

The study of the formation of the Fatimids government of Egypt:

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Abstract: Obaidullah al-Mahdi, the founder of the Fatimids government, was born in 260 AH in Salmia of Syria. When he becomes the Imam of the Ismailis, he reveals the Imamah, and with all the obstacles that stand in his way, he through the hard-working preachers, such as Abu Abdullah, gets the attention of Ketama people to him and with their cooperation lays the foundation of the Fatimids government in North Africa. He and his missionaries made extensive use of the idea of Mahdism. In this article, we intend to examine how the Fatimids government of Egypt was established, which was founded by Obaidullah al-Mahdi. The research method is descriptive and in some cases, the analytical method has been used as needed. The method of collecting information is library facilities.

Keywords: Obaidullah Al - Mahdi, Fatimids, Ismailis agents, North Africa, Egypt.

Introduction:

Obaidullah Al-Mahdi, who was born hidden and away from the eyes of his followers after his father, gets the responsibility of imamate of the world of **Shia of Ismaili**. He is the fourth mystical Ismaili Imam who later revealed his invitation and Imamate and called the people to him by his stimulators. The Fatimids are a powerful Islamic government that ruled for centuries in lands such as North Africa, Egypt, and Syria, and even conquered Baghdad. This prompted us to examine how they were formed. It can be said that our main question is how and under what conditions Obaidullah Al-Mahdi creates such a government, did he personally take on this great task, or did others play a role in creating this government? Our premise is that when Obaidullah al-Mahdi revealed his Imamate, in order not to ruin the result of the years of hard work of the Imams before him, he was forced to form a government that was formed by the Ismaili stimulators and the conditions of the people of North Africa and most importantly the use of the idea of Mahdism has a prominent role. The purpose of the idea of Mahdism is to make people believe in the emergence of a savior named Mahdi, who according to Islamic traditions is from the family of the Prophet, and to this day this idea has many supporters among many Islamic religions.

Obaidullah Al-Mahdi and the Establishment of the Fatimid Government of Egypt:

In order to get to know Obaidullah Al-Mahdi, the founder of the Fatimid government of Egypt, it is better to start briefly from the beginning of Ismaili history to get a series of discussions. Ismailis are divided into three categories in a general division. The first category is nominally Khalisa or crown colony Ismaili. They do not accept the death of Ismail, the eldest son of Jafar Ibn Mohammad, the sixth Imam, and head of the Jafari Shia religion. The second category is called Mubarakiya or the blessed Ismaili. This group accepts that Ismail passed away, but after him, his son Mohammad was appointed as the Imam by Imam Sadeq. This group continued the Imamate, in which their Imams were hidden in the beginning, later with the preparation of the ground, their Imams appear.

The third group is those who stopped their son Mohammad after Ismail and became known as Sabiah (Abdullah, 1379: 25-26).

During the secrecy or hideout period, the Ismaili Imams lived in secrecy in the form of merchants in the city of Salmiah so as not to attract the attention of the agents of the Bani Abbas government. No one, not even the Ismailis, was aware of the name and emblem of **their Imam**. The same Imams were sending their stimulators to all parts of the Islamic lands and invited the people for the imminent appearance of Mahdi from the descendants of Ismail (Mashkor, 1353: 241).

Until one and a half centuries after the death of Ismail, the Ismaili Imams are hidden, so there is not enough information about their activities and teachings. With the weakening of the Abbasids government, their religious and political activities begin. This is where the Ismaili message and teachings gave hope to both his followers and the rest of the dissidents. In the time of Abdullah son of Mohammad ibn Ismail, the secret invitation of the Ismailis was spread to all parts of Iran and Arabia. He moved from Halb (Aleppo) to the city of salmiyah near Homs, after him Ahmad ibn Abdullah in Salmiyah and then Hussein ibn Ahmad led as the Imam of the Invitation (Mashkur, 1353: 237).

At the end period of mysterious Imams, we discuss about Obaidullah Al-Mahdi:

His early life passed in secrecy and it was in the last stages of his life that he succeeded in establishing the Fatimids Caliphate in North Africa (Luis, 1382: 165). In the third and fourth centuries of Hegira, the invitation centers were in Iraq, Sham and Ahwaz and other stimulators were sent to other provinces and cities to promote the Ismaili religion, such as Abu Abdullah al-Shi'i, who first promoted the Ismaili religion in Yemen and later moved to North Africa, from where he was sent to the South until providing the background for the appearance of Obaidullah al-mahdi. (Fazayi, 1363: 35).

Obaidullah al-Mahdi is the fourth secret Imam of the Ismailis after Mohammad ibn Ismail, who was born in 260 AH in Salmiyah, Syria, and his father sent missionaries around the world of Islam to preach to the waiting Mahdi, including Rostam ibn Husain ibn Hushab Najar. He was sent to Yemen, which succeeded in his propaganda in Yemen, and found many followers (Tarmani, 2/1388: 231).

Saeed al-Khair was the omnipotent invitation of the Ismailis at this time. When Mahdi reached a young age, Saeed had no children left (Saeed had died), Mahdi married Saeed's daughter and was able to take full control of the organization. Perhaps around 284 (Lewis 1382: 165).

At this time Qaramata, a branch of the Ismailis, left for Bahrain and wanted to know their Imam, but didn't succeed in meeting him that is why their leaders were skeptical about the Imam and until the leaders went to war with imams and invited the people to them, and then they attacked Salmiyah, killed some people and looted many properties. Obaidullah al-Mahdi fled to Ramla in Palestine for fear of Qaramata in 289, Qaramata after knowing about him followed him to Ramla and tried to kill him. He was forced to flee to Fustat, Egypt, and after a few weeks in Fustat, he revealed his Imamate. After this, he was also in danger of the Abbasids. The government of Bani Abbas, aware of the existence of Mahdi, ordered his agents to arrest him and his agents and surrender to the government (Mashkur 1353: 241).

Mahdi, when he wanted to declare a caliphate, among his agents the place of the caliphate was debated. One referred to Iraq, which meant the abolition of the Abbasids caliphate; and another was attached to Yemen, because Yemen is an Arab country with impenetrable mountain bases. A third called for the establishment of a government in a non-Arab neighborhood, because the west was far from the center of the Islamic world (Lewis 1382: 156-166).

Al-Mahdi sent Ibn Hushab ibn fazal, who was one of his agents to Yemen, and they formed small governments there. But the activities of the Qaramatians did not allow Al-Mahdi to travel to Yemen. He sent Abu Abdullah to Yemen, when Abu Abdullah knew, he has no place in the Fatimids caliphate in Yemen, went to the west. On his way back from Yemen to Egypt, Abu Abdullah met the barbarians of Katameh who had come to visit Mecca and went to their homeland with them on the orders of Mahdi. At that time, the west was under the rule of Aghalibeh Qirwan, Abu Abdullah was able to occupy part of their territory, and defeated Ziyadatullah, the last ruler of Aghalibeh in the city of Raqada, and Mahdi traveled from Egypt to Tripoli and from there to Sajilmasa. He went and was arrested by Beni Modrar (Weiss 1382, 168-170).

Before we talk about how Obaidullah was released, it is better to introduce Abu Abdullah in order to better understand the issue.

One of the influential figures who played a role in the formation of the Fatimids government, like Abu Muslim in the Abbasids government, is Abu Abdullah. Although historians disagree about his name and family tree, he is often referred to as Abu Abdullah Hussein ibn Ahmad ibn Mohammad Zakaria. He was mentioned as an Arab from Kufa and was given titles according to his religious orientation, occupation and place of residence, such as Shiite titles, guide, teacher and Oriental, according to Ibn Hajib, one of Obaid's friends and relatives; Abu Abdullah was a Sophy and a resident of Kufa. He and his brother Abu Al-Abbas were initially Shiites and were converted to the Ismaili religion by Abu Ali, who was their neighbor. He converted to the Ismaili religion. He swore commitment to Firoz, father in law of abu Ali who was the accountant of the Ismailis and joined the service of Ibn Hushab, the Ismaili agent in Yemen, where he was educated. He was a talented person. His mission was to go to the west with the pilgrims of Katameh to invite and propagate the Ismailis (Chelongar 1381: 91).

Abu Abdullah talked and negotiated with the pilgrims on the way and expressed to them the qualities and praises of the Ahl al-Bayt. When Abu Abdullah reached Katameh, on the request of Katami people, he settled there in the valley in the name of Faj Al-Akhyar (Nikan valley) and said, "This is the same

valley that is mentioned by this name for you, and in the news it is said that Mahdi migrates in this sphere." Nikan of this day helps him that this trick worked very useful, he attracted the majority to his thoughts (Ibn Asir 1382/13: 4618).

Abu Abdullah obtained information from the land, tribes, and spirits of the Katamahs, where he preached and invited among the Berber tribes and promised the advent of the Mahdi. In the meantime, many people accepted the Ismaili religion, including Sheikh Katameh, who became a supporter of Obaidullah al-Mahdi. Abu Abdullah gradually revealed his religion and announced the Imamate of the Ahl al-Bayt and invited al-Reza Man Al-Mohammad (Chalongo 1381: 93); this act of his is very similar to the propaganda of the Abbasi regime before they came to power.

Abu Abdullah's method of propagating and calling for justice-seeking ideals was moral and revolutionary, based on the rules of his own religious traditions. In addition to that, asceticism was one of the effective factors in the progress of his propaganda. He invited the people to the imminent emergence of waiting for Mehdi and in 15 years he was able to provide a huge army of about twenty thousand warriors (Farmanian and Musa Nizhad 1386: 68).

With such an expansion of the activities of the Fatimids and the news of Abu Abdullah, it reached II Ibrahim Aghlabi, the governor of Africa. He sent a threatening message to Abu Abdullah, which eventually led to war and strife. The battles between him and the rulers of Aghalaba led to the victory of Abu Abdullah. He defeated most of them, took Qirawan, the capital of Aghalaba, and found power throughout the region (Chalongo 1381: 96).

When the conditions were completely provided, Abu Abdullah sent some people of Kitamah to Obaidullah al Mahdi, and he informed Obaidullah about the openings that had taken place and the activities that he had done, and he sent a message that everyone was waiting for him and that he would arrive as soon as possible. After hearing this news, Obaidullah came to the West with his relatives. When he arrived in Egypt, he hid in business clothes because the Abbasi government had found out that Mahdi was in Egypt and pursued him, sending letters explaining his name, face, and occupation to other cities so that he could be identified, arrested and killed, the spies monitored him until he was rescued from here with the help of one of the Ismaili agents and from there he went to Sajlmasa. There, Elisa ibn Madrar, the ruler of Sajlmasah, who had the mission of arresting Obaidullah on behalf of the Abbasi government, arrested and imprisoned him (Ibn Asir, 1382/11: 4632).

When their agents learned of the imprisonment of Obaidullah al-Mahdi, they took action to free him, including Abu Abdullah al-Shi'i, who took responsibility for this and attacked the ruler of Egypt (the deputy ruler of Egypt) and defeated the ruler of Egypt and the parts of Qirwan, West and North Africa also conquered and in the month of Rajab in 296 AH came to the fortress of Sajlmasa near Tripoli (Fazai 1363: 38).

Abu Abdullah, after reaching Sajlmasah, in the first stage, wrote several loving and peaceful letters to the ruler of Sajlmasah that he did not intend to fight, but wanted to talk about something important, but Al-Isa, the ruler of Sajlmasah, destroyed several correspondents of Abu Abdullah and eventually, a battle broke out between the ruler of Sajlmasah and Abu Abdullah, who, was unable to resist, fled at night with

his family and close friends. After that, Abu Abdullah entered the city without fear or war and took Obaidullah al-Mahdi out of prison; Abdullah's followers pledged allegiance to him and addressed the people. This is your servant, the Promised Mehdi. Mehdi stayed in Masjalmasa for forty days and then traveled to Africa and EnkJan and took the territories of Bani Aghlab and Rostam under his command and when he reached the city of Raqada, he was welcomed by the people of Raqadeh and Qirwan. Abu Abdullah and the leaders of Katameh used to move in front of Obaidullah and send greetings. Obaidullah ordered that his name be mentioned in all the sermons of the city on Friday. He erected new walls and strengthened his caliphate (Ibn Asir 1382/11: 4630).

After Obaidullah al-Mahdi came to Qairwan, he took over the leadership of the caliphate and power, strengthened the foundations of his caliphate, and some of the actions there caused dissatisfaction among the elders of Katameh, and they reported their dissatisfaction to Abu Abdullah, and he told Obaidullah. Abu Abdullah had a good reputation among the people and had many supporters. Obaidullah cut off the hand of Abu Abdullah and his brother from power and pushed him to the margins for fear of losing his position. Abu al-Abbas also objected to his brother Abu Abdullah and said that this is not the one we believed in obeying him and we called everyone to him because he does not have any of the signs and symbols of the Mahdi mentioned in the hadiths, Mahdi Hojjat Ayat Ashkar brings with him this word sat on the hearts of the majority of the people and including Sheikh Al-Mashayekh people of Katameh told Obaidullah if you are the promised Mahdi, reveal the verses, but Obaidullah issued the order to kill that person and this act was condemned by Abu Abdullah. He read it correctly and advised him to refrain from such acts. Abu Abdullah's advice to Obaidullah al-Mahdi was contrary to Ismaili beliefs because he considered himself a reliable Imam (Farmanian and Mousavinejad 1386: 71).

After this, Abu Abdullah and his brother, along with Abu Zaki, decided to kill Obaidullah, but they did not succeed because there was a person among them who conveyed the news to Al-Mahdi and informed them of their decisions. Obaidullah al-Mahdi then treated them with a term, scattering them with their tricks and skillfully killing them. Abu Zaki was appointed as the governor of Tripoli. On the other hand, he sent a message to his guard to kill Abu Zaki when he reaches Tripoli and he did the same. From the other side he commanded Abru, his servant to attack and kill Abu Abdullah and his brother as they reach the palace. Abru killed Abu Abdullah and his brother. After the killing of these two brothers, movements took place but left no significant traces (Ibn Asir 1382: 4637).

After the assassination of Abu Abdullah and his brother Abu al-Abbas, Obaidullah appointed Habasteh ibn Yusuf Katami as the governor of Maghreb al-Adni and his brother Arwatah ibn Yusuf as the governor of Maghreb al-Awsat and Maghrib al-Aqsa and he moved to the west to dominate the territories of Adrisian in Fars. During his caliphate, Obaidullah al-Mahdi faced strong anti-Fatah movements and, due to the necessity of building a new capital in the west, 60 miles south of Qirwan, which was connected to the sea from three sides, was named Mahdieh himself (Abdullah 1379: 60).

Ibn al-Raqiq wrote that because Obaidullah founded the city of Mahdia after the establishment of the Fatimi rule in Africa, he said: I founded this city so that the Fatimi reign would one day make it a refuge and stronghold (Ibn Khaldun 1 / 1375: 654)

Obaidullah Al-Mahdi lived among the barbarians of North Africa for 18 years and during this time he converted many people to the Ismaili religion and finally by the age of 62 in year 322 AH he died in the city of mahdiah. At first, Qayem, his son hid his father's death in order to take allegiance from the people and sent an army to Barqah to occupy the eastern parts. At the time when he announced his father's death, Obaidullah had seven sons and eight daughters (Halm. 1377:38).

The most important issue that influenced the formation of the historical events of this sect was the issue of the lineage of Obaidullah Al-Mahdi, when this movement became public and passed its secrecy period revealed and expanded its political activities, a serious danger of losing The overthrow of the Abbasids caliphate and their allies was created, so they were questioned and denied by the opponents (Abdullah, 1379: 32). The Abbasi caliphs, who were now in serious danger, denied him, because according to this genealogy, Abdullah al-Mahdi considered himself a traitor to the right of the Prophet and invalidated the Abbasid caliphate.

The reason why Obaidullah, the first Ismaili caliph, was nicknamed the Mahdi and called himself the Fatimi caliph, is that in Shiite narrations it was stated that the Promised Imam has the title of Mahdi and is a descendant of Fatima because the Fatimi circles considered the decree of Rouhani and the ideal government of waiting for Mehdi as their right and adapted to it. This series of caliphs, in addition to the Fatimid title, sometimes called themselves Alowies attributed to Ali Ibn Abi Talib and sometimes Ismailis (Fazai 1363: 40); On the other hand, the hidden Imams explicitly invited the people to the Promised Mehdi, and it is probable that he was well aware that the minds of the people had turned to the Promised Mehdi. Therefore, he used this trick and called himself Al-Mahdi to tell the people that he is the promised Mahdi that his agents were talking about.

Result:

Obaidullah Al-Mahdi, after being chosen as the imam, made revealed the secret invitation of the Ismailis. He was also the first person in the Ismaili religion to reveal his Imamate in order to establish a powerful government, and he used his agents extensively. Abu Abdullah and his brother are the only ones who made endless efforts to consolidate and establish the Fatamian government, and the reason for his success was that the people of Katameh and North Africa studied and treated them well.

Later, Obaidullah al-Mahdi removed all the opponents and those who might have bothered him, even Abu Abdullah and his brother. The Abbasi caliphs did their best to destroy him to the extent that they denied his lineage, but they could not prevent him from becoming powerful. He traces his lineage to Imam Ali and Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet of Islam, through several intermediaries. With all the obstacles that stood in his way, he was able to establish the decisive Egyptian government in North Africa, which later moved its headquarters to Egypt, which is considered one of the most powerful Islamic states in the history of Islam.

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