



## A Comparative Study of Imāmate of Kitmān of Ibāḍiyya and the Era of Occultation of Imāmiyyah

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### **Abstract**

The issue of Imāmate has been one of the first controversial issues in the history of Islam. In the meantime, the Ibāḍiyya regard the appointment of Imam as one of the obligatory affairs on the Islamic Ummah and there are numerous rational and traditional reasons for the necessity of appointing the Imam. In their view, the Imāmate has four stages: the emergence, the defense, the stage of Ash-Shurāh and Kitmān, which are referred to as the methods of religion. In Shiite culture, the term Imāmate is also a divine and godly position that encompasses all human virtues and perfections, including public Imāmate and special Imāmate. From the viewpoint of Ibāḍiyya, the last stage of Imāmate is the Imāmate of Kitmān. During this period, the Ibāḍiyya, because of the domination of their enemies and the inability to confront them, did not carry out armed operations, but fully accepted the rule of enemies, building and cultivating their lands in the field of education and development and strengthening mosque bases and promoting Ibāḍiyya ideas among Muslims secretly. Among the Shiites, it is well known that preserving the life of Imam Zaman from the enemies and the unwillingness of society to accept Imam are among the reasons for his Occultation. But during the period of Occultation, Shiite scholars and thinkers have not ceased to work in various individual and social dimensions and have led the Shiite community to the right. In this article, in addition to processing the views of the Ibāḍiyya, this article compares the stage of Kitmān in the Ibāḍiyya to the absenteeism in the Imāmiyyah religion and explains its differences.

**Keywords:** *Ibāḍiyya; Imāmiyyah; Imāmate; Kitmān; Occultation*

### **Introduction**

The Ibāḍi or Ibāḍiyya religion is attributed to Abdullah ibn Ibāḍ Tamimi and is one of the oldest religious cults among Muslims. Although compared to the majority of Muslims (Sunnis and Shiites), this

cult is a small group but it is historically and religiously important. Believers of this cult live in Oman, Zanzibar and North Africa. Famous historians believe that Ibāḍiyya is attributed to Abdullah ibn Ibād from the Tamim tribe.

In this essay, we are studying one of the theological issues that has been contested by religions, namely the successor of the Messenger of God. Since knowing the Imam and the Leader in every age is essential for Muslims, different religions have come to know the characteristics of the Imam and the Caliph of the Muslims. Although there are many disagreements in this regard among Muslims in all religions, but because of the verses of the Qur'an and the authentic traditions, most cults have no doubt in its essence, so the issue of Imāmate is one of the oldest discussions of Islamic theology that is still discussed and disputed among different Islamic religions.

The Imāmiyyah believe that the successor of the Prophet of Islam must be from Bani Hashim (Quraysh), but unlike most Islamic religions, Ibāḍiyya do not even consider it to be from Quraysh. Unlike the Imāmiyyah, who regard the election of successor of Prophet (PBUH) on behalf of the God Almighty, Ibāḍiyya has delegated this task to the Council and Election to be solved.

Kitmān is one of the stages of Imāmate in Ibāḍiyya which is very similar to the discussion of Occultation in Imāmiyyah. Therefore, in this study, we will analyze the Kitmān stage in Ibāḍiyya and compare it with Imam Mahdi's (AS) Occultation in Imāmiyyah with a theological and historical perspective.

### **Imāmate of Kitmān**

Kitmān is the most important and the fourth stage of Imāmate in Ibāḍiyya, while at the same time it is the lowest degree of jihad in the age of lack of emergence Imāmate in which Muslims are weak and unable to fight the oppressors, and the denial of the denied is only possible in the heart. The nation has accepted the existing reality and submitted to the oppressors. There is no way to rebel against the government, and those who are zealous for religion have to disguise their plans and have to separate themselves from the corrupt society. They direct their activities to internal affairs and thus enter the stage of Imāmate of Kitmān. This is a program designed for the Ibāḍiyya government to enter this phase unintentionally if there are insufficient conditions for the Imāmate of emergence stage.

The stage of Kitmān is characterized by good organization and based on rigorous principles and teachings that demonstrate the ability of the Ibāḍiyya to organize rationally, realistically, with moderation in thinking, in issuing rulings and in establishing principles. This stage indicates the political maturity of the Ibāḍiyya. Kitmān does not mean silence and inaction, but it is the stage of preparation for obtaining the power (Jahlān, 1411 AH).

Some Ibāḍiyya writers refer to this stage as the pre-emigration period of the Prophet (PBUH) (Harithī, 1991). Attafayyesh also puts forward this theory, saying:

"The Kitmān is similar to state of the Prophet of God before Hijra and similar to that of Muslims in the apocalypse. This stage is to prevent Muslims from being hit. Some have said this is something that has been added to the Qur'an and the Sunnah and they do not accept it, and some have considered the ban to be disbelief. Some have even considered all the commandments of the emergence stage to be permissible for this stage. Kitmān refers to the stage when Muslims are tortured for the religion of God or forbidden and tortured for divine religion. This stage does not reach the extent of the Imāmate stage, which according to this principle are in Kitmān and the other statements stated are incorrect." (Attafayyesh, 1406 AH, p. 50)

As explained above, it has become clear that Kitmān is one of the four stages in which the Ibāḍiyya invitations can be exist and that the Imāmate should not be explicit and independent.

In spite of the stage of Ash-Shurāh where the Taqiya was not permitted according to the famous narration, the approach of Ibāḍiyya in this stage is Taqiya and avoid any political or doubtful affairs but secretly organize their own religious and secular affairs. The performance of the Ibāḍiyya Muslims in this period is not different from the previous periods and merely have Taqiya in expressing the beliefs that are in the best state in this period (An-Nāmī, 2001). It is also permissible for Taqiya in their beliefs to prevent their being killed, because this is achieved when the Ibāḍiyya become very weak and have little power and do not have the ability to confront the enemy or defend themselves against them which will inevitably succumb against the rule of the cruel governments and they will abandon the corrupt communities.

According to the Ibāḍiyya, the Kitmān stage does not mean silence and non-movement, but rather the elimination of domination and the way to reach the emergence stage (Ṭālib Hāshim, nd). However, the fact is that the Ibāḍiyya in the contemporary era do not intend to re-emerge because the current situation is different from the first centuries of the Prophet's migration and the existence of an Islamic authority in the affairs of the country prevents Ibāḍiyya to enter the political field.

Confirmation of this statement can be cited by Ali Yaḥyā Mu'ammār who has said: since the end of the third century AH, it has not been observed that the Ibāḍiyya, acting in a manner inviting themselves or others to gain power or assisting a particular group in order to gain government.

In any case, the Ibāḍiyya believe that an Imam should be appointed to manage the spiritual and religious affairs of the Ibāḍiyya, and that his invitation should not be made public until the conditions for Ibāḍiyya government are met (Yaḥyā Mu'ammār, 1406 AH).

### **Imāmate of Kitmān during the lifetime of the Prophet (PBUH) in Mecca;**

The Ibāḍiyya have obtained the legitimacy of the Kitmān stage from the prophetic course. The course of the Prophet's Kitmān stage dates back to the time he lived in Mecca. There is consensus that the Kitmān stage has been continued in the life of the Prophet (PBUH) and that the only difference between the scholars of Ibāḍiyya is during this period in the time of the Prophet (PBUH).

Abu Ammār Abd al-Kāfi attributed the first three years of the Prophet's mission as the Fitrat of Kitmān, after which the following verse was revealed:

(So shout that thou art commanded and turn thou away from the idolaters) (Hijr/94)

Attafayyesh believes that the period of Kitmān is from the time of the revelation until the companions of prophet became 40 people, namely when Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb publicized his conversion to Islam (Attafayyesh, 1983).

Abu Suleiman Dāvūd ibn Ibrahim Talati has also considered the period of the Kitmān from the beginning of the Prophet's mission to his emigration from Mecca to Medina (An-Nāmī, 2001).

### **All kinds of activities of the Ibāḍiyya at the stage of Kitmān**

At this stage, the major activity of the Ibāḍiyya has two areas:

- 1- Internal organization of society in religious, social, educational and economic fields;
- 2- Ibāḍiyya's foreign relations with other groups and religions;

## 1- Social organization

There is no intrinsic activity of the Ibāḍiyya community at the time of Kitmān, unless it was largely based on the principle of "keeping religion". This principle became the title and purpose of this stage so that the Ibāḍiyya said that anyone who destroys religion is not in the stage of Kitmān (Attafayesh, 1983).

According to Zamam ibn Sa'ib Basri, the student of Jabir ibn Zaid Azudi, in support of religion at the stage of Kitman, has said so:

"What has happened to each of you concealing your own money and wealth, but why not concealing your religion?" (Shamakhi, 2009, p. 82) It is understood that the Ibāḍiyya Muslim must value and preserve his religion more than his wealth.

Despite the protection of religion, the community must be preserved by some organizations like family, council of families and council of cults towards mosques, cities, and the assembly of elders of mosques must be guaranteed in terms of values, customs, traditions and types of authentic heritage and different arts (A'usht, nd).

Many religious institutions are supported by these institutions depending on the tasks assigned to them, such as mosques, clans, schools, institutes, districts and orphanages and are run by a public entity representing the Azzaba system. (Jahlān, 1411 AH).

## 2- Ibāḍiyya's relations with the opposition during the stage of Imāmate of Kitmān

These relationships are not fixed for the Ibāḍiyya at this stage, and are in fact characterized by convergence and synergy in some cases and divergence and incompatibility at other times, which in the second type forces Ibāḍiyya society into isolation and retreat within its own community. To the extent that he rejects all his foreign relations. This fluctuation between the two appears to be largely the result of temporal and spatial conditions, as the Ibāḍiyya are forced to enter the stage of Kitmān in order to protect religion and fear the tyrannical rule of the time. They are only allowed to have fraternal relations with opposition that is free from sedition and that group seeks positive political relations. The first thing that should be done is to seek refuge in secluded places far from the UN contact points and completely forgotten residential areas (Tasihir, nd).

One of the hallmarks of closing the doors at the Kitmān stage is to avoid opposition meetings and not read their books in order to avoid being influenced and absorbed in those groups. Sheikh Abu Rabi' Suleiman ibn Yakhlaf Nafti advised the Ibāḍiyya followers to beware of the people other than yourself. Confirmation of this statement is the curse of Ibāḍiyya's elders on Abi-Ya'qub Yusuf Ibn Khalfoun who read the books and works of Ibāḍiyya's opponents (Derjini, nd).

The Ibāḍiyya may have exaggerated their position at the Kitmān stage for fear of falling into sin, but this happened in a period of history that was influenced by severe anger and sectarianism. At a time when sectarian strife was to the extent that isolation was the best solution, it led to important events such as the leisure of religious scholars to study, compose and compile books in hideouts and valleys. They were secretly seeking to gain knowledge, and therefore the scientific movement was not interrupted at the Kitmān stage (Jahlān, 1411 AH).

Mohammed Sheikh Balhaj said about the efforts of Ibāḍiyya in those particular circumstances:

"In spite of these difficult and painful conditions, the scientific and jurisprudential movement has concluded that while being secretive and hidden, it must continue its course with difficulty and effort and never consider the door of ijtiḥad to be closed in Ibāḍiyya. It should also be noted that this secrecy was cruelly imposed on them, and the Ibāḍiyya were never satisfied with their conditions." (Balhaj, nd, p. 27)

While the position of the Ibāḍiyya with the opposition may change with the changing circumstances, these relations have always improved. This is done with the calm of the community atmosphere, without conflict, with the agreement and respect for each other's opinions and the exchange of ideas and thoughts. Sheikh Ali Yahyā Mu'ammār calls for closer understanding and unity with the enemies of Islam.

"When the existing government is unjust, Muslims must listen to it and follow it in the issues that are not the disobedience to God. They must fight alongside the enemies of Islam and provide them with the war necessities and help the government maintain security and carry out public projects." (Yahyā Mu'ammār, 1406 AH, p. 29).

## Supreme board of Azzaba

### History and Position of Supreme board of Azzaba

The word "Azzaba" is the plural of "Azzab" with a /æ/ sound meaning a person who has been cut off from his people and devoted all his life to religion (ElBaradei, nd). In a word, Azzaba means abandonment, living alone, being a dervish life, waking, being cut off and living in the mountains. It can be said that one deviates from the pleasures of life, works of life and family, and devotes most of his time to the pleasure of God, which is to serve the Ibāḍiyya Muslims, and demands the payment of his hard work from God.

Individuals affiliated with the Azzaba group called by this name and accepted the responsibility for education in the Ibāḍiyya social religious system. In the definition of this ring, Derjini says:

"This group (ring) of Azzaba, is a name which includes the Sheikh and his disciples to whom he teach science and show the right path and by what God has revealed to him to the extent of their capacity, he gives religious insight and they are intertwined like a ring, though they seem to be dispersed. (Derjini, nd, p. 4)

What is certain is that the ring of Azzaba is a limited delegation and, according to certain criteria, has complete domination over all issues and conditions of Ibāḍiyya, including religious, social, political and cultural issues. The person at the head of this important delegation is the symbol of the Imam's sovereignty and the execution of all their duties, except for the execution of the Divine Verdicts which is closed at the "stage of Kitmān" (Khalifāte, 1423 AH).

The date of the establishment of the Azzaba system dates back to the early fifth century AH by Sheikh Abi Abdullah Muhammad Ben Bakr (Shamakhi, 2009). When he and his disciples settled in Tinsley<sup>1</sup> town in Tessie Cave<sup>2</sup>. Sheikh Abi Abdullah began to build the ring system in 409 AH. The Sheikh transferred his disciples to the River Valley by completing his organization and enacting his laws and customs and thus entered the Azzaba system into the valley and it is still essential today (Derjini, nd).

Ibāḍiyya's sources indicate that the system of Azzaba during the Kitmān stage also had political, social, and religious activities. The Assembly of Azzaba also had the authority to overthrow the rulers and oust them. In this regard, Sheikh Abu Suleiman Tallati has said: We are a group of Azzaba who do not have the right to rule and overthrow their rulers at this time. (Shamakhi, 2009)

Sheikh Ali Yahyā Mu'ammār says about Sheikh Abu Suleiman:

"This statement implies that the authority of the rulers and their dismissal was considered to be some of acts of Azzaba, but at that time this authority was denied to them" (Jahlan, 1411 AH, p. 164).

<sup>1</sup> It is also called Tansli, and its current name is A'mar, which is located near the Wadi Arigh.

<sup>2</sup> It is also called Tis'amāy dated to 409 AH; Derjini, Classes, v. 1, p. 170; quoted by Jahlan, previous, p. 169.

Some Ibāḍiyya scholars, of course, find it unlikely that political affairs are possible in the Azzaba system, since Azzaba is similar to the religious and social system that took place only in the Kitmān period when there was no political domination for the Ibāḍiyya and the reality of society is imposed on them. Therefore, they are not allowed to interfere in political affairs at all, so how can they be able to run and dismiss the rulers (Abd al-Kafi, nd).

According to the famous Ibāḍiyya, the means and conditions of Azzaba was created since late third century, namely the time of the fall of the Rustamid dynasty in Tiaret in 296 AH and the failure of the uprising of Abu Khizr Yaghli ibn Zaltaf, and ultimately the defeat of him and his followers in 358 AH by the Fatimid of Egypt. Sometime later, Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Bikr Farasthyi Nofusi, who was a great thinker of Ibāḍiyya, succeeded in establishing the "system of Azzaba" in the same cave as mentioned and where he and his disciples lived (An-Nāmī, 2001).

### **The status and conditions of the members of the supreme board of Azzaba**

The supreme board of Azzaba often consists of 12 members for each of its specific duties, and the number of members may exceed the religious and social need. There are many membership terms, the most important of which is the comprehensive service of the member to his religion and followers. The member must be hafiz of the Holy Quran and be ascetic to the world and its pleasures. Once this person is found out, he will still be monitored for his behavior (Khalifat, 1423 AH).

- 1- Sheikh of Azzaba: At the head of the delegation of Azzaba is "Sheikh of Azzaba". This person needs to be the most scientist person of his own society and possess good qualities such as intellect, piety and so on in order to overcome the existing problems and future problems. In addition to managing the group, this Sheikh is also the guardian of the preaching and guidance and propaganda of the affairs of Azzaba. He is regarded as the righteous Imam of the Ibāḍiyya community whose position is for the rest of his life (Khalifat, 1423 AH).
- 2- Deputy of Sheikh: Because the duties of the Sheikh are very important, the Sheikh can choose another person to take over the affairs of the Azzaba, and that person will perform part of the Sheikh's duties as "Vice-President".
- 3- Counselors: In the next stage there are four "Counselors" whose votes are binding on Sheikh Azzaba and all opinions will be certain with their success.
- 4- Imam al-jamā'a: Another member is the "Imam al-jamā'a" who performs the congregational prayer. He may declare an individual's acquittal or pardon him if the Sheikh is absent.
- 5- Mu'azzin: The guardian of the announcement of the time of prayer is considered a member of the delegation.
- 6- Endowment Attorneys: They are the people who oversee the reform, growth of endowments, and the recording of imports and exports.
- 7- Teachers: In the supreme board of Azzaba, the "teachers" consisting of three persons, more or less, are required to regulate all education and training programs.
8. Other Members: The other five members also carry out various social duties such as inheritance, rights of the dead and so on.

### Conditions to enter the supreme board of Azzaba

Due to the very difficult conditions to enter the supreme board of Azzaba, only a few can reach it. The terms to enter this delegation are as follows:

1. Being the Hafiz of the holy Quran ;
2. Ethical approval and good behavior by individual's professors and preservation of 'official clothing'<sup>3</sup> of Azzaba after entering the ring;
3. Having high scientifically approved degree;
4. Skilled literate ;
5. Eager to read and pursue education;
- 6 Refusing the world and its occupations and avoiding interfering with people and anything that insult his glory and personality. Some sources have also explicitly stated the non-permissibility of wages and salaries (al-Maktabah al-Shamilah, 1438 AH).

If he has these conditions, it is necessary to bathe the body in water and wash the chest with water and sidr, which is a manifestation of outer and inner purity (Jahlān, 1411 AH).

### The duties of the supreme board of Azzaba during the Imāmate of Kitmān

At the Kitmān stage, the Azzaba system has four important tasks:

#### 1- Religious tasks;

These duties are for individuals consisting of the Imam, the Judge, the Endowment Watcher and the breadwinner of the dead. Its members are responsible for Shar'ī and religious affairs of the Ibāḍiyya and issuing the fatwas, appointing imams in the mosques and overseeing the mosques' endowments and their incomes, and religious education for children, bathing, burying people, sermons, and preaching and guiding people in their normal lives.

#### 2; social tasks;

This delegation should help people in marriage and divorce and determining their *mahriyeh* and religious relations, bathing and prayers on orphanages and inheritance and dealing with orphaned children and women and paying attention to the ethical issues of youth to prevent them from deviating and as a whole monitoring the general social affairs of the people. In addition to the aforementioned matters, the supreme board of Azzaba has the task of approving the judge in a scientific and legal capacity. Of course, the appointment of a judge is up to a higher parliament called the "Ami Said" House, where representatives of the House of Azzaba participate from different districts.

#### 3 - Educational tasks ;

According to the basic philosophy of forming a system of Azzaba, which is to educate people from child and teenager to adult based on religious teachings, the system of Azzaba should provide the ground for teaching the Holy Quran and its sciences and Arabic language and Islamic law to children and adolescents and in general teach those who are interested in Islam.

#### 4. Economic tasks;

<sup>3</sup> The official clothing of Azzaba is white, but it is more perfect if they wear a white shirt. The turban is also okay and sufficient. (Derjini, nd)

The members of this system must fulfill all the duties of the Ministries of Development and Economy. Therefore, it is their duty to take care of roads and dams and to monitor the quality of buildings to protect the individual and social rights of the people.

It is noteworthy that the members of this delegation carry out all the duties of the Imāmate of Kitmān and have direct control over all religious, social, moral and educational affairs of the people. Therefore, the Azzaba Assembly rises to perform the duties of Imam of Kitmān at a time when there is no Imāmate of Kitmān and the people are incapable of appointing such Imam. There is only one difference between the two that is enforced in the Imāmate of Kitmān, but some verdicts are not enforced in the system of Azzaba, verdicts such as the punishment of drinking wine, adultery, etc., and it has been known not to incite political rule against the activities of this group, as it is usually Political rulers perform such duties and do not allow their opponents to have an independent system of law practice (Nasser, 1993).

### **Institutions and corporations that support the system of Azzaba**

There are some institutions in the Ibādiyya structure that are socially inferior to the Azzaba system and cooperate with this supreme board. These affiliated institutions are:

#### **1. Tribal system and its duties;**

The tribe is a family group that has a kinship relationship and their ancestors are the same. But the bond of Islamic brotherhood and the spirit of cooperation, synergy and love for God makes it possible to establish relationships with other tribes, acquaintances, social relationships, cooperation for good deeds and for the satisfaction of God. These relationships are such that they destroy family and kinship relations and ignorance prejudices.

The tribesmen in the land of M'zab had a strong system based on the principles of Shari'ah and proper Islamic orders, and the authorities of the Islamic community was in the fields of peace, security and prosperity. Due to this social cohesion, there were no manifestations of poverty, begging and homelessness, and class distances were reduced and different groups in society were at one level. The tribal system enables the common practice of society to harmonize patterns of social behavior in people's daily lives and to regulate people's customs on occasion; for example, the increase in the price of mahriyeh is no longer in the community and families can easily expand the Islamic family at minimal expense through easy marriage.

The tribe is elected under the supervision of the Administrative Council, elected from among the tribes. The council elects the head of the tribe from among its members.

#### **2- Security men (Makārīs);**

This group is called the Board of Commons, or Makārīs, made up of a group of brave, strong, intelligent men. Perhaps the descendants of the Katātīb and the Ismaturdan (Amsurdan) are the core of the Makārīs group.

This group is the watchful eye that ensures the safety of the community and represents the executive branch of society (Qureshi, 2004).

They include guarding, defense, rescue, firefighting, visitor guidance, safeguarding public safety and ethics, overseeing public works, drainage and flooding activities, drilling wells, organizing waterways and canals, water distribution as well as calculating and carrying out voluntary work.



### 3- Manzamat at-Tullāb (Irawān);

This is an organization formed by the Qur'anic Hafiz scholars. They are the scouts and the closest to the Supreme Board of Azzaba, who help them in some important matters, and in the future, the members of Azzaba are chosen from among them. Irawān also literally refers to those who were trained in Quranic sciences and teachings (Umar Bayud, 1989).

### 4- Qāsilāt (Tasardīn);

This group belongs to the women of the Azzaba system and has been operating in the Women's Center since the ninth century AH. They look at the educational and social aspects of women's society and issues related to weddings and funerals and do things like washing the dead women and children. Qāsilāt's name also derives from this task (Umar Bayud, 1989).

## The various stages of the Imāmate of Kitmān

Another point to consider in the Imāmate of Kitmān stage is the division of the Kitmān stage into two modes:

**1- Hard or secret Kitmān;** the stage of concealment, a cover with wandering and extreme isolation that resembles a stillness; such as Imam Jabir ibn Zayd, Abu Ubaydah Muslim in Iraq, and Abu Rabi Suleiman ibn Yakhlaf. This is what happened in Aljarid in the contemporary era, which was very difficult for them.

**2. Moderate or apparent Kitmān;** This stage is also called Kitmān stage in which the Ibāḍiyya enjoy freedom of speech and operate internationally but are unable to create an independent state for themselves and are reluctant to do so. An example of this age is the situation of Ibāḍiyya in northern Africa after the fall of the Rustamid dynasty.

In both cases mentioned, the Ibāḍiyya Muslims call the Imam of Kitmān as the Imam of the Muslims or the Imam of the group or the Imam of research, as Abdullah bin Ibāḍ was originally called in these titles at the beginning of the Ibāḍiyya religion (Shamakhi, 2009).

However, this Imāmate has no political dimension. At the stage of Kitmān, the Imam is the head of state who serves Muslims in the Ibāḍiyya democracy community (Lewicki, nd).

This government is responsible for the internal affairs and social organizations of the Ibāḍiyya. The government, which consists of a council of the best sheikhs, among whom a leader is chosen who has the important task of Imāmate of Kitmān. Examples of this organization include the Assembly of Sheikhs during the time of Imam Jabir ibn Zayd and Abi 'Ubaydah Muslim ibn Abi Karimah, and then Rabi' ibn Habib, which originated in the East. In the Maghreb, one can refer to the Assembly of Sheikhs in the time of Ya'qub ibn Sahlun in the fourth century AH, or in the era of Abi Noah Saeed ibn Zanghil and Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Bakr in the fifth century.

In recent years, the assemblies of Azzaba, which had lesser activity and had been formed by Ibāḍiyya in North Africa, were halted. Just the thing related to the land of M'zab in southern Algeria was not halted, where its parliament carried out its religious and social duties and organized the Ibāḍiyya's activity in the conquest phase (Ja'biri, Beta).

## Matching the Kitmān stage with the Imāmiyyah beliefs

Examining the Kitmān stage from Ibāḍiyya's point of view, we study this period in the Imāmiyyah religion and answer the question whether there is a similarity between the course of Imāmate

either in the presence of Imam or during the absence of the Imam or the period of the Imāmate of Kitmān of Ibādiyya?

In some periods of the life of the Imams there has also been a state of Kitmān and Taqiya to preserve the lives of Muslims and even to safeguard the principle of Islam and its teachings from the dangers of the caliphs. Here are some of these:

### **1- The era of the isolation of the Amir al-Mu'minin (AS)**

Amir al-Mu'minin (AS) was in isolation for 25 years and remained silent to preserve the base of divine religion and secretly trained the talented souls. The martyrdom of his wife, who was the sole daughter of the Prophet of Islam within 75 or 95 days after the martyrdom of the Prophet of Islam and the secrecy of his tomb to this day, is a clear document for the authenticity of the true caliph and the imam after the Prophet who had to endure the imposed conditions and not to complain.

If we want to have a proper analysis of the his silence time, we have to say that silence was imposed on him because of the ignorance of the people to the status of Amir al-Mu'minin (AS) and his right, because he was not a person who wanted to leave the affairs of the Muslims and willingly have a state like Kitmān.

Imam Ali (AS) did not interfere in the political affairs of the society during the caliphate, but was involved in the issues that would damage the Islamic community. The word of the second caliph, who said: if Ali did not exist, Umar would have perished (Rāzī, 1411 AH), indicating this fact.

### **2- Peace period of Imam Hassan Mujtabā (AS) with Mu'āwiya**

During the golden age of Imam Hassan Mujtabā's life, with the poisonous conditions that came into Islamic society by Mu'āwiya, his companions was dispersed, and bought by Mu'āwiya, so Imam Hassan (AS) had no choice but to accept a conditional peace with Mu'āwiya that resembled that of the Ibādiyya's retreatment and entering the stage of Kitmān.

Factors such as the weakness of the people in support of their Imam were not unhelpful in this decision. Imam Hassan (AS) said: I saw the desire of most people in peace and dissatisfaction with the war and I do not want to force them to do what they don't want. (Dīnawarī, 1371 AH).

Imam Hassan (AS) also said elsewhere:

"Swear by God! I made a peace to him because I had no help. If I had a helper I would fight Mu'āwiya day and night so that God would rule between me and him." (Majlisī, nd, p. 147)

Another proof of the Imam's acceptance of peace has been the preservation of the lives of Shiites. The Imam said about the reason for accepting peace: "When I saw that you do not have enough power, I gave up the job so that you and I would stay." In other words, Imam Hassan (AS) clearly meant that he means to preserve the Shiites. In a speech, he described his action as making a hole in the ship with the Prophet Moses (PBUH) whose purpose was to preserve the ship for its owners. (Majlisī, nd)

Imam Hassan (AS), with his deep insight, was well aware that Mu'āwiya, with the rightness, and with his vast uninformed army, could suppress the limited movement of Iraq and suppress prominent Alawite and Shiite individuals under the pretext of killing 'Uthman (Ja'farian, 1381).

Imam Hussein (AS) for the same reasons mentioned, was loyal to his brother's peace and did not act until Mu'āwiya's death.

### **3- The Era of Imam Sajjad (AS)**

After the Karbala incident, the society was in serious distortion, with the spirit of welfare and worldliness prevailing in the Muslim community, and moral, political, and social corruption prevailed.

Politically, there were no little chance that Imam Sajjad (AS) could guide the people towards good and unity against the cruelty of Banī Umayyad.

Imam Sajjad (AS) at this time used the best weapon he could use, namely, prayer, to express some of the original divine beliefs, and created another impetus in the Islamic community to motivate the knowing people who like servitude to God.

He also expressed many insightful political concepts through aesthetic words in order to familiarize the Muslim community with his views in the form of pure liturgy with the Almighty God. Among the prayers of the Prophet (PBUH), *ṣalawāt* on Prophet Muhammad and his family, is the most repeated one so as not to forget the name of Ahl al-Bayt in the minds of the people.

Imam Sajjad (AS) explained the concept of Imāmate to the people in the form of the same prayers and showed that in addition to being entitled to superiority for the caliphate and leadership, divine aspects of infallibility and the benefit of the prophetic sciences of Islam were at its highest level for the infallible Imam. (Elahi Qomshe'i, nd).

His special attention to the special place of the Prophet's family was also revealed in his stirring sermon in the presence of Yazīd and made his wicked face scandalous to the people (Majlesi, nd).

These were examples of the actions of the fourth Shia Imam during the reign of Banī Umayyad; even the 33-year-old Imam's cry after the disaster of Ashura, in addition to the emotional aspect of the story, became a scandal for Yazīd and his followers.

#### **4- The Era of Imam Bāqir and Imam Sadiq (AS)**

The era of Imam Bāqir and Imam Sadiq (AS) was also a unique era and many events took place in Islamic society. People's separation from the truth of jurisprudence and the sciences of Ahl al-Bayt on the one hand, and the emergence of multiple religions on the other hand, and the conflict of Banī Umayyad with Banī Abbas and the power struggle over the Islamic caliphate, further incited events that exacerbated the responsibility of these two prominent personalities of Islamic society. On the one hand, they had to deal with the deviant ideas that emerged in society, and on the other hand, to educate students in Islamic jurisprudence and other necessary sciences so that the scientific vacuum of society would not erode the beliefs of the people, that is, whatever the Ibādiyya stated during the Imāmate of Kitmān, was quite evident in the behavior of these two noble Imams that despite the oppressive atmosphere, they were able to keep the truth of Islam from harm of events and to fulfill their mission.

Imam Bāqir (PBUH) invited the people to use the science of Ahl al-Bayt and considered the only true hadith for them. In a narrative, Salama ibn Kohail and Hakam ibn Ayyinah said:

"If you go to the East and the West, you will never find the right knowledge, unless the thing issued from us". (Kulayni, 1390 HS, p. 399)

Fighting Jewish and Israeli thinking in Imam Baqir's era was another important point that influenced people's beliefs and Imam denied the false traditions that had been created in order not to tarnish the image of divine prophets. (Rouhani, nd) There was also a fight against Isra'iliyyat in Imam Reza's life (Fayz Kashani, 1373 HS).

In spite of all these efforts, he could not communicate with his Shiites and followers, and only during the Hajj, the Shiites could meet the Imam, usually in Mecca or on the return of the pilgrims, who pass through Medina. Even the Iraqi people were forbidden to go to Medina to meet him (Ibn Asākir, 1404 AH).

Imam Bāqir (AS) stated at that time that Taqiya was one of the most important shields of Shia, in which one can protect oneself from the dark era of Umayyad and Abbāsi tyranny, and said: "Taqiya is

part of my religion and the religion of my fathers, and anyone who does not have Taqiya does not believe in God." (Kulayni, 1390 HS, p. 219)

Imam Sadiq's era also continued with this severe repression, and only in the third decade of the second century AH there was relative freedom, although at the same time his and Shiites' activities were under tight control. At the end of the Umayyad era in 132 AH, with the coming of Mansour Abbāsi, there was the strongest pressure on the Shiites that the Imam was forced to use Taqiya and ordered his Shiites and his special followers, such as Aban Ibn Taqlab, to use Taqiya and express the words of the opposition. (Hur Āmulī, 1416 AH).

Imam (AS) said to Mu'allā b. Khunays:

"Yā Mu'allā! Hide our secrets and don't tell it to everyone. God bless the one who hides our secrets and does not reveal them to the world" (Kulayni, 1390 HS, p. 566).

Imam Sadiq's era had been such that Mansour had placed some spies on Medina to identify Shiites affiliated with the Imam (AS) in order to cut their head for being "Rāfiḍī" (Majlisī, nd).

According to Imam, military intervention against the sovereignty, without providing the necessary preparations, including cultural measures, had no result but defeat and destruction, and the Imam always emphasized this issue and mentioned the problem to those who sought to revolt. The uprisings that took place without the Imam's consent had no result except Banī Abbas's abuses at that time, an example of which was the slogan "Satisfaction of Al Muhammad", which led to unpleasant consequences. The rejection of Imam (AS) against Abu Muslim Khorāsānī indicates the depth of Imam Sadiq's great insight that has been preserved in history, where Imam (AS) said to him: "You are not my follower and this is not my time." (Haidar, 1422 AH)

These were just examples of the style and context of the behavior of two noble Imams dealing with the conditions of the time, which had to take on a state of Kitmān or Taqiya, so the base of divine religion should be protected and the lives and beliefs of the Muslims would not be endangered, and against sovereignty, he would establish his Imāmate on society, which is both a policy and a fight against the government.

## 5- The Era of other Imams until the Great Occultation of Imam Zamān (AS)

The same situation continued after Imam Sadiq (AS), and even in the era of Imam Kāzīm (AS) these pressures were increased on the Shiites and the Imam himself. Aaron Abbāsi's caliphate is one of the worst times of Imam Kāzīm's life. Shiite and Alawite protest movements against the Abbāsi caliphs, one of which is the most notable uprising of Hussein ibn Ali ibn Hussein (AS), which took place during Hadi Abbāsi's rule.

The era of Imam Reza (AS) with the acceptance of the succession of Ma'mūn Abbasi, represents another method of Kitmān and Taqiya of the Imam that in the pressure and suppression of Ma'mūn, the Imam was able to convey pure Shiite teachings to the elders and scholars of different religions and and show the glory of the school of Ahl al-Bayt.

The severe oppression of Abbasid on the Islamic community continued during the era of Imam Jawād, and Ma'mūn had heavily monitored Imam by imposing his daughter to Imam Jawād for marriage, who was eventually poisoned and martyred by his wife at a young age.

Imam Hadi's era also coincided with the caliphate of Mutawakkil Abbāsi, who imposed a great deal of oppression on him and put him under extreme control and with the exile of Imam to the city of Samarra, he displayed the top of this oppression and domination and finally with many oppressions, such as calling the Imam to the wine assembly and numerous attacks on his home, martyred the Imam.

The same persecution and torture continued during the era of Imam Hassan Askari (AS), imprisoning or controlling him for many years in military areas, the purpose of which was to know when his son will be born, because a promise had been given by God about his rule for killing and preventing divine promise. The Divine Promise was fulfilled in the middle of Sha'ban in 255 AH, and Narjis Khaton secretly gave birth to his child in strict security to keep him safe.

With the martyrdom of Imam Hassan Askari in 260 AH, another phase of the Kitmān of Imāmate began in the Ahl al-Beit dynasty, and with the Imāmate of the last Divine Reserve, the Minor Occultation of Imam Zaman in his paternal home began in Occultation Crypt to keep him safe from the evil of the enemies. The Imam was associated with the people during this period by the Four Deputies.

In the year 329 AH, and at the end of the period of the Minor Occultation of Imam, due to the command of God, the period of his Major Occultation was began, which continues to this day and during this period, the jurists of the Islamic community will be in charge of Shia affairs. It may be said that the separation of his Occultation into two periods of Minor Occultation and then the Major Occultation was due to the fact that the Imam's appearance was likely to be prepared among the people, and since this preparation was not available, the era of Major Occultation was began.

Preserving the life of Imam Zaman (AS) from enemies and Taqiya is one of the reasons for the Occultation of the Imam (AS). However, during his Occultation, he assisted the Shiites, and the Shia scholars did not abandon the scientific, educational, cultural, social, political and economic efforts and lead the Shiite community to the truth until the emergence of the Imam and to promote the spread of universal justice.

### ***Conclusion***

What was said was a comparison between the theological foundations of the Ibāḍiyya and the Imāmiyyah in the important issue of Imāmate and one of its stages. Among the theological religions, Ibāḍiyya is the only religion that has opened a special case on the issue of Imāmate and has tried to portray the four stages of the Islamic society and the duties of the rulers of the Islamic community in the context of the above mentioned conditions.

The path taken by the Imams of Imāmiyyah has been the complementary of each other's duties during the Imāmate period. Due to their infinite humanity and perfection, the Shiite Imams of the Ummah have opened a path to humanity that is infinite and passes humanity through dangerous paths in the face of oppressors and arrogant people. But in the religion of Ibāḍiyya, the leadership of the perfect and infallible human being at the head of human society has been ignored or even not attempted to address this issue and somehow have sought to fill this vacuum by expressing the various stages of the Imāmate. Therefore, Ibāḍiyya has not seriously addressed the issue of Mahdism, while the Imāmiyyah religion has considered the era of the infallible Imam to be a golden age and has a coherent plan for his Occultation that the jurisprudents of the Shari'ah passes the same route and undertake the leadership of Islamic community. Even if it is possible with the formation of Islamic society and divine government, fulfill the God's commands in the society, although it is believed that a full and just and divine government will be formed only with the presence of the infallible Imam, but this thinking, does not stop us from trying to spread justice and behavior based on the consent of God. At the stage of the Imāmate of Kitmān, the religion of Ibāḍiyya has a new and prominent organization and structure that makes it possible from its best to the worst.

Kitmān is one of the stages of Imāmate in Ibāḍiyya that is very similar to the discussion of the Occultation in Imāmiyyah and even in the presence of some Shiite imams who did not have the opportunity and the conditions to form a state of justice, some of which are in the form of behavioral and verbal Taqiya or ... Given the way the forces were organized, the customary management of society, and

its intellectual and cultural nourishment at the stage of the Imāmate of Kitmān, and a detailed study on this issue can take a new step in the approximation of religions, especially the two religions of Imāmiyyah and Ibāḍiyya.

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