



The Political-Religious Role of Abu Bakr Hasiri Sistani Faqih Shafei in the Court of Ghaznavid Based on Two Literary and Historical Sources

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Abstract

Common interests emerged between religious leaders and rulers according to propagation of Islam and the close relationship between politics and religion in Iran. One of the personalities who had both of the two elements of politics and religion is Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri, the great jurisprudent of the Shafei religion in Sistan and the eastern countries of Iran, who entered the court of the Ghaznavids and enjoyed a high position. He was a special counsellor for Sultan in political and religious affairs. Given this issue, this study is in line with the answer to this main question: what political and religious role did Abu Bakr Hasiri, as the counsellor and the great jurisprudent of the Shafei religion in eastern Iran, play in the court of the Ghaznavids? We assume that he played a key and influential role in the court of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni and his son, Sultan Massoud. The research method is descriptive-analytical and based on two literary and historical sources (Divan Farrokhi Sistani and Beyhaqi history). Due to the connection between politics and religion and the role of jurisprudents and religious leaders in legitimizing the rulers, Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri has greatly contributed to the political strategy of the Ghaznavid rulers to legitimize their political and religious views in public opinion, also, the support of the Ghaznavi rulers from Khajeh Abu Bakr and his religious ideas have played an important role in propagation the Shafi religion and marginalizing his religious rivals.

Keywords: *Ghaznavids; Relationship between Politics and Religion; Khaje Abu Bakr Hassiri; Farrokhi Sistani; Beyhaghi History*

1. Introduction

The Turkish non-Iranian Ghaznavids were aware that they had no national legitimacy with the Iranian people before gaining power in Iran. Therefore, they relied on religious legitimacy, and the Abbasid caliph, as the leader of the Sunnis, played a key role in this legitimacy. From the very beginning, Sultan Mahmud sought the support of the caliph, and the caliph, who saw that Sultan's opinion agreed with his political and religious goals, sent him from Baghdad the covenant of Khorasan and the brigade,

disgrace and crown, and called him "Yamin al-Doleh and Amin al-Mullah Abu al-Qasim Mahmoud Amir al-Mo'menin" (Gardizi, 1984: 381). They were well aware that they should gain the support of Sunni religious leaders for advancing this policy.

One of the religious characters who was considered by Sultan Mahmud and his son Sultan Massoud during this period is Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri Sistani, a Shafei jurisprudent who has greatly contributed to the political strategy of the Ghaznavid rulers to legitimize their political and religious views in public.

Khajeh Abu Bakr Abdullah Ebn-Yusuf Sistani, known as Abu Bakr Hassiri, was a counsellor of Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznavid. He had a Shafei religion. Farrokhi Sistani has praised him for this great attribute and Abolfazl Beyhaqi has also named him as "Faqih Abu Bakr Hasiri" (Beyhaqi, 2004: 173). There is no information about his life, especially before he attended the court of Sultan Mahmoud Ghaznavi and his son, Sultan Massoud.

The most important source about the life of Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri is the history of Beyhaqi. Beyhaqi who lived in his neighborhood and considered himself indebted to him and his son Ebrahim Hassiri (Beyhaqi, 2004: 174-173). Also, Farrokhi Sistani, who was one of his compatriots and devotees, mentioned him in some poems and introduced him as the great counsellor of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi, and also he provided valuable information about Abu Bakr Hassiri's influence and position in the court of Sultan Mahmud and his son, Sultan Massoud. According to Farrokhi, he was from a virtuous and learned family, moreover, he was the leader of the followers of the Shafei religion in Sistan. Farrokhi mentioned his skill in writing and called him "Sar-Ashab Hadith", "Hojjat Shafei" and "Sepehr Adab". Abu Bakr's father was also a "jurisprudent" and "chief" man from whom Abu Bakr inherited greatness and virtue (see: Farokhi Sistani, 1984: 170-181).

The author of the Sistan history attributes Khajeh Abu Bakr to "Neh", one of the district of Sistan, and introduces him as the great jurisprudent of Sistan, Abu Bakr Nehi (History of Sistan, 2008: 332). Beyhaqi mentions the death of Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri in 424 AH in the city of Bost, one of the cities of Sistan. He was surprised because Khajeh Ahmad Hassan Meymandi, who did not have a good relationship with Abu Bakr Hasiri, also died in the same year. "On 7th Safar, the letter was arrived from Bost to Eskedar which expressed that Abu Bakr Hasiri passed away, and it was surprising situation in which the relationship between Khajeh Ahmad Hassan and Abu Bakr Hasiri was always bad but the death of both of them happened close" (Beyhaqi, 2004: 349).

1.1. Statement of Research Problem, Questions and Hypotheses

Sistan, the birthplace and place of development of Khajeh Abu Bakr, was involved in political conflicts and religious prejudices and sectarian tensions at that time; this situation has long been existed due to the presence of various political and religious groups in this part of the country which was fueled by the presence of Arab tribes after propagation of Islam. Although in the second and third centuries AH, religious prejudices and political, ethnic and sectarian differences were limited to conflicts between Sunnis and Khavarej or Khavarej with themselves, in the fourth and fifth centuries, which coincided with the days of the life of Khajeh Abu Bakr, the scope of religious prejudices between the Islamic sects has widened, so that the conflict between the Sunni religions is expanding, for example, the followers of the Hanafi religion versus the followers of the Shafei religion, and they competed with each other as the two groups of Samaki and Sadaqi. Samakieh and Sadaqi were, respectively, the companions of the opinion and followers of the Hanafi religion and the companions of the hadith and followers of the Shafei religion (Sistan History, 2008: 268).

Taher opened the way for profiteers and opportunists during his reign by having useless fun, lack of attention to important matters, and banishing wise and benevolent people. Throughout the Saffarid period, there was no period as intense as Taher reign in terms of religious purges and prejudices. There was already a quarrel between Tamimi and Bakri and Sadqi and Samaki, but it reached its peak during his weak and powerless reign. The author of the history of Sistan writes: "And prejudice was expanded over Sistan in that days among the sects, and many people were killed, one was called Sadqi and another one was called Samaki" (Ibid: 268). Amir Taher and his brother Yaqub not only did not take any action to resolve the conflicts, but with the support of one of the parties involved, they also intensified the crisis and ignited the flames of prejudice between them. People were also divided into two groups. A group of them supported the companions of the opinion (the Hanafis) and other group was the supporter of the hadith companions (the Shafei). In the meantime, Taher and Yaqub supported, respectively, the companions of the hadith and opinion (Ibid: 268).

Until the fall of the Saffari dynasty by Sultan Mahmud Ghazni, religious prejudice occasionally led to clashes, killings and looting, and lots of people died in the area. According to Moghaddasi at that time, "prejudice has always been evident in two groups" (Moghaddasi, 1990, vol. 2: 444).

After the conquest of Sultan Mahmud on Sistan in 393 AH, he first tried to appoint Taher Ebn-Zeinab, who played an important role in his domination on Sistan, to rule Sistan, but after consulting with the great jurist of Sistan named Abu Bakr Nehi, he abandoned the decision and appointed Qabji Hajib to rule there (Sistan History, 2008: 332).

We are witnessing the political active presence of Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri after the fall of the Saffarid rule and the domination of the Ghaznavid rule. He, who had spent part of his life at the end of the Saffarid rule in Sistan and witnessed the religious rivalries and conflicts of that time, did not want that situation to continue during the rule of the Ghaznavid, so he decided to enter in court of Sultan Mahmud, and finally he was noticed by Sultan Mahmud. Khajeh Abu Bakr, counsellor of Sultan Mahmud, wanted to reduce local strife, and ethnic and religious prejudices in Sistan by electing a non-Sistani ruler. However, according to the author of the history of Sistan, not only the situation of Sistan was not better than before but also the conquest of Sistan by the Turks was the beginning of the suffering of the people (Sistan History, 2008: 332).

However, according to the author of the Sistan History, the situation of Sistan, under the rule of the Ghaznavid Turks, not only did not get better than before, but also got worse than it was, but the religious classes of Sistan wanted to support the Ghaznavids. In the conflicts between the Ghaznavids and the Seljuks, the jurisprudents and religious leaders supported the Ghaznavids, because the Ghaznavid sultans were known for their support of the Sunni religion, and these religious classes were scared because of the chaos created by the Turkmen.

Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi also sought to gain credibility via Sunni jurisprudents and the Abbasid caliph, so Sultan made Abu Bakr Hassiri Sistani, who was a one of the Shafei jurists in eastern Iran, one of his special advisers and counsellor and consulted with him on political and religious issues because of his high social standing with the general public and also for the advancement of Sultan's government goals.

So far, no serious research has been done on the political-religious role of Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri Sistani in the Ghaznavid government. However, Mr. Gholam Hossein Yousefi, in a book entitled "Golden Paper: Notes in Literature and History" published by Sokhan Publications in 2007, has dedicated a few pages to Abu Bakr life and the story between Abu Bakr and Ahmad Ebn Hassan Meymandi. Also, the article "Comparative study of historical anecdotes, "Abu Bakr Hassiri" and "Afshin and Budolf" refers to the adventures of "Abu Bakr Hassiri" and "Afshin and Budolf" from the perspective of construction

and form in the history of Beyhaqi written by Saeed Hesampour and Razieh Sadat Alavi in the scientific-research journal of the Persian Language and Literature, which the third volume was published in 2009. He compared the narrative aspects used in these two stories.

Considering the importance and position of jurists and religious leaders in this period for advancing the goals of the government, this study tries to answer these basic questions: first of all, what was the role of Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri as a Shafei jurist and thinker in the Ghaznavid court? And secondly, how did the Ghaznavid government use him to advance its political goals? In line with these questions, the following hypotheses can be made: First, Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri had a very important and influential political and religious role in the court of Sultan Mahmud and his son, Sultan Massoud. Secondly, both Sultan Mahmud and Sultan Massoud used the position and influence of Khajeh Abu Bakr to advance their political and religious goals, meanwhile, Khajeh Abu Bakr used their power and wealth to expand his social and economic influence and position. To prove the hypotheses, the character of Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri has been studied and analyzed both politically and religiously based on two literary and historical sources.

2. Discussion

2.1. The Political Role of Abu Bakr Hassiri

Although Abu Bakr Hassiri is known as the "jurist", his official job in the Ghaznavid court was "counsellor". Counsellor had several duties in the court. They acted as advisers in addition to filling the king's leisure time and entertaining him. Hence, they were very close to the kings and influenced behind-the-scenes policies. Abu Bakr Hassiri was politically influential in Sultan Mahmud's court and was one of his special and trusted counsellors. Abu Bakr Hassiri has explicitly commented on the selection of people for different jobs. Farrokhi says: "Perhaps, some people were released from prison and some were imprisoned according to his opinion."

Sometimes he says that send someone for a job, sometimes he says that solve someone problem (Farrokhi Sistani, 1984: 320).

Sultan Mahmud paid special attention to Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri and brought Abu Bakr closer to himself every day and gave him "slave" and "cradle" which was one of the special privileges of the sultan's rulers:

The influence and position of Abu Bakr Hassiri for the Sultan is evident from many of Farrokhi Sistani's poems written in his praise. He considers the close relationship between the sultan and Khajeh as to be a father-son relationship. The Sultan listens to his advice and applies it, he is sure that Khajeh thinks only of the interests of his government.

Of course, this closeness caused jealousy and conspiracy of his rivals, but the Sultan did not value their words and paid more and more attention to Khajeh.

Some have rightly pointed out that perhaps it was because of this position that after the removal of Ahmad Ebn Hassan Meymandi from the ministry in 415 AH and the confiscation of his property, Sultan Mahmud told Bonsar Meshkan to write a letter to Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri to made Meymandi swear again in front of the congregation that he has nothing left of his property. Earlier in this phenomena, some of Sultan Mahmud's messages to Meymandi about the confiscation of his property had been sent by Abu Bakr Hassiri. Considering that Ahmad Meymandi considered Abu Bakr Hassiri as one of his enemies and also because of his involvement in this phenomena, it is not surprising that Meymandi in

his second ministry during the reign of Sultan Massoud was trying to take revenge on Hassiri (Yousefi, 2007: 255).

According to Farokhi, Khajeh Abu Bakr has a lot of talent. In addition to being a jurist and a religious scholar, he also played a role as a minister and even commander of the army.

Abu Bakr Hussiri's war mission to Turkestan was one of his greatest political missions during the reign of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi. Farokhi describes his heroism and bravery in great detail and compares his battles with Sultan Mahmud's wars with the Indians and says:

Towards the end of his life, Sultan Mahmud removed his son Massoud from the throne and chose his younger son Muhammad as his successor, which caused conflicts among the courtiers. In this story, Abu Bakr Hassiri sided with Massoud due to his foresight. Beyhaqi has referred to the sufferings of Abu Bakr as a result of this tendency on behalf of Massoud (Beyhaqi, 2004: 79).

After the death of Sultan Mahmud in 421 AH, the grandee of the Ghaznavid court dismissed Amir Mohammad after a short reign and imprisoned him in Kutztiz Castle because of fearing that Massoud would overthrow him; when they wanted to write a letter to Massoud from Teginabad, apologizing for bringing his brother to work and summoning him to Ghaznin, the letter was sent to him by Abu Bakr Hassiri and Mangitrat, the brother of the great Hajib, Ali Gharib, who was one of the jurists and political grandee of the time of Sultan Mahmud and had a good relationship with Sultan Massoud (Ibid: 78). The grandee of the Ghaznavid court were aware that Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri had a high position with Sultan Massoud, and if they sent him to the Sultan and he interceded for them, the Sultan would accept their excuse for Abu Bakr Hassiri so they sent Khajeh with Great Hajib brother. Finally, their foresight and prediction came true and their excuse was accepted.

Sultan Massoud paid special attention to Abu Bakr Hassiri because he had supported him during his father's reign. For this reason, he comforts Khajeh after reaching reign. "And he covered Abu Bakr Hassiri by the great clothe as expensive as they give counsellor." He called Khajeh and said that you suffered a lot during my father reign because of friendship and you did such a service to us and your right became more obligatory. These are official numbers. So see the goodness. He prayed and returned "(Beyhaqi, 2004: 79). Of course, this bias ends to the detriment of Abu Bakr Hassiri.

When Sultan Massoud came to the throne, he asked Meymandi to take the position of the minister, but he did not accept, and finally he accepted the position of the ministry in terms of proposing conditions and accepting them by the sultan (Beyhaqi, 2004: 173). Sultan Massoud's aim was to avoid direct confrontation with the courtiers. For this reason, Khajeh considered Ahmad Hassan Meymandi as a means of taking revenge on them. Meymandi also started taking revenge from the moment he came to the ministry. "And Khajeh began to take revenge from the beginning, and expressed the hadith of Boalqasem Kasir, who had been dismissed from his temporary job, and Abu Bakr Hasiri and Boalhassan Aghili, who were among the counsellors, and he had several intentions" (Beyhaqi, 2004: 173).

The reason for Meymandi's revenge on Abu Bakr Hassiri was his role in dismissing and confiscating his property during the reign of Sultan Mahmud. Sultan Mahmud, who did not want the power and wealth of his powerful minister Khajeh Ahmad Hassan Meymandi to be a problem for him in the future, tried to oust him and confiscate his property, and in this incident Abu Bakr Hassiri played an important role for the sultan. Khajeh Meymandi was questioned and sworn in by Abu Bakr during the reign of Sultan Mahmud (415 AH) during the confiscation of his property (Aghili, 1985: 177-178). Now that Meymandi was back in power, is the best time to take revenge on his opponents, in particular, Hassiri.

The story of Abu Bakr Hassiri's encounter with one of the Meymandi's men is the evident for this incident, the report of which is detailed in the history of Beyhaqi (see: Beyhaqi, 2004: 176-173).

Sultan Massoud did not know what to do? Whose side to take? Should he support a minister who has begged him to take office? Or take the side of Abu Bakr Hassiri who struggled to support him during his father's time. Inevitably, he asks for help from Bonser Meshkan and says: "Hassiri has the right to be close to me, who is one of my father's great counsellors, and he has suffered a lot because of our rule, and in no way I will hand over Khajeh who forgave such men..." (Beyhaqi, 2004: 179). Eventually, Bonser Meshkan interceded and ends the problem according to the Sultan's wishes.

In addition to the political support provided by the government, Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassairi already had extensive financial resources, which helped him to spread the Shafei religion. His economic situation had reached such a level that Meymandi warned Sultan Massoud and said: "punish Hassiri so that it harms Khajeh badly, because Khajeh has become powerful and he and his son have a lot of property." And I took three hundred thousand dinars to the treasury of Mamour for the sake of father and son" (Beyhaqi, 2004: 176). Of course, Meymandi's warning is not because of benevolence, but he wants to take revenge on Hassiri, because he played a role in the dismissal and confiscation of his property by Sultan Mahmud, and he thinks that now is the time to retaliate. But Sultan Massoud was not satisfied with this, because Abu Bakr Hassiri helped him a lot in advancing the political and religious goals of his government.

2.2. The Religious Role of Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri

From the very beginning of reign, the Ghaznavids sought to gain religious prestige and the satisfaction of the Abbasid caliphs and Sunni religious leaders. Sabkatgin received the title of Nasereddin from Amir Samani after the suppression of Abu Ali Simjour, who was accused of attributed to Qarmatians (Jozjani, 1984, vol. 1: 227). After the fall of the Samanid reign in 398 AH, Mahmud Ghaznavi established friendly relations with the Abbasid caliphs and showed obedience to Caliph al-Qadir Ballah, and he strengthened the foundations of his government after receiving the charter of the government from the caliph. Amir Mahmud was first named "Yamin al-Dolah and Amin al-Mullah" by the caliph (Gardizi, 1984: 210). After repeated campaigns to India and gaining many trophies from there and sending a part of those trophies along with the conquest rights to the caliph, he received from the caliph other titles such as Nezam al-din and Kahf al-Muslimin (Shabankareh, 2002, vol. 2: 61). After Mahmud's death, the caliph sent covenant and titles to Sultan Massoud, which according to Baeyhaqi, Massoud was very glad about this and sent several gifts for the judge, chairman, orator and leader of the Alavids and chieftain of Ghazian (Beyhaqi, 2004: 59). Also, when the caliph's envoy handed over the gift to Sultan Massoud, "Amir came down from the throne and open out the prayer rug that Yaqub Laith had gave. Amir Massoud put on his cloth and prayed ... Sultan got up and went to the bathhouse and put on the clothes and said that they gave two hundred thousand dirhams to the dervishes, and then the people came and prepared food. Sultan plea was that I did write: Nasser Din Allah, Hafiz Ibadullah, executed by God, the apparent caliph of God, Amir al-Mumenin" (Ibid: 78). These titles given by the caliph show the caliph's trust in the Ghaznavids and their decisions and actions in line with the policies of the Abbasid caliphs.

With the spread of Islam and the strengthening of its foundations, the caliph gained great political and religious position, and the rulers related themselves to the basis of religion in order to attract the attention of the people and satisfy them (Zidan, 2000: 826-827). If the people respected the caliphs, it was for their religious status, and if not, they did not care about the caliph himself. The caliphs inevitably brought the jurisprudents, narrators and memorizers of the Qur'an closer to themselves, and in fact they took power from the caliphs and caliphs from them (Ibid: 830).

The rulers of Ghaznavid also gained the support of religious leaders from the very beginning of their presence in the political arena. Since Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri and his family have long been among the religious leaders of Sistan and had a great social base, they attracted the attention of the Ghaznavids and used them to advance their goals.

Farrokhi Sistani refers well to the religious role of Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri and says:

Khajeh Seyyed Bubakr Hassiri was as great as the Prophet, Bubaker and Umar.
He was the son of jurisprudent and chairman and he found jurisprudence from leaders.
Sistan was proud of Khajeh like the story of Sam and Rostam.
Wherever ask who Abdullah Ebn Yusuf is, everyone says that Karimi who is unique.

Abu Bakr Hassiri's social base in Sistan and among the Shafei followers was one of the most important reasons for his influence in the Ghaznavid court. Some believe that the support of the Ghaznavid government for the Sunni religion (especially in its Hanafi and Shafei sects) and the support of the spiritual position of the Abbasid caliph required the support of jurists who were supporters of the Abbasid caliphs according to their religious views. Accordingly, during the Ghaznavid period, the jurists were respected and were sent by the court as high-ranking ambassadors to carry out missions outside the territory of the Ghaznavids. They were consulted by government leaders in important matters (Forouzani, 2008: 402). Sultan Mahmud first defended the Karamians and Hanafis, but later refused the Hanafi religion. He chose the Shafei religion with the encouragement of Imam Qafal Shashi (Chachi) (Ibid: 401). Of course, the general tendency towards the Shafei religion at that time was effective on Sultan Mahmud.

At the beginning of the fourth century, the Shafei religion clearly overtook the Hanafi religion in some large cities. Shafei was critical of the school of jurisprudence of Abu Hanifa and Malik, to which referred as neglect of hadith. It was normal for the people of Hadith in Iran, who were opposed to the Hanafi religion and called it the religion of opinion, so they attracted to the Shafei religion (Wilfred Madlung, 1993: 103).

Therefore, Abu Bakr Hassiri Shafei could be useful both scientifically and religiously in line with the political and religious goals of the Ghaznavid government, so he was considered by Sultan Mahmud and his son, Sultan Massoud. A point that is also mentioned in Farrokhi Sistani's poem:

With a pure religion and with good blessings, no Muslim is pestered by him
The king of the Muslim world is Mahmoud, I support him with all my heart
It has been said that in my property the person you want was not who you are talking to in this sense
I learned bravery and religion from you, this was my habit and this should be smooth
Look at my government and observe it in the religion of everyone, guide those who got lost their way
And whoever does not return to your word, throw him down from the throne and hang him up
Near the east, it is his base because the world has never seen like him (Farrokhi Sistani, 1984: 171-170).

In another poem, Farokhi refers to the role of Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri in the spread of the Shafei religion in eastern Iran and says:

He is Shafei and a hundred times a day, Shafei is proud of his religion
Khajeh added honor to Shafei religion, Shafei became strong because of Khajeh (Ibid: 322).
From Farrokhi Sistani's point of view, Abu Bakr Hassiri is a virtuous and capable jurisprudent whose influence on the scientific centers of the Islamic world is significant and the scholars of Basra and Baghdad see him as a leader:
There is no one like Khajeh Seyyed Abu Bakr Hassiri, in the world in terms of wisdom

Ali is greater than any other scholars in knowledge but his wisdom is great so that can compare with Ali's.

They consider his words very important in Basra and Baghdad (Ibid: 45)

In fact, Abu Bakr Hassiri's alignment with the religious policies of Sultan Mahmud is another reason for his influence in the Ghaznavid court. Sultan Mahmud, who was an anti-Qarmati ruler, also found Abu Bakr anti-Qarmati and agreed with him; hence, he encouraged Khajeh to religious guidance and opposing with the opponents of his religion. This point comes out of Farrokhi Sistani's poems better than any other historical source:

Your anger is because of religion and your work should be based on religion
Irreligious man fear from your awe even if there is a distance between you and him

Live eternally and keep this custom and habit, destroy the house of Qarmatians from time to time(Ibid:46)

Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri is head of the companions of Hadith, the evident of Shafei and the Miracle of the Prophet (Ibid: 171)

Day and night he finds the followers and the fans everywhere and always beats them like the snake head (Ibid: 174)

Some orientalist have rightly pointed out that Sultan Mahmud, contrary to what historians and poets of the period stated, did not have a strong religious prejudice and used religion as a tool, because apparently accepting Islam was not a condition even for the Indians who were employed to serve in army by the Ghaznavid (Fry, 2006, vol. 4: 157).

The Ghaznavid sultans, especially Sultan Mahmud, cleverly used religion for their own governmental purposes. Competing with the infidels of India and being Rafidi and Qarmati was an important pretext for achieving political goals as well as a means of confiscating property and wealth of people. The removal of the Ismaili sect from Ghaznavids territory, in particular, was to the delight of the Abbasid caliphs, who were overshadowed by their Fatimid rivals in Cairo at this time.

The religious policy of the Ghaznavid sultans was similar to the policy used by the Abbasid caliph and later the Seljuks, and it was the famous policy of "divide and rule" (Shimoyama and Aghajari, 2015: 90). For the sultans of Ghaznavid, religion was more a tool than a goal. For this reason, they supported different religions in different circumstances so that reducing their support for the previous religion and then supporting the new religion. A policy that was especially used by Sultan Mahmud.

Barthold's commentary on Sultan Mahmud's religious policy is well written: "Mahmud, of course, understood the connection between political and religious conservatism and therefore supported the jurisprudents and sheikhs, but this support was somehow valid up to the level that they were considered as his political involuntary tool (Barthold, 1987, J 2: 611). In line with such a policy, although, Khajeh Abu Bakr Hassiri had a lot of political and religious influence in the court, he could not make a fundamental change in the views and political behaviors of the Ghaznavid rulers.

Conclusion

According to Iranian thought, the relationship between religion and politics is certain. Throughout history, rulers have used religious scholars and religious leaders, who wielded great social influence among the general public, to advance their political goals and programs, and perhaps they supported religion and religious leaders ostensibly to attract public attention but in fact to advance government

goals. This issue is highly regarded in the Ghaznavid era, and Sultan Mahmud tries to gain credibility for himself from Sunni jurists and the Abbasid caliph. He used every means to show his legitimacy. Of course, religious scholars also took advantage of this opportunity to enjoy the support of the sultan to propagate their religious and sectarian ideas, and while spreading their religious thought, they marginalized their religious rivals. It was in this direction that people such as Abu Bakr Hassiri Sistani, who was one of the Shafei jurists in the east of Iran, came to the attention of the Ghaznavid rulers and became the special advisers and counsellors of the court of Sultan Mahmud and his son, Sultan Massoud. Although Abu Bakr Hassiri is known as the "jurist", his official job in the Ghaznavid court was "counsellor", who acted as a consultant in the court and was influential in the secret policies of the Sultan and even in affairs such as selecting people for different jobs and imprisoning or releasing people from prison.

Abu Bakr alignment with the religious policies of Sultan Mahmud is one of the reasons for his influence in the Ghaznavid court. Sultan Mahmud, who was an anti-Qarmati ruler, also found Abu Bakr anti-Qarmati and agreed with him; hence, he encouraged him to religious guidance and oppose with the opponents of his religion. At that time, the Shafei religion was one of the most influential religions in eastern Iran, and Abu Bakr Shafei could be useful both scientifically and religiously for the political and religious goals of the Ghaznavid government and increase the legitimacy of Ghaznavid rule in public opinion, and strengthen the foundations of their sovereignty. On the other hand, Khajeh used the power and wealth of the Ghaznavid sultans to promote religious ideas and spread the Shafei religion in eastern Iran and increase its social and economic position.

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