

THE POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE SHIA-SUNNI DIVIDE IN AL-ANDALUS

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Abstract: The Al-Andalus region, situated at the westernmost frontier of Muslim lands, held a profound allure for various Islamic sects and groups. Among them, Shiites sought to exert their influence and disseminate their ideological tenets among the inhabitants of Al-Andalus. Their endeavors found manifestation in several notable uprisings, one of which was the rebellion led by "Shaghia Ben Abdolvahed Moknasi" against the Umayyad ruler, "Abdolahman Omavi" (755-788), a protracted struggle that unfolded from 768 to 777 and posed significant challenges to the Umayyad monarchy. Ultimately, the movement was quelled through the assassination of its leader, "Moknasi" (Abdolahman, 1989: 101).

The widespread presence of Alevism and Ahlul Bayt advocacy groups in select cities within Al-Andalus attests to the Shiite's concerted efforts to infiltrate the political landscape of the region. Alevi families carved out distinct neighborhoods, known as Al-Hashimi, reflecting their allegiance to the Shiite cause. The nomenclature of these neighborhoods pays homage to "Hashem Ben Ebrahim Ben Jafar," a descendant of "Imam Jafar Sadegh," who ventured to Al-Andalus and settled in the "Lobleh" area (Azari, 1983: 56-57).

The Shiite aspiration to establish a firm presence and wield influence in Al-Andalus was fraught with numerous obstacles and challenges. While they did achieve some measure of success at certain points in time, these accomplishments paled in comparison to their counterparts in the eastern territories of Iraq and Iran. The failure of the Shiite movement in Al-Andalus can be attributed to a myriad of factors, with this research specifically delving into the political determinants of this outcome. As succinctly stated by Michael Stanford, "When asked about the cause or causes, there is usually no need for an exhaustive enumeration of all contributing factors. Instead, we focus on those that are most pertinent and beneficial for our analysis" (Stanford, 2005: 319).

Keywords: Al-Andalus, Shiites, Uprising, Alevism, Political Factors

Introduction

Al-Andalus region as the most western Muslim lands was attractive to all groups and Islamic sects. Therefore, Shiites attempted to influence and spread their ideas among the inhabitants of Al-Andalus. Some of these efforts have emerged in the uprising. For example, uprising of "Shaghia Ben Abdolvahed Moknasi" against "Abdolahman Omavi" (755-788) continued from 768 to 777 and created many problems for the Umayyad king of Al-Andalus. This movement finally was suppressed by the assassination of "Moknasi". (Abdolahman, 1989 :101) The widespread presence of Alevism and Ahlul Bayt advocacy groups in some cities, indicates activity from the Shiites to enter politics in Al-Andalus. Due to the presence of Alevism families, they had certain areas in some cities. Their houses were known Al-Hashimi. The name derives from the name of a descendant of "Imam Jafar Sadegh" Named "Hashem Ben Ebrahim Ben Jafar" who went to Al-Andalus and lived in "Lobleh" area. (Azari, 1983 :56-57)

Shiites for presence and influence in Al-Andalus were faced with many obstacles and problems. They achieved some success in some times. But these successes incomparable with eastern lands such as Iraq and Iran. The failure of Shiites in Al-Andalus has several factors. In this research only we review the political reasons of this

issue. In this regard, Michael Stanford writes: "When asked the cause or causes, usually no need for complete list of all involves causes. we studied only the cause that is important and benefit for us."(Stanford,2005 : 319)

So, the main question is that what are the most important political factors caused the failure of spread of Shiite in Al-Andalus? In response to this question the hypotheses is that "Political factors such as uprising attributed to Shiites and rival Umayyad in Al-Andalus and conflict with Fatimid and Edrissian governments, caused the failure of spread Shiites thought."

1- Shiite Uprisings

Al-Andalus was conquered by the Umayyads. The inhabitants of the land were familiar with Islam by the Umayyads. Due to long-standing hostility with the Shia and Alevis, the Umayyads did a lot of anti-Shia propaganda in Al-Andalus. The establishment of the Umayyads in Al-Andalus intensified the hostility. In fact, the formation of the rule of the Umayyads in Al-Andalus, created obstacles against the spread of Shiite ideology in this region.

The fall of the Umayyads in the East and the massacres and suppression by the Abbasids, Caused hostility of the Umayyads with them. Especially given that Abdul Rahman(755-788), the founder of the Umayyad rule in AlAndalus, after a lot of hard work and suffering that could revive the Umayyad rule in this land, faced with uprisings that some of them were related to Alawites and Shiites. The uprising connection with Alawites and Shiitesand according to the history of their enemies, the Umayyad rulers tried to suppress the uprising and fight the Shia. One of the first movements of Shiite could observed by"Abdullah bin Saad bin Ammar bin Yasir"(760) Who commanded Yemeni in the fight against Abdul Rahman.They fight was like the confrontation of"Ammar Yasir"and "Moavieh" in the Battle of Siffin(658). Finally, "Abdullah bin Saad" was defeated and killed in 761.(Ibn al-Qūṭīya,1996 :52-53)

One of the other uprising against Abdul Rahman was formed by "Alae Ben MoghithJozami"(763).He was supported by the Abbasid Caliph "Al-Mansur", (753-774) but he defeated. (Ibid : 55)The uprising was not supported by Shiites, however since the Alawites were united by the Abbasids and their activities was against Umayyads in the Levant, Caused the Umayyad limited Shiites in Al-Andalus.

Another uprising, in which Shiites are involved, was conducted in the year of 774 by someone called Hussein bin Yahya.His grandfather was Shia and one of the commanders of "Imam Ali". large number of barbarians opposed the Umayyads, joined him. but the uprising defeated and he was killed.(IbnHozm, 1995 :64)

Another Shiite uprising was conducted by "Shaghia Abdul Wahid Meknesi". The uprising was a great danger for the government of "Abdul Rahman" and continued from 768 to 776.He claimed that he is Fatemi. Shaghia uprising was a great danger for Abdul Rahman. He could not defeated Shaghia, therefore, assassinated him, and ended to this crisis. (Ibid :131)

It seems that the Umayyads with three reasons suppression Shiite thought and prevent its spread:

- 1- The uprising that was done by Alawites
- 2- The uprising that was done by Shia
- 3- The danger by the neighboring Shiite government which threatened them.

2- Combat with influence of peripheral Shiite governments

Attempt to confront with Shiite governments and their competitors in the borders was another important factor of the Umayyads in opposition the Shiite. Undoubtedly the establishment of two Alawite's governments in North Africa and their neighborhood with Al-Andalus, Edrissian (788) and then Fatimid (910) and their efforts to influence in Al-Andalus had great impact on enemies and confront the Umayyad with Shiite culture and thought.

The establishment of the Alawite governments and advertise of Shia near the territory of the Umayyad, leads to political confrontation with the Alawite governments and the Umayyad. So, they have to cope with the beliefs of each other. They insulted to predecessors of each other. Edrissian government formation in the Maghreb (Morocco), stimulated the Umayyad government to cope with them. Edrissian did not have the ability to cope with the Umayyad of AlAndalus. But the Umayyad considered them as a threat. Umayyad activities against Edrissian, indicated this point. Eventually, weak governance of Edrissian was overthrown by the Umayyads. (Khatib, 1964 : 220-222)

At the end of the third century AH in North Africa, other political transformation was formed. This issue was the foundation of Fatimid state in 910, on the basis of Shiite ideas. They had claimed leadership of the Islamic world. In contrast of Fatimid government not only the Umayyad Andalusian, but also Abbasid caliphate was also felt threatened. After the Fatimids fixed their power in the Arabian West, started to develop influence and territory in the East and the West. They also began to develop their thoughts in the land of Al-Andalus. Umayyads to confront this danger, suppressed all groups tended to Shia. Even Abdul Nasser Umayyads (912-962) to cope with Fatimids government called himself Amir Almomenin (Commander of the Faithful). He ordered that all religious meetings in Andalus, cursed Shiites. (Ibn Saeed, 1996 :182)

During this period, Anti-Shia and Alawites supported. Many writers and poets with the aim of achieving the interests of the Umayyad palace, Wrote articles and poems against Shias. For example, Abd al-Malik ibn Habib to be happy the Umayyads in his poetry, stimulated them to celebrate the day of Ashura. (Moghri, 1988 :6) Also, Ibn Abdol Rabeh mentioned in the poem "Mu'awiya" as the fourth caliph. He has no mention of "Ali ibn Abi Talib". This poem was the harsh response of the Fatimids. (Zarkali, 1989 :207)

3- Combat with Shia political thoughts

One of the important reasons that prevent the spread of Shiite thoughts in Al-Andalus, was the official religion of "Maliki" by supported of the Umayyads in Al-Andalus. "Maliki" religion with the support of Abdul Rahman (755-782) entered to Al-Andalus. His son "Hisham" (788-796) forced the people to act on the basis of Maliki religion. He ordered, judgments and political issues made on the basis of Maliki. (Ghazi Ayaz, 1965 :155)

Maliki jurists had an important role in the politics and government of Al-Andalus. For example, "Yahya ben YahyaLeisi"known as "the wise of Al-Andalus", have an important position in the Umayyad government. Ibn Rabeh

Says: " *Rulers and people accepted his opinion on political issues.*" (Alzahbi, 1992: 416)

In fact, the alliance was formed between Maliki jurists and the Umayyad.Maliki jurists gave political and religious legitimacy to government and Umayyad supported them. Maliki jurists, accused Shia to deviation of Islam. For example, "Ibn Sahl Alandalusi" divided Shiitesinto two groups and writes: " *A group of radical Shia knows "Ali" like God or the Prophet, they could be excommunicated. Another Shia groupknows "Ali" as Imam(leader of all Muslims)and considerthe position for his children.They know that obedience to Ali is like obedience to God.They are in error.*" (Ibn Sahl,1981 :18)

Umayyads succeeded in prevent the spread of Shia thought.Poets and scientists to win the support of Umayyad using the wrong words against Shiites. for instance "Ibn Rabbeh", denies Caliphate of "Ali", and presented "Mu'awiya" as the fourth caliph. Also, "Abbas Ibn Naseh"to consent of Umayyad ruler Abd-Alrahman, considers him as the heir of justice after the Prophet Muhammad and Othman.(Ibn Bar, 1997 :193)

Conclusion

The early years of the arrival of Muslims in Al-Andalus, Shiite thoughts penetrated in this land. But faced with various obstacles and could not expand. The conquest of Al-Andalus by the Umayyad and their domination on the region, caused expand of anti-Alevi policies in this land. Uprisings tendencies to Alawites or some signs of Shiite thought, at the time of the formation of Umayyad rule. Also the formation of Shi'ite governments (Edrissian and Fatimid) near the borders of Al-Andalus, was the reason that the Umayyad cope with Shiites. As well, entrance of Maliki religious ideas and its connections with Umayyad rule, prevented the spread of the ideas of all non-Maliki Islamic sects, especially Shiites. With a lot of limitations for the Shiites, and prevention of their Religious ceremonies and freedoms, they were forced to emigrate, so their population has decreased in Al-Andalus. Therefore, Political factors, has an effective role in preventing the spread of Shiites ideas and beliefs and Scarcity of Shia Population.

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