

Sheikhiyeh Sect in Kerman

Alireza Mehrabizadeh, Davoud Esfahanian*

Department of Historical Management, Shabestar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sabestar, Iran

*Corresponding Author Email: Davoodasfehanyan@gmail.com

Abstract: Qajar era is bed of shaping various sects and factions according to social and political conditions of that time rooted from weakness in governing and life chaos? One of such sects is Sheikhiyeh sect that its initial leaders were people such as Sheikh Ahmad Ehsaei who used these conditions by proposing ideas and thoughts such as fourth pillar which reinforced denying savior belief by disappointment existed in society and made denying distributary bodily resurrection in Esna-Ashari Shia. This sect was spread according to certain social and economic condition in Kerman in this era by Mohammad Karim Khan Ebrahimi who was one of Qajar princes, but significant note about Sheikhiyeh sect regardless of its spread were proposing apparently fully new ideas about bodily resurrection and Hur Ghalyaei, fourth pillar, and doubt in Shia beliefs that led to creation of Baha'i and Babbitt sects which were not only at that time, but also in all history has made chaos in state.

Keywords: Sheikhiyeh Leaders, Fourth Pillar, Hur Ghalyaei.

Introduction

In contemporary specially in Qajar era weakness, inability, and non-planning in governance of state originated from selfishness of Qajar governors and attempt of foreigners to weaken Iran provided conditions again to propose thoughts by whom not had any purpose expect ruining Shia thought and expressing themselves. Exploring conditions during Sheikhiyeh leaders' life time and their performance show that they had no purpose except fulfilling presidential ambitions in religious affairs and their amplifiers were people who increased these conditions to facilitate their predominance on people.

This article tries to identify Sheikhiyeh leaders to explore reasons of shaping and spreading this sect and stating results of shaping this sect in Kerman.

One of the first founders of Sheikhiyeh sect was Sheikh Ahmad Ehsaei. Sheikh Ahmad was Arab Shia from south of Saudi Arabia (1746-1821) and Bani Khaled ethnics. His was born in 1746 in Ehssa region of Ghatif around boundary of Saudi and today Bahrain.

His ancestors were Sheikhiyeh from several generations ago as it is seen from biography of some scholars. Sheikh Ahmad claimed that various dreams changed him so far as said he had permanent relationship with pure Imams in dream and what he said was quotation of Imams. Henry Carbon supported from Sheikhiyeh in his book and confirmed this part of his life: "Sheikh Ahmad had ability and talent in mysticism from childhood such other priests from other places; as though, he gathered documents and information about savior Imam in himself and this was from various dreams and inner relationship with savior Imam (Carbon, 1967).

He used scholars such as Seyyed Mahdi Bahrol Olum and Sheikh Jafar Kashefol Oza and skilled ones in mathematics, medicine, Kalaam (speech) science, Alaam (declarations) besides jurisprudence and Hadith pillars.

He spent most of his life time in Basra, Karbala, then entered to Khorasan to pilgrim Imam Reza in 1801, then Yazd and was attracted by Fatahali Shah, because Qajars tried to attract priests to get enough legitimations for not having religious base.

This act of Fatahali Shah increased social status of Sheikh. Sheikh Ahmad spent a period of time in Kermanshah by invitation of Mohammad Ali Mirza Dowlatshah, the oldest son of Fatahali Shah. Sheikh grew new thoughts in mind from time ago, because he was impressed by Sufi and mystical thoughts of Greece. He went to Qazvin to proselyte these thoughts but face with opposition of Mohammad Taghi Borghani, one of Shia scholars. Therefore, he went to shrines and religious scholars expressed their oppositions to him, too. While he was very sad for this condition, he left there to pilgrim Kaaba but he died before that, near Medina City, in 1821. Sheikhiyeh called him "Sheikh Jalil". It is quoted that Sheikh Ahmad had written more than 90 book volumes in old philosophy, the Word Science, and interpretation.

Sheikhiyeh School and Its pillar

Bodily Resurrection

Although bodily resurrection emphasized in Islamic narratives is accepted in Sheikhiyeh thoughts, a certain interpretation of bodily condition is proposed in judgment day.

Accomplishment of reward and punishment is Shia thought as enjoyment and pain that has partial and sensational aspect is not possible or natural body that is composed of natural elements; therefore, human is present against God by his natural face to get his reward or punishment.

Ehsaei offered a new interpretation; he believed that human has 2 bodies. The first body is called an outward body that is composed of time elements, as it is changed during time, it can't be human truth, because no change is made in human reality at same time of increase or decrease in it. Sheikh knew the first body as cloth we cover ourselves and believed that it goes back to its elements after human death. But the second body is hidden in the first one that is purified after dying the first body and stays in grave. It is not seeable for its softness and Sheikh Ahmad called it Hur Ghalyaei.

Hur Ghalyaei was proposed by Sohrevardi for the first time and in Kalam Eshragh it is eighth climate. Sohrevardi divided all bodily worlds to 7 climates and eighth world is example world and its amount is out of this world.

Therefore, Sheikh proposed a new theory that had no legal rational and traditional reason to prove it and it seems that Sheikh was tried to have something to say; otherwise, it was not possible to question all rational and traditional reasons of Shia bodily resurrection just by relying on some expression of Sabein.

Fourth Pillar

But the most controversial theory of Sheik is issue of complete Shia or fourth pillar. According to this thought, God create a complete Shia in each era that is middleman between savior Imam and Shias. Most of resources attributed it to Seyyed Kazem and makes Sheikh free of that.

According to proposed issue, religion pillar in Skeikhiyeh sect is divided into 4 parts that includes fourth pillar besides monotheism, prophecy, and leadership. He knew monotheism as permanent (called Sobutiyyeh) characteristics and said there was no need to know it as a part of religion pillar, and believed that it is not possible to put it beside monotheism and prophecy, because resurrection and justice are mentioned in Quran that needs to believe on Quran as one of religion pillar.

Proposing the main pillar is one of the main factors of distribution in Sheikhiyeh School. Azerbaijan Sheikhiyeh denied this fact and called it as one of renovations of Mohammad Karim Khan Kermani and opposed intensively with him.

Fourth pillar institutes a certain belief in Shia that is outward symbol of need. It should be noted that Ahmad Ehsaei didn't see adaptable thought about savior Imam being alive for thousands of years; therefore, he justified existence of hidden Imam by Hur Ghalyaei thought. He didn't tend to deny savior Imam and introduced himself as one of savior Imam communicational way for his interest to this issue.

Therefore, he emphasized on presence of middleman between people and savior Imam that was later an excuse for Ali mohamamd Shirazi to make Alhadi Babbitt sect.

After him, his student, Seyyed Kazem who had a great ability in exaggeration and mixing pillar and ideas by ignorance among people reinforced this thought that as he said, his most important speech in his life time was that arrival of savior Imam is near. He didn't even determine a successor to reinforce this thought.

Proposing the fourth pillar or complete Shia in Shia school was called Moteshare'e since then Tabriz Sheikhiyeh rejected it completely and Hamedan Sheikhiyeh introduced the purpose of fourth pillar and complete Shia the same as pure Imams narrators and religion Imams and as a whole religion scholars and just Kerman Sheikhiyeh knew him as a certain person or called unitary talker.

Sheikhiyeh leaders questioned beliefs on savior Imam and ascension of Mohammad Prophet (pbuh) using Hur Ghalyaei that was indicator of being non-bodily resurrection and similar unknown terms by abusing people illiteracy and superstition and stated new issue about savior Imam (called Mahdaviyat) that was a typical Mahdaviyat issue. Therefore, there should be middlemen to bring God blesses to ordinary people that are deputies with more main and disciplinal roles.

Ali Mohammad Shirazai in such schools were taught and first introduced himself as savior Imam Deputy then savior hidden Imam

Reasons for spread Sheikhiyeh in Kerman

The social, political, and geographical conditions of Kerman not only raise people of this city inconsiderate and easy going, but also in this certain era means 13th century for global evolutions and Qajars condition in Kerman, this city became bed of new evolutions and school.

Being near to India and impressed this thousand-culture country, Persian Gulf, and its marginal Arabic countries not only justify the presence of Occupiers such as England, but also it was impressed by evolutions in Arabic countries. Therefore, since arriving Islam to Kerman, this city became a host of different mystics and Sufis sects (Bastani, 1995).

Being far from governments' boundaries, vast expansion, and full resources caused conflicted groups and also sects weren't able to find living place and shelters refuged to this place and lived peacefully and in tolerance with people of this region that examples are like Zoroastrians, Khawarij, Ismaeilieyeh, and Sufi sects such as Nematollahi and finally Sheikhiyeh.

Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar attack to Kerman in 1790 which was let to escape of Lotfali Khan Zand had awful results for Kerman people. Kerman and Kerman people became victim of Qajar Kings revenge.

Many religious men and scholars were killed during this attack, and scientific and cultural centers in Kerman were ruined and many groups of people were died for epidemic illnesses.

Some attempts were done in such conditions by some of Kerman governors for scientific and educational activities who were Ebrahim Khan Zahiroddoleh, son of Mehdi Gholi Khan, son of Mohammad Hassan Khan who was son of Fatahali Khan Qajar that was also his cousin and brother- in law.

According to resources, Ebrahim Khan was a bright- heart and religious person who had a certain belief on Sheikh Ahmad Ehssaei. As he entered to Kerman wrote to Fatahali Shah this city is ruined and has just a small crowded of blind and poor people.

Ebrahim Khan after attracting satisfaction and help of Fatahali Shah started to build this city. He builds pools and cisterns and considered some of building for educations. Ebrahim Khan built Gheysariyeh and school and invited scholars to teach to city that the most significant school is Ebrahimiyyeh. Therefore, many scholars were treated there such as Mohamamd Karim Khan who was institutor of Kerman Sheikhiyeh sect and his son. Teachers of this school was Akhund Molla Ali Alami one of Khorasan religious scholars. Ahmad Ali Khan Vaziri wrote about him: "he knew general science of pillar very well but he memorized most of jurisprudence issues instead of finding them from his juristic science" (Vaziri, 1979).

Sheikh Nematollah Bahraini who was traveled from Bahrain to Kerman was Friday prayer' leader. He was also expertise in Hadith and interpretation and extracted religious rules by these 2 sources. But what is clear ere is that sessions and scientific and jurisprudence rings were not so efficient to fill the occurred scientific and jurisprudence emptiness. Hence, jurisprudence and scientific environment prepared sufficient bed to grow Sheikhiyeh thoughts and made Ebrahim Khan to have closer relationship with Ahmad Ehssaei who lived at that time.

Sheikh Ahmad attracted Fatahali Shah Qajar by his asceticism and this attention of Shah increased reputation of Sheikh Ahmad and many prices became his disciple. Kerman and Yazd being near to each other caused Ehssaei to find many disciples in Kerman; as though, his disciples were in way of Yazd to see him. These disciples were Molla Hossein Kermani, one of determined disciples of Sheikh Ahmad, and this relationship was so close that Sheikh wrote some of his books to answer to his questions (Ebrahimi, 2005).

The bed to appear Sheikhiyeh thought besides mentioned cases is role of Sufis sects and mysticism. Sheikh Ahmad Ehssaei had used Sufis thoughts a lot in writing his book in spite of his opposite claims about Sufi sects (Carbon, 1967). Kerman region was living place for various groups of Esmaeiliyeh, Sufis, and Zoroastrians and Kerman Sheikhiyeh was impressed a lot by these sects especially classic, talking unity (fourth pillar) that entered from Esmaeiliyeh sect to Sheikhiyeh sect (Chahardehi, 1983), but what is considerable here in this time is that these sects were weakened for various reasons such as district opposition of Zahiroddoleh and non-existence of education and vase advertising system to be prior to other religious groups that this matter and emptiness of a religious power to cope with Sheikhiyeh thought in Kerman led to spread Sheikh-orientation in Kerman (Afrasiyabi, 1987).

Another factor was reinforcing Mahdavi-orientation and hope for savior Imam arrival. Bad economics condition and frequent famine, pressure from Qajar governors to get higher taxes and laboring people harassed people. People by watching frequent failure of Qajars from Russians, which were done in spite of the first level religious scholars' supports, lost their hopes in repairing and improving their conditions and power of Shah and priests and increased introspection and leaving social affairs that reinforced social problems and ruined all hopes. That was trigger of proposing fourth pillar in Sheikh Ahmad mind.

Conclusion

Intensive and hard-tolerating social and economics' pressure inserted on oppressed Iranian in Qajar era was beside jobbery, damage in country and auction of state to other countries that demolished all people hopes. People had no legal and political canal to survive themselves for presence of Qajars; therefore, religious meeting were reinforced and conditions were ready to grow new thoughts that they found the only way to rescue by arrival of hidden Imam.

Hence some people in these conditions were found that abuse this chance consciously and unconsciously by different intentions to fulfill their benefits. They were fame seeking group and foreigners who tried to weaken country and people by making conflict among them to disadvantage.

In this time Kerman for poverty occurred after attack of Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar became a proper place to grow Sheikhiyeh thoughts. Thoughts such as talking unity became reinforcing source for Babbitt thought.

Although, it can be claimed that Sheikhiyeh did a lot in building Kerman, it made conflict and gap in Islam body by its thoughts. If Muslim could have kept their union, it would have been better stand against oppressing system of foreigners and gotten better results.

References

- Afrasiyabi B, 1987. Baha'I quoted by history. Tehran: Parastesh Publication.
Bastani P, 1995. Thief of Prophets. Theran: Khorram publication.
Carbon H, 1967. Sheikhi school from Shia theology. Tehran: Taban Publication.
Chahar Dehi N, 1983. From Ehssa to Kerman, about Sheikhiyeh religious traditions and beliefs. Tehran: Gutenberg Publication.
Ebrahimi AK, 2005. Index of books of Mashayekh Ezam. Kerman: Saadat Publication.
Ehsaei A, 1974, Hayatonnafs. Kerman: Saadat Publication.
Vaziri A, 1978. Kerman history. Tehran: Elm Publication.