



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

History and Development of the Shia

Teacher: Sayed Saleh al-Qazwini

Lesson: 26

Topic: The Minor Occultation (1)

Starting date of the imamate of Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام: Rabi' al-Awwal 8, 260 A.H.

Age: 5

Occultations:

- Minor occultation; duration: 69 years (from 260 to 329)
- Major occultation started with Imam al-Mahdi's letter to his last representative Ali ibn Muhammad. There is no direct representative from then on.

Direct deputies of Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام during minor occultation:

1. Uthman ibn Sa'id al-Amri (d. 265)
2. Muhammad ibn Uthman (d. 305)
3. Al-Husayn ibn Ruh al-Nawbakhti (d. 326)
4. Ali ibn Muhammad al-Samuri (d. 329)

Good sources to read about Imam al-Mahdi's occultation:

1. *The Book of Al-Ghayba* by Sheikh al-Tusi
2. *Al-Ghayba* by al-Nu'mani

The Event that marks the beginning of minor occultation:

- The people of Qom who went to deliver Zakat and Khums to Imam al-Askari عليه السلام, realized that Ja'far al-Kadhab was not the next Imam but Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام is.
- Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام told them that was the last time they see him and that they should give their trust and questions to his deputy Uthman ibn Sa'id in Baghdad from now.

First deputy: Uthman ibn Sa'id ibn al-Amr al-Asadi

- One of his titles: **Al-Samman** (one who sells ghee and fat)
- He was a companion of Imam al-Jawad عليه السلام.
- Then one of the Wakeels of Imam al-Hadi عليه السلام



- He was very close to Imam al-Askari عليه السلام
- He was the *wakeel* of Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام for five years (260 – 265 A.H.).
- He was buried in Baghdad like the other deputies.

Imam al-Hadi عليه السلام described Uthman ibn Sa'id as follows:

« هذا أبو عمرو الثقة الأمين »

He is reliable and trustworthy.

« ما قاله لكم فعني يقوله و ما آداه إليكم فعني يؤديه »

Whatever he tells you, he tells it from me; and whatever he gives and orders you, he is giving and ordering it from me.

Imam al-Askari عليه السلام's words about Uthman ibn Sa'id (whose nicknames or titles were Abu Amr and al-Askari): "He is the reliable, the trustworthy."

Imam al-Askari عليه السلام on Uthman ibn Sa'id:

« ثقني في الحياة و المماتة »

I trust him whether I am alive or dead.

« ما قال لكم فعني يقول و ما آدى إليكم فعني يؤدي »

Whatever he says to you, he is saying it from me, and whatever he is giving you, he is giving from me.

- When some people brought something to Imam al-Askari عليه السلام, he told Uthman to sign it and called him trustworthy on God's property.
- Forty days before his martyrdom, Imam al-Askari عليه السلام invited 40 Shia scholars, introduced them to Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام and told them that Uthman ibn Sa'id would be his and his son's wakeel.

2nd direct deputy: Muhammad ibn Uthman

- Duration of office: 40 years
- A companion of Imam al-Askari عليه السلام as well
- Before his death, Uthman ibn Sa'id announced his son, Muhammad, as the next direct representative of the Imam عليه السلام.
- After Uthman ibn Sa'id's funeral procession, a *tawqi'* (letter from Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام) from *al-Nahiya al-Muqaddasa* (not to mention Imam's name) was received by Muhammad ibn Uthman including condolences and that he is the new deputy.
- Muhammad ibn Uthman's nickname: Abu Ja'far al-Amri



Imam al-Askari عليه السلام's word on him: "Uthman ibn Sa'id is my wakeel, and his son Muhammad is the wakeel of my son al-Mahdi عليه السلام."

Imam al-Askari عليه السلام:

«العمري و ابنه الثقتان المأمونان»

Al-Amri and his son are both reliable and trustworthy.

● Imam Sadiq Muhammad ibn Uthman knew about the time of his death. He made his gravestone, dug his grave, and used to go and lie in it.

3rd direct deputy: Abu al-Qasim al-Husayn ibn Ruh al-Nawbakhti

- Introduced by Muhammad ibn Uthman in a letter from Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام
- Belonged to the great clan of Nawbakht
- Two years before Muhammad ibn Uthman's death, Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام wrote to him to prepare al-Husayn ibn Ruh; because he wasn't in the time of Imam al-Askari عليه السلام and many people didn't know him.
- When Muhammad ibn Uthman was on deathbed, a companion sitting beside his head asked him about the next deputy. He replied it was al-Husayn (who was sitting next to his feet). That companion rapidly changed his place and asked al-Husayn to sit next to his head.
- Al-Husayn died in the year 326 A.H.; served 21 years as deputy.

4th direct deputy: Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Samuri

In office: 3 years.

Death: 329 A.H.

During the last deputy's time:

- Unstable political circumstances
- People started losing faith in Imam عليه السلام.
- The Shia began to live in extreme Taqiyya
- He was respected, but not like the previous ones

Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام's last letter to Ali ibn Muhammad:

- He will be dead in 6 days, so he should prepare himself.
- He must not pass his will to anyone
- The major occultation occurred
- It will continue for long
- The earth will be filled with oppression
- The hearts will become hardened.



- People will come claiming to see me and have an interconnection with me.
- Whoever claims such, he is a liar. (*Mushahada* means seeing Imam عليه السلام as his deputy)
- The one who claims the arrival of Mahdi before the following events is a liar:
 - Sufyani's emergence
 - The loud cry

ImamSadiq.tv

ImamSadiq.tv

ImamSadiq.tv

Minor occultation duration: 69 years, six months, and 15 days.

6 Abbasid caliphs during the Minor Occultation:

1. Al-Mutamid (murderer of Imam al-Askari عليه السلام)
2. Al-Mutadhid
3. Al-Muktafi
4. Al-Muqtadir
5. Al-Qahir bi Allah
6. Al-Radhi bi Allah

They were weak.

Those Abbasids were rough with the Shia except for al-Mutazid, who:

ImamSadiq.tv

- Didn't persecute the Shia that much;
- Dreamed of Imam Ali عليه السلام who told him not to oppress his progeny
- Used to curse Muawiya
- Moved the caliphate from Samarra back to Baghdad
- These Abbasid several times raided and tried to find Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام.

ImamSadiq.tv

Among the ways Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام connected the Shia during the Minor Occultation:

1. Some of his close companions saw the Imam عليه السلام (not as a representative)
2. Writing letters with certain clues to prove they are from the Imam عليه السلام such as:
 - a. Saying the unseen.
 - b. Answering difficult questions that even the deputies were not able to.
 - c. The handwriting of the Imam of the time عليه السلام.

ImamSadiq.tv

ImamSadiq.tv

ImamSadiq.tv

On the other hand, Imam al-Mahdi عليه السلام had to protect his identity. So,

- He connected only with a few Shias by showing signs
- He asked them not to say his name, etc.
- Always changed places.
- There was total secrecy.



IMAM SADIQ peace be upon him
ONLINE SEMINARY

- Another way to protect the Imam (عليه السلام) and the Shia): the direct deputies had to practice full taqiyya, like in the story of al-Husayn ibn Ruh; if he had done otherwise, thousands of the Shia would have been killed.
- Imam al-Mahdi (عليه السلام) is permanently watching over the Shia and their matters. History testifies Imam's care for the Shia.
- The reasons why, during the six Abbasid caliphs, Imam al-Mahdi (عليه السلام) didn't talk about the political issues in his letters; instead, he spoke about Sharia issues:
 1. Taqiyya
 2. Most letters were replies.

ImamSadiq.tv

ImamSadiq.tv

ImamSadiq.tv

ImamSadiq.tv

ImamSadiq.tv

ImamSadiq.tv