ERUDITES FOR THE GUIDANCE
IN
THE PERIOD OF MAJOR OCCULTATION

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At the time of Death of Ayatullah Moinul Hakim, a short information about this subject was given in Iran's Journal ‘ITTELÀ’AT’ about Deputies of Imam-e-Asr (A.S.) in the Period of Major Occultation (Ghaibat-e-Kubra). The Urdu Translation of original Persian was obtained from Maulana Syed Hasan Abbas Saheb ‘Fitrat’ and was printed in Gujrati Magazine ‘ALAMDAR’ Monthly of January, 1971.

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According to Shia belief the Last Prophet Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa (S.A.) appointed and nominated, by order of Allah, Maula-c-Muttaqeen Ameerul Momineen Hazrat Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S.) as his Successor and Vicegerent. After the demise of the Holy Prophet, Hazrat Ali (A.S.) became Khalifatur Rasul (Vicegerent of the Prophet (S.A.) and the leadership of Islam was transferred to him by the Order of Allah.

After Him this leadership was transferred to his progeny and eleven Imams were thus appointed for the guidance of Muslims one after the other. The Holy Prophet S.A. had, on several other occasions declared Hazrat Ali (A.S.) as his successor.

From the time of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) and throughout the time of the Twelve Imams the Tradition about the promised Mehdi was an accepted fact and the belief was commonly held that the Mehdi will be Qaim-e-Aal-e-Mohammad (A.S.), and that he will remain in Major Occultation, hidden from the sight of the people, till his re-appearance at a time when this world would be full of injustice and oppression so that he would fill the Earth with Justice and Peace.
The Twelfth Imam (A.S.) was born on the 15th Sha’ban, 255 A.H. In this early years he remained concealed in an underground vault so that his enemies might not harm him. Even after the death of his holy father, Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.) he remained concealed from the eyes of the public for seventy years. This period is called Ghaibat-e-Sughra or Minor Occultation. During this period, The Imam (A.S.) remained in communication with the faithfuls through four Safeers (or Deputies) who acted as medium between the faithfuls and the Imam (A.S.). Their names are:

1. Oosman Bin Saeed.
3. Husain Bin Rowh and

In the last days of Abul Hasan Ali Bin Mohammad Samarri, Hazrat Imam Mehdi (A.S.) told him not to appoint his successor, saying: “Now the time for Major Occultation has arrived. Do not appoint your successor. Hereafter the work of imparting knowledge of Canon of Mohammad (S.A.) is to be entrusted to the erudites and jurists of the community.” This fourth worthy deputy died in 327 A.H. and the worldly link and contact of common Shias with the Imam (A.S.) came to an end.

From now onwards the responsibility of guiding people and imparting knowledge of Canon came on the shoulders of erudites, traditionists and Jurists. From then on, research work in religious sacraments and matters began. These Ulema began giving Fatwa (decrees) according to deductions based on traditions, judgements and decrees of the fourteen Infallibles including the Prophet St. Thus a system of “Reference” began which is known as Taqleed. By Taqleed we mean to follow decrees and decisions of an Aa’lam who is a confirmed scholar of Tradition and Islamic jurisprudence. Such an Aa’lam is termed as ‘Marja-e-Taqleed’, i.e. Centre of Reference.

Just after the beginning of Major Occultation the great jurist Mohammad Bin Yaqoob Kulaini took charge of the seat of learning
as the first Marja-e-Taqleed. He was the resident of Kulain, a town-
ship near Tehran. The system of one Marja-e-Taqleed taking position
on the death of the predecessor has since continued throughout all
these centuries. Some of them are mentioned herender.

In the fourth Century, Janab Abul Hasan Bin Moosa Ibne Babwaih, Qummi, was the next Marja-e-Taqleed for Shias.

Shaikh Saduq (Abu Ja’afar Mohammad Ali Bin Babwaih), who
died in 381 A.H. and whose grave at Rai is still a revered place of
visit for Shias was the contemporary of Ruknuddaula and remained
for many years the Marja-e-Taqleed.

Shaikh-e-Mufeed (Mohammad Bin Nauman) was the next Marja-e-Taqleed and religious leader of Shias of his time. He died in the
year 413 A.H.

On the death of Shaikh-e-Mufeed, Syed Murtaza (Ali Bin Husain
Moosavi) “A’alamul Huda” was appointed to take his place. He was
in the fifth generation of Hazrat Moosa Kazim (A.S.).

After Syed Murtaza, Shaikh-e-Toosi (Abu Ja’afar Mohammad
Bin Toosi) became the centre of Reference. He was the disciple of
Shaikh-e-Mufeed and Syed Murtaza. His grave is in Najaf-e-Ashraf.

After the death of Shaikh-e-Toosi his disciple Ibne Barraj took
up the work of guiding the Shias. In the time of Shaikh-e-Toosi,
he was appointed for the work of preaching the True Faith in Syria
and Tripoli.

After the death of Ibne Barraj the leadership of Shias became
the responsibility of Shaikh Aboo Ali Toosi. He died in 496 A.H.

PREACHING IN AFRICA

In the 6th Century Hijri, Allama Mohaqiq-e-Halabi became the
leader of the Shias. He was the first person to send different groups
to Africa for preaching.

After Allama Mohaqiq-e-Halabi Janab Emaduddin Tabrasi and
after him Shaikh-e-Tabrasi became Marja-e-Taqleed. Their graves are
in Mashhad (Iran). The Successor of Shaikh-e-Tabrasi was Janab
Hasan Tabrasi.
Qutub Ravandi was one of the great Shia erudites. He was the first critic of ‘Nahjul Balagha’. After the death of Janab Hasan Tabarsi he became Marja-e-Taqleed. His grave is in the courtyard of the mausoleum of Ma’sooma-e-Qum at Qum in Iran.

In the last years of the 6th Century Ibne Zehra and Ibne Idrees performed the function of Marja-e-Taqleed.

SEVENTH & EIGHTH CENTURIES

In the Seventh and Eighth Centuries the following erudites were the Marja-e-Taqleed:

3. Fakhr Bin Ma’ad.
4. Allama Halabi.

NINTH & TENTH CENTURIES

3. Ibne Fahod.
4. Ibne Najmuddin.
5. Abdul A’ali.

were the Centres of Taqleed in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries, Hijri. When Shah Tehmasp accepted the true religion (Shia faith) he called Janab Mohaqiq-e-Karki from Najaf to Tabrez.

ISPAHAN PERIOD

The following leaders of Shia Faith became Marja-e-Taqleed in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries Hijri, Seven of these erudites died and are buried in Ispahan, which was in those days the centre of religious studies and knowledge, so this period of two hundred years or so is known as Ispahan Period.
THE NECESSITY OF IMAMAT

3. Allama Majlisi the First.
7. Mulla Ismail Khawajwi (Contemporary of Nadir Shah).

TWELFTH CENTURY

In the Twelfth Century there were many great scholars and erudites who performed the work of guidance of the Shia people, such as:

1. Aqa Mohammad Baqir Bahbani.
5. Mulla Ahmad Naraini.
6. Shaikh Mohammad Hasan Najafi Ispahani (Author of 'Jawahar').
7. Shaikh Ansari.

Apart from these the greatest leader and Marja-e-Taqleed of this period was Syed Mohammad Hasan Shirazi alias Mirza-e-Buzurg. He preached the True Faith in other parts of the world. In the reign of Naseeruddin Shah Qachar, Mirza was grieved to note that the English were strengthening their hold in Iran. They had introduced the use of Tobacco in Iran and were earning a lot by the trade of Tobacco. To inflict a blow to the English he decreed the use of Tobacco as prohibited. On account of this declaration he achieved extraordinary popularity in the masses.

After Mirza-e-Buzurg, the Author of 'URWATUL WUTHQA', Ayatullah Syed Kazim Yazdi became the Marja-e-Taqleed.

JEHAD RELIGIOUS WAR

After Ayatullah Syed Kazim Yazdi, Ayatullah Mirza Mohammad Taqi Shirazi alias Mirza-e-Kuehak became the Aa'lam. He decreed
The necessity of Imamat

Religious war against the British Government because they had occupied Iraq in the First World War. This decree brought the Independence of Iraq nearer.

After Mirza-e-Kuchak the leadership of the Shias came in the hands of Ayatullah Syed Abul Hasan Ispahani. In his period the Government of Iraq became hostile to the Iranian erudites who were staying in Iraq. He migrated with a big group of people to Iran and settled in Qum. He came again to Najaf-e-Ashraf after the conditions had improved.

The period of his successor, late Ayatullah Al-Haj Husain Qummi was not a long one. He died within a short time of becoming Marja-e-Taqleed.

After him Ayatullah Aqa Syed Husain Burujardi became the 54th Marja-e-Taqleed and remained so till 1380 A.H. In his time some missionary centres were established and mosques were constructed in European countries.

Ayatullah Mohsinul Hakim has been the centre of Taqleed in our mes, but unfortunately he too passed away on 26th Rabiul Awwal, 90 A.H. (2nd June, 1970) leaving the entire Shia world engulfed in deep grief. His greatness in erudition was unequalled and he was so famous as a fearless supporter of the religious cause that it is hard to find anybody to replace him.

A complete list of the Marja-e-Taqleed since the Major Occultation adopted from the book “Hayat-e-Kakim” by Moulana Murtaza Reen Fazil, Lahore, 1969, is shown in the appendix.

The names of the ‘centres of reference’ (Marja-e-Taqleed), in the past centuries

THE NECESSITY OF IMAMAT


7. Ash Shaikhul Ajal Shaikh Mohammad Bin Shaikh ut Taifa, died 494 A.H.


12. Shaik Bin Idrees Mohammad Bin Ahmad Hilli, author of the book As-Saraer, died 598 A.H.

13. Shaikhul Ajal, Abul Fazal Shazan Bin Jibrail Qumi settled at Madina Munawwera, died 618 A.H.


16. As Syedul Ajal, Razi-ud-Din Bin Taoos Abul Qasim Ali Bin Musa Bin Jafar Hasani, Huseini, died 664 A.H.


NECESSITY OF IMAMAT

27. Shaikh Shams-ud-Din Mohammad Bin Makki, A'amili Shami, author of the book Mojaz-un-Nafisi, etc., died 860 A.H.
29. Shaheed Sani, Shaikh-e-Jalil, Zain-ud-Din Bin Nuruddin Ali Bin Ahmad, author of the books Sharh Lama'a Damishqia, etc., died 936 A.H.
30. A'alime-Rabbani Maulana Ahmad Bin Mohammad Ardbeli, author of the books 'Ayatul Ahkam, etc., died 993 A.H. (burried, Najaf).

34. Zahid Wara, Mohammad Taqi Bin Maqsud Ali, Known as Majlisi Awwal, author of the book Shaeh Man Ia fahzaruhul Faqih, died 1070 A.H.


36. Murabbiul Fuqaha wal Muhaddison Husain Bin Jamaluddin Mohammad Bin Husain Khwansari, author of the books Sharh-e-Durus, etc., died 1098 A.H. (Isfahan gallows)


43. Ayatullah Al-Allama Syed Mahdi, known as Bahrul-Ulum, died 1212 A.H. (Najaf).


46. Maulana Ahmad Bin Maulana Mahdi Az-Zaqi, author of the book Meraj-us-Sa'adat, died 1244 A.H.

48. Ar-Raisul Azim, Murtaza Bin Mohammad Amin, known as Shaikhul Ansari, author of the book Ar-Rasaelowal Makasib, died 1281 A.H. (Najaf).


50. Maulana Mohammad Bin Mohammad Baqir Airwani, died 1306 A.H. (Najaf).


56. The leader of the Iraqi Movement against the British Mirza Mohammad Taqi Shirazi, died 1338, A.H. (Karbala).


