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A Study of the Occultation of Imam Mahdi (a.s.)

The most important discussion in this book, in my view, is that the readers of this book learn something about the causes of the occultation of Imam (a.s.) and also that the information about the natural causes of the longevity of His Eminence (a.s.) may be conveyed.

Causes of the Occultation of Imam Mahdi (a.s.)

The occultation of His Eminence, the Master of the age (a.s.) is a necessary thing and His Eminence (a.s.) is not needless of it. We shall discuss those factors that rendered it an absolute necessity.

Fear of Tyrannical Abbaside Regime

When Abbaside rulers gained power they initiated the worst of atrocities and tortures on the Holy Imams (a.s.). Basically they considered the school of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and anyone who was their adherents to be eligible for extreme pressure and restrictions.

They were thrown into horrible prisons and then put to death. Poets and historians have drawn a pathetic picture of the perilous circumstances suffered by the Alawite Sayyids.

Abu Ataa says:

Alas! If only the oppression of the Merwanids (Bani Umayyah) had returned and the justice of Abbasides were destroyed and thrown into the fire.

Dibil Khuzai says:

The oppression of Bani Abbas has covered everything and no one was secure from its oppression. If we regard the oppression of Bani Umayyah an expected fact, as they were enemies of Bani Hashim, how can we justify the oppression of Bani Abbas who were themselves from Bani Hashim?

Yaqub bin Sikkit, an intellectual and a scholar of language says regarding Mutawakkil, the Abbaside, when he razed the tomb of the beloved one of the Holy Prophet (S) and harassed and tortured the visitors to his grave:

"It is true that Bani Umayyah unjustly killed the son of the daughter of the Prophet of Islam (S). But the Bani Abbas regretted not being present among them when they committed this crime. So their malice was expressed in mutilating the grave of the His Eminence (a.s.)..."

Abu Faras Hamadani has described the various kinds of tortures and atrocities wrought by the Abbasides with regard to Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) in the following words:

"The Abbasides have metamorphosed the religion of Allah (SwT) and usurped the rights and subjected the progeny of Ali (a.s.) to humiliation and imprisoned and tortured them. Though the Bani Abbas can never reach the elevated position of the progeny of Ali (a.s.). They cannot aspire for the exalted status of Bani Hashim.

Their ancestor, indeed was not having even one-tenth of the position of the Progeny of the Prophet (S). Basically there is no similarity between the two clans. On the basis of this, the Progeny of Ali (a.s.) is great and honorable. Even though Abbasides are rulers, but in fact they shall remain servants of the Progeny of Ali (a.s.)."

Abu Faras further satires the Abbasides thus:

"Why are these blatant behaviors and unsuitable things kept away from the Progeny of the Messenger (S)? Really, how deep you have gone into deceit in religion. How much blood of the Progeny of Messenger (S) has been spilled at your hands! No matter how hard you try, you are going into further deviation. You can never gain the status of the Progeny of Ali (a.s.).

This is your Haroon who could not be compared with Musa bin Jafar (a.s.). And this is your Mamun, who like his father, was sunk in evil deeds and so he could not be compared to Ali bin Muse ar Reza (a.s.). The fact is that you exceed the Umayyads in your atrocities towards the progeny of the Prophet (S)."

Ibn Rumi has penned the following:

"You have two options before you. One is the straight path of truth and the other is a deviated road. Man is given the option to take one of the two. The path of enmity to the progeny of the Prophet (S), which is the path of deviation or the path of truth."

Then he says:

"How prolonged is the path of usurping the rights of the Progeny of Ali (a.s.) and their tortures and killings. How long would the progeny of the prophet (S) be continued to be killed, and for how long would their blood continue to be spilled? How long would you continue to sell your religion to these rulers to

whom you have paid allegiance?

Is there none among you who could respect the rights of the Messenger of Allah (S) and have fear of the Lord of retribution? So that you may help them in such times of terrible calamities and oppressions?"

He further says:

"Beware of the Bani Abbas and keep away from them. You should know that they are drowned in the sea of oppression and injustice. And their kingdom and regime is not permanent and it should not be a cause of your pride and deceit. Very soon an avenger shall arise and seek revenge of the blood of the progeny of the Messenger (S), which was spilled unjustly; because after every dark night there is a bright day.

Apparently, Ibn Rumi has alluded to the reappearance and advent of His Eminence, Imam Mahdi (a.s.) who would rise up to establish his right.

The above were some examples of the atrocities the Abbasides had committed on the descendants of Imam Ali (a.s.) that were versified by these poets.

Letter of Khwarizmi to the People of Nishapur

Abu Bakr Khwarizmi wrote the following letter to the people of Nishapur. It is an example of records containing the oppressions done on the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) after the passing away of the Messenger of Allah (S) that were committed by Umayyads, Abbasides and others. Here we shall quote this letter verbatim, because it contains in details some of the tortures suffered by the Alawites. It is as follows.

"Know that! May Almighty Allah (SwT) guide your efforts and may He gather your activities on piety and fear of God. There is a matter on which no powerful person has spoken about. That he could not bear any kind of difficulty except that he should have kept it in his own place and would not confess to its greatness but that he be inclined to it and no one shall care, that he should destroy his religion. If his world becomes bad and if he saw his happiness in it he does not care about the pleasure of Allah (SwT).

You all and me – May Allah (SwT) reform you and us. We are that group that Allah (SwT) has not made us for this world. Rather he was kept us for the Hereafter. He has kept us away from instant happiness and prepared the rewards of the Hereafter for us.

We are divided into two groups: A group that accepted sacrifice and another group that is a life of homelessness. The living people doubt regarding those who have died and had reached an elevated status and are not pleased with the life given to them. [That is the life of homelessness].

Amirul Momineen (a.s.), the chief of religion said: "Calamities reach our Shias more swiftly than water reaches a low-lying land." The conclusion of this discourse is that these things are obtained by patience; and he found the people of his house to be always in difficulties and calamities.

Their life was always in difficulties and their hearts were always filled with sadness and grief and the world had becomes aloof from them. If we wish to be the Shias of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) in the obligatory and recommended deeds and wish to act on all their commands, we must also be prepared to bear the worst kinds of difficulties.

In the end of his discourse he has mentioned the different types of atrocities wrought upon the Shia by the tyrant rulers and the calamities that befell them shall be recompensed in form of great reward of Paradise by the Almighty Allah (SwT), which is for His favorite ones. The Almighty would reward them more in recompense of the atrocities borne by them, due to their having affection for Ahlul Bayt (a.s.)..."

Among the points derived from his statements is that the people of Nishapur were subjected to great oppression and calamities due to their love for Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) therefore, Abu Bakr has written this letter comforting them in their troubles. Further on the letter–writer says:

"The right of Fatima Zahra (s.a) regarding her inheritance from her father was usurped on the day of Saqifah and Amirul Momineen (a.s.) was deprived of caliphate. Imam Hasan (a.s.) was secretly administered poison and his brother was slain openly. Zaid Ibn Ali was crucified on a tree in Kanasa and he was beheaded in the battle [though it is said that he was beheaded after the battle]. His sons, Muhammad and Ibrahim were murdered by Isa bin Musa, the Abbaside.

Imam Musa bin Jafar (a.s.) passed away [was martyred] in the prison of Haroon. Imam Reza (a.s.) was poisoned at the behest of Mamun. Idris fled from the battles of Fakh and led a solitary life in Andulasia. Isa bin Zaid died while he had been expelled and had fled. Yahya bin Abdullah was killed inspite of having been guaranteed safety."

In this part of the letter Khwarizmi has detailed the atrocities borne by the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). The most serious of these crimes against them was against the chief of the ladies of the world and the beloved of the Messenger of Allah (S) and a part of his body, Her Eminence, Fatima Zahra (s.a).

That she was deprived of her inheritance on the day of Saqifah. On the day whose calamity shall remain forever in the history of the world. And all those atrocities and oppression that have reached the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) all of them are the consequences of that unfortunate day; when they kept away the Master, Amirul Momineen (a.s.), from the center of caliphate even though the Prophet of Allah (S) had appointed him to Imamate on the day of Ghadeer.

From that day onwards, such atrocities continued on the Ahlul Bayt of the Messenger (S). Muawiyah, the son of Hind, had Imam Hasan (a.s.), the great leader of the youths of Paradise, poisoned. Yazid, the son of Muawiyah, massacred the beloved grandson of the Messenger of Allah (S) and his family members and friends at Kerbala. It was such a terrible carnage that its equal is not present anywhere in the history of mankind.

Among the calamities that befell Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) was the martyrdom of Zaid, the son of Imam Sajjad

(a.s.) who was killed by the Umayyads and after that he was impaled on a date tree. He continued to remain there for some years. He showed the Muslims the path of freedom and dignified humanity. He persuaded them to fight for freedom rather than lead a life of degradation.

In the same way the greater personality from Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) of his time, His Eminence, Musa bin Jafar (a.s.), who was also the leader and guide of the people had to bear the wrath of Haroon, who suppressed social justice and cast the Holy Imam (a.s.) in the dark dungeons of the prison and finally had him martyred by poison.

After that his son, Imam Reza (a.s.) became engrossed in the atrocities of Mamun, the Abbaside, when he was compelled to accept the heir-apparency of Mamun. Later on, the same Mamun had him martyred through poison.

Such atrocities were heaped upon the purified Sadat while they all were those who invited the people to justice and freedom in the world of Islam.

Khwarizmi further details the problems suffered by the Alawites and says:

"Apart from this Yaqub bin Laith oppressed the Alawites in Tabristan. Muhammad bin Zaid and Hasan bin Qasim Dai were arrested and imprisoned by the Sassanids. Additionally we have the troubles that Abu Saj imposed on the Alawites of Medina when he forcibly brought them to Samarrah in such a way that no shade was provided over their heads and only barren earth was there to walk and sit.

This occurred after the killing of Qutaybah bin Muslim along with his family and children who had been arrested by Umar bin Ali who was overpowered by Babawahy. Later on he concealed himself and changed his name in order to escape death.

In addition to what Husain bin Ismail Musabi did with Yahya bin Umar Zaidi. It was what Muzahim bin Khaqan did with the Alawites of Kufa and it is sufficient for you. There is no town in the Islamic lands but that at least one martyr from the Alawites is buried therein and none but the Umayyads or the Abbasides had a hand in their killings and the Arabs of Adnan and Qahtani descent are unanimous on this.

There is none of the living ones whom we could recognize from Yemen, Bakr and Mudir but that they were partners in the bloodshed of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). They are partners in it just as the butcher divides the meat of the slaughtered animal."

In these statements, he has mentioned the atrocities of Bani Abbas with regard to the great personalities of the Alawites and Shias, who were subjected to killings and destruction. The Abbaside ruler had commanded his security organization to find the Alawites wherever they might be and subject them to the worst tortures. Khwarizmi has given a brief account of all the leading Alawite personalities who were martyred at the hands of Abbasides.

Khwarizmi then moves ahead and further details perilous circumstances of the Alawites and says:

"Their personality and abstemiousness guided them to death. A life of degradation was not a good future for them. Thus they welcomed a death of dignity. They reposed their faith on that which was stored for them in the Hereafter. They kept their temporal selfish desires at a distance. Thus none but their Shias and fans had to drink the cup of death. Their helpers and followers bore each and every kind of torture with patience and forbearance."

In this section, Khwarizmi has described the honor and dignity of the Alawites and says that the Alawites possessed such self-respect that they could not bear a life of degradation under the shameless indignities from the Abbasides. Therefore they raised the flags of opposition and revolution so that they may gain and retain freedom and they bore unlimited atrocities in this process. The worst tortures descended upon the Shias who took up resistance against the tyrannical Abbasides and Umayyads.

Thereafter, Khwarizmi has mentioned the tortures borne by the Alawites and their Shias.

"In the illuminated Medina, Uthman bin Affan kicked Ammar bin Yasir severely in the stomach. He also arrested and confined Abu Zar Ghiffari, and harassed Ammar bin Abdul Qais Tamimi. Ashtar Nakhai and Abi bin Hatim at Tai were beaten up by him.

Ubayy Ibn Kaab was tortured and Muhammad bin Hanafiyyah was oppressed and kept away. He did what he intended with the blood of Ibn Salim. He did not fell short in doing what he intended with Kaab Zihatba."

In these statements Khwarizmi has described the behavior of Uthman bin Affan, the senior member of the Umayyad clan towards the senior companions of the Prophet (S) and the punishments and mental tortures meted out to them.

For example, the great companion, Ammar Yasir and the respected companion, Abu Zar Ghiffari and others like them also opposed the politics of wealth hoarding and the precedence given to Bani Umayyah and Progeny of Abu Muit. Uthman had gifted to them vast wealth and imposed their power on the lives of Muslims. This alone became the cause of the Muslims coming together upon the killing of Uthman.

Khwarizmi has mentioned all the problems and oppression borne by the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and the Shias and he says:

"And Bani Umayyah followed the footsteps of Uthman. Thus whoever confronted them in war was killed and whoever submitted to them was abused. They did not provide any social security for the Emigrants (Muhajarin) and made them dispersed. Nor did they accord any place of safety for the helpers (Ansar).

They had no fear of God and they had no respect for anyone. They considered the people as their slaves and considered the property of God as their own. They made the Kaba deserted and invited their companions to worship them. They omitted the ritual prayers. They destroyed the freedom of people.

Their behavior in the holy places and cities of Muslims was like that of the infidels in their own holy places and cities. And if a person from the Umayyads committed a sin, it was not even criticized, as if he had committed nothing wrong."

In this section, he has penned the crimes and misappropriations of Bani Umayyah. They were not having any kind of regard for the people upon whom they ruled with an iron hand. They considered lowly all those who wanted to advise them to good and they forced all that the people did not like. Similarly he mentions other calamities imposed by the Umayyads.

After that Khwarizmi details the continuous oppressions and atrocities of Bani Umayyah upon the Alawites.

"Muawiyah killed Hujr bin Adi, he also arrested and killed Amr bin Hamaq Khuzai in spite of having given him guarantee of safety and a promise of according him security. Ziyad bin Sumaiyah massacred thousands of Shias of Kufa and tortured and killed the Shias of Basra. He was the one whose prison was the largest and who had the largest number of captives under him.

Finally the Almighty Allah (SwT) gave the worst form of death to Muawiyah and life ended in the worst manner. After that he prepared his son to finish off the remaining righteous people and slaughter the children of the martyrs. Thus first he put to death Hani bin Urwah Muradi and Muslim bin Ageel Hashmi.

After that Harith bin Ziyad Riyahi then Abi Musa Amr bin Qarda Ansari, then Habib bin Mazhar Asadi, Saeed bin Abdullah Hanafi, Nafe bin Hilal Jamali, Hanzala bin Asad Shami and Abis bin Abi Shabeeb Shakiri. The number reached to more than seventy Shias who were killed by him.

And after that he ordered for the killing of Imam Husain (a.s.) in Kerbala so that the second part of the strategy was started. Then the son of the bastard, Ubaidullah Ibn Ziyad, was imposed on the people, so that he impales his opponents on date palms, and people were killed in different ways till the time he was killed.

But the great burden of bloodshed of the sacred blood and the gigantic sin remained on his neck, till a group which Allah (SwT) had intended, rose up to finish off those who had committed the heinous crime. They were supporters of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and they came together to oppose this group and sought revenge for the martyrs.

Although the son of the bastard was not totally helpless and continuous assistance reached him. The prominent personalities of Kufa rose up against him to oppose him and be killed and there was no other way for them. They sacrificed their lives and property on this path.

So much so, that Sulaiman bin Surd Khuzai, Musayyab bin Najih Farazi and Ubaidullah bin Waal Tamimi and some of the prominent people and the best believers and the chiefs of the followers of companions, who were the leading lights and the brave stalwarts of Islam, were martyred."

In these statements, Khwarizmi has delineated the tortures and oppressions borne by the Shias during the caliphate of Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan. It was that he appointed Ziyad bin Abih and initiated the massacre and pursuit of the Shias. When the tenure of Muawiyah ended, his son, Yazid assumed power and committed such oppressions as have no equal in the history of the world.

He martyred the progeny of the Messenger of Allah (S) in such a terrible manner with such mercilessness that its equal is not found anywhere else in history, because here the sanctity of the Holy Prophet (S) and his descendants was trespassed, and whatever Ibn Ziyad did with the chief of the youths of Paradise (a.s.) did not suffice for him.

He also stretched his hands towards the great Shia leaders. For example, he had Mitham bin Tammar crucified on a date tree. After that a religious group of supporters of the Shias revolted and demanded revenge for the blood of Imam Husain (a.s.), who were called Tawabeen (the repenters). Their leaders were martyred, like Sulaiman bin Surd Khuzai, Musayyab bin Najih Farazi and Abdullah bin Waal Tamimi, and also others who were the leading lights of Shia Islam.

Khwarizmi goes further regarding the calamities of the Shias and says:

"After that Ibn Zubair gained power in Hijaz and Iraq and killed Mukhtar. It was Mukhtar who had raised the banner of revolt and revenged the blood of the martyrs of Kerbala and put to death all those who were involved in the martyrdom of the chief of the martyrs (a.s.) and arrested those who had dishonored him.

After Mukhtar, Ibn Zubair killed Abi Umar Ibn Kaisan, Ahmar Ibn Shameet, Rufa bin Yazid, Saib bin Malik and Abdullah bin Malik and those who were of the Shias. He had them arrested and cut up into pieces and had them killed in the most terrible manner. Till the time the Almighty Allah (SwT) had the cities rid of Abdullah bin Zubair and got the people peace from his brother Musab Ibab. Both of them were killed by Abdul Malik bin Marwan.

"In this way we shall put some of the oppressors with other oppressed as a consequence of the deeds they had committed."

And when Muhammad Ibn Hanafiyyah was in the prison of Ibn Zubair and wanted to burn him to death he also arrested Abdullah Ibn Abbas and caused a lot of bloodshed.

The above words are about a great commander and a powerful ruler like Mukhtar bin Yusuf Thaqafi, who had purified the earth of the impurity of the misappropriators and criminals who were the killers of the Chief of the Youth of Paradise, Imam Husain (a.s.). He pursued all of them and caught them from wherever they were hiding and executed them.

After that people aligned with Abdullah bin Zubair and his brother Musab and gained power in Hijaz and Iraq and started the killing of the Shias of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and at the end of that killed the ruler of Iraq,

Mukhtar and his group who were the signs of the believers and righteous people. But not much time had passed when Abdul Malik bin Marwan killed both of them and the Almighty Allah (SwT) saved the people from their tyranny."

Here Khwarizmi has related some of the atrocities of Abdul Malik Marwan and other Umayyads against the Shias.

"When the kingdom of progeny of Marwan became consolidated they appointed Hajjaj on the governorship of Mecca and Medina and later as the governor of Kufa and Basra and he did whatever oppressions on the Bani Hashim he was capable of. And he terrorized the Fatimids and massacred the Shias of Imam Ali (a.s.) and the heritages of the house of the Prophet (S) were destroyed.

He did what he did with Kumail Ibn Ziyad Nakhai. In this way the oppressions continued during the period of the caliphate of the Merwanids till the time of the Abbasides. The Almighty Allah (SwT) decided to put an end to the caliphate of Merwanid with the most terrible crime.

The greatest crime they committed against the rightful group at the end of their rule was that the hypocrites deserted Zaid bin Ali and he was martyred at the hands of the Syrians. And his Shias like Nasr bin Khuzaimah Asadi, Muawiyah bin Ishaq Ansari and a group who had supported and followed him were also executed. Rather whoever was found to have any relationship with him was murdered."

He has described the evil handiworks of the Merwanid rule; how they occupied the seat of Muslim rule, how they hoisted themselves to misappropriate the wealth of Muslims and how they wrought havoc on the populace.

The chief of them being the appointment of Hajjaj bin Yusuf Thaqafi on the necks of Muslims. He initiated elaborate measures to tyrannize the believers and righteous people by employing spies and mercenaries. The atrocities reached such a stage that Zaid bin Ali decided to rise up in revolt against all these tyrannies and gathered a group around himself.

However, the hypocritical people soon deserted Zaid and he was also executed on Hajjaj's orders. Hajjaj also destroyed all the signs of the House of the Prophet (S) and was so atrocious that anyone suspected of being a Shia was immediately arrested and executed and anyone even supportive of the Shias was not spared.

After that, Khwarizmi has indicated how the kingdom of the Umayyad declined and how the Abbasides achieved power and how the Shias were again between atrocities and calamities.

"When they destroyed the sanctity of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and martyred Zaid bin Ali, the Almighty Allah (SwT) became infuriated with them and He tore away power from Abu Mujrim, so Abu Muslim Khorasani, gained the power.

When he saw the atrocities upon the Alawites being wrought by the Umayyads he took it as a pretext to

raise the standard of revolt against them and in the process obtained for the Abbasides the kingdom and rule of Islamic lands. But soon they also began to continue the misdeeds of their predecessors.

They began with the killing of Abdullah bin Muawiyah bin Abdullah bin Jafar bin Abi Talib. They imposed the rebels of Khorasan and the Khawarij of Seestan and the kings of Isfahan upon the necks of progeny of Ali Talib (a.s.). These people were hotly pursued and sought out from wherever they had taken refuge.

Ultimately they abandoned the towns and villages and retired into wilderness or mountains to save their lives. Till the time, the Almighty Allah (SwT) imposed His best friend upon them and the foe was killed. Everyone who followed Abu Muslim was killed. He then invited the people to pay allegiance to him. Till the time the Almighty Allah (SwT) became infuriated with him and he committed the most heinous crime upon whomsoever he could reach.

Then came Dawaniqi, who made himself cheap like the rate of jewels falls but he did not select the straight path. He ruled with a heavy hand till he finally died while his prison was filled with the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and the repositories of Prophethood.

He pursued those who had concealed themselves and put them to death. Till the time he had Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Abdullah Hasani killed in Sindh at the hands of Umar bin Hisham Taghlibi. Then at the time he was killed in Sindh, know that also, whoever he could reach what was it that he did not do with them.

Was it anything less than what Haroon Rashid and Abu Musa had done previously? And you will know what Musa did with Husain bin Ali at the Fakh and similarly what Haroon did with Ali bin Aftas Husaini and that was what had been done with Ahmad bin Ali Zaidi, Qasim bin Ali Husaini and Ali bin Ahsan Hazir Khuzai.

At last Haroon died and by the time of his death, he had destroyed the tree of Prophethood and uprooted the foundation of Imamate. And you (O people of Nishapur) may Allah (SwT) reform you. You had a great part of faith. They abused Amash, dethroned Shareek, terrorized Hisham bin Hakam and made allegations against Ali bin Yaqtin."

In the above statements, Khwarizmi has drawn a picture of the handiworks of the Abbaside tyrants against the holy Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and their sincere followers. We can say that what the Umayyads could not do was accomplished by the Abbasides who claimed affinity to the Prophet (S).

Khwarizmi has drawn up a list of the Alawi Sadat who were put to death at the hands of Abu Musa Khorasani. The same Abu Musa from whom Allah (SwT) took revenge. Mansur made him taste what he had done with hundreds and thousands of Muslims. But the greatest atrocities were committed on the Alawi Sadat during the caliphate of Mansur Dawaniqi.

He exceeded all limits in their killing and he gave up all the pretenses of self-respect and merits. He pursued all of them in such a severe manner, that even if one concealed oneself behind the rocks or below the earth, he used to search him out and had him killed or had him imprisoned in his dark dungeons where one could not distinguish between day and night.

At the time he died, his prisons were crowded with Sadat and sincere Shias and the same atrocities continued under the sons of Mansur. The worst times came during the caliphate of Haroon Rashid that he wreaked terrible oppressions on the Alawites and destroyed the descendants of the Messenger of Allah (S).

He massacred and trampled upon them with utmost ferocity. He oppressed the leader of the family of the Prophet, Imam Musa Ibn Jafar (a.s.), had him imprisoned for years and then finally had him poisoned.

After this, Khwarizmi further details the troubles faced by the Alawites and Shias as follows.

"In the beginning important personalities like Zaid bin Sauhan Abadi, Uthman bin Hunaif Ansari were convicted. Then Harith bin Qudama Saadi went into hiding and Jundab, Shareeh, Malik, Motal, Harith and Abu Tufayl etc. were killed or humiliated in their own houses. They heard their friends being abused and insulted and they could not say anything against it. They saw their followers being killed before their own eyes but had to maintain silence. It did not remain hidden that they did not create any obstacle and most of them were kept bewildered.

For example, people like Jabir, Rashid, Zurarah and others like them, who had devotion towards the holy saints and had kept aloof from their enemies. And when they were put into perplexity the most terrible crime of theirs was that they did not recognize their own Imam."

In these lines, Khwarizmi has described the perilous circumstances of the great Shia personalities and their followers during the regime of Bani Umayyah and all these atrocities were not except due to their devotion towards Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), whose love the Almighty Allah (SwT) had made obligatory on all the Muslims.

After that Khwarizmi describes the bitter conditions of the Shias during the tyrannical rule of the Abbasides and says:

"In Bani Abbas there are a lot of things that you will see and ponder upon as much as you can and you will find many strange things in them.

And at the time when money was brought for them it was distributed among the Dailamites and Turks and they used to spend it on the Maghribis and Farghabis. When an Imam of the Imams of guidance (a.s.) and a chief from the Sadat of Bani Mustafa passed away no one used to participate in his funeral and his grave was not cemented.

And for one who passes flatulence loudly regularly or a sportsman or gymnast or jester or one who dies by the whips of women, the magistrates and judges used to attend his funeral and arrange mourning assembles for him under the command of the regime.

Those who are atheists or sophists are not objected to anything and no action is taken against them. They are in peace and security. If anyone reads the books of philosophy and mysticism he is not restrained or objected to. However, if anyone is recognized as a partisan of Shia religion, he is killed.

Anyone who named a child of his as Ali was executed. If anyone was even suspected to be a Shia, except of the partisans of Mualla bin Khumais, who was killed at the hands of Dawood bin Ali, he was put to death. If they had not imprisoned all the Shias except those of Abi Turab Maruzi it would have been such a wound that never heals and such a fire that never cools, a headache that never goes away, a crack that is never filled.

It is sufficient what the poets of Quraish say: In the period of ignorance there were some poems through whom they attacked Amirul Momineen (a.s.) and confronted the Muslims through the couplets. When their poems were collected and their narrations were classified. So much so that writers have recorded their histories in their books like Waqidi, Wahab bin Mamba Tamimi, Kalbi Sharqi bin Qatami, Haitham and Daab bin Canaani, etc.

However, whenever a Shia poet composes poems in the honor of the virtues of the Master and mentions the miracles of the Prophet (S), his tongue is pulled out and his collection is torn up. Just as in the case of Abdullah bin Ammar, Kumail bin Zaid Asadi. The grave of Mansur bin Zabarqa was ransacked. The house of Dibil bin Ali Khuzai was destroyed.

While they supported and helped Marwan and Ali bin Jahm. Though it was not but due to their extreme enmity to Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). They had indeed earned the worst anger of the Almighty. The circumstances reached such a stage that Haroon bin Khaizan and Jafar who was the agent of Satan, and not that of the Beneficent, he did not spend but to help the abusing and denouncement of the Master and help the enemies of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).

For example Abdullah bin Musab, Wahab bin Wahab Bakhtari and the poets like Maswan, and the litterateurs like Abdul Malik and in the caliphate of Jafar people like Bakar, Abi Samt and Ibn Abi Shaurab etc."

In these words, Khwarizmi has described the calamities faced by the Shias of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) during the regime of the Abbaside ruler who had the audacity to shed their blood and pressurized them. The great Shia luminaries who were executed or put into prison had no crime upon their necks except their devotion to Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), and Khwarizmi has mentioned their names.

Another activity of the Abbasid was to suppress the remembrance of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) among the people. They did it firstly by censuring and torturing anyone who composed an elegy or praised their virtues; he

was either executed or put into prison. Also, whoever abused and denounced them was accorded great honors by the regime and rewarded greatly.

And those things that further illuminate their dealings with the Shias are as follows.

"May the Almighty Allah (SwT) guide. Indeed we have held the strong rope of Allah (Ahlul Bayt (a.s.)) and followed the religion and preferred them to material wealth. None saw us but that there was an increase in his insight. And one who has more defects than us cannot point out our shortcomings.

Since the beginning, Islam was only poor and in this way it would be again turned poor. It is the statement of Almighty Allah (SwT) and bequest of the Messenger of Allah (S) that He would give power and rulership to whomsoever He likes and the final end is for those who fear Allah (SwT). And know that after everyday there is a tomorrow and after every Saturday there is a Sunday. That is, the world is not the same always.

In the battle of Siffin, Ammar Yasir (a.r) said: If the enemy kills and when we lose all hopes of survival we still know that we are on the right and the enemy is wrong. Indeed the Messenger of Allah (S) was weak in the beginning but later he became strong. In the same way Islam was initially backward but afterwards it achieved honor and precedence:

"Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, we believe, and not be tried?" (Surah 29, Verse 2)

And if the severity upon the believers and their paucity had not been there and if the power of the disbelievers and their great numbers had not been there, indeed, the Hell would not be filled up. And that it says: Give me more! And the Almighty Allah (SwT) would not have said: But most of them do not know!

And it is not known that the one who pleads and begs is of the patient and forbearing one. And the thanks-giver would not have been distinguished from the denier. The obedient one, eligible for reward and the sinner who is liable for chastisement would not have been distinguished.

Thus whenever a calamity befalls us, we indeed consider it our habit. If power and kingdom comes into our hand while we are expecting, thanks be to the Almighty. We are seeking salvation in all circumstances and always we hope for the best but maintain patience in even the worst circumstances.

Indeed, the Master (Ali (a.s.)) was abused for a thousand months but we never doubted his teachings. And the Holy Prophet (S) was falsified for 10 years but we laid no blame on his prophethood and the Iblis lived for years more than the number of grains of sand and we do not refrain from cursing him.

We had been tested with wealth for a long time also and indeed we had faith in the Kingdom of Allah (SwT). And Imams (a.s.) after an Imam (a.s.) and the pleasure of Allah (SwT) with His Will. They were all martyred but we did not doubt their Imamate. Indeed the promise of Allah (SwT) would be fulfilled and the command of Allah (SwT) changes never. You will never come to know it, never; very soon, the oppressors shall know what their end shall be. Indeed, you shall know their fate after sometime, in Qiyamat."

These words describe the patience and forbearance of the Shias, and their lack of undue concern towards the problems that befall them which are caused by the misappropriators and enemies of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). They never compelled them to abandon their love and devotion of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) and his descendants.

They were the callers to the social activities in Islam. And the Shias proved in two periods, in the rule of the Umayyads and Abbasids that they were the strongest defendants of Islam and open opposition of the people against oppression and rebellion and as a result the standard of Islam was raised high and fluttered. And they never submitted defeat to the Umayyads and Abbasids and confronted them with all resources they had.

And Khwarizmi further says:

"Know that! May Allah (SwT) have mercy on you! Bani Umayyads, all of them are the accursed tree and it has come about them: They are the followers of the sinners and rebels and the cahoots of falsehood who had the audacity to conceal the virtues and merits of the Master (a.s.) and they gathered some people around them to forge traditions of the Messenger of Allah (S).

They changed their residence from Medina to the neighborhood of Baitul Maqdas and transferred the seat of Caliphate from Kufa to Damascus. In this field they spent a lot of wealth for causing destruction. They appointed an official agent in every place and appointed those who were like ruffians. But they could not destroy any tradition of the Messenger of Allah (S) neither could they interpolate any verse of the Book of Allah (SwT).

They could not even place one of the enemies of Allah (SwT) at the position of His friends. Indeed the merits of the Progeny of the Messenger of Allah (S) and their fame spread to all corners and their proof and argument was presented to others. Actually the awe of the king and the sultan had no effect on their hearts that they be afraid of him or be affected by him.

And truth had always been dominant and lofty even if the people of truth were downtrodden and there were very few like it and they are lowly and humiliated. On the other hand falsehood is honorless and insulted even though they may try to bestow great honor upon it. It is bad even if it is presented in a beautiful manner.

Abdur Rahman the leading light of Bani Umayyads says:

Sumaiyah increased her progeny so much that it became equal to the grains of sands in the deserts, while the daughter of the Prophet (S) had no descendants.

Another poet rebuts this saying:

May Allah (SwT) curse all those who abuse Ali (a.s.) and Husain (a.s.) who is the Imam and leader of all.

Abu Dahbal says regarding the power of the kingdom of Bani Umayyah and devotion of progeny of Abu Sufyan:

The Bani Umayyads intoxicated with comfort turn the night into a day while in Taff and Kerbala the martyrs of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) did not get to sleep.

Sulaiman says:

And the one killed at Taff from the progeny of Hashim, how he has degraded the reputation of Muslims. What a great disrespect!

But Kumayt has replied by saying:

Ask the Bani Umayyads what religion they have chosen for themselves that you threaten the people of cutting off their limbs.

May Allah (SwT) starve those whom you have fed and may He satiate those whom you have starved."

In the above discussion, Khwarizmi speaks about the steps Bani Umayyads took in order to suppress and destroy the excellent merits and virtues of Amirul Momineen (a.s.). They employed their wealth, power and all means to efface the signs of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) so that their virtues may remain hidden but they did not succeed and their merits and good qualities become apparent just as humanity becomes apparent from a human being.

In all the stages of history it was picturized just as it was for everyone and it became apparent that they were the defrauders who cheated the Muslims of what was rightfully theirs. They spent all the wealth in the fulfillment of their selfish desires and vices and the Muslims were forced upon what they were helpless in. Khwarizmi says:

"And what is being said is not surprising. What the poets of Bani Abbas have narrated to the Caliphs, even though they did not like to hear it. That is they spoke in praise of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) though the Abbasids did not like to hear all that.

Mansur bin Zabargan said in the presence of Haroon:

The progeny of the Prophet (S) and their supporters conceal themselves due to the fear of being killed

while the Jews and Christians are in peace and security. Even though they are the people of Monotheism they lead a life of fear and insecurity.

Dibil says:

Don't you see that I am nearly eighty years of age and day and night I am in sorrow and anger to see the property of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) being usurped by others and spent upon themselves while the followers of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) do not get anything!

Ali bin Abbas Rumi says:

Every period of time is a killing one for the Holy Prophet (S) and it is smeared in its own blood.

Ibrahim, a scribe and a close confidant of Mamun says:

The Bani Abbas give the wealth of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) to their followers with great obligation while they would not give anyone more than a hundred."

The above statements describe that the compositions of the poets that announce the virtues and merits of Ali (a.s.) and his descendants were more than those of the Abbasides and they announced for them the most severe times and the most bitter of them. When anyone remembered the Purified Imams (a.s.) in a good way, he got nothing except sword or spear. That is they were put to death. But these people were lion-hearted and brave. They had no fear to speak the truth.

Khwarizmi moves forward saying:

"And how could these poets not denounce the people while they had starved their cousins and filled up the cities of Dailam and Turks with gold and silver. And they supported the Maghribi and Farghana people while they oppressed the Emigrants and Helpers. They accorded ministerial posts to non–Arabs. They gave military commands to Tamatam and Persians while they denied the descendants of Abu Talib (a.s.) from the inheritance of their mother.

And even though it all belongs to their ancestor if the Alawites wanted to spend a penny from it, they were deprived of it. They were kept hungry during the day and not given any food and while all the Islamic wealth and income from various provinces was bestowed to Ibn Abi Maryam Madyani, Ibrahim, Ibn Jame, Zulzal and Soma.

And the Bakhtish Christians are given the food equal to that of a town. The Jari and Afshin are given food equal to a community. Mutawakkil keeps 12000 slave girls in his harem to have sexual enjoyments while a chief of the Sadat has to content himself and protect his chastity with a single slave girl.

A lot of wealth is reserved for the vain pastimes, unlawful foods, feeding the dogs, training the monkeys and paying for female singers and falcons. The Court jester, Umar is given a lot of wealth while they are

miserly to the Fatimids even to the extent of giving them a morsel of food and a draught of water. They deny them 1/6 of a Dirham and a grain and give them the leftovers which they purchase before it becomes stale while the Almighty Allah (SwT) has made Khums their obligatory share and made Sadaqah prohibited for them.

And love and devotion towards them is incumbent while they spend their lives in hardships and pass away in poverty. In order to satiate their hunger some of them pawn their sword and some sell off their clothes while they behold the wealth of God with sorrow. They experience such a difficult life as there is nothing equal to it while their only sin is that their ancestor is the Messenger of Allah (S), their Father is Master (Ali (a.s.)), their mother is Fatima (s.a) and their grandmother is Khadijah (s.a) and their faith and their guide is Quran."

In this portion, Khwarizmi speaks about some difficulties that made the Alids sorrowful that were caused due to the economical hurdles posed by the Abbasides. They denied even the minimum human rights to them. They imposed upon them the worst of the hardships, so much so that the Alawites did not own a piece of cloth to cover their nakedness and food to satiate their hunger.

While all the wealth was diverted to the singers, the players and those who flatter. Khwarizmi has listed the names of those who were bestowed great favors and millions of good things by the Abbasides. While on the other hand they put the Muslim Community in poverty and deprivation.

The letter continues:

"Indeed, the shameful deeds of the Umayyads were mentioned from people to people and their evil doings were transferred from generation to generation. Muawiyah was such a person who killed the companions of the Prophet (S) and the companions of the companions.

His mother was the one who had chewed the liver of the purified martyrs. His son, Yazid was addicted to playing with monkeys and wild dogs. He was the demolisher of the Kaba, the plunderer of Medina and the killer of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.); and Marwan the son of the Lizard because he listened to the talks of the Prophet's (S) house from behind the wall and he is the one whose father was cursed by the Prophet (S), while Marwan was in the loins of his father. Thus the divine curse fell upon him also.

And Abdul Malik was one who had committed a great sin, who made the earth narrow and spread his power in all directions. He was the one who appointed Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf Thaqafi, who in the due course killed the people and trampled the principles of Islam and uprooted the branches of faith and made the cities into deserted ruins. He was the most unchaste of the people whoever ruled over the Islamic lands and many of his misdeeds are recorded in books of history and biography.

Walid was another Umayyad transgressor. He appointed Hajjaj on the Eastern lands and gave the western dominions to Qurrah bin Shareek. Sulaiman was one with a huge appetite and this eventually became a cause of his death, while he had filled his belly with food and seeds.

Yazid was having a sting of a serpent and his belly was like a great utensil; he abrogated Jihad by wine and spent the period of his Caliphate on the lute and Zumar (a wind instrument). He was the first to increase the payments of singing girls and committed every lewd action openly.

And what can be said that on one side is Marwan and on the other, Yazid bin Muawiyah and they inherited their genes from both of these accursed ones. Thus he was the offspring of two accursed ones and the partner of two disbelievers.

Hisham was the killer of Zaid bin Ali and the patron of Yusuf bin Umar Thagafi.

Walid Ibn Yazid was the last of the Umayyad Caliphs. He was a denier of God (atheist) and he used a copy of the Holy Quran for target practice. He was the to compose poetry in denial of faith and openly committed lewd and unchaste deeds."

In this section, Khwarizmi has described the conditions of the Umayyad rulers and their remaining activities that opened up shameless deeds and blackened the pages of history. And the community also bore their worst tortures and most heinous crimes under their shade.

They destroyed public property and snatched away from people their freedom. Hajjaj bin Yusuf Thaqafi and stonehearted and tyrannical people like him behaved with them like wolves and wild criminals. They transformed this life into hell and made oppression and corruption common among the people.

Now pay attention to the part of this letter, which says:

"In spite of the greatness of the crimes of Umayyads and their magnitude and severity, in comparison to that of Bani Abbas they were like dispensations of justice and their rule was marked with a distinct support for justice and equity. Their Friday prayer leaders also used to mention these qualities and congregation prayers were established by them.

On the other hand the Abbasides had established a city of injustice and oppression and spent the wealth of Muslims in sinful activities and gatherings of vain pastimes and vices while they themselves were supposed to be the leaders of guidance and the Friday leader used to describe them thus in their sermons."

In these statements, Khwarizmi has described the sinful activities of Bani Abbas and says that the crimes of the Abbasids were much more in magnitude and severity than those of the Umayyads. The Abbasides spent public funds on the fulfillment of their sensual desires and their intrigues and bloody associates, while the majority of the people spent a life of poverty and sorrow.

The most astonishing thing is that the best titles are attributed to these rulers and it is said that they were the leaders of guidance, that they ruled with justice and actions and equality is associated with them.

Here our discussion about the letter is coming to an end. The letter, which is the most important political

document and has great authenticity and is most appropriate with the topic of our discussion. It is that the Sadat and Shias had borne with great difficulty the tortures and calamities caused to them by the Umayyad and Abbaside rulers.

And the letter itself shows what could be the reason for occultation of His Eminence, Imam Mahdi (a.s.), and why he is concealed from the view of the people. That which is thought to be the basic reason is the force applied upon the two Imams, Imam Hadi (a.s.) and Imam Askari (a.s.) who were made to reside at Samarrah under house arrest.

And moreover they were surrounded by a large army of male and female spies so that they may come to know when Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is born so that he is immediately taken into custody and put to death. Since their heart was throbbing with anxiety and fear due to the numerous reports of the Prophet of Islam (S) and also those of the successors among the purified Imams (a.s.), that the Awaited Imam (a.s.) is the last caliph of the Messenger of Allah (S) and that he is the one who would establish justice and spread the truth.

He would create peace, security and comfort between the people and it is he only who would destroy all types of oppressions and defeat the oppressors. Therefore they considered it necessary upon themselves to employ strict surveillance on his grandfather and father and after the passing away of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) [(Actually it was after Imam Hadi (a.s.)] they laid siege to his house and arrested some ladies from the Imam's household suspected of being pregnant and kept them in custody as we have already described in detail in the foregone pages. This is one of the most important causes of the disappearance of Imam (a.s.) and his not being identified by the people.

In the tradition of Zurarah this same cause is mentioned by the Imam (a.s.) that:

"For the Qaim (a.t.f.s), there is an occultation before his reappearance."

Zurarah immediately asked, "What for?" Imam (a.s.) replied, "For fear of being murdered."1

Shaykh Tusi says: The cause of the obstacle in the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is nothing but the fear of being killed. Because if there had been any other reason, his remaining in occultation would not have been justified.2

Doubt of Khanizi

Abul Hasan Khanizi has objected to the belief that the non-reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is due to the fear to his life. He says that such a surmise is baseless and wrong and that it is a sort of allegation to say that Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is not reappearing due to the fear of enemies.3

The objection of Khanizi is incorrect, because if the Abbaside rulers had managed to get hold of His Eminence (a.s.), they would definitely have put him to death, in the same way as they had martyred his respected father and grandfather. They kept his father, Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) under strict

surveillance and after the martyrdom of His Eminence (a.s.), they surrounded and raided his house and tried their utmost to find the whereabouts of the Awaited Imam (a.s.).

The Almighty Allah (SwT) kept him concealed from the Abbasid tyrants so that he remains safe in order to allow him to spread truth and justice and establish peace and security on the earth. The time for that occasion is known only to Allah (SwT). None else has any idea about it nor anyone is having control over it.

Test and Trial

One of the causes of the occultation of His Eminence, Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is said to be the test of people. It is narrated from His Eminence, the Messenger of Allah (S) that he said:

"By Allah (SwT)! He would go into occultation and none shall get salvation except those who have faith in the heart and whom Allah helps."4

Although the divine practice is appointed that people should be subjected to tests and trials so that those who perform better deeds may be rewarded suitably. The Almighty Allah (SwT) says:

The one who created death and life so that "He may test you, which of you has the best deeds."

He also says:

"Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, we believe, and not be tried?"

The occultation of His Eminence, Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is a very important component of Divine test. None has faith in it except those who have perfect belief and testify to what the Messenger of Allah (S) and the Purified Imams (a.s.) have said regarding the occultation of His Eminence (a.s.) and that he does not fix the period of his occultation.

Rather he should agree that the reappearance of His Eminence (a.s.) is upto the wise decision of the Almighty Allah (SwT). No one has any choice in it. The example of His Eminence (a.s.) is like that of the Hour (Qiyamat) that there is no doubt in its coming.

Secrets of the Occultation of the Imam of the Time (a.s.)

The occultation of the Awaited Imam (a.s.) is explained to be one of the divine secrets and no one else has any knowledge of it. It is this same point stated by the Messenger of Allah (S) when he said:

"The example of the occultation of the Qaim (a.s.) is like that of the Hour (Qiyamat), that only the Almighty Allah (SwT) is cognizant of it and that it will not come towards you but all of a sudden."5

It is narrated from His Eminence, Imam Mahdi (a.s.) that he said:

"Do not put yourself into difficulty and do not ask about matters that have no material or spiritual benefit. And do not ask but pray more for the reappearance as in it lies your success; and peace be to those who follow the guidance."6

Shaykh Miqdad Siyuri says:

"The wisdom of the occultation of His Eminence, Imam Mahdi (a.s.) is restricted only to Allah (SwT) and its knowledge is only with Almighty Allah (SwT)."7

Not Paying Allegiance to the Oppressors by the Imam of the Time (a.s.)

As a justification of the occultation of His Eminence, the Master of the Age (a.s.), it is mentioned that the Imam (a.s.) is in occultation so that he does not have to pay allegiance to any oppressive ruler. Hasan bin Ali bin Fazal has narrated from his father from Imam Reza (a.s.) that he said:

"The Shias, during the absence of the son of the third of us would be like sheep that run towards the pasture but they would not find the pasture."

Then he was asked, "O son of Allah's Messenger (S)! Why is it so?"

He replied, "Because their Imam (a.s.) shall be in occultation."

He asked, "Why?"

He replied, "Because if he rises up with a sword he would be compelled to have the allegiance of others upon his neck."

His Eminence, the Master of the Age (a.s.) has announced that each of his predecessors had the allegiance of the tyrants on his neck but when he reappears he shall not have the allegiance of any tyrant on his neck.8

The above were some of the important causes of the occultation of His Eminence (a.s.), which we have explained. And the fact is that the Almighty Allah (SwT) has kept His Wali and the great reformer in occultation due to the reasons best known to Him alone, which we are not aware of.

- 1. Ghaybah, Shaykh Tusi and Al-Kafi
- 2. Ghaybah, Shaykh Tusi, Pg. 199
- 3. Ad-Dawaatul Islamia, Pg. 199
- 4. Bihar 53, Pg. 7 and Pg. 281
- 5. Al-Burhan fi Alaamaat-i-Aakhiruz Zaman, 1/255
- 6. Bihar, 52/92
- 7. Mukhtasar al-Tohfatul Ithna Ashariya, Pg. 199
- 8. Muntakhabul Athar, Pg. 267

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