

The Role of Yaqub Lais Safar in Formation of Iranian-Islamic Identity

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ABSTRACT

Exploration into the role of Yaqub Safar in formation of Iranian-Islamic identity, manifestation of Yaqub uprising association with social traditions of second century, his attitude towards Islam, Abasi dynasty and differentiation of his uprising attitude from that of Tahir-ibn-Hosein are the primary and secondary questions of this study. Study findings shows the similar and different aspects of Yaqub uprising in relation with to second-Century social uprisings within Iran, his beliefs regarding Islam and his distrust in Abasi dynasty; his attempt to bring that dynasty and distinguishing Yaqub's role from that of Tahir-Ibn-Hosein. Finally this study attempts, through analysis of historical data, to show yaqub's role in formation of Iranian-Islamic identity. Survey method within this study is descriptive, analytical and for data collection library method has been used.

Key words: Safarian Dynasti, Yaqub, Iranian-Islamic Dynasty.

Introduction

Investigation of Yaqub lais Safar's role in formation of Islamic-Iranian identity, the relationship of his uprising with social, national and religious revolts of second century, his attitude regarding Islam and Abasi Dynasty along with comparison of his role with that of Tahir-Ibn-Hosein constitute the primary and secondary questions of this study. The aim of this study is to answer the main question namely elucidation of the role of Yaqub-Ibn-Safar in political, social and cultural domains. Within this framework, Iranian-Islamic culture and civilization is conceptually regarded as a tradition so as to be conceived of having an onset and stages in which Iranian governments

played an effective part in their development. Because manifestation and analysis of attitudes can play an essential role in elucidation and analysis of trends, this study is looking for emphasizing Yaqub Lais Safar's role and showing his position in making the history of Iran. About Yaqub and his uprising, his relationship with Abasi Dynasty and his stratagem and military actions, his association with Taherian Dynasty and individual and identity traits lots of sporadic writings can be found. This study is unique in its attitude towards this subject by raising primary and secondary questions. Survey method is descriptive and analytical and data-collection method is basically that of library-oriented.

Iranian-Islamic Identity

Iran's culture and society retained its cultural and civilizational elements and kept them in service of new religion in opposition to regions like Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco whose identities were combined with Arabic-Islamic identity. In Occurrence of this important event, different factors played a role. On one hand, Iranian elements played an important role in political, social and cultural evolutions and on the other hand anti-Iranian policies of Abasi and Omavi rulers were involved in them. Sir John Malcolm regards Iranian renaissance to have happened in 3rd, 4th and 5th century. In another perspective, initial years of the 3rd century are regarded as an era of stasis and silence. Although he regards these elements in positive manner but believes that because in this centuries Iran had remained a party of dynasty realm with no independent form of government it was not able to broadly manifest its Iranian identity. Mr. Zarkob has also confirmed this idea in his work called "Two Centuries of Silence". (Zarincob, 2005) But the famous contemporary researcher, Mr. Mortaza Motahari has tried to magnify these elements in his book called "Mutual Services of Iran and Islam". (Motahri, 1981) Instances of the effects of Iranian factors in Islam history can be found in existence of many elite individuals such as Abu-Muslim Khorasani, Abu-Salme, Al-Barmac and Tahir-Ibn-Hosein each of which had an influential part in political arena of that time. Within this process, Iranian cultural and political wealth came into the service of Islamic Culture and Omavi and later on Abasi government constituting its civilizational elements. Killing of Iranian elites by Abasi Dynasty brought up the social, national and religious uprising of Iranian people in the second half of 2nd Century RIC. Gradual

disintegration of Abasi Empire, formation of semi-independent Taherian government and anti-Iranian policies of Motasim Abasi made Iranian people to start a new mission in historical terms.

Yaquob Lais Safar, attitudes

The Association of Yaquob Uprising with Revolts of 2nd Century RIC

The first issue studied regarding Yaquob Lais Safar is his beliefs and commitments. Based on what is inferred from Sistan history also referred to by other researchers, Yaquob believed in God and was committed to and aware of Islamic History. He thought intensely about his deeds and asked God for help (Sistan History, 1987). He did not regard elephant as his god because he mentions that God has called Ibrhh as alike to elephant and this issue shows his awareness of Islamic history through allusion to the assault of Ibrhh to Supreme Kaaba (Above, 206). He always called his victories pre-destined by God (above, 203) while we don't see this attitude within the 2nd-Century RIC uprisings within Iran. Belief orientation of Sinbad uprising within "Siasat-Name" by Eunuch Nezam-ol-Molk has been mentioned as such: " Anytime you were alone with the elderly, they said that once it was written in a book by Bani-Sasan about a man who was resolved to destroy Kaaba because it is regarded as alike to The Sun and we still have The Sun as our god just the way it was in the past (Eunuch, 1931). Sinbad was a magi and his uprising for retribution of killing of Abu-Muslim (MirKhand, 1959). Also his uprising was for revenge but it had anti-Arabic and anti-Islamic orientation (Zarinkub, above). Sinbad uprising could have brought an ancient-times atmosphere to the country if it had resulted in success.

Sinbad uprising had not been suppressed when another person namely Ostad Sis initiated his opposition though his actions had nothing to do with taking revenge on murder of Abu-Muslim. He wanted to revitalize and correct Zoroaster religion (Zarinkub, above; 152). Abu Reihan Bironi has written about Maghnaa uprising that: "the white-Clothe occult and the Turks gathered around him. He made exploitation of money and women permissible and anyone opposing him was killed. He made all laws and principles of Mazdac mandatory and battled away Al-mohtadi army and governed for 14 years." (Bironi, 1942) Bokhara History writes about Maghnaa in this way: "Their religion has no prayer, fasting or ablution after sexual intercourse. But they acted secretly and hid their attitudes from the Muslim and showed themselves as Muslims" (Narshakhi, 1948). The author of "Social History of Iran" believes that because Maghnaa and his fans rose against their government and called "support of deprived social classes" their primary aim, they were highly suppressed by governing social classes and their dependent historians and writers attributed this uprising unfair libels and charges. He, the author, had a serious criticism on the content written on this uprising in *Bokhara History* and writes that although Maghnaa uprising happened twenty years after Abu-Muslim's murder, Maghnaa and his clienteles alluded him in a good manner and believed their uprising as following Abu-Muslims' opposition (Ravandi, 1968). Both Bironi and Narshakhi called Maghnaa inclined towards revitalizing the primeval times while none of valid sources attribute such a trait to him. Khoram-dinan uprising has too been reported as anti-Arabic and Mazdak-oriented (R.K: Nezam-ol-Molk, above, Moghadasi, 1971, Alfehrest, 1967

and Balami, 1974) About the effect of Muslim's murder, Abu-Muslim, Baramaki and Fazl-Ibn-Sahl write on the Yaqub uprising in *History of Sistam* that: "Yaqub talked about the vile and cruelty of Abasian Government talking about what had happened for Au-salame, Baramake, Abu-Muslim and Fazl-Ibn-Sahl with such a high social position. Nobody should trust such a government" (*Sistan History*, above). The comparison of Yaqub uprising and chains of revolts before him during Abasi Dynasty clearly show their differences and similarities. The murder of Iranian elites has affected these uprisings including that of Yaqub but the difference of his revolt with other ones was in its orientation and aims. Yaqub wanted to take revenge on from Abasi Dynasty but he did also believe in God and Islam. His ideas concerning the central government and its head were antithetical but this is not true about Islam. No oppositional quotation or attitude regarding Islam has been reported about him. The standpoint of the author of "The history of Islamic Civilization" about treachery of Abasi Dynasty regarding their men confirms this fact: "The treachery of Abasi Dynasty with their servants and men was so famous that they alluded to this fact themselves. For example when Tahir, the commander of Khorasan army, rose against Amin with Amin's brother, Amin wrote a letter with the following sentences: In the name of God, Tahir! You should know that anybody that helps our family is finally killed by our swords. Give up this move or Prepare yourself for death" (Georgy Zaidan, 1977)

The Standpoint of Yaqub Regarding Islam and Abasi Dynasty

The religious aspects and poise of Abasi Dynasty caused Muslims to obey them. They, through attributing themselves to Abas-the uncle of Prophet Mohammad-

referred to him as the cause and the reason of their success. As Tabari said, in 103 AH, when Mohamad-Ibn-Ali-Ibn-Abdollah-Ibn-Abas were sending his messenger to Khorasan told him to invite people to the pre-defined person (of Mohammad family) without naming him (Tabari, 1973). Balami has told an speech by Prophet Mohammad addressing his uncle Abbas with this implication that Governing will get to his later generations and will remain so till the end of the world and the advocate of their invitation to acceptance of this new government will rise from the east (Balami, 1994).The history of Sistan about effects of Abasi propaganda about the legitimation of their government due to ascribing themselves to The Prophet and firm belief of people in obeying the orders of Caliph writes that: "When Yaqub dominated Naishapoor, some asked him to show Caliph's Order and called him an infidel. When he got aware of the fact, he ordered his servants to invite all famous individuals of Naishapoor so as to show them his Caliph's approval letter. After they got together he ordered that a thousand slaves should get swords, wear shields and golden or copper hamlet all of which were made in that city and captured from the exchequer of Mohammad-Ibn-Tahir. He was seated there in kingly manner and these slaves stood by him in two rows. Then he permitted the Naishapoor elites to come in, let them sit down and then called his private servant to bring the letter so as to read it for them. The servant came back with a Yamani Sword covered in an Egyptian sheath. He took out the sword and gave it to Yaqub. Most of the invited man got unconscious and some said: "You want to kill us?" Yaqub said:" I did not bring this sword to kill somebody. You complained about this fact that I haven't Caliph's approval order. I wanted you to

know that I have it". They looked at each other surprisingly. He added:" Is not it true that this sword has made Caliph the governor in Baghdad? This sword has brought me into this position and so mine and Caliph's approval letters are the same." The he ordered his slaves to capture those people from Taherian Dynasty sending them to Espahand Mountain in exile and told the others that: "I am looking for establishing the divine justice with the help of God, capturing the cruel and those ravishing in vice. If I wasn't so, God would have not given me such victories." (Sistan History, above)In history of Iran within Islamic period this is the first time that the basis of legitimation of Abasi Dynasty is challenged by an Iranian individual. In conceptual domain, Abasi Dynasty had called their government immortal through alluding to and creation of false speeches by Prophet. Now that almost 700 years have passed from the Abasi Dynasty, falseness of that speech is clear to all. It is for a long time that they have been forgotten within the mists of history but within the middle 3rd century when only 120 years had passed of their 500 years dominance, challenging their so-called legitimate government was a noticeable action. This action was done by Yaqub Lais Safar and this was a turning point within the history of Iran and Caliphs' government. Although before Yaqub, Tahir-Ibn-Hosein had deleted the Caliph's name from religious sermons, but Tahir did not bring any challenge into legitimation of Abasi Dynasty.After a century of Abasi government whose basis was on bloodshed, deception of its servants, a dark image of their government was made in the minds of those enlightened elites like Yaqub. Comparison of Dynasty actions with criteria held and promoted by Prophet and his family raised a discordance the result of which was

invalidation of their government and manifestation of their governmental basis truly distinguished by Yaqub. Abasi Caliphs falsely propagated their legitimate domination through mentioning the Quran verse of "Obey God, Obey the Prophet and those of Higher Order among you" in addition to creation of false speeches attributed to the Prophet about them (Ibn-Khalkan, 1905). The military victories of Yaqub and his disobedience from Abasi Dynasty caused them to use the above-mentioned verse and call his actions deviation from God's orders. In comparison with Yaqub's kindness with people, attempt to hold justice and generosity, living in simple manner and his noticeable victories in military encounters, social and economic inequality and weaknesses of Abasi Dynasty caused people to ignore their false speeches and this helped Yaqub to move towards Baghdad so as to end the caliphs' government. Continual loss of Motamid Abasi in giving up eastern and south-eastern lands to lands near Medina showed the high potential of Yaqub in changing political states of that time (Sistan history, above, 228; *Roz-al-Safa History*, 1959;12. *Alrosol-val-Molok History*, 1973). The author of *Sistan History* declares this fact about high influence of Yaqub in battling Abasi Caliphs and world rulers in this way that: "Caliph sent some negotiators to Yaqub and he killed them. It was right after this event that messengers of Torkestan, India, Rome other lands that announced their obedience and forwarded their gifts to him and called him the Ruler of World" (Gardizi, 1968). About the aim of stratagem of Yaqub towards Baghdad, Zain-al-Akhbar wrote: "Yaqub decided to dethrone Motamid Abasi and his prince. His military assault towards Baghdad was due to this objective and for getting those aims he

wrote some confidential letter to Moafagh". Contemporary researcher, Bastani Parizi, writes about the attitude of Yaqub regarding Abasi Caliphs that: "The first ruler which ignored Abasi Caliphs was Yaqun Lais Safar. When Ibn-Balam in Zoranj gave Caliph's letter to him, he tells Yaqub: "It is Caliph's letter. Kiss it." But Yaqub doesn't kiss it and opens it. This intimidates Caliph's messenger and bows to him. Yaqub frees Taheri captives due to Caliph's request" (Bastani Parizi, 1972).

The Role of Yaqub in Formation of New Iranian Identity in Relation to Tahie-Ibn-Hosein

Yaqub accepted neither the domination of Abasi Caliphs nor penetration of Arabic Language within the cultural language of Iran. After glorious victories in Khorasan regions, poems in Arabic were written in his praise but after listening to them he didn't grasp their meaning and addressed his Mohammad-poet laureate-saying "Why should something is said that I can't understand?" It was then that Mohammad started writing poems in Persian. (Sistan History, above). So Yaqub not only ended the Caliphs' influence but also provided a basis for political independence of Iran and made Derry Accent surrogate for Arabic language as the national language of Iranian individuals. He distinguished his nation from other Islamic nations by this action. Jolly Scot Misami, researcher in the field of Culture and History of Iran in Oxford Eastern Studies Institute writes in his book on translation of Tabari Translation called "History Writing in Persian" that: "Beyond Tabari translations, another important issue is hidden and that is knowledge transfer as a symbol of power transfer. Though this subject is not clearly alluded to but this has highest importance in translation. Following Arabic Victory and transfer of material

wealth of Iran to the Arabs, Iranian Knowledge too had been translated into Arabic just like cultural, official and royal trends information. Now after translation of that knowledge into Persian, that lost knowledge was recovered and came to its native land. (Maisami, 2012). Although he discussed this idea in relation to Samanian era, certainly this analysis is showing the prominent role of Yaqub-Lais-safar and his role initiated the onset of this tradition. The founder of Taherian Government that considered himself a native Iranian and belonging to the generation of Rostam- the eminent ancient fighter- and regarded Caliph as owing him a lot omitted his name during religious sermon in 207 AH in Marve Mosque. Caliphs' spies informed him of Taher's actions. Caliph poisoned him by using a female slave within Taher's government. Though Taher proved to have Independence of Iran in his mind but his actions are regarded in the framework of recovering political independence of Iran. In Barthold's Idea, Russian researcher on Iran History, Taherian and Samanian Dynasty, due to their loyal origins and high position granted to them just like official representatives of Arabic Government couldn't show their national and democratic orientations like Abu-Muslim and other promoters of religious sects. Both periods are better to be called the era of totalitarian governments. They both tried to establish a stable government and composure. Due to this fact, a defender of lower classes stood against the high nobility and supported common people. This high nobility did not bear any dramatic reformation and severely acted against revolutionary agents of society. This characteristic showed up more prominently during first independent government of Khorasan namely Abdollah-Ibn-Tahir (Barthold, 1973; 462) After Tahir, those who followed him named

Caliph in their sermons sharing taxes and some governmental earnings with him but they did not lose their independence within internal matters and this is the case too about those governing after Yaqub. The writer of "History of Taheri Clan" believes that leaders and pioneering claiming political independence of Iran after Arab dominance were Safarian, Samanian and Boye dynasties in addition to Ziar Clan but the most prominent pioneer in this area was Taherian dynasty (Nafisi, 1956:22). But Tahir could not challenge the so-called legitimate Abasi Caliph the way Yaqub did. Tahir played an essential role in establishment of Mamoon government but his decision to eliminate the Caliph's name in his sermons is noticeable in the process of political independence of Iran and attempts of this research is to find attitudes resulting in formation of Iranian-Islamic identity led by Yaqub. In attributing his genealogy to ancient kings of Iran, Yaqub Lais Safar had a common point with Tahir-Ibn-Hosein and Other dynasty leaders of Iranian Origin (Ibn Shah Mahmood Soltani, 1956). Almost all of the governments formed within Iran after conquering of it by Muslim army have attributed their history to that of noble Iranian families before Islam. The reason of this has been Iranian reaction to Arabic bias and their condescension of non-Arabic races on one hand and protection of nationalistic feeling of people and using their help through raising their tribal prides on the other. (Ibn-Khaldon, unknown) Another important point in this area is the social position of Yaqub. Another feature that Taherian dynasty did not have was that they were nominated by Abasi dynasty. Samanian and Ghaznavian dynasties had the same situation too but Boye dynasty that played an important role in Iranian uprising had a public stance. This issue is related to Yaqub and

prominent in analysis of his political orientation. This orientation later became a stable policy.

Conclusion

Yaqub-Ibn-Safar has had an initial and important role in formation of Iranian-Islamic identity so that semi-independent and independent governments after him grasped his ideals and attitudes. Taking revenge on Abasi Caliphs because of murder of Iranian elites was the common point of Yaqub uprising and social revolts of 2nd Century AH but the difference is its Iranian-Islamic attitude. In addition to firm belief in God, Yaqub announced his government aims to be bringing justice for common people, dethroning cruel rulers based on divine victories which followed his battles. Other social uprisings tried to denounce Abasi-dynasty dominance with the aid of ancient-times attitudes but Yaqub challenged the legitimatization principles of Abasi dynasty and believed that deception, treachery and fighting to be its main bases. Comparison of Yaqub's uprising with actions of Tahir-Ibn-Hosein in deleting from his sermons the name of Tahir-Ibn-Hosein and his decisions in political realm Iranian self-orientation becomes clear when we come to the point that Yaqub's stance had cultural and civilizational orientation too. Moving his army towards Baghdad for dethroning Abasi dynasty in order to establish a truly Islamic government can be justified. In addition to belief in Islam tried to revitalize Iranian elements. He used the high potential of Persian language and literature in serving Islam and provided the grounds for formation of Iranian-Islamic identity bringing Iranian elements within different realms to the fore and separate from Arabic ones. This study tries to relatively improve past knowledge regarding Yaqub and to create a boundary

between political, cultural and civilizational realms.

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