

# Causes for the Formation of Zaydi Alawites' Uprisings before the Establishment of Zaydi Government in Tabarestan

Abolghasem Molaei Mahali<sup>1\*</sup> and Ghodrat Beyk Ilchi Beyk<sup>2</sup>

1- PhD Candidate of History, Tajik Academy of Sciences, Republic of Tajikistan

2- Professor of History, Tajik Academy of Sciences, Republic of Tajikistan

*Corresponding author:* Abolghasem Molaei Mahali

**ABSTRACT:** This paper aims to investigate the causes and circumstances of formation of uprisings led by Zaydi Alawite leaders in Islamic lands before the establishment of the Alawite government in Tabarestan. In addition, the underlying factors contributing to the Husseini Zaydists' uprisings in the Umayyad period and the silence of Hassani Zaydists during that time are discussed. Although most of these uprisings were severely suppressed, they set the ground for the formation of semi-independent governments in most Islamic lands and also contributed to the decay of Umayyad and Abbasid. The main factors contributing to these movements were rooted in tribal rivalry and Alawite Family's Claim for caliphate against that of Umayyad and Abbasid's. The excessive expansion of Islamic lands made the caliphs and their families too rich; not only they did not share their wealth with other tribes particularly Alawites, but also humiliated and tortured them and put them under economic pressure and cut their pension to control them. However, Alawites, helped by dissatisfied governors and encouraged by the Kufa's opposition toward the Umayyad government in Damascus, took up a series of extensive struggles in most of the Islamic cities which eventually led to the decay and fall of caliphs. While investigating the Alawites' uprisings, it should be noted that they were not united enough and did not use this opportunity appropriately; some Alawite governors were harshly criticized by their fellows, and this threatened their survival and finally led to their fall.

**Keywords:** Zaydis, uprising, massacre, migration, revenge, pursuit.

## INTRODUCTION

After the assassination of Ali in the mosque of Kufa and Moavieh's deceptions and conspiracies to seize the power and transferring it from Kufa to Damascus, a new era began in the history of Islam. After Yazid's Caliphate and the Ashura event in 61 A.H., more pressure, humiliation, and torture directed to Alawites led to their uprising in several Islamic cities; governors who were not satisfied with Umayyad and Abbasid had a significant role in these uprising; in a sense, these uprisings could be considered as a kind of political payback.

The main factors contributing to Zaydis' uprisings are as follows:

- 1- Suppression, injustice, and humiliation of Alawite families and Umayyad's political agenda against them
- 2- Political rivalry between people of Kufa and Damascus to be the center of caliphate and encouraging the Alawite leaders to legitimization of their uprising
- 3- Support provided by governors dissatisfied with Umayyad's fanatic Arab government who always had a crucial role in Zaydis' movement.
- 4- Expansion of Islamic lands and competing to gain independence, and supporting every anti-Umayyad uprising.
- 5- Alawite leaders' spiritual journey and their proximity to the prophet's family; encouragements provided by opposition groups that convinced Alawites to lead the uprisings and legitimated their rebellions.

- 6- Alawites' dissatisfaction with the Umayyad and the fact that the Umayyad did not share the acquired wealth from the conquered lands with them.
- 7- People's dissatisfaction across Islamic cities with Umayyad and Abbasid's governments

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This is a library research. First references were identified and compared to each other and then they were assessed and evaluated. Temporal and special distance of the references, frequency of the reports, and the authors' attitude were taken into account. The intention was to use those references which were produced by unbiased authors. In the present study, the authors tried to arrange and evaluate the historical records from a scientific and unbiased perspective.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Forming factors of Zaydi uprisings: After Moavieh came to power, and the political power was transferred from Kufa to Sham in 41 A.H., tribal disputes between the people of these two cities escalated. In 61 A.H. during Yazid's Caliphate Kufa had become the center of strikes and massive uprisings against the Umayyad. The brutal suppression of these uprisings led to many more uprisings that followed them. One of the most important opposition groups were the governors dissatisfied with the Arab regime. According to the author of *The History of Kufa*, "the Umayyad played with Islam like a child who plays with a ball." (1, p. 322). Zayd Ibn Ali, one of the descendants of Hussain Ibn Ali, which was a pious man, started an uprising in 122 A.H. during Hesham Ibn Abdolmalek's caliphate after people of Kufa insisted on this. Although most of the Islamic cities announced their support for this uprising, it failed because the army was mismanaged and the movement began earlier than it was supposed to (2, p. 178). Youssef Ibn Umar's soldiers executed Zayd and burned his body to fear people; however, they failed and his son Yahya continued the uprising and fled to Khorasan which had become the center of opposition groups at that time; people of Khorasan helped Yahya in continuing his fight against the Umayyad. Yahya's guerrilla attacks in Marv, Herat, and Neishaboor damaged the Umayyad effectively, but Yahya was finally decapitated in the Joozjanan area and his men were killed. (3, V2, p. 306). People of Khorasan were so touched by Yahya and Zayd's martyrdom that one year after it all newborn male babies were named Yahya or Zayd, and people mourned their death for seven days. Alawite Abdollah Ibn Moavieh started another uprising in 126 A. H. in Kufa which was later moved to central areas of Iran; after heavy fights, he was finally defeated by Amer Ibn Zabareh's army sent by Marvan; it was after this battle that many Alawites migrated to Iran (4, events of the year 127 A.H.). Although Zayd and Yahya's uprising was harshly suppressed, it led to a series of uprising that eventually resulted in the fall of Umayyad (5, p. 190). After the fall of Umayyad, the Hussaini Zaydis family did not use the opportunity and Hassani Zaydis who were the descendants of Abdullah Ibn Hassan took their place; Abdullah's four sons started four separated uprising: Mohammad in Kufa, Ibrahim in Basra, Yahya in Deylam, and Edris in Morocco. All of these uprisings happened because the Abbasid took the caliphate while they had no right over it; they started to deliver sermons in their own name, used terror, and tortured opposition leaders to defeat their political rivals. One piece of evidence for this is found in Sheikh Al Mohri in Bukhara: "and said now that we are freed from the suffering caused by Marwan, we should not endure the suffering caused by the Abbasid, the caliph's children should be the prophet's children." (6, p.86-87). After he Abbasid came to power, Alawite uprisings started again and from the time of Saffah to the time of Ma'moon, 30 uprisings happened. Facing Mohammad Ibn Abdullah who considered caliphate his legitimate right, Mansour fist tried to settle his strike through granting amnesty and tolerance, but he failed and later managed to end the strike by giving false promises to the people of Medina; Mohammad was killed in the bloody battle that raged in 145 A.H. (7, the events of the year 145 A.H.). Mohammad's brother's 9Ibrahim Ibn Abdullah) uprising also failed because Mansour's councilors persuaded people of Kufa to stop supporting him; in addition, Ibrahim hesitated in pursuing Mansour's army and was defeated and finally killed in the Bakhmeri village. Most of Zaydi uprisings during the caliphate of Abbasid failed because of starting before the planned time, betrayal of the followers, and the caliph's deception; the Fakh event which happened during the uprising led by Hussain Ibn Ali was one of the saddest incidents in this regard (8, p. 327). To suppress Edris Ibn Abdullah's uprising in Morocco, Mansour sent a spy who poisoned Edris; moreover, Mansour let the Sunni majority to establish a local government in Tunisia which prevented the Zaydi government of Edris' followers from gaining power (8, p. 204). Abdullah's other son, Yahya decided to go to Tabarestan to be far from the capital, use thick forests as a military advantage, and use the Jastani governor's support; however, Aaron outwitted Yahya and defeated him with the help of Fazl Ibn Yahya Barmaki. Fazl bribed the noblemen, poets, and even the governor and turned them against Yahya (9, p. 493). Although Yahya was given an amnesty letter, he was killed using a scheme. After Aaron, the dispute between Amin and Ma'moon created an excellent opportunity for more Alawite uprisings

most of which were led by the descendants of Musa Ibn Kazem. Most of these uprisings were caused by the severe measures taken by the Abbasi Caliph, Motavakkel; his policy to control the Alawites was based on torture, fear, and putting them under economic pressure. One of the most prominent uprisings was that of Yahya Ibn Umar Hussaini which was directly related to his financial situation and its improvement. (7, p. 314). After the failure of all the uprisings which happened during the caliphate of Umayyad and Abbasid, the Alawite leaders came to the conclusion that to be successful, uprisings should have an organized army, and Zaydi groups in different areas should join forces and try to use the help of governors who are far from the capital and dissatisfied with the central government. That is why after the assassination of Ali Ibn Musa (Reza), the Alawite refuged to Tabarestan, and when it was time established an Alawite government during the caliphate of Mosta'in (10, p.87).

**Conclusion:**

Zaydis, like other Arab tribes, wanted more power and benefits after Muslims conquered many lands. They were descendant of the prophet's family, and considered caliphate as their exclusive right. Umayyad and Abbasid not only recognized such right, but also humiliated and tortured the Alawite, and suppressed their uprisings in the most severe way possible. The Alawite sacrificed their lives and wealth to join forces with other opposition groups, and occasionally damaged the caliphates severely; eventually they managed to establish a government that ruled over most of the Islamic cities for a while.

**REFERENCES**

- Abi Ya'ghub AI. 1995. Yaghubi history, Translated by Mohammad Ibrahim Ayati, Elmi-Farhangi Publication.  
Athir I, Abolhasan A, Fettarikh AK. 1969. Beirut, Dar-al-Ketab.  
Awlia'llah A. 1969. Rooyan history. revised by Manoochehr Sotudeh, (Bicha), Tehran, Bonyade-Farhange-Iran publication.  
Boraghi. 1977. The history of Kufa, Najaf.  
Brukelman C. 1991. Arabs and Empires, third ed., Beirut, Dar-al-Zawa.  
Hussain Mas'oodi AL, al-Zahab M and al-Johar M. 1984. Qom, Dar-al-Hijrah.  
Ibn Tabataba MIA, Fakhri history. 1971. translated by Vahid Golpayegani, Bongahe Tarjome va Nashre Ketab, Tehran.  
Ibn Ja'far Narshakhi ABM. 1984. Bukhara history, translated by Mohammad Ibn Nasr Ghabawi, Toos Publication.  
Shushtari GHN. 1986. Majalis-al-Mo'menin. Tehran, Islamieh bookstore.