

## Activities of Mosques in Amavids Period

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### Abstract

Archeological and historical records show that human being , according to his belief , from his appearance on the earth has built a place for worshipping a sacred and exalted object which can meet his needs. Therefore, numerous, temples such as fire temples, churches, synagogues, idol-temples mosques, and so on were built. Quran introduces Kabba for worshipping the unique God , and Islam as the last Divine Religion considers mosques for these purposes .Since they have been fulfilled numerous functions in different era of Islamic history .They have been paid attention.

**Keywords:** Mosque, Amavids, Islamic caliph

## 1. Introduction

The history of human civilization shows that human being wherever has found a suitable opportunity whispers his Creator in a private place. Historical evidences and archeological discoveries indicate that ancient nations constructed a temple to hold ritual ceremonies according to their beliefs. The Holy Quran considers Kaba, Mecca, the first construction for worshipping on the earth. The first house of (worship) that God assigned men was in Bakka (another name of Makka) It is a blessed one and a guide for all people. "Lo! The first Sanctuary appointed for mankind was that at Mecca, a blessed place, guidance to the peoples. (Sura 3, verses 96) Which has always been honored and respected by different nations and tribes during the history. It should be mentioned that God commanded Adam (PBUH) to construct Kabba, then Abraham (PBUH), reconstructed it as a center for worshipping and a sacred place for real monotheists. Afterwards Soleiman (PBUH) constructed Qods in Palestine as a place for worshipping, which was then considered a sacred place for Judaism, Christian and Islam (Ibn khaldoun, 1963). Therefore each of Divine Religions in order to guiding and leading people and making solidarity and unity among all groups constructed a place for gathering their followers and performing Divine services.

## 2. Methodology

The historical method was employed in this study to show numerous ritual, educational, political, and social activities and other functions during the period of Amavid Caliphs. Therefore, more than thirty valid references have been reviewed in order to obtain a profound understanding of the activities and functions of mosques during the Amavids period. The article is going to express the roles of the mosques in the three following sections:

## 3. Literature Review

Islam according to these necessities established mosque as not only a place for ritual activities, but also an institution for numerous purposes such as propagator, educational, political, and social ones, and has played numerous roles in different periods of Islamic history. Here and for short we limit our discussion to its ritual, educational, political, and social activities during the period of Amavid caliphs.

### 3.1 *Ritual Activities*

When Amavids gained control of the caliphs through stratagem and intrigues, they left ethical principles and did not treat according to the ways of the Holy Prophet and Rightly-guided caliphs'. They established a hereditary and monarchy government. During this period, except in the caliphate of Omer ibn-AbdulAziz (99/714-101/716). Islamic society was transformed from its awareness in the prophet's period to negligence and rapidly reviving values of ignorance resulting in changes on social and political conditions among Muslims. These changes left behind their effects on the basic roles of mosques such as ritual and propagator affairs and soon after they lost their fundamental mission and essence. In such periods, ritual activities of mosques as performing congregational and Friday prayers became stagnation and gradually changed to the state formalities and meaningless activities. Such congregations which had significant and motivational role during the period of the Holy Prophet became a

propagatory instrument for Amavids rulers. Therefore activities of mosques with regard to fulfilling ritual role became very weak and begun to decline.

### *3.2 Educational Activities*

It was common during the period of rightly – guided caliphs, mosque considered as a significant center for ritual, educational, political and social activities. Although mosques encountered feebleness and lassitude in ritual activities , they were very active concerning educational ones .And though Amavid caliphs , except Umar ibn-Abdolaziz and Khalid ibn -Valid who ruled in Egypt for a sometimes, did not show any interest to disseminate and propagate Islamic sciences and paid more attention to literature and storytelling , and their court was a place for poets , singers , and chanters , they gave freedom to Islamic scientists and jurists to teach and perform educational activities as far as did not hurt to their political affairs , so they could plan educational programs and decrees.

Therefore, some of the great scientists among companions and many of their entourages by making big scientific meetings in the mosques of that time endeavored themselves to disseminate and develop Islamic culture and sciences (Philips, 1988). Also , in other central mosques of cities and capital of Islamic lands , a group of scientists of companion's followers engaged in teaching Quran and religious jurisprudence to new Muslims , such as krimma Molla and the famous student of Ibn - Abbas as well as Shahr ibn - Hushab at central mosque in Neyshabouri, Iran (Vahedi Neyshabouri, 1960). In this period, scientific activities were so widespread that women as men engaged in teaching and training. As it was said: "The mother of Hassan Basari, Saffyeh, engaged in teaching Quran at the mosque of Basra, and his father, Yasar did there too (Ibn Khalaf). In addition to teach Quran and religious jurisprudence, storytelling also was considered one of educational activities in the mosques as it was in the periods of rightly –guided caliphs. Some of the great of entourages by forming preaching meetings in mosques engaged in narrating stories, such as the famous follower, leader, and reciter of the Holy Quran of the mosque of the prophet, Moslem Ibn-Jondab Hozali (Al Jahez, 1986) as well as Jafar ibn - Hassan and Hassan Basri in the mosque of Basra who engaged in narrating stories and preaching(A.-A. Ghanima, 1985).

It should be remembered that the educational activities performed in the mosques of Amavids were not limited to religious affairs, but primary educations and subjects concerning to reading and writing were often done in the mosques (Ibn-Raste, 1986).

Thus, mosques experienced the most brilliant periods of their teaching in this periods, specially at the time of Omar ibn.- Abdol Aziz. He, by issuing a charter to the jurists of his time, had officially declared that people were educated Islamic sciences in the mosques (Ibn Abdolber). Also he dispatched a group of entourage scientists as teachers of religious affairs to cities and capitals of various Islamic Lands (Ezati, 1987). And henceforth scientific value and educational ranks of the mosques were gradually provided. Therefore, under the illumination of scientific activities of the mosques, some of Islamic sciences such as theology (Kalam) and religious jurisprudence originated, progressed, and evolved.

### 3.2.1 Masjid al-Nabi (The mosque of the Prophet)

It became famous for teaching and discussing meetings of Shiites Imams and some of their entourage scientists such as Reybah Alraye and Malik In Anas (Amin, 1993). Medina in this period such as the period of the Holy Prophet and rightly –guided caliphs considered the most important scientific centers and knowledge-seekers came there from numerous areas since Shiite Imams, most Islamic jurists, and scientists of the entourage lived in Medina which considered Islamic authorities in answering religious affairs. In the mosque, big scientific meetings were established at that time and some Islamic sciences such as Quranic commentary and Islamic jurisprudence were discussed and deliberated (Almaleki). In addition to Islamic sciences, one of the storytellers told stories for the congregation. One event that helped for progressing Islamic sciences, especially Shiites jurisprudence, was the political conflicts between the rulers of Amavids and Abbasids which resulted in not causing troubles for Shiites. They advantaged from these conflicts and found suitable opportunities for compiling and composing religious principles and leanings.

### 3.2.2 Masjid al-Haram in Mecca

After the mosque of the prophet, it was considered as one of the most important center for Islamic sciences during the period of Amavids. The action of teaching and educational activities were initiated first by Abdola ibn - Abbas, then it was followed by his students. What understood from historical texts is that ibn.- Abbas had numerous teaching meetings and discussions in the mosque and everyday communicated specific sciences and earnings. As it was said that he allocated one day for teaching jurisprudence and another day for teaching spiritual hermeneutics (tawil), he one day proceeded to Maghazi, another day to discuss Arabic poems and literature , and another to talk about Arabic era (Ibn Athir). It is recounted that no educational meeting was more honorable and pithy than his one (Hojati, 1981).

After his death, his students continued his ways and engaged in teaching and sat on his position in the mosque.

### 3.2.3 Central Mosque of Kufa

It was another educational center for distinguished men and famous experts. For instance, Abdola ibn - Masud, the generous companion and commentator of Quran, and Hathifa Yeman, the another scientist among companions was considered the first teachers of religious affairs. Following migration of Imam Ali to Kufa, he –by addressing eloquent sermons and fluent preachings – set up the mosque as a center for elaborating Islamic precepts and leanings. Under the light of scientific activities of these generous men, the central mosque of Kufa gradually continued its developing and progressive stages, there by delivered generous graduates to the Islamic society, including Alghame ibn - Gheys , Masrough ibn - Ajda, Shorayh Ghazi, Saeed ibn - Jobair , and Shabee each of them had teaching meetings and pronounced religious decree (Amin, 1993). After these entourage scientists, Hemad ibn-Abisoleyman engaged in teaching .He had a big educational meeting in Kufa mosque where students and learners rounded him and asked questions then he answered and thought,

and also anyone who had a question regarding religious jurisprudence came him and received his answer (Amin, 1993).

Abu-Hanifa, the founder of Hanafi school, was his student and concomitant within a period of 18 years since he considered his knowledge more excellent and useful. It is recounted that he said: "I continued his attending so much that no one did such as me" (Amin, 1993). After Hemad, Mousa ibn - Abi-Kasir then Abu-Hanifa engaged in educational affairs in the mosque for 30 years whom thought and issued religious decree until he died in the year 150 AH (Amin, 1993)

#### 3.2.4 Central Mosque of Basra

The mosque was testified vast scientific activities in different aspects such as Arabic syntax, theology, and religious jurisprudence in this period as Arabic syntax was thought and educated for the first time in this mosque. According to most historians, Abul –Asvad Doeli, the famous entourage and poet of Basra, was the first who devised Arabic syntax following the command of Imam Ali, the first Shiite Imam. After him, his students such as Ansaba al-Fil and Nasr ibn-Asem engaged to complete and spread the syntax (Sirafi, 1936). Also, it is worthily to say that the first Islamic theological school, sect of schismatic, was originated from the mosque which played a significant role in scientific, political, religious, and jurisprudential revolutions in this period and the first period of Abbasids.

Therefore, the central mosque became the most active center among cultural centers in the Islamic World and an origin place for narrators of tradition, philosophers and theologians whom themselves played a significant role in scientific revolutions in the first century. It should be added that the educational activities in the mosque were not merely limited to syntactic and theological subjects, but religious jurisprudence, exegeses', and Hadith were thought officially too. Before long, there appeared the great syntactic scientists such as Khalil ibn-Ahmad Farahidi and his student Sibevaih who endured in researching and educating lexical and syntactic subjects in Basra. As a result the mosque became famous as an origin place for Arabic syntax (A. Ghanima, 1985). Moreover, Islamic theology was manifested in the mosque for the first time then developed and evolved.

#### 3.3 Political Activities

In spite of all lassitude and feebleness emerged during this period in the political functions of the mosques and these ritual and political centers had not played their roles like the first era of the appearance of Islam, they were again active in some aspects. For instance, the ceremony of allegiance with the caliph was held in the mosque. Also, the new ruler introduced himself to the people in the mosque and declared his programs there. In addition, mosques were used as a center for public communication and handling juridical affairs. Although Amavid caliphs separated politics from religion and applied non-religious methods in their ruling affairs, they used mosque as a political center for acquiring their social positions and religious legitimacy.

The caliph in his initial ruling, presented his first political discourse on the pulpit of mosque and got allegiance from people. Yaqubihis written: "Muawiyah entered Kufa in the year 40

and ascended on the pulpit, and after praising God gave a speech then come down and asked the people to swear allegiance to him (Ahmad Ibn Abi Yaghub Yagubi, 1932). Likewise, concerning swear allegiance to one of Amavid caliphs, valid, it has mentioned in historical texts: "When Abdolmaleke died and was buried, Valid entered the mosque, ascend on the pulpit and addressed the gatherings, Then came down and asked people to vow allegiance to him (Tabari, 1973a). Thus other Amavid caliphs followed this method initially in their reign.

Whenever a new ruler was dispatched to each city, he immediately entered the central mosque and introduced himself to the people there. As it has been written: "When Abdollah ibn-Motee was appointed as the agent (ruler) for Kufa on the behalf of Abdollah – ibn - Zobair, came there and entered the mosque then ascended on the pulpit and after praising the God, introduced himself and his political program" (Tabari, 1973).

Also, it is recounted about Hadjadj Ibn- Yousof Saghafi that when he entered Kufa, begun his reign from mosque, so he went there, then ascended on the pulpit and addressed his famous sermon (Tabari, 1973b). In addition, uprisings occurred against Amavid caliphs originated from mosques. For instance, rebellion of Medina people against Yazid in the year 63 AH/682 AD begun from Masjid al-Nabi (The Prophet's Mosque). Although the rebellion was suppressed and the army of Yazid committed so massacre, looting, and crimes that the history was not able to mention them. Following it, Abdollah ibn-Zobeyr rebelled against him in the same year which originated from Masjid al-Haram. His uprising was also suppressed and consequently Yazid ordered a general massacre of Mecca and for three days gave his soldiers freedom to kill, loot and take the women of the city. Also, he had the sacred Kabah destroyed and burned (Ahmad Ibn Abi Yaghub Yagubi, 1932).

It is also worthy to mention that the rebellion of Mokhtar Saghafi against Yazid in the year 66/685 originated from Kufa mosque. It is recounted that he after performing the Friday prayer whose leader-prayer was himself addressed a pitchy and enraged sermon in which he described the main aim of his uprising saying: "Oh people of Kufa! I on behalf of the prophet's families was appointed to rebel against the oppressive rulers in revenge for the oppressed Imam. Hossayn ibn-Ali, the third Imam of Shiah, and the martyrs of Karbala (Tabari, 1936a).

### *3.4 Social Activities*

As was mentioned previously, mosques were used as the centers for public communication too. When an important event was occurred, people were invited to the mosque and were informed. Tabary has written: "Abdollah ibn - Motee, the ruler of Kufa, commanded people to gather in the mosque for fighting Mokhtar and his assistants, then the crier called out: "know thou that tonight who does not come to the mosque will not have any protection". As a result people gathered in the mosque, then groups of them dispatched to fight Mokhtar (Tabari, 1936b).

### *3.5 Juridical Affairs*

It should be take into consideration that the mosques as the centers for verifying juridical affairs were more active than political and social aspects, so that it can be said that most

juridical affairs such as investigating disputes, issuing a verdict, and also executing religious penal were carried out in the mosques. Many entourage scientists engaged in juridical affairs and settled disputes in the mosques too. As it has been said that Shabea, a famous entourage sat in the mosque and judged between belligerents (Mohammad Ibn-Khalaf). Also, Mohammad ibn - Khalaf has transmitted of ibn - shabrema that Shabea executed religious penal on a Jewish at the mosque of Kufa (Mohammad Ibn-Khalaf). And Mohammad ibn - leyla, a jurist and expounder of Kufa, judged at the mosque of Kufa during the period of Abu-Hanifa, and he himself executed penals on criminals there. And Hassan Basri, another jurist of Amovid's period, engaged in juridical affairs at Basra mosque (Mohammad Ibn-Khalaf).

#### 4. Conclusion

From the appearance of human being on the earth, mosques played different roles in human lives. They were not only built for ritual purposes and worshipping the unique God, but they have been significantly used for educational, political, and social activities during different periods of Islamic leaders and caliphs. In Amavid caliphs, they were most used in the fields of educational, political, social and juridical affairs but they were less paid attention in ritual activities.

#### 5. Recommendations

More studies and further research on Islamic historical texts are recommended to find out the significant roles of mosques among Muslims during the Islamic history.

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