A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE AHL-E HAQQ COMMUNITY

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Abstract

This article examines the historical formation and development of the Ahl-e Haqq (Yaresan) community through a critical synthesis of oral traditions, religious narratives, and available documentary sources. Given the predominance of oral transmission in Ahl-e Haqq culture, early history is largely preserved in mythological and poetic forms, posing significant challenges for reconstructing a reliable chronology. The study therefore distinguishes between the internal, tradition-based understanding of the past and historically verifiable evidence derived from written sources. It argues that neither oral tradition nor documentary material alone is sufficient for reconstructing the early history of the community; rather, their combined analysis provides a more nuanced historical framework. The earliest reliable references, including a 16th-century waqf document associated with Bābā Yādegār, alongside manuscript evidence such as *Kitāb-i bahr al-ansāb* and the accounts of C. J. Edmonds, make it possible to situate key figures like Soltān Sahāk within a tentative historical context, while also revealing significant chronological discrepancies between sources. The article further analyzes the formation of the khāndān system, internal divisions, and the emergence of subgroups such as the Perdivar Kāka'is, highlighting variations in ritual practice, language, and religious organization. It also examines later transformations, including 19th-century reformist movements led by Hajj Nematollah Jeyhunabadi and the modernist reinterpretations developed by Nur Ali Elahi and Bahram Elahi. Finally, the study explores the impact of modern political developments---particularly the 1979 Islamic Revolution---on the Ahl-e Haqq, emphasizing ongoing challenges related to religious identity, state pressure, discrimination, and strategies of concealment such as taqiyya. By integrating internal and external perspectives on history, the article offers a more comprehensive approach to understanding the evolution of a religious community shaped by the interplay of myth, memory, and historical reality.

Keywords: *Ahl-e Haqq, Yaresan, Soltān Sahāk, oral tradition, khāndān system, Kurdish religious communities, religious identity, Iran*

Introduction

The Ahl-e haqq (Yaresan) are a syncretic religious community primarily found among Kurdish populations in western Iran and parts of Iraq. Their belief system combines elements of Islamic, especially Shi'a, and pre-Islamic traditions, along with distinct mystical and esoteric teachings. Central to their doctrine is the concept of divine manifestations in human form and a strong emphasis on spiritual truth revealed through oral transmission rather than formal scripture.

In the culture of the Ahl-e Haqq, as in many other communities with a strong oral tradition, history is transmitted not through facts recorded by chroniclers, but through myths, narratives, and poetry. As Jan Vansina has demonstrated, oral traditions constitute not merely stories about the past but socially transmitted historical knowledge that reflects the concerns and perspectives of the communities that preserve them 26\].

Unfortunately, in the absence of a written tradition, many details and historical circumstances are gradually forgotten, distorted, or transformed over time, often becoming enriched with fictional elements. Instead, the community constructs its historical memory in accordance with the needs that shape its identity. In this sense, memory functions as a collective social framework through which communities interpret and reconstruct the past in ways that reinforce present identities [10]. As a result, the study of the formation of such a community or group frequently becomes a challenging task.

There are almost no reliable documentary sources concerning the early history of the Ahl-e Haqq. The limited information available derives primarily from the internal tradition of the community itself, the core of which consists of religious poems, *kalāms*, that not only convey historical perceptions but also serve to preserve them as immutable sacred knowledge. Such ritualized forms of transmission can be understood as practices through which societies remember and reproduce collective understandings of the past across generations [4].

In this regard, the history of the Ahl-e Haqq may be approached from two perspectives:

1. the internal, mythological understanding of history, based on tradition and religious texts,
2. the factual history, grounded in documentary and historical sources.

Setting aside the myths concerning the formation of the community and focusing solely on historical evidence, it is important to begin with the observation that the Ahl-e Haqq religious community emerged within a milieu in which, from the spread of Islam until the period of Soltān Sahāk's activity, numerous religious

movements and heterodox trends appeared and disappeared in Kurdistan. These movements were largely characterized by a synthesis of Islamic and pre-Islamic beliefs. As Martin van Bruinessen has shown, Kurdish religious history was marked by the presence of diverse heterodox and mystical currents, including movements that combined Shiʿi, Sufi, and local pre-Islamic elements and often developed outside the framework of Sunni orthodoxy. More recent scholarship has likewise emphasized the fluid boundaries between Sufi networks, popular religious practices, and heterodox communities in the Kurdish regions of Iran and Iraq [2].

Early Formation and Historical Foundations

The earliest documentary source that refers to a leader of the Ahl-e Haqq is a waqf deed dated 933/1526, certifying ownership rights over the village of Anzaleh and its adjacent lands.[1] One of its later versions was published by M. Mokri [18]. This document pertains to one of the prominent figures of the religious tradition, Bābā Yādegār.[2]

M. Mokri considers the date mentioned in the document to be a written confirmation of the community's oral tradition and uses it to situate the lifetimes of two key figures, Soltān Sahāk and Bābā Yādegār, at the beginning of the 16th century. It should be noted, however, that the community itself attributes the lifetime of Soltān Sahāk to the 8th century AH (15th century), whereas the Anzaleh document places it in the first half of the 10th century AH (16th century). This discrepancy may suggest that Soltān Sahāk lived toward the end of the 9th century AH, thereby creating a chronological gap of approximately one century between oral tradition and documentary evidence [18: 240].

The date of Soltān Sahāk's birth varies considerably across different Iranian sources, ranging from 445--612 AH (1053--1215 CE) [23: 54] to 671 AH (1272 CE) [6: 184] or 716 AH (1316 CE) [24]. There is also disagreement regarding the date of his death, which is reported in various sources as between 588--716 AH (1192--1316 CE), and in some cases even as late as 912 AH (1506 CE) [23: 54; 24].

Another important source is a manuscript entitled *Kitāb-i bahr al-ansāb wa risāla-yi ashrafiyya dar nasab-i Sādāt* ("The Book of the Ocean of Genealogies and a Treatise on Nobility Concerning the Lineage of the Sayyids"), discovered in Sulaymaniyah (Iraq). This work is a compilation of Persian and Arabic sources

[1]Located in the Qaleh-ye Shirin district of Sarpol-e Zahab County, in the present-day Kermanshah Province.

[2]The content of the document in Persian and its English translation see [16: 59].

relating to the biographies of sayyids, with particular attention given to individuals originating from the region of Shahrizur [18: 241].

Specifically, the manuscript mentions the two sons of Baba Rasul, Sheikh 'Isa and Sheikh Musa, who, according to the text, arrived in Shahrizur in 760 AH (1358 CE) or shortly thereafter. It is noted that Sheikh 'Isa died in 846 AH (1442 CE). He had twelve sons, one of whom was Soltān Sahāk, who, according to the same manuscript, died without leaving descendants.

All the information contained in the manuscript, both in its structure and internal logic, pertains to members of the Ahl-e Haqq community, and many of the details presented there closely correspond to the community's oral and written traditions. Notably, the author of the manuscript, being a Sunni Muslim, characterizes these figures as mystical individuals and their followers as heretics holding extreme views outside Islamic orthodoxy.

These data, when considered alongside the continuous memory preserved in the *Gurān* tradition and genealogical references, make it possible to reasonably assume that we are dealing not with mythical or fictional figures, but with real historical individuals who lived in the respective period [18: 241].

Particularly noteworthy is the account provided by C. J. Edmonds, who, relying on a *tazkira* written in old Turkish specifically for him, dates the birth of Soltān Sahāk to 671 AH (1272--1273 CE) and identifies 716 AH (1316--1317 CE) as the period of the formation of the religious community [6: 184-185]. Although these data differ to some extent from the chronology presented in the aforementioned Persian manuscript, they remain significant for reconstructing the general historical framework and for the study of the early stages of the Ahl-e Haqq community.

The figure of Soltān Sahāk, despite his historical nature, as well as the entire period in which he lived, is enveloped in myth. Van Bruinessen has drawn attention to traditions that suggest historical and symbolic links between Soltān Sahāk and other heterodox religious figures of the wider Kurdish and Anatolian milieu, particularly in relation to the formation of later Bektashi narratives, illustrating the fluidity of religious memory in the region [3]. Although in the Ahl-e Haqq tradition he appears as the fourth incarnation of God, it is evident that he is the founder of this religious tradition.

Several scholars, such as F. Macler [17: 297] and V. Ivanow [14: 8-9], in discussing Soltān Sahāk, emphasize the Armenian influence reflected in this figure, particularly in relation to his name. In an Islamic context, he would more logically

have borne the name Isḥāq or Eshāq rather than Sahak.[3][4] He was of Kurdish origin, born in the Armenian Highlands in the first half of the 14th century, and is buried near the village of Shaykhan, not far from Perdivar [19: 215].

Internal Structure and Fragmentation of the Community

Various accounts concerning the early history of the *khāndāns* (lineages) of the Ahl-e Haqq unanimously assert that the system of khāndāns was established by Soltān Sahāk, and that the first seven, or original, khāndāns belonged to his contemporaries [16: 60]. However, according to Hamzeh'i, only three khāndāns were founded during Soltān Sahāk's lifetime: those of Shāh Ebrāhim, Bābā Yādegār, and Ali Qalandar. Of these, Shāh Ebrāhim and Bābā Yādegār were close associates of Soltān Sahāk [10: 211].

The subsequent history of the Ahl-e Haqq community is closely connected with these figures. According to tradition, a schism occurred between Bābā Yādegār and Shāh Ebrāhim, possibly because of a struggle for leadership of the community, leading to the departure of part of the community from Perdivar.

As a result, a small subgroup emerged within the community, the so-called Perdivar Kāka'is, who reside to the west of the village of Perdivar, in the Iraqi villages of Hawar, Hawara Kon, and Dere Tuy Mate. Their religious tradition differs significantly from that of all other known groups. The Perdivaris appear not to distinguish between the Haft Tan, the septet of celestial (spiritual) angels, and the Haftavaneh, the septet of terrestrial (material) angels.[5] Although they have sayyids, they do not adhere to any khāndān (lineage), instead replacing this concept with the term shākh ("branch"), asserting that their shākh is Perdivar itself. Perdivar also serves as their qibla, the direction toward which they pray [10: 189].

They gather once a month to celebrate the jam,[6] yet they do not possess a designated space for these gatherings, such as a jamkhāneh. Unlike other

[3]Notably, the name of Soltān Sahāk is not the sole example of Armenian influence. Within the anthroponymic system of the Ahl-e Haqq, one also encounters names that clearly reflect Armenian influence, such as Bāhūs (derived from Poghos/Paul), as well as Benjamin and Noah [14: 9].

[4]For Christian influences within the religious system of the Ahl-e Haqq, see [14: 48-57; 19: 419-431].

[5]F. Kreyenbroek draws parallels with Zoroastrianism and Yezidism, both of which recognize only a single heptad of sacred figures, noting that the distinction between "spiritual" and "material" heptads is specific to the Ahl-e Haqq tradition. Since the inhabitants of Perdīvar appear, in many respects, to have preserved a comparatively earlier form of the tradition, it may be assumed that this differentiation emerged at a later stage within the community, after the Perdīvaris had already separated from the main body of the Ahl-e Haqq [16: 62].

[6]The jam (Pers. jam, "assembly" or "gathering") is the central communal ritual of the Ahl-e Haqq religious tradition. It brings together members of the community for collective worship, the recitation

communities, the Perdivaris do not speak Gurani, but have adopted one of the local Kurdish dialects. It is also noteworthy that they do not use the tanbur and claim to have lost the musical tradition that holds great importance for other groups. During jam ceremonies, they simply recite sacred texts without musical accompaniment.[7]

All these differences may indicate that the Perdivaris, and possibly other groups, separated from the main body of the Ahl-e Haqq community prior to the formation of the khāndān system and the development of the present religious tradition, thereby preserving an earlier stage of that tradition.

The movements of the community are also reflected in the linguistic and dialectal differences observed among various Ahl-e Haqq groups. Many dialects of the Iraqi Kāka'is show similarities with the Zardeh dialect, suggesting that most Kāka'i groups migrated from Perdivar to present-day Iraq via an intermediate stop in Zardeh, located in modern Iran. They appear to have resided there for a considerable period, long enough to adopt the local Gurani dialect, which subsequently formed the basis of their later speech [16: 62.]. In contrast, the Perdivaris, who did not partake in this migration and remained an isolated minority, adopted a local Kurdish dialect.

The migration from Perdivar to Zardeh is associated with Bābā Yādegār, who can be more reliably dated to the 16th century. However, a kalām entitled "The Birth of Shāh Ebrāhim" recounts that the Soltān ordered Ebrāhim's father, Sayyid Mohammad, to relocate from the Shahu mountain range (near Perdivar) to Mount Dalahu (in Guran), together with his family, livestock, and the entire community. His wife, Khātun Zeynāb, is said to have protested this decision, unable to reconcile herself with leaving the beauty of Mount Shahu. Despite her pleas, the family ultimately relocated to Guran [16: 63].

If this tradition corresponds to historical reality, it becomes evident that not only Bābā Yādegār and his followers, but also the lineage of Shāh Ebrāhim, migrated to Guran. This suggests that the movement to Guran was part of a broader migration of Soltān Sahāk's followers, likely occurring after the Soltān's death, who is believed to be buried in Perdivar [16: 62-63].

of sacred kalāms, ritual music performed on the tanbur, communal meals, and the reaffirmation of social and spiritual bonds. Beyond its liturgical function, the jam serves as a space in which religious knowledge, collective memory, and communal identity are transmitted across generations. Although the fundamental significance of the jam is shared throughout the Ahl-e Haqq world, its frequency, organization, and ritual details may vary among different regional and hereditary groups. In many communities, the ceremony is held in a dedicated ritual building known as a jamkhāneh, while in others it may take place in private homes or temporary gathering places.

[7]For these and other religious differences, see in detail [16: 61-62].

According to another tradition, Shāh Ebrāhim arrived in Zardeh after learning that Bābā Yādegār had successfully established a community there. It is possible that for some time a rivalry existed between these two leaders over the leadership of the community. Following these disagreements, Shāh Ebrāhim is said to have departed for Baghdad, where, according to tradition, his tomb is located [16: 63].

Returning to the khāndāns, it should be noted that they are all divided into two groups: the followers of Bābā Yādegār and those of Shāh Ebrāhim. This supports the assumption that the khāndān system took shape during the early Zardeh period, when Bābā Yādegār and Shāh Ebrāhim were competing for leadership within the community. It is likely that the families of religious leaders at that time aligned themselves with opposing sides in this conflict, thereby establishing lasting affiliations with either Bābā Yādegār or Shāh Ebrāhim.

Aside from Shāh Ebrāhim and Bābā Yādegār, little information is available regarding the founders of other khāndāns. Some of them are regarded as incarnations of the Haftavaneh, the seven divine beings. According to tradition, four of the currently recognized eleven khāndāns---Zu'l Nuri, Ātashbegi, Shāh Hayāsi, and Heydari---were formed after the time of Soltān Sahāk [11: 189].

Modern Transformations and Reform Movements

In the 19th century, a decisive development took place in Guran. Sayyid Heydar (1834--1872), who became known as Sayyid Brāke, emerged as one of the religious leaders of the Guran region. He was regarded by many as an embodiment of the divine and was surrounded by a group of thirty-six poets who composed new kalāms in the Gurani language. These kalāms are now widely spread in the region. The spiritual leadership of Guran continues to remain within Sayyid Brāke's family. The current leader, Sayyid Nasreddin Heydari, enjoys great respect and popularity both among the Yaresan and beyond; his photographs can be found in nearly every household in the Gurani region.

The first decades of the 20th century were marked by significant transformations within the Ahl-e Haqq community, as new ideological currents emerged and internal divisions arose, profoundly influencing the community's subsequent development. These processes are closely associated with the figure of Hājj Ne'matollāh Jeyhunābādi.[8]

[8]For the life, activities, and literary legacy of Hājj Ne'matollāh Jeyhunābādi, see [23: 160-161], as well as on a dedicated website devoted to him [9].

He was born in 1871 in the village of Jeyhunabad, near the town of Sahneh. Although he was not of sayyid descent, he aspired to become the spiritual leader of the Ahl-e Haqq community in the Sahneh region. Within the framework of Ahl-e Haqq tradition, such an aspiration was possible even for a non-sayyid individual, provided that he possessed visionary experiences or was regarded as a dīdedār, one endowed with divine inspiration. In 1899, after renouncing worldly activities, Hājj Ne'matollāh Jeyhunābādi withdrew to Jeyhunabad to devote himself entirely to religious life. His mission was to unite the various khāndāns, which at that time exhibited considerable differences in doctrine and ritual practice.

Within a short period, he gathered a wide circle of followers in Sahneh, and many began to perceive him as the Sāheb al-Zamān---the messianic or divinely guided leader. However, his growing influence provoked tensions with the traditional religious authorities of Sahneh, leading to his expulsion and the humiliation of his followers. He later returned to Jeyhunabad, abandoned his active claims to leadership, but continued his profound spiritual activity, dedicating himself to the study of the traditions of various Ahl-e Haqq khāndāns.

In his literary legacy, Hajj Nematollah Jeyhunabadi undertook a reformulation of Ahl-e Haqq doctrine using modern terminology and within the conceptual framework of Twelver Shi'a Islam [15]. He proposed limiting the hereditary authority of the sayyids, emphasizing instead the role of didedars, individuals endowed with divine inspiration [15: 411, 420].

His ideas had a particularly strong impact in Sahneh and among Ahl-e Haqq communities outside the Guran region. As a result, a new, modernist or Jeyhunabadi-oriented current emerged, characterized by openness to external membership and a departure from the ritual and worldview structures of the traditional khāndāns.

Jeyhunabadi's legacy was continued by his son and grandson, Nur Ali Elahi[9] and Bahram Elahi, who expanded the influence of this current beyond the Ahl-e Haqq community, attracting both Shi'a and non-Shi'a followers in Iran and the West. They assert that the Ahl-e Haqq are adherents of Twelver Shi'ism and reject certain traditional rituals, regarding them as superstitions, while advocating adherence to established religious authorities, developments that have further deepened divisions within the Ahl-e Haqq community.

Contemporary Status and Identity Challenges

The 1979 Islamic Revolution and the subsequent Iran--Iraq War had significant implications for the Ahl-e Haqq. The state began to pay closer attention

[9]For the life and activities of Nūr ʿAlī Elāhī, as well as his literary legacy, see [22].

to developments in border regions, with the aim of incorporating those who did not adhere to officially recognized religious traditions (including the Ahl-e Haqq) into the ranks of Twelver Shi'ism, often by coercively imposing conformity with Shi'ite practices through participation in various rituals and ceremonies.

One of the spiritual authorities of the Gurani region, Sayyid Fereydun Hosseini, recounts: "In 1979 and 1980, the situation in Guran was very difficult. People were forced to participate in the rituals of Tasua[10] and Ashura[11]. They [the authorities] claimed that this was part of the local culture and wanted everyone to join the mourning processions. Of course, we do not have *sineh-zani*[12] and similar practices, but we were subjected to considerable pressure. In the first year, no one participated, but in the second year people agreed. Iranians are always adaptable, yet they follow their own path, just as they adopted Islam but transformed it into Shi'ism. The Yaresan are the same. I remember, I was there. They [the Muslims] would say: 'What are you, infidels, Yazidis[13], that you do not want to participate?' Do you know what my father did? When we bury our dead, the procession is led by a *sayyid*, who plays the *tanbur* and sings 'Fāni, fāni,' a *kalām* about death.[14] This is what my father did. He said, 'Let's go.' People formed a procession behind him, and he recited religious poems of Yaresan poets dedicated to Hazrat Husayn to the melody of 'Fāni, fāni,' and people began to beat their chests. After that, we no longer had problems, but the custom continued, and now it would be difficult to prevent people from following it" [16: 67].

Within the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Jeyhunabadi branch, unlike the traditional one, is officially recognized as a *maktabi* current [7],[15] whereas other groups are accused of "devil worship" [16: 68, 13]. These developments have deepened the divisions between the two principal currents, the modernist and the

[10]Tāsuʿā is a day of mourning in Shiʿi Islam, observed on the 9th day of the month of Muḥarram, dedicated to the commemoration of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī and his companions, one day before ʿĀshūrāʾ.

[11]ʿĀshūrāʾ is the most important day of mourning in Shiʿi Islam, observed on the 10th day of Muḥarram, in remembrance of the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī in the Battle of Karbalāʾ in 680.

[12]Sineh-zani (literally "chest-beating") is a Shiʿi mourning ritual during which participants strike their chests to lament the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn and his companions at Karbala. It is often accompanied by elegiac recitations and is performed especially during the mourning days of Muḥarram.

[13]Since the historical caliph Yazid ibn Muʿāwiya is regarded as the opponent of Ḥusayn and is held responsible for his death, the term "Yazidi" is used by Shiʿis in a strongly derogatory sense [16: 67].

[14]That kalām has been recorded and can be listened to at the following link [8].

[15]Maktabī means "belonging to a religious school" or "affiliated with a religious tradition." In the Iranian context, this term is often used to refer to groups or confessions that are considered compatible with Shiʿi beliefs and doctrine and are therefore not regarded by the authorities as heretical or threatening.

traditional. The Ahl-e Haqq of Guran generally maintain that their religion is independent of Islam, and that it is only the "followers of Bahram Elahi" who attempt to push them toward Islam often attributing such positions to fear of possible sanctions [16: 67].

In official and semi-official publications and sources, the Ahl-e Haqq are described as a "deviant sect" (*ferqe-ye zāle*) [20], while the term "devil-worshippers" is frequently applied to those who refuse to identify themselves with Islam.[16]

Since 2015, the Ahl-e Haqq have submitted petitions to the Iranian government seeking official recognition as a religious minority, but without success to date [27]. According to the 2017 annual report of Amnesty International: "Other religious minorities not recognized by the Constitution, such as the Yaresan (Ahl-e Haqq), also faced systematic discrimination, including in education and employment, and were persecuted for practicing their faith" [1].

As a result, many Ahl-e Haqq are compelled to conceal their religious affiliation, presenting themselves as Muslims. This, in fact, constitutes a common practice among them, as they follow the Islamic principle of *taqiyya* (dissimulation), which permits the concealment of one's faith when necessary [16: 75, 15: 330]. On November 7, 2012, Firuz Yusefi wrote on the Facebook page "Yari, Tāyefe-sān, Yāresān": "We in Iran are thirsty for freedom of expression and freedom of belief. Thousands have given their lives for this aspiration. During every fasting period, Yaresans are subjected to humiliation and persecution, being labeled as infidels, devil-worshippers, impure, and so on. We want the government to officially recognize our religion, because we are tired of being Yaresan at home and Shi'a at school for many years. Secretly worshipping the Soltān and Dāwud in our *jamkhāneh*, but in universities, schools, and in the presence of Muslim classmates swearing by Abolfazl and Fatemeh Zahra. Being Yaresan at home, but Muslim in Islamic workplaces. We are tired of the false identity imposed upon us" [7].

As for the Kāka'is residing in Iraq, although since 2015 they have been officially recognized by the Kurdistan Regional Government (though not by the central authorities of Iraq), and a representative of the community, Falakeddin Kāka'i, has held ministerial office and been elected to parliament, it can nevertheless be stated that the Kāka'i community in Iraqi Kurdistan still does not enjoy full religious freedom. Many Kāka'is refrain from publicly expressing their religious

[16]For the designation of the Ahl-e Haqq as a "deviant sect," as well as issues of discrimination against them, including the prohibition of religious gatherings, places of worship, religious monuments, symbols, and rituals, restrictions on religious expression, and the lack of political and religious representation, see [25]

affiliation to avoid negative reactions within the surrounding Muslim environment [5].

Historically, the Kāka'is have been subjected to multiple forms of pressure: in the 1970s, both by the Iraqi government and by Kurdish nationalist circles; in some cases, Turkmen nationalists have also portrayed them as a Turkmen subgroup, thereby contesting their identity. At the same time, there is no consensus within the community itself as to whether the Kāka'i faith constitutes a branch of Islam or an independent religious system [12].

From the mid-1970s to the late 1980s, the Kāka'is suffered under the Arabization policies of Saddam Hussein's regime, during which many families were deprived of their property. This process intensified particularly during the Anfal campaign of 1988. In 1997, Kāka'is in Kirkuk, along with other non-Arab populations, were subjected to pressure to register their ethnic identity as "Arab," under threat of forced displacement [21].

In 2014, the advance of the "Islamic State" (ISIL) posed a new and serious threat to the Kāka'i community. In Nineveh province, several thousand Kāka'is and Shabaks were forced to flee their homes, some of which were later recaptured by Kurdish forces in 2016. The threat of violence and persecution by ISIL in some cases led individual Kāka'is to publicly present themselves as Muslims to ensure their safety.

Conclusion

The historical trajectory of the Ahl-e Haqq community illustrates the complex and often ambiguous relationship between myth, memory, and historical reconstruction. As this study has demonstrated, the early development of the community cannot be adequately understood through reliance on either oral tradition or documentary evidence alone. Rather, it emerges most clearly through a critical engagement with both, each reflecting different dimensions of historical experience and modes of preserving the past.

The figure of Soltān Sahāk and the formative period associated with him exemplify this tension, revealing significant discrepancies between internal narratives and external sources. These divergences should not be viewed merely as obstacles to historical reconstruction, but as indicators of the processes through which communal identity is shaped, legitimized, and transmitted. In this sense, oral tradition functions not only as a repository of belief, but also as an active agent in the construction of social and religious continuity.

The subsequent development of the khāndān system, internal divisions, and the emergence of distinct subgroups such as the Perdivar Kāka'is further demonstrate

that the Ahl-e Haqq tradition has never been static or homogeneous. Instead, it has evolved through processes of fragmentation, adaptation, and reinterpretation, often in response to shifting social, political, and geographical contexts. These dynamics are particularly evident in the modern period, where reformist movements and intellectual reinterpretations have both challenged and reconfigured inherited structures of authority and belief.

At the same time, contemporary political pressures, especially within the framework of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the broader regional context, have profoundly influenced the ways in which Ahl-e Haqq identity is articulated and negotiated. Practices such as taqiyya, as well as the tension between public conformity and private belief, underscore the extent to which external constraints continue to shape internal religious life. The community's ongoing struggle for recognition and the persistence of social stigmatization further highlight the precarious position of heterodox religious groups in the modern Middle East.

Ultimately, the case of the Ahl-e Haqq underscores a broader methodological challenge in the study of religious communities whose histories are preserved across both textual and non-textual domains. It calls for an approach that moves beyond rigid distinctions between "myth" and "history," and instead recognizes the interplay between symbolic meaning, collective memory, and historical process. By situating the Ahl-e Haqq within this analytical framework, the present study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how religious traditions are formed, transformed, and sustained over time.

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Ահլ-է հաղղ համայնքի ձևավորումն ու զարգացումը (պատմական ակնարկ)

Հիմնաբառեր- Ահլ-է Հաղղ, Յարեսան, Սուլթան Սահակ, բանավոր ավանդույթ, խանդան համակարգ, քրդական կրոնական համայնքներ, կրոնական ինքնություն, Իրան

Արփինե Առուշանյան

Ամփոփում

Սույն հոդվածը ուսումնասիրում է ահլ-է հաղղ (յարեսան) համայնքի ձևավորման և զարգացման պատմական գործընթացը՝ համադրելով բանավոր ավանդույթները, կրոնական պատմությունները և առկա վավերագրական աղբյուրները: Քանի որ ահլ-է հաղղերի մշակույթում գերակշռում է բանավոր փոխանցումը, վաղ շրջանի պատմությունը հաճախ պահպանվել է առասպելաբանական և բանաստեղծական ձևերով, ինչը բարդացնում է փաստական ժամանակագրության վերակառուցումը: Այդ պատճառով հետազոտությունը տարբերակում է պատմության ներքին՝ ավանդույթի վրա հիմնված ընկալումը և գրավոր աղբյուրներից ստացվող պատմականորեն ստուգելի տվյալները:

Վերլուծությունը ցույց է տալիս, որ Ահլ-է Հաղղ համայնքի վաղ պատմությունը բավարար չափով փաստագրված չէ, և ամենավաղ հուսալի հիշատակումները հանդիպում են 16-րդ դարի վակֆային փաստաթղթում, որը վերաբերում է Բաբա Յադեգարին: Սուլթան Սահակի կերպարը, որը ավանդույթի մեջ դիտարկվում է որպես աստվածային մարմնավորում և համայնքի հիմնադիր, տարբեր կերպ է ներկայացվում բանավոր և գրավոր աղբյուրներում՝ բացահայտելով զգալի ժամանակագրական անհամապատասխանություններ: Սկզբնաղբյուրները, մասնավորապես *Kitāb-i bahr al-ansāb*-ը, ինչպես նաև Չ.Ջ. Էդմոնդսի և այլ գիտնականների ուսումնասիրությունները, կարևոր դեր են խաղում համայնքի վաղ պատմական շրջանակի վերակառուցման գործում:

Հոդվածը նաև անդրադառնում է խանդան համակարգի ձևավորմանը, ներքին բաժանումներին և Փերդիվարի քաքայիների համայնքի առաջացմանը՝ ընդգծելով ծիսական, լեզվական և կրոնական տարբերությունները: Բացի այդ, ուսումնասիրվում են հետագա զարգացումները՝ ներառյալ XIX դարի բարեփոխական շարժումները՝ Հաջ Նեմաթոլլահ Ջեհյունաբադիի ղեկավարությամբ, ինչպես նաև Նուր Ալի Էլահիի և Բահրամ Էլահիի շարունակած ժամանակակից մեկնաբանությունները:

Վերջապես, ուսումնասիրությունը քննարկում է քաղաքական վերափոխումների, մասնավորապես 1979 թվականի Իսլամական հեղափոխության ազդեցությունը ահլ-է հաղղ համայնքի վրա՝ շեշտադրելով կրոնական ինքնության, պետական ճնշումների, խտրականության և ինքնության թաքցման (օրինակ՝ թաքիյայի) խնդիրները: