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Persian Shu'ubiyya from the Abbasid Era to the Modern Era Weak Excuses

Al-Qurtubi said about it: It is a movement that “hates the Arabs and favors the non-Arabs”, while Al-Zamakhshari said in *Asas Al-Balaghah*: “They are the ones who underestimate the status of the Arabs and do not see them as superior to others”.

The Shu'ubis call their movement the “Settlement Movement” (settlement between their rights and the rights of the Arabs).

Discrimination between the Arabs and the loyalists appeared in Persia to reinforce a Shu'ubi nationalist thought against them, including that the Arabs are fanatic about their race. This accusation is easy to respond to, especially since they were in the stages of Islamic conquests and that its from their race that caliphs, princes, writers, poets and jurists emerged. They were proud of their race and did not equate the Arabs with the slaves, especially from the Persians.

Shu'ubiyya began to have a new meaning in history that aims at intolerance to non-Arabs, considering them, with their great history, as superior to the Arabs. Jews of Persia led this direction, helped by the fact that Abbasid state rose with Persian swords and that Persian thinkers cared about excelling in the fields of literature, poetry, interpretation and thought, which guaranteed for them excellence in political and intellectual fields. Thus, caliphs began to recognize their virtue, which is the tolerance of Islamic morals, but they are arguments they relied on. Many of them became ministers, writers, ambassadors, interpreters and historians and they began, with their present and past, to consider themselves superior to the Arabs. That is the meaning to which Shu'ubiyya has come to, i.e., double meaning: degradation of the Arab race and the undermining the Islamic religion.

Its means to that is fanaticism to raise the status of non-Arabs, especially the Persians, and boast of their glories and the advancement of their civilization, along with consequent belittling of the Arabs, attacking them and describing them with the most despicable descriptions.

Al-Jahiz depicts Shu'ubiyya movement and its goals by saying: "For the majority of those who doubted Islam, Shu'ubiyya was the basis of their suspicion and it is still move its people from one situation to another, until they deviated from Islam; because it was revealed to an Arab prophet and the Arabs were the bearers of his banner when it came down..".

In the third century AH, Mahmoud al-Ghaznawi commissioned the Shu'ubi poet, Abi al-Qasim al-Firdawsi, to write poems glorifying the history and civilization of Persia, insulting the Arabs and their Islamic civilization and belittling them. He pledged to give him the weight of what he wrote in gold. On that basis, Ferdowsi wrote his epic titled “Shahnameh”, having in its core the aim of cursing and belittling the Arabs and glorifying the Persians and their kings.

Some historians consider the first act of Shu'ubiyya to be Abu Lulu'ah al-Fayrouzi's assassination of Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab in revenge for the Sasanian state that was subdued during his reign.

Shu'ubiyya had a role in establishing the esoteric sects, such as the Qarmatians, Nusayris, etc. It was also known that the rulers in Iran has Shu'ubiyya, not Shiite, inclinations!

Some authors believe that the word “Shu'ubiyya” is a historical term originated in the first Abbasid era as a result of certain historical circumstances, when the Arab and Persian conflict intensified under the rule of the Abbasids. The word is attributed to the peoples (shu'oub). It was initially referring to the owners of the tendency that the peoples - all peoples - are equal in virtue. Therefore, the owners of that tendency were also known as the “People of Settlement.”

However, advocated of Shu'ubiyya did not stop at the principle of equality, but transcended it to put the Arabs in a lower rank, as did some of the ultra-Orthodox Persian writers and clerics who pretend to be Muslims yet believed in Magi ancient traditions. Some writers, such as Sadiq Hedayat, declared the superiority of the Aryan race, among other matters.

Among their inherited works is the Shu'ubis' secessionist movements to undermine the Arab-Islamic countries, starting with the Abbasid state and up to our time, with obvious impact on multiple levels, and sowing of sedition and infiltrators as their constant creed. Among these movements, for example:

- Movement of Sinbad carried out by the followers of Abu Muslim Khorasani.
- Movement of Isaac the Turk, who claimed to be a prophet sent by Zoroaster.
- Movement of Al-Muqanna' Al-Khorasani.
- Movement of Babak al-Khurami, who wanted to revive the Magi religion, and whose lineage is currently disputed by historians of Iran and Turkey, where each group claims his affiliation therewith!

In his book, *Identity of Shi'ism*, Al-Waeli write: “The most important of the fields in which Shu'ubiyya emerged is literature, in poetry and prose genres, starting from the days of the Umayyads until the Abbasid era. Narratives appeared in history that demean the Arabs and exalt others, along with other manifestations that embodied in the revival of rituals, customs and beliefs that belonged to nations where Islam entered Islam. This included even the social behavior of rulers and citizens in terms of eating, clothing and other patterns of social dealing, which carried non-Arab characteristics. This would have been natural if it was limited to that, but it was accompanied by a challenge and pride in such behaviors with a degradation of the appearances of the Arabs and belittling of the lifestyles”.

Safavid state intended to give a religious character to the elements of its movement, in an effort to strengthen a Shiite Shu'ubi movement, in order to give Shu'ubiyya a spiritual character and a smear of religious sanctity, before launching its subversive actions.