extended from the Syria Desert and Al-‘Ās River to the coasts of Morocco. The Fātimid capital first was Mahdia city near Tunisia, and was then transferred to Cairo. Though this resulted in losing possession of their western dominions, the Fātimids held the power in Egypt and Syria for years and extended their range of wealth and trade to domains on the sides of Mediterranean Sea. The Fātimid dynasty of Egypt was overthrown by Salāh-al-Din Ayyūbi in 567 AH/ 1171 AD (*Mo‘īn Dictionary*, vol. 6, p. 1298, the entry of the Fātimids in proper names and places section).

²³ Mas‘ūdi, *Al-Tanbih wal Ishrāf*, p. 328.

²⁴ Cf. *ibid.* p. 327, and ‘Azizullah Bayāt, *ibid.* p. 135- 136 and 137; cf. Fayyāz, *ibid.* p. 232. Banī Hamdān, the family of Hamdān, belonged to the Taghlab tribe, who lived in some region neighboring Mosul. In 260 AH/ 873 AD, Hamdān ibn Hamdūn, their grandfather was greatly influential in political

events that occurred in Mosul, in 281 AH/ 894 AD. Muhammad ibn Hamdān took possession of the city of Mārdian though he was exiled by Mu'taḍid . In 292 AH, Abu al-Hayjā Abdullah ibn Hamdān was appointed to rule Mosul and its suburbs. From this date on, the Hamdānids had a great period of prosperity. The Hamdānid rulers were Shi'ite and respected Sayf al-Dawla, the Egyptian Fātimid caliph. They ruled until 369 AH/ 979 AD (*Mo'īn Dictionary*, vol. 5, under the entry Hamdānids). It is said that in 234 AH/ 935 AD after a long period of conflict with his paternal uncles, Abu al-Hayjā's son named Hasan ibn Abdullah ibn Hamdān (Nāsir al-Dawla) was issued to the ruling on Mosul and Jazira (the Bakr, Rābi'a, and Muḍir territories) by the order of the caliph al-Rāḍī and his brother 'Ali (Sayf al-Dawla) also assisted him in protecting these territories. Taking his seat of power in Jazira, Nāsir al-Dawla rose to support Amīr al-Umarā Ibn Rā'iq and the caliph al-Muttaqī in opposition to Baridids of Basra. He finally killed Ibn Rā'iq, and in 330 AH/ 942 AD, seized his office. He ruled for **about a year**, until a man named Tūzūn raised in rebellion. Nāsir al-Dawla withdrew to his capital in Mosul and attempted to support al-Muttaqī, but after a while submitted to it. Mu'iz al-Dawla imposed his power on the Hamdānids who were insubordinate peasants. Finally, Nāsir al-Dawla was withdrawn from the caliphate by his sons and two years later died (Joel, Corms, *Cultural Revival in the time of Būyid Family*, p. 138).

²⁵ Fayyāz, *ibid.* p. 233.

²⁶ Shaykh Tūsī, *Al-Ghayba*, p. 244; cf. *Tarjumat ul-Ghayba*, Muhammad Rāzī, "The Blessed Gift in the Signs of the Promised Mahdi (A)", p. 283.

²⁷ Shaykh Tūsī, *ibid.* p. 243; and Shaykh Hūr 'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-Shi'a*, vol. 18, ch. 11, sections on The Attributes of Judges, hadith no. 4.

²⁸ Abu al-Fida', 'Imād al-Dīn Ismā'īl, *Al-Mukhtasar fi Akhbār al-Bashar*, vol. 2, p. 69; and Shaykh Tūsī, *Al-Ghayba*, p. 192.

²⁹ Shaykh Tūsī, *Al-Ghayba*, pp. 294- 296.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Cf. Shaykh Sadūq, *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni'ma*, p. 498; Jāsim Husayn, *ibid.* p. 175.

³² Cf. Shaykh Tūsī, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 189; his biography, cf. Mamaqānī, *Tanqīh al-Maqāl*, vol. 3, p. 149.

³³ Tabarī, vol. 3, pp. 57, 18, 1857, 2024 and 2109; cited from Jāsim Husayn, *op cit.* p. 175.

³⁴ The rebellion of Zanzibari slaves occurred between 255 and 270 AH. An Iranian man named 'Ali ibn Muhammad from Warzanayn led this sedition. He claimed descent from 'Ali (A) and at the beginning introduced himself as the spiritual leader and officially declared his Azāriqites belief (a branch of Khārijites). Soon he sought protection from the slaves and promised them freedom, plunder, and robbery. He occupied the outskirts of Basra, including the lower grounds of the Karun valley. Thousands of African slaves and a large number of the Bedouins joined together under his flag. The caliphate

armies were defeated many times by him, until Basra was conquered by the Zanzibaris. They plundered and massacred until they left Basra and scattered along the Persian Gulf on the north and the south coasts and after occupying Wāsīt, pillaged Ahwaz. The caliph Muwaffaq could not invest in all his efforts to suppress this rebellion until the death of Ya'qūb. But he finally gathered a huge army and dispatched to repel the Zanzibaris. Consequently, these rebels surrendered in the swamp area and their leader was killed after fifteen years of bloodshed and the rebellion was put down (*Mu'īn Dictionary*, vol. 5, under the entry of Zanj).

³⁵ Isma'ilite is a sect of Twelver Shi'ism, which branched as a result of a difference over the imamate of Ismā'il ibn Ja'far al-Sādiq (A) and his brother Mūsā ibn Ja'far (A). Those who maintain that imamate must be kept in the family of Ismā'il are known as Isma'ilites or Bātinīs. They believe that after the departure of Imam Ja'far (A), since his son Ismā'il died before his father, the imamate was passed to Muhammad ibn Ismā'il, who is (ending to seven) and seventh era ends at him and after him, imamate remains in his family; the succeeding imams after Muhammad split into two groups: one group were hidden imams who went undercover around the city, while their dā'īs were openly promoting their invitations. After the hidden imams, it was the time of 'Ubaydullah Mahdi, who manifested his invitation and after him. His descendants were imams, one by one and [they believed] everyone who dies while he is in opposition to them, "has died in ignorance of being like pre-Islamic atheists". Among the dā'īs who were actively promoting the Ismā'ili faith and establishing the foundations of this sect during the Imam's (A) occultation, there was Maymūn ibn Daysān known as Qaddāh. He and his descendants engaged in activities in Khuzestan, Iraq, and Syria for a while and their dā'īs were active in extending the Ismā'ili invitation. Among these dā'īs, was Abu 'Abdullah Hasan ibn Ahmad, known as Abu 'Abdullah Shī'ī who gained great power in the western cities and overthrew the Aghlabid government in that region. In doing so, he freed 'Ubaydullah Mahdi, who was imprisoned in Saljamāsa and believed that he is the same anticipated Mahdi from the family of 'Ali (A), and that the Imamate belongs to him. Accordingly, the Fātimid government was formed in North Africa (297 AH).

The Fātimid invitation was quickly extended to Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, Palestine, Iran, and North Africa (on this subject, cf. Ibn Khaldūn, *Al-'Ibar, Ibn Khaldūn History*, vol. 3, p. 13).

The Isma'ilites observed some stages in their mission and their dā'īs were entitled based on their ranks. The highest rank of the believers of this sect was known as "Hujjat". Only a limited number of dā'īs from among them could hold this rank. Among Iranian dā'īs, Nāsir Khusrow and Hasan Sabbāh had this rank. For each of their imams, Isma'ilite dā'īs assigned twelve Hujjats who were spreading the invitation in twelve districts and in their invitation, they believed the numbers of seven and twelve to be important. For all of the

dā'īs, there was a head named dā'ī-al-du'āt who had office in the caliphate government. The Isma'ilites believed that there are hidden aspects behind superficial appearance, of which only imams are aware, and one must learn them through him or through those who have been taught by him. This led this group to direct their attention from outward aspects of religion to inward and esoteric aspects. (*Mu'īn Dictionary*, vol. 5, under the entry of Isma'ilite, and for further information: cf. *Farhang-e Feraq-e Islami*, p. 47).

³⁶ Tabarī, *Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk*, vol. 8, p. 159; cf. Jāsim Husayn, *ibid.* p. 177.

³⁷ 'Alī ibn Ismā'il Ash'ari, *Maqālāt Islāmiyayn*, p. 85; cited from Jāsim Husayn, *ibid.*

³⁸ Cf. Shaykh Sadūq, *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni'mah*, pp. 483- 485; cf. Jāsim Husayn, *op cit.* p. 178.

³⁹ Shaykh Tūsī, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 327.

⁴⁰ Ibn Athir, *Al-Kāmil*, Beirut, vol. 4, p. 577.

⁴¹ Cf. Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb Kulayni, *Al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 525; Jāsim Husayn, *op cite.* p. 179.

⁴² Shaykh Tūsī, *Al-Ghayba*, p. 255.

⁴³ Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Maskūya, *Tajārib al-Umam*, vol. 1 (from four volumes), p. 137; Jāsim Husayn, p. 199.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Al-Ghayba*, p. 200; Shams al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn 'Uthmān Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa Mashāhīr al-A'lām*, vols. 1- 4, footnote 132a, cited *ibid.*

⁴⁵ Jāsim Husayn, *ibid.* p. 182.

⁴⁶ Najāshī, *Rijāl*, p. 261; Shaykh Tūsī, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 219.

⁴⁷ Mīrzā Muhammad Bāqir Mūsavī Khunsārī, *Rawzāt al-Jannāt*, vol. 4, p. 275.

⁴⁸ Shaykh Tūsī, *Al-Ghayba*, p. 318.

⁴⁹ *The Encyclopedia of Islamica* (Farsi version), vol. 3, p. 61.

⁵⁰ Khunsārī, *Rawzāt al-Jannāt*, vol. 4, p. 274.

⁵¹ *The Grand Islamic Encyclopedia*, *ibid.*

⁵² Rijāl Najāshi, p. 261; cf. Shaykh Tūsī, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 219.

⁵³ Shaykh Tūsī, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 218.

⁵⁴ Khunsārī, *ibid.* vol. 4, p. 278.

⁵⁵ Mīrzā 'Abdullah Afandī Isfihāni, *Riyāz al-'Ulamā' wa Hiyāz al-Fuḍalā'*, vol. 4, pp. 7, 10 and 11.

⁵⁶ *Op cit.* cf. *Tohfih Qudsī*, (translation of *Al-Ghayba*), p. 255.

⁵⁷ *The Encyclopedia of Islamica* (Farsi version), vol. 3, p. 61.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*