Preparing the Shi'a for the Age of Occultation

Part 2

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Al-Islam.org

Message of Thaqalayn Vol. 11, no. 1, Spring 2010

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Ahlul Bayt World Assembly [5]

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Topic Tags:

Ghayba (Occultation) [7]

Person Tags:

Imam al-Mahdi [8]

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In the previous part, when we reached the age of Imam Hadi (A) and Imam 'Askari (A), we said that in this period additional measures were adopted and the preparation for entering the Shi'ite for the age of occultation was culminated. Imam Hadi (A) and Imam 'Askari's (A) first action was the same as the Prophet's (S) and other Imams' in informing and prophesying about [Imam] Mahdi (A) and the facts about his occultation, reappearance and whatever Shi'a needed to know about this issue.

Their second action which was carried out by both Imams (A), sometimes wittingly and sometimes compulsorily, was to reduce direct and oral contact with Shi'a so that they become used to having no contact with Imam. Their third important action in making preparations for occultation was to reinforce the network of agents as a key factor in making contact between Imam and the Shi'a whether in presence of Imam (A) or in his absence. In the previous part, we discussed the first two actions.

With respect to reinforcing the network of agents, reinforce the network of agents. In this part, we will try

to study the way the network developed and its status at the age of Imam Hadi (A) and Imam 'Askari (A) and also the age of occultation and its other features and tasks.

A) The lexical and idiomatic definitions of the word "Wikalah" and brief introduction of "Wikalah" network

The word "Wikalah" [in Arabic] means to authorise someone to do a task on someone's behalf especially when someone is unable to do it by himself. And therefore, a "Wakil" [in Arabic, the subjective noun] is one who is entrusted with a task:

Wakil" is a sagacious one, whom is entrusted with a task, the guardian (patron), agent, second (in command).1

In jurisprudential references, "Wikalah" is defined as:

● 'Wikalah' is that another is chosen as agent in decision and approval of a task or to be the second in rank having the right to interfere in what is concerning him.

● 'Wikalah' is delegation and from the viewpoint of Islamic law, it is a particular type of agency.

● 'Wikalah' is to take one as delegate to do a task while he is alive, or it is to give another the right to direct something out of a person's activities at the same time with his own right to do so.2

By paying attention to the lexical and idiomatic definitions of the word "Wikalah", it can be understood that there is "a weakness in fulfilling the task directly" hidden in the lexical origin of this word, which means that the client appoints the agent when he himself is unable to perform a task directly because of certain causes, circumstances and exigencies. Therefore, if Shi'ite Imams (A) took an action in appointing agents, it was because they were not able to make contact with Shi'a in distant locations of Islamic world directly and in normal ways.

Studies show that "organization or network of agents" are terms which are associated with the age of Imams' (A) presence and the age of minor occultation. The reason for labelling that community as "organization or network of agents" is the existence of an interiorized integrity and orderly form in it.

The formation of this community dates back to the age of Imam Sadiq (A). In that age, Imam (A) sent some agents and representatives to near and far Shi'ite towns to make contact between Imam (A) and the Shi'a and also to fulfill their other duties. This community retained more integrity and developed at the time of Imam Kadhim (A) and became more organized and undertook a broader level of activities in late age of Imam Ridha' (A) and later during the age of Imam Jawad (A).

The situation continued during the ages of Imam Hadi (A) and Imam 'Askari (A) until we see an increase in activities of this network because it was the only way of communication between Imams (A) and the

Shi'a in this age. In this way, "the network of agents" began its activities in this course of development and continued to work until the end of the age of minor occultation. Imams' (A) agents were this network's members who had to have certain qualities to hold this position.

They were entrusted with certain tasks when they held the position of being Imam's (A) agents; but then some of them went astray and some who were not agents made false claims of agency in a way that the Imams (A) had to stand against them. To gain a general knowledge about this network, it is necessary to discuss each one of the issues mentioned independently. The following topics are related to this matter.

B) The causes that led to the formation of "the network of agents" and continuation of its activities until the end of the age of occultation

One of the key points in this issue is to determine why Imams (A) founded the network and continued its activities and also to find out about the causes that made Imams (A) care about this community and its members and endeavour seriously to keep and promote it. These causes and circumstances can be listed as below.

1. The necessity of connection between leadership and the followers

It seems that one of the primary causes in developing this network was the necessity of maintaining a connection between the infallible Imams (A) and their Shi'a. In every religious, political and social system, the connection between leadership and the members of the system is vital. Therefore, there must be some persons appointed by the Shi'ite Imams (A) as their agents to play the role of making contact between the Shi'a and the Imams (A).

This matter becomes clearer when we consider the vast size of Islamic world at that time and the spread of the Shi'a in many places in Iraq, Hijaz, Iran, Yemen, Egypt and Morocco. As a result, it was natural that not all Shi'a could travel to visit Imams (A) and, therefore, it was necessary to send some trusted people as the Imams' (A) representatives and to be the link between the leader and his followers.

2. Restrictive atmosphere of Abbasids' time and the necessity of protecting Shi'a and the religion by Imam (A)

Although, existence of a restrictive atmosphere cannot be considered as the major cause of establishment of the network of agents but for sure, the existence of such an atmosphere can cause acceleration of that network's activities and also its progress and development. Therefore, we see the peak of this network's activities at the age of Imam Kadhim (A) and Imam Hadi (A).

3. Preparation of the Shi'a for the Age of Occultation

Undoubtedly, one reasons for establishing the organization was to prepare Shi'a to accept the new situation at the age of occultation, the age during which Shi'a could not make any contacts with their leader and Imam (A) except through his agents and representatives. It was according to this fact that, as Shi'a approached the age of occultation, their way of making contact with Imam (A) became more limited while the network of agents became stronger in a way that at the age of Imam Hadi (A) and Imam 'Askari (A), most Shi'a' affairs concerning the two Imams (A) were conducted through correspondence, representatives and agents.

Therefore, it can be concluded that at least during the age of these two Imams (A), reinforcing the network of agents was a strategic plan for preparing the Shi'a for entering to the age of occultation.

4. Resolving doubts of some Shi'a at the age of occultation

When we reach the age of minor occultation, the necessity of such network becomes more obvious, since the only way for Shi'a to make contact with Imam (A) was through representatives and agents. In this age, special and general representatives and deputies of Imam (A) were the only authorities for Shi'a in political, intellectual, social, economic and religious difficult situations. They were also appropriate authorities for Shi'a at the ages of some of the Imams (A) such as Imam Kadhim (A) and the two Imams: Imam Hadi (A) and Imam 'Askari (A).

C) Time and place of the activities of "the network of agents"

According to references, the age of Imam Sadiq (A) should be considered as the exact time for beginning of the activities of "the network of agents." This network, although having many ups and downs, progressively continued its activities and did not stop working at any stage during the time of the succeeding Imams (A). One of the most critical and decisive periods of this network's activities occurred during the age of minor occultation, because with the absence of the infallible Imam (A), his representatives and deputies were the only references and refuge for Shi'a.

The network's activities lasted until year 329 A.H. when the fourth and the last deputy of Imam Mahdi (A) passed away. In that year, as the major occultation began, the contact with Imam (A) through special deputies broke off and the activity of the network of agents stopped, for the network consisted of persons who were chosen directly by Imam (A) himself as deputies, but when the major occultation began, fully qualified jurists took on the deputies' duties and no one was specifically appointed as Imam's deputy.

Therefore, although in a general sense, jurists took on deputyship of Imam (A) at the age of major occultation, but they were not considered to be part of the network of agents. Then chronologically, the period of that network's activities can be considered from the age of Imam Sadiq (A) until the end of the age of minor occultation (i.e. 329 A.H).

With respect to the location scope of the network, it should be noted that since Shi'a at that time were scattered across the Islamic world, the network was extended to all Shi'a centres and areas.

According to historical sources, the list of regions include: Hijaz (Medina)3, Iraq (Kufah4, Baghdad5, Samarra, Wasit6), Iran (Khurasan, the large7, Qum8, Rey9, Qazvin10, Hamedan11, Azerbayejan12, Qarmisin13, Ahwaz14, Sistan and Bust15) and Egypt16.

D) Duties of "the network of agents"

Examining historical sources illustrates the fact that "the network of agents" had different duties and functions as follows:

1. Collecting religious taxes

Since establishment of this network, agents began to collect religious taxes and hand them over to the Imams or spend them locally according to the instructions of the Imams. For example, Mu'alla b. Khunays is mentioned as the financial agent of Imam Sadiq (A) in Medina. His activity in collecting religious taxes from Shi'a made Abbasids worry, so they martyred him. Mansur who was the Abbasids' caliph accused him of collecting money for assisting the uprising of Muhammad b. 'Abdullah – Nafs Zakiyyah (the Pure Soul).17

Due to expansion of the network of agents and their activities and also growing Shi'ite-resident areas at the age of Imam Kadhim (A), the sum of financial taxes which agents received were much more than those of the time of Imam Sadiq (A). This increase of property in the hands of some of agents tempted some of them to betray Imam's (A) path after his martyrdom. They tried to keep the properties under their control by announcing endowment [of the property] or claiming to be the promised Mahdi (A) or denying Imam Ridha's (A) imamate.18

At the other times, religious taxes were taken and handed over to the Imams in an orderly manner because the network by that time had become more organized.

These financial payments were collected in forms of zakat, khums and endowments.19

It seemed that at the age of Imam 'Askari (A), some Shi'a were a little indolent to pay Khums. During the age of minor occultation, we see some increase in the payment of khums and other taxes by Shi'a. The agents were also more determined to collect the khums or other taxes. Some of the reasons for this are understandable from the following passage in the Wasa'il al-Shi'ah:

This strictness in paying khums was because of some agents, to whom paying taxes was necessary; also there were people in need, among whom, there were some descendants of the Prophet (S).20

Sometimes agents used to collect religious taxes at the age of occultation in special ways that would

establish perfect trust in the side of the tax-payers. For example, an agent of Imam described the exact amount and other details of the money to Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. Mahziyar before taking the money from him. Similar stories are reported about Ahmad b. Muhammad Dinwari[21] and Husayn b. Ruh Noubakhti[22].

During a certain period of the age of occultation, receiving taxes was performed without giving or taking receipt which seems that it had been because of the restrictive atmosphere of Abbasids' period[23].

Properties sent to Imams (A) would be spent for different purposes including:

- Helping descendants of the Prophet (S) and Bani Hashim;
- Spending on common interests of the Shi'a community;
- Resolving financial disputes among the Shi'a;
- Helping the people in need.

2. Managing endowments

Endowed lands and estates were located in different places. For example, Hasan b. Muhammad Saydalani was the agent who managed endowments in Wasit[24]. Some of the agents, such as Ahmad b. Ishaq Qummi in Qom, were designated for the same affairs.[25]

3. Guiding Shi'a and debating with oppositions

One of the network's tasks was to guide Shi'a about their duties and true principles of religion. There is no doubt that the one who is introduced to residents of a city or region as the acting and chief agent of an infallible Imam (A) is the most informed and knowledgeable one in that area. People used to ask them about their religious enquiries. An example is that after Imam Ridha's (A) martyrdom, some people were puzzled about the imamate of Imam Jawad (A) since he was very young. To solve the problem about 80 persons of Twelvers' leaders (among whom were 'Abd al-Rahman b. al-Hajjaj – the chief agent of Iraq – and many other agents) gathered in Baghdad to discuss this issue and clarify it for the public.

At the age of minor occultation, when Shi'a faced challenges of having no access to the infallible Imam (A) obviously there was a greater risk that some people might get confused or puzzled. Therefore, it was the network headed by the deputy of Imam (A) which was the refuge and authority for the people who were in need of guidance. For example, after the first deputy of Imam Mahdi (A) passed away, when people were in doubt about the next deputy, it was Abu Ja'far 'Amri, the second deputy, who took over the responsibility of guiding Shi'a and eliminating their confusion. The story about Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad Dinwari Sarraj proves the claim above.[26]

There is plenty of evidence indicating that Imams (A) would refer Shi'a to agents for knowing the truth at

the time of inaccessibility to Imams (A). One of the best examples is a case when Imam Hadi (A) asked Ahmad b. Ishaq Qumi to go to 'Uthman b. Sa'id when Imam (A) [himself] was out of reach.27

In religious issues, especially during the age of occultation, Imam's (A) deputies were the authority to ascertain whether a belief was true or false. For instance, when Shi'a asked 'Amri, the deputy of Imam Mahdi (A), about Mufawwidhah [those who believed in delegation of divine power to Imams (A)] and their beliefs, he rejected their viewpoints in considering people and their sustenance depending on Imams (A), and he indicated that the sustenance depended only on the Sacred Supreme Being of Allah.28

By adopting that position, the official standing of Imams' (A) deputies in that issue which was the same as that of the Household's followers and Shi'ite community was proved.

In the same way, when one of the Shi'a asked Husayn b. Ruh Nawbakhti about the cause of the domination of Imam Husayn's enemies; he gave a convincing and definite answer to it in a way that the narrator of the story stated that: "I doubted if he gave the answers by himself, but I did not say a single word. [At this time,] he turned to me and said that he had heard all these from its original source (Imam Mahdi (A))"29.

Of course, discussion and debate with those who had other ideas were not exclusive to the time of occultation. For example, 'Abd al- Rahman b. al-Hajjaj, who was the chief agent of Imam Sadiq (A) and the three Imams (A) after him, was once ordered by Imam Sadiq (A) to have a discussion with the people of Medina. It is quoted that Imam (A) told him: "O' 'Abd al-Rahman! Talk with people of Medina, for I like to see someone like you among Shi'a"30.

Sometimes, Imams' (A) agents would get help from reliable Shi'ite narrators of hadiths to resolve doubts. For instance, Husayn b. Ruh Nawbakhti sent a book, whose credibility was in doubt, to narrators of hadiths in Qum so that they could investigate the contents and inform him about anything that was in contradiction with their own knowledge of the narrations. Finally, guiding Shi'a towards the truth by agents was not only about opinions and beliefs but sometimes it would include personal matters too.31

4. Political role of the network of agents

Although the network was established mainly to collect religious taxes, its political role cannot be neglected. Even regardless of all political activities, the issue of collecting properties from around neighbouring areas for Shi'ite Imams (A) itself was considered as a political movement in the eyes of Abbasid rulers.32

Mansur accused Imam Sadiq (A) of collecting money to help the oppositions of Abbasid government and Harun made the same accusation about Imam Kadhim (A). Mutawakkil Abbasi had the same kind of sensitivity about Imam Hadi (A). When he found out about Imam's agents' activities, he sought to destroy the network and arrest its members. He even arrested some of Imam's (A) companions and martyred or

tortured them.[33]

The Abbasid government's attempt to identify the members of the network of agents during the age of occultation is another proof for the network's political role.[34]

5. Communicational role of the network of agents

When discussing the causes of establishing the network of agents, it should be mentioned that one of the most leading causes was the communicational role of the network of agents. It is obvious that those Shi'a who lived in far places and could not find the chance to see their Imam (A) even once, would refer to agents, who made contact with Imam (A), in different cities in order to meet their religious, financial and other needs.

Delivery of religious taxes, answering people's questions about religion and beliefs, presenting letters and messages to Imam (A) and also taking oral and written messages and responses from Imam (A) to Shi'a were agents' other actions that they would perform as the liaison between the Imam (A) and the Shi'a.

It is clear that if the network of agents was not established among people, those affairs would not have any responses and Shi'a would become confused.

One of the most important duties of the agents in periods near the age of minor occultation and during it, was "delivery of Tawqi's". Idiomatically, "Tawqi '" [in Arabic] means the short words which authorities would write at the bottom or sides of books to answer a question, resolve a problem or explain a certain idea or opinion. Although, Imam's (A) short words were often the answers to questions [of people], there were times when Imam (A) himself would issue and send out a Tawqi' even if no one had submitted a question or problem, like the one Imam Mahdi (A) sent out to express sympathy about his first deputy (after he passed away) or another time announcing the end of deputyship of the fourth deputy.

Normally, Tawqi's would be released in about two or three days after a question was addressed, but sometimes the answer was ready even in a shorter time. Tawqi's contained issues such as answers to questions of religious laws, different orders to the agents, receipt of the religious taxes, announcements of appointing an agent, warning about a political danger threatening the network of agents and suggesting solution, issuing denunciation, deposing and dismissing treacherous, corrupted or false agents, describing some of the agents' personalities and clearing them of accusation and settling arguments, and removing doubts and misgivings.[35]

6. Helping the oppressed and needy Shi'a

For instance, 'Ali b. Yaqtin, Imam Kadhim's (A) agent, was one of those who entered Abbasid government to remove oppression from Shi'a and he was successful. When Imam (A) expressed his disapproval of 'Ali b. Yaqtin's cooperation with Abbasid's oppressive government (even though at that low

level) unless he uses this as an opportunity to help the oppressed, Imam (A) told him:

Surly, Allah appoints a minister from His friends beside every illegitimate ruler, in order to remove [the problem] from His friends by that appointed one and O' 'Ali! You are one of those appointed ones.[36]

In a similar manner, sometimes some of the agents were ordered to deliver help [in form of money] from Imams (A) to needy Shi'a, like Muhammad b. 'Isa b. 'Ubayd b. Yaqtin Asadi who was ordered to go for hajj on behalf of Imam Ridha (A) and deliver financial aid to the poor in Medina and Imam Ridha's (A) households.[37]

Sometimes, Imams' (A) agents were ordered to resolve arguments between some Shi'a; where if necessary, they would spend money to do so. For example, Mufac.c.al b. 'Umar Ju'fi, Imam Sadiq's (A) agent and trustee, was ordered to pay 400 Dirhams, on behalf of Imam (A), to Abu Hanifah Sa'iq al-Hajj and his son-in-law who had argument over inheritance. That shows how Imams (A) were determined to preserve unity of Shi'a.[38]

E) Features of "the network of agents"

1. Characteristics of members of "the network of agents"

- Reliability;[39]
- Being confidential and stealthy;[40]
- Cleverness;
- Being organized;
- Piety & trustworthiness;
- Being detached from materialistic things;
- Having none of the attributes of deceit, selfishness, envy, fame-seeking, treachery, exaggeration, ignorance, bigotry and tendency towards the wrong and oppression;
- Being respectful to the Holy Prophet's (S) household;
- Having knowledge about God, tradition and Imams' (A) rights;
- Competency in accomplishing extraordinary tasks at the time of emergencies about Imams' (A) affairs like the four deputies.

2. Other characteristics of "the network of agents"

In addition to the previously mentioned features of this network's characteristics, there are some others as the following:

Leadership

[At every age] a leader who was the Infallible Imam (A) would carefully supervise agents' activities; he (A) would also handle several affairs such as appointing local agents, supervising their functionality, introducing local agents to Shi'a, making their virtues and personalities known to others, dismissing corrupted and treacherous agents and replacing them with new agents, explaining movements of false agency and how to treat them, guiding agents in their duties and the way they had to deal with the Abbasid government, financially supporting agents and also dismissing accusations from them.

Head or chief agents

In the network of agents, different regions had special partitioning and eventually for every vast area, a chief agent was appointed whose duty was to supervise dispatched agents' works in their appointed areas, while local agents were also supposed to refer to the chief agents. Reported by Dr. Jasim Husayn, based on historical evidences agents divided Shi'a regionally into four groups: first region including Baghdad, Mada'in, Sawad and Kufah. Second region included Basra and Ahwaz. Third region included Qum and Hamadan and finally, the fourth region included Hijaz, Yemen and Egypt. Each region was assigned to an independent agent under whose supervision, local representatives were appointed.[41]

Resident and roaming agents

Although most agents sent to regions were residents of those regions, based on historical evidence, some agents undertook the task of observing different regions in order to supervise resident agents' works and also played the role of the medium between Imam (A) and other [resident] agents. Moreover, they would submit religious taxes and properties which people brought to them, to Imam (A).

The factor of hiding and concealment

One of the most essential features of the network of agents was the factor of secrecy due to dangers arising from the Abbasid government. Considering close and constant monitoring of Imams (A) and their Shi'a activities exercised by Abbasid rulers, it seemed necessary for agents' activities to be done in complete hiding. And that guaranteed the security of the network of agents during its working life; and except for few cases, the network itself and its members were secured from the danger of disclosure and collapse.

And in certain cases whereby the danger of disclosure existed, the insight and awareness of the

leadership of the network and also its members' devotion caused the core of the network's existence to be secure and the danger was limited to some members and not the core of the network. For instance, even after being threatened by Dawud b. 'Ali to death if he does not reveal the names of Imam's (A) [close] Shi'a, Mu'ala b. Khunays, Imam Sadiq's (A) agent, answered: "Do you threaten me to death?! I swear by God that even if they were under my feet, I would not disclose them [to you]".42

During the age of minor occultation when 'Ubaydullah b. Sulayman, the Abbasid minister, was informed about agents' secret activities, he consulted with the Caliph and decided to identify the agents; therefore, he sent some people pretending to be some Shi'a who wanted to pay their religious taxes to whom he thought they would be the agents, but all of a sudden act, a Tawqi' was issued by Imam (A) forbidding all the agents from taking any payment from anyone. Muhammad b. Ahmad was among those agents to whom a government spy went to pay religious taxes and in response, he answered that: "You have come to wrong person. This is none of my business". This continued to be the case till the danger was completely over.43

Necessary means of communication

Necessary means of communication were among other features of the network. Means such as letters and release of Tawqi's, Hajj, roaming agents, direct contact with Imam (A), etc. were used to pass the messages between the Imams (A) and the Shi'a.

Introducing some of most eminent agents of Imams (A)

Investigating primary references of biographies of the narrators of hadiths, collections of hadiths and historical references, one would find numerous names of Imams' (A) agents who were the members of the network of agents discussed previously. Although one cannot claim that the names of all Imams' (A) agents are recorded, but in an almost extensive search of these references, we found numerous names of them which assisted so much in knowing this network and its features.

Thorough investigation of these agents' personalities and biographies is far beyond capacity of this paper; therefore, we end this paper by mentioning some prominent names among them and introduce necessary references for further study in the endnote:

1) 'Abd al-Rahman b. al-Hajjaj

2) Muhammad b. Sanan

3) Mu'ala b. Khunays

4) Nasr b. Qabus Lakhmi

5) Mufadhdhal b. 'Amr Ju'fi

6) 'Ali b. Yaqtin

7) 'Abdullah b. Jundab

8) Ibrahim b. Salam Neyshaburi

9) 'Ali b. Abi Hamzah

10) Safwan b. Yahya

11) 'Abd al-'Aziz b. al-Muhtada

12) 'Ali b. Mahzyar Ahwazi

13) Zakarya b. Adam Qummi

14) Ibrahim b. Muhammad Hamidani

15) Ayyub b. Nuh b. Darraj

16) 'Ali b. Ja'far Hamani

17) 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. 'Abdurabbih

18) Ibrahim b. Mahzyar

19) Ibrahim b. 'Abduh al-Nishaburi.[44]

1. Cf. Ahmad b. Faris b. Zakariya, Mu'am Maqa'is al-Lughah, vol. 6, p. 136; Al- Mu'jam al-Wasif, p. 1053; Loghat Nameh Dehkhoda, vol. 14, p. 20542.
2. Cf. Ahmad b. Faris b. Zakariya, Mu'am Maqa'is al-Lughah, vol. 6, p. 136; Al- Mu'jam al-Wasif, p. 1053; Loghat Nameh Dehkhoda, vol. 14, p. 20542.
3. Cf. Sheikh Husi, Al-Ghaybah, p. 102; 'Allameh Mamaqani, Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 3, no. 12451; Sheikh Tusi, Al-Rijal, p. 324; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 47, p. 342, trans. by Yunus b. Ya'qub and Mufadhdhal b. 'Umar Ja'fari; Rijal Kashshi, p. 511, no. 988, trans. by Abu 'Ali, Muhammad b. Ahmad b.Hamad Marvzi Mahmudi.
4. Cf. Tarikh Syasi Ghaybat Imam Dawazdahum (A), p. 78. 134; Rijal Kashshi, p. 493, no. 946; Rijal Najashi, p. 74.
5. Ibid., p. 134. Also, it can be understood from Imam's (A) letter addressing the resident agents of the above regions that he appointed 'Ali b. Rashid as the successor instead of 'Ali b. al-Husayn and he (A) ordered them to go to 'Ali b. al-Husayn. Imam (A) took this action in following Mutawakkil 'Abbasi's action in arresting Shi'ites. About this, refer to: Tarikh Syasi Ghaybat Imam Dawazdahum (A), p. 136; moreover, the meaning of the [Arabic] expression "Qura Sawad" here is surrounding regions. It should be noted that they were called towns since they were fertile regions where farming was common and the land there seemed dark [like cities].
6. Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah, p. 504, no. 35; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 51, p. 336.
7. Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 2, no. 6470, trans. by Fadhl b. Sanan; Rija Kashshi, p. 580, no. 1089. [where] in a letter to 'Abdullah b. Hamduwayh, Imam (A) stated: "So I appointed Ibrahim b. 'Abduh for you to defend the regions and your region's residents. You are charged with obligatory fees set for him, and I [also] appointed him my trusty friend and my trustee there." Also [refer to] Rijal Kashshi, p. 542, no. 1027 trans. by Ayub b. al-Nab.

He was disregarded by Fadhl b. Shadhan – one of Nishabur's noble men – because of his tendency toward extremism, then Imam (A) resolved the matter for him through a decree to Fadhl b. Shadhan. Cf. Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 3, no. 10843, trans. by Muhammad b. Shadhan b. Na'im b. Shadhani; ibid. vol. 2, no. 2820, trans. by 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali al-Tabari; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 51, p. 339; Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah, p. 509; Rijal Kashshi, p. 533, no. 1017; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 51, p. 341. He was living at the time of Husayn b. Ruh, the third deputy of Imam Mahdi (A.J) and went to him.

8. Rijal Kashshi, p. 483, no. 910; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 2, p. 251; Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 3, no. 10304; Mirza Husayn Nuri, Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 374; Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Ardibili, Jami' al-Ruwat, vol. 1, p. 41; A'yan al-Shi'ah, vol. 2, p. 48.

9. Sheykh Tusi stated about Rey in his book, Al-Ghaybah, that: "And at the time of honourable deputies, there were some trustees who carried decrees [from imam (A)] before the originally appointed ones, among whom were Abu al-Husayn, Muhammad b. Ja'far al-Asadi". Also, according to Sheykh Tusi's reports, a person called Salih b. Abi Salih, year 290 A.H, was ordered to collect religious taxes from people and deliver to Abu al-Husayn in Rey. Cf. Sheykh Tusi, Al-Ghaybah, p. 257; Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 2, p. 92; Jami' al-Ruwat, vol. 2, p. 83; Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah, p. 509, no. 38, p. 522.

10. Cf. Dhiyafah al-Akhawan, p. 66.

11. Cf. Rijal Kashshi, p. 611, no. 1136; Rijal Najashi, p. 242; Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 2, no. 9607; Ibid. vol. 1, no. 2752; Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah, p. 483, no. 2; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 51, p. 297; ibid. vol. 97, p. 45.

12. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 20, p. 91.

13. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 51, p. 300; Al-Masalik wal Mamalik, p. 41, 198.

14. Cf. Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 2, no. 6792; Rijal Kashshi, p. 549, no. 1038, 1039, 1040; Rijal Najashi, p. 177; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 12, p. 342; Sheykh Tusi, Al-Ghaybah, p. 211.

15. Cf. Tarikh Syasi Ghaybat Imam Dawazdahum (A), p. 78.

16. Ibid. p. 71; Sheykh Tusi, Al-Ghaybah, p. 43; Manaqib, vol. 4, p. 432; Bihar al- Anwar, vol. 5, p. 285.

17. Cf. Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 3, no. 11994.

18. Those who were the leaders of Waqifite school, were denounced and rejected by imam Ridha (A) and also rejected from the Shi'ite community of that time. From among them are 'Ali b. Hamzah Bata'ini, Hayyan Sarraj and 'Uthman b. 'Isa Rawasi; Rijal Kashshi, p. 493, no. 946; Sheykh Tusi, Al-Ghaybah, p. 42.

19. Mudarrisi Tabataba'i, Maktab Dar Farayand-e Takamol, p. 19; Rijal Kashshi, p. 434, no. 819.

20. Cf. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 6, no. 378.

21. Cf. Sheykh Tusi, Al-Ghaybah, p. 171; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 51, p. 303 (Story concerning Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. Mahziyar Ahwazi).

22. Cf. Al-Ghaybah, p. 195.

23. Cf. Al-Ghaybah, p. 225.

24. Cf. Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah, p. 504, no. 35; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 51, p. 336.

25. Cf. Rijal Najashi, p. 66; Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 1, p. 50; Jami' al-Ruwat, vol. 1, p. 41.

26. As a people's trustee, he took some properties [as endowments] of people of Dinwar to Baghdad, and so did Ahmad b. al-Hasan al-Mawara'i (as the deputy in Qarmisin) while on the way, they faced false claims of some rivals of the second deputy (Abu Ja'far 'Amori). He [Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad Dinwari Sarraj] found the false rivals incapable of proving their claims while Abu Ja'far 'Amri provided necessary proofs and gave a description of the properties, discovered the truth and went toward his own town. You may see the full account of this story in: Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 51, p. 300.

27. Cf. Ayatullah al-'Udhma Khu'i, Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith, vol. 11, p. 112.

28. Cf. Sheykh Tusi, Al-Ghaybah, p. 178; Maktab Dar Farayand-e Takamol, p. 58.

29. Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah, p. 507, no. 37.

30. Rijal Kashshi, p. 422, no. 830.

31. In a case, when one doubted the relation of his son with him; he sent someone to Husayn b. Ruh in order to clarify the matter to him. Husayn b. Ruh sent the messenger to Abu 'Abdullah Bazufari and he said: “That is his son, and has been produced at some certain time and name him Muhammad.” (Sheykh Tusi, Al- Ghaybah, p. 185).

32. That would become confirmed better if we pay attention to the way Mansur accused Imam Sadiq (A) when Imam (A)

sent Mu'alla b. Khunays, his agent, to collect money from Shi'ites, for the movement of 'Abdullah, Nafs Zakiyyah [the Pure Soul]. That led to an accusation for which Mansur called Imam (A) to Baghdad. Similar accusation was made about Imam Kadhim (A) by Harun. (Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 3, No. 11993.)
33. Mutawakkil 'Abbasi sued Ayyub b. Nuh who was Imam Hadi's (A) agent in Kufah because of such sensitivity he had about Imam Hadi's (A) agents. (Tarikh Syasi Ghaybat Imam Dawazdahum (A), p. 81)

He also put 'Ali b. Ja'far Hamani in jail and decided to kill him. When 'Ubaydullah b. Yahya b. Khaqan, his minister, wanted to mediate in the matter, Mutawakkil 'Abbasi told him: "Do not bother yourself to mediate in the matter for him or alike him for his uncle told me that he is an extremist Shi'ite and also 'Ali b. Muhammad's (A) agent. (Rijal Kashshi, p. 607, no. 1129, 1130; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 50, p. 183)

Mutawakkil martyred Abu 'Ali b. Rashid who was the chief agent of Baghdad, Mada'in and Qura Sawad. Mutawakkil also killed some others such as 'Isa b. Ja'far by striking them with a spear. He lashed B. Band 300 times and then threw him into Dijlah [Tigris River]. (Rijal Kashshi, p. 603, no. 1122)

34. 'Abd b. Sulayman, Abbasid minister, sent some people as spies pretending to pay religious taxes to different agents about whom he was suspicious in order to find out if they were really agents; but becoming informed by Imam (A), none of the agents accepted any money until the danger was completely passed. (Bihar al- Anwar, vol. 51, p. 310.)
35. Cf. Tarikh al-Ghaybat al-Sughra, p. 472; Maktab Dar Farayand-e Takamol, p. 131; Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah, p. 483, no. 4; Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 2, no. 10222; Rijal Kashshi, no. 1005; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 82, p. 50; Sheykh Tusi, Al-Ghaybah, p. 185.
36. Rijal Kashshi, p. 433, no. 817.
37. Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 3, no. 11211.
38. Cf. Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 3, no. 12084.
39. Cf. Maktab Dar Farayand-e Takamol, p. 22; Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith, vol. 4, p. 74; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 20, p. 114 also vol. 18, p. 100; Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 3, no. 281; vol. 1, no. 200; vol. 2, no. 106.
40. It is for this reason that Imam Sadiq (A) criticized about Mu'alla b. Khanis's deed in revealing some of Imams' (A) secrets that lead to his death when Imam (A) stated: "May God forgive Mu'alla! I predicted that, for he revealed our secret and whoever reveals our secret before one, who is not authorized; he will be killed by weapon or rope." (Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 75, p. 85); Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah, p. 501, no. 28.
41. An example of replacing local agents is appointing Abu 'Ali b. Rashid by Imam Hadi (A) replacing 'Ali b. Husayn b. 'Abd Rabeh. (Cf. Rjal Kashshi, p. 513, no. 991.) With respect to supervising agents' functionality, see the story of Imam Sadiq's (A) treating one of the treacherous agents (Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 13, p. 291); With respect to introducing agents to Shi'ites, see the story of introducing 'Uthman b. Sa'eed 'Amri to some Shi'ites of Yemen by Imam 'Askari (A) (Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 5, p. 345).

About dismissing treacherous agents, see the story of denunciation and dismissal of Faris b. Hatam Qazwini by Imam Hadi (A) (Rijal Kashshi, p. 552, no. 1003-1011); About explaining movements of false agents, see Imam Hadi's (A) letter to one of Shi'ites and his expression of disapproval of Muhammad b. Nusayr Numayri and Hasan b. Muhammad b. Baba'i Qummi (Rijal Kashshi, p. 520, no. 999); About assigning tasks, see Imam 'Askari's (A) letter regarding appointing Ibrahim b. 'Abduh and assigning his tasks (Rijal Kashshi, p. 509, 982).

42. Cf. Tanqih al-Maqal, vol. 3, no. 11994; Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith, vol. 18, p. 2374; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 47, p. 81, 342.
43. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 51, p. 310, no. 30.
44. To find more evidences concerning agency of mentioned names, the reader can refer to original biographies of the narrators of hadiths and also Sheykh Tusi's Al- Ghaybah and Sheykh Saduq's Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah and B. Shahr Ashub's Manaqib Al-e Abi Talib.

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