

Religious Reasons for the Punishment of Crucifixion in the Abbasid Era (132-334 AH/750-945 AD)

Prof. Hashem Dakhel Hussein Al-Darraji, Saja Kamel Qasim

¹University of Misan / College of Education

² Researcher University of Misan / College of Education

Email: Prof.hashimaldraraj@uomisan.edu.iq

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ABSTRACT:

The Abbasid era (132-334 AH/750-945 AD) witnessed a marked escalation in sectarian and religious conflicts, as a result of the diversity of intellectual trends and the spread of different sects and denominations. The state resorted to the punishment of crucifixion as a tool to control the situation and contain tensions, especially those related to religious and sectarian disputes. This punishment was used against those accused of violating the official doctrine of the state or of inciting sedition and sectarian conflict. This stemmed from the authorities' desire to impose political and social stability, even if it came at the expense of the intellectual and religious freedoms of some groups and trends.

Keywords: Abbasid era, crucifixion, religious and intellectual reasons

Introduction

Crucifixion is a legitimate punishment in Islam, as it is mentioned in the Holy Quran. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) implemented it in accordance with the Sharia. However, rulers in later eras applied it in a manner contrary to the Quran and the Sunnah, resulting in a gradual deviation from the Islamic path. Signs of this began to be evident in the Umayyad era, and this deviation reached its peak in the Abbasid era, where the punishment of crucifixion was imposed on individuals or groups who deviated from the official doctrine of the state or caused sectarian strife and conflict.

This research discusses the religious reasons for the punishment of crucifixion in the

Abbasid era (132-334 AH/750-945 AD) by examining historical events and incidents that reflected this trend.

This research is presented within a continuous methodological framework consisting of an introduction and two main chapters. The first chapter is devoted to presenting the concept of crucifixion in language and terminology, due to its importance in defining the term, controlling its connotations, and understanding its theoretical dimensions. The second chapter deals with the religious reasons for the punishment of crucifixion in the Abbasid era (132-334 AH / 750-945 AD), as it was a tool resorted to by the authorities to achieve political and sectarian goals, the effects of which were clearly reflected on the Abbasid

society in that era. The research is concluded with a conclusion that includes the most important results that were reached, in light of the information presented and the scientific and methodological analysis conducted.

The research relied on the historical analytical approach, which is based on tracing and analyzing events and facts and linking them to their political and religious contexts, based on reliable historical sources, biographical books, and works that dealt with religious and sectarian thought in the Abbasid era, with the aim of presenting a comprehensive, objective, scientific vision of the religious reasons for the punishment of crucifixion and its impact during that period.

Section One

The Concept of Crucifixion

- The Concept of Crucifixion in Language and Terminology:

A. Crucifixion in Language:

Cross: The root word for crucifixion is to crucifixion, and crucifixion is doubled for emphasis⁽¹⁾. and its root is to strike⁽²⁾. Crucifixion is derived from the cross, which means blood... and thus the crucified is named after the blood that flows from his blood. And crucifixion, this well-known killing, is derived from that, because its dung and pus flow⁽³⁾. It is said that crucifixion is the pulverization of the carcass⁽⁴⁾. Crucifying the meat means roasting it and making the dung flow from it. Crucifying the bones means gathering them, cooking them, extracting them, and crushing them to make a condiment from them, like tasting them⁽⁵⁾. It is said that the sun crucified him, crucified him, and crucified him crucified if it

burned him, so he is crucified and burned⁽⁶⁾. Crucifixion, as a punishment, is derived from the flow of dung and pus from the body of the one being punished with this punishment. It is also noted at the same time that the flow of dung and pus comes as a result of the effect of the burning rays of the sun that dissolve these materials from the body of the one being punished and make them flow, since the one being punished is suspended under the rays of the sun⁽⁷⁾. And in the Noble Revelation: "And they killed him not." And they did not crucify him⁽⁸⁾. and God Almighty said: (And I will surely crucify you on the trunks of palm trees)⁽⁹⁾. The plural of (cross) is (sulub) with two dhammahs and (sulban)⁽¹⁰⁾.

The cross was named: the wood on which the one who is killed is crucified. Then it was used for what the Christians make in that form, and its plural is crosses, crucifixion, and crucifixion: making a cross, or making an engraving on a garment, wall, paper, or other in the shape of a cross⁽¹¹⁾.

And wadak. It is said: A man has cooked bones, meaning he has gathered bones to cook them, taken out their bones, and used them as a condiment.

Al-Kumait said:

The winter pond has occupied his home, and the head of the family has spent the night cooking bones⁽¹²⁾.

It is also said: the date stone is hard, if it reaches dryness, then it is hardened with a broken lam, and if molasses is poured on it to make it soft, then it is musqar, and the hardness:

(1) Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-Arab, Vol. 1, p. 529.

(2) Al-Razi, Mukhtar Al-Sihah, p. 194.

(3) Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-Arab, Vol. 1, p. 529.

(4) Al-Farahidi Al-Ain, Vol. 7, p. 128.

(5) Al-Zubaidi, Taj al-Arus, Vol. 2, p. 148.

(6) Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-Arab, Vol. 1, p. 530.

(7)) Al-Daraji, The Punishment of Crucifixion, p. 38.

(8) Surah An-Nisa, verse 157.

(9) Surah Taha, verse 71.

(10) Al-Razi, Mukhtar Al-Sihah, p. 177.

(11) Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-Arab, p. 529.

(12) Tahdhib al-Lughah, Vol. 12, p. 137.

whetstones, you say Sanan sulabiyyun and musallabb also, meaning sharpened. And the hardness is from the back, and everything in the back that has vertebrae is the hardness, and the hardness of the earth: the rough, obedient place, and the plural is sulbah⁽¹⁾.

B. Crucifixion in technical terms:

Crucifixion in technical terms refers to the hanging of a person upright with his arms outstretched, either by killing or torturing. It has also been said that it refers to the tying of prominent people to a piece of wood or similar objects, such as hanging them from a tree or high place for people to see, or from palm trunks, as indicated by what is stated in the Holy Quran in the words of Pharaoh, threatening the magicians with his words: "And I will surely crucify you on the trunks of palm trees."⁽²⁾ It is also said that the murdered person who is tied to a piece of wood until his cross drips is a cross and a crucified person, and the act is called crucifixion⁽³⁾.

Chapter Two

Religious and Intellectual Reasons

First: Crucifixion for Religious Reasons:

The punishment of crucifixion was one of the most severe deterrent punishments employed by the Abbasid state (132-334 AH), particularly against dissenters, particularly those accused of religious offenses whose actions were justified by the authorities on religious grounds. The Abbasids relied on Quranic texts and Prophetic hadiths confirming the legitimacy of crucifixion as a punishment for apostates and those who spread corruption on earth. Preserving the unity of the Islamic faith and the religious prestige of the caliphate was considered essential to ensuring the stability of the state. Al-Tabari's commentary on the relevant verse

states: "The only reward of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive after corruption in the land is that they be killed or crucified or their hands be cut off." And their feet from opposite sides or they are banished from the land. That is for them a disgrace in this world, and for them in the Hereafter is a great punishment.⁽⁴⁾ Those who fight "God and His Messenger" Crucifixion is considered one of the legitimate punishments for those who violate the prestige of religion and society⁽⁵⁾. Crucifixion represents a means of demonstrating the strength of the state and its ability to suppress dissenters, especially those whose movements were linked to religious or ideological dimensions, such as the Khawarij and the Zanadiqa. The goal of implementing this punishment in public places was to intimidate other dissenters and to demonstrate that any threat to faith or religious unity would be met with severe punishment. Ibn al-Athir mentioned that the Abbasids used crucifixion against their opponents to demonstrate firmness towards extremist religious movements, such as The Kharijites, some of whom were executed in Khorasan after their rebellion⁽⁶⁾. For example, the Kharijites, whom the state considered corruptors on earth, were punished by death and crucifixion, as happened with some of their leaders in Khorasan during the rule of Harun al-Rashid. The Abbasid authority also resorted to crucifixion as a punishment for heretics, especially in light of the rise of intellectual movements that questioned the official doctrine of the state, as al-Yaqubi explained in his discussion of the Abbasids' treatment of heretics and atheists in Baghdad⁽⁷⁾. Among the evidence of the religious reasons in the year (133 AH /

(1) Al-Farabi, Al-Sihah, Vol. 1, p. 163.

(2) Surah Taha, verse 71.

(3) Sayyid Sabiq, Sunnah Jurisprudence, Vol. 2, p. 478; Al-Daraji, The Punishment of Crucifixion, pp. 39-40.

(4) Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 33.

(5) Al-Tabari, Jami' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Quran.

(6) Ibn al-Athir, The Complete History, Vol. 5, pp. 98-100.

(7) Al-Yaqubi's History, Vol. 2, pp. 471-472.

750 AD) was Al-Mu'alla bin Khunais⁽¹⁾ from the followers of Imam Al-Sadiq (may God be pleased with him) and those close to him, as he was known for his service to the Imam and his care for his daily affairs, in addition to being one of the narrators and knowledgeable in his hadith. Imam Al-Sadiq (may God be pleased with him) described him when he entered with one of his companions, saying: "Welcome, welcome to you, faces that love us and we love them, may God make you with us in this world and the hereafter"⁽²⁾. and Sheikh Al-Tusi⁽³⁾ mentioned him among the praised ones, as he was from the pillars of Abu Abdullah (may God be pleased with him), and he was praised by him, while Ibn Tawus⁽⁴⁾ described him as one of the people of Paradise, and Al-Allamah Al-Hilli⁽⁵⁾ praised him and considered him one of the most just companions of Imam Al-Sadiq (may God be pleased with him), but his closeness to The Imam, and the secrets he held about his companions, made him the focus of attention of the Abbasid state, which was anxiously awaiting the movements of the family of Abu Talib, given their high standing among the people.

Some historians, such as Shabestari⁽⁶⁾, have mentioned that Al-Mu'alla was one of the companions of Muhammad Al-Nafs Al-Zakiyya, and participated in his revolution, which led to his capture by Dawud bin Ali Al-Abbassi and his crucifixion in the year (145 AH), but this statement is unlikely. As for Salim Abbas Jassim⁽⁷⁾, he mentioned that he was killed in the year (131 AH / 748AD), but he was wrong in that, as the governorship of Dawud bin Ali over Medina did not begin until the caliphate of Abu Al-Abbas Al-Saffah, in Dhu Al-Hijjah of the year (132 AH / 749 AD), and continued for three months until his death in Rabi' Al-Awwal of the year (133 AH / 750 AD)⁽⁸⁾. It was mentioned in the narrations that Dawud bin Ali summoned Al-Mu'alla bin Khunais to ask him about the names of the companions of Imam Al-Sadiq (may Allah be pleased with him), but Al-Mu'alla denied knowing them, and confirmed that he was just a servant who took care of the needs of the Imam. And Dawud took advantage of the absence of Imam al-Sadiq (may Allah be pleased with him) in Mecca, to arrest al-Mu'alla and interrogate him, especially since the Imam had advised him to keep it secret, saying: "O Mu'alla, keep our affair secret and do not divulge it, for whoever keeps our affair secret and does not divulge it, Allah will honor him in this world and make it a light between his eyes in the Hereafter, leading him to Paradise"⁽⁹⁾. The Imam (may Allah be pleased with him) also said: "O Mu'alla, the one who divulges our affair is like the one who denies it"⁽¹⁰⁾. When Dawud intensified his threat to kill al-Mu'alla if he did

(1) Al-Mu'alla ibn Khunais: He is a mawla of Banu Asad, a Kufan who worked as a cloth merchant. He then became a mawla of Imam al-Sadiq (may God be pleased with him) when he visited Kufa. He is one of the mawla of the tribe, not the Arabs. He has a son named Sulayman ibn al-Mu'alla. See: Al-Najashi, Rijal al-Najashi, p. 417; Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 3, p. 102.

(2) Al-Kulayni, Al-Furu' min Al-Kafi, Vol. 4, p. 34; Al-Amili, Madarik Al-Ahkam in Explaining the Laws of Islam, Vol. 5, p. 226.

(3) Men of Al-Tusi, p. 202.

(4) Ibn Tawus, Iqbal al-A'mal, p. 144.

(5) Al-Hilli, Summary of Sayings on Knowing Men, p. 384.

(6) Al-Shabestari, Al-Fa'iq in the Narrators and Companions of Imam Al-Sadiq, Vol. 3, p. 274.

(7) Al-Mualla ibn Khunais and his influence on Islam, p. 2177.

(8) Al-Tabari, History of Nations and Kings, Vol. 7, p. 459.

(9) Al-Saduq, Reasons for the Laws, Vol. 1, p. 34.

(10) Al-Mazandarani, Explanation of the Principles of Al-Kafi, Vol. 9, p. 131.

not tell him the information, he answered him firmly, saying: "You threaten me with death! By Allah, if they were under my feet, I would not lift my feet from them even if you killed me"⁽¹⁾. Imam al-Sadiq (may Allah be pleased with him) had predicted his murder at the hands of Dawud ibn Ali, and his crucifixion after summoning him and threatening him, saying: "He will order his neck to be struck and he will be crucified, and that is from "Qabil," and when the following year came, Dawud took over the city and carried out his threat⁽²⁾. Al-Mu'alla was imprisoned and tortured, and Dawud insisted on interrogating him, but he remained steadfast in his secrecy, saying: "I am a man whose needs are disputed, and I do not know of any companions"⁽³⁾. Then Dawud ordered his police chief to kill him, so his neck was struck, and then his body was crucified in the city. The news reached Imam al-Sadiq (may God be pleased with him), and he said: "May God have mercy on al-Mu'alla, I had expected that"⁽⁴⁾. The killing of al-Mu'alla angered Imam al-Sadiq (may God be pleased with him), so he went out to Dawud bin Ali, and ordered his son Ismail to carry the sword, then he confronted Dawud violently, saying: "You killed my master and took my money?" Dawud denied his responsibility for his killing, and pointed to his police chief, saying: "This one killed him." So the Imam ordered his son Ismail to arrest him, and when the policeman protested, saying: "He ordered me to..." By killing him, and when I killed him, he said this," the Imam replied: "You are right in what you said, and no one killed him but him, and I will

call upon God against you," then he left⁽⁵⁾. It seems that Al-Mu'alla was carrying legitimate money for the Imam, and Dawud confiscated it, and that is why the Imam referred to it in his protest against him.

The Imam went out to the mosque and prolonged his prostration, praying to God to hasten the death of Dawud ibn Ali. As soon as he raised his head, people heard the call of Dawud's death. His wife, Lubaba bint Abdullah ibn Abbas, narrated that he died suddenly in his sleep. She said: "I moved Dawud and found him dead."⁽⁶⁾ Dawud died on Friday, thirteen nights before the end of Safar in the year 133 AH/750 AD⁽⁷⁾.

In the era (136-158 AH/753-775 AD), during the reign of Abu Jaafar al-Mansur, Abu Abd al-Rahman Muhammad ibn Saeed ibn Abi Qais al-Azdi was killed for heresy (Muhammad ibn Saeed al-Maslub), by Abu Jaafar al-Mansur, then crucified, so he was known as al-Maslub. He was killed and crucified in Baghdad, and the reason for him being considered a heretic was that he was a fabricator of the Prophet's hadith, and was described as a liar⁽⁸⁾. The date of his killing was not mentioned, but it does not exceed the period (136-158 AH/753-775 AD), the era of Abu Jaafar al-Mansur, and it is reported that he said: I do not care if I hear a

(1) Ibn Shahr Ashub, *Manaqib Al Abi Talib*, Vol. 3, p. 352.

(2) Ibn Shahr Ashub, *Manaqib Al Abi Talib*, Vol. 3, p. 352.

(3) Al-Tusi, *Selection of Knowledge of Men*, known as (*Men of Al-Kashi*), Vol. 2, p. 679.

(4) Al-Tusi, *Selection of Knowledge of Men*, known as (*Rijal al-Kashi*), Vol. 2, p. 678.

(5) Judge Al-Nu'man, *Explanation of the News on the Virtues of the Pure Imams*, Vol. 3, p. 302.

(6) Judge Al-Nu'man, *Explanation of the News on the Virtues of the Pure Imams*, Vol. 3, p. 302.

(7) Al-Baladhuri, *Genealogies of the Nobles*, Vol. 3, p. 83.

(8) Ibn Adi Al-Kamil *fi Du'afa' al-Rijal*, vol. 7, p. 319; Ibn Asakir, *Tarikh Madinat Dimashq*, pp. 53-75; Ibn al-Jawzi, *Kitab al-Du'afa' wa al-Matrukin*, vol. 3, p. 65; al-Halabi, *Al-Kashf al-Hatheeth 'an Man Rimma'i 'Adab al-Hadith'*, p. 241.

good word to create a chain of transmission for it⁽¹⁾.

In (150 AH / 756 AD) Astadis or Astadish launched a dangerous movement against the Abbasid Caliphate⁽²⁾. He appeared in the year (150 AH / 756 AD), and was killed a year after he declared his call⁽³⁾. Perhaps the political factor played a role in the accusation and the killing. Was he actually a claimant to prophethood, or was it exaggerated, and was he considered the grandfather of Caliph Abdullah al-Ma'mun through his mother Marajil al-Farsiyya, and that his son Ghalib was the uncle of the Caliph and had a role in eliminating one of the ministers? Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari mentioned his story, and did not mention the accusation of claiming prophethood⁽⁴⁾. Among his weapons were spades and axes, which may indicate that most of his followers were farmers⁽⁵⁾.

During the reign of Al-Mahdi (158-169 AH), there was a tightening of the ideas and doctrines that contradicted the Islamic faith, especially heresy. I remember that Salih bin

Abdul Quddus⁽⁶⁾ (784/167 AH) was brought, and Al-Sharif Al-Radi⁽⁷⁾ mentioned that he claimed to follow the doctrine of dualism. When the Umayyad state fell and the Abbasid state rose, Salih was brought to Caliph Al-Mahdi (158-169 AH), and when he was brought to him, a dialogue took place between them about him being a heretic. Salih's response was that he was a poet and that he was immoral in his poetry. Al-Mahdi (158-169 AH) showed him the books of the heretics, and he admitted to reading them. He pleaded with Al-Mahdi (158-169 AH) to pardon him, announce his repentance, and keep him until he ordered him to be imprisoned. Al-Mahdi (158-169 AH) asked him to recite poetry to him, until he reached his saying:

What the enemies can achieve from an ignorant person

What the ignorant person can achieve from himself

The Sheikh does not abandon his morals

Until his remains are buried in the ground

If he is frightened, he returns to his ignorance

The affliction has returned to its setback⁽⁸⁾.

Al-Mahdi (158-169 AH) ordered him to be taken to prison. When he wanted to take him out, he shouted at them to bring him back. So they brought him back to him. He said: O Salih, aren't you the one who says:

(6) He was one of the most eloquent poets and speakers of the Abbasid era from Basra. His poetry frequently encourages abandoning the world and renounces it, and often mentions death and the grave. See: Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Tabaqat al-Shu'ara'*, p. 91; Daif, *Art and its Schools in Arabic Poetry*, p. 113.

(7) Amali Al-Murtada, *Ghurar Al-Fawa'id wa Durar Al-Qala'id*, p. 114; Daif, *History of Arabic Literature, the First Abbasid Era*, Vol. 3, p. 393.

(8) Ibn Asakir, *History of the City of Damascus*, Vol. 23, p. 348; Ibn al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam fi Tarikh al-Muluk wa al-Umam*, Vol. 8, p. 287.

(1) Ibn Asakir, *History of the City of Damascus*, 53-83.

(2) Ustadish spread his message in Herat, Badghis, Sistan, and other cities in Khurasan. It was a dangerous movement against the Abbasid Caliphate. The name of its most prominent leader was "Al-Harish." He was accused of claiming prophethood and was accused of displaying immorality and practicing banditry. Ustadish claimed prophethood, but his companions displayed immorality and banditry. See: Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Kamil fi Al-Tarikh*, Vol. 5, pp. 591-593.

(3) Ibn al-Athir, *The Complete History*, pp. 591-593.

(4) Al-Tabari, *History of Nations and Kings*, Vol. 7, p. 21.

(5) Al-Maqdisi, *The Beginning and History*, Vol. 6, p. 86.

The Sheikh does not abandon his morals Until his grave is buried in the ground

He said: Yes... The Caliph said the same, do not abandon your morals until you die, take him. He said, and there were four servants with him, so each one of them took his sword, then Al-Mahdi (158-169 AH) himself went to him and took his sword from its sheath, then struck it with his hand once, breaking it into two pieces, then he ordered it to be carried and crucified on the eastern side, half of it⁽¹⁾. and on the western side, half of it, and it was hung on the bridge of Baghdad in the year one hundred and sixty-seven⁽²⁾.

In the year 283 AH/896 AD, Caliph Al-Mu'tadid decided to eliminate the movement of the Kharijite Harun Al-Shari, after he received news of Al-Hussein bin Hamdan's⁽³⁾. truce with

him and his inclination towards his doctrine. So Al-Mu'tadid prepared an army and equipped it for Mosul, where he entered it in the month of Muharram of the same year. Then Al-Hussein bin Hamdan came out to him, declaring obedience, and offered to release his father Hamdan bin Hamdoun from captivity, in exchange for bringing him Harun Al-Shari as a prisoner. The Caliph agreed to that, and Al-Hussein sent a campaign that included three hundred horsemen from his best soldiers. He set out to confront Al-Shari, and fierce battles took place between the two sides in which both sides showed bravery and patience, until it ended with Al-Shari's defeat and flight. However, Al-Hussein bin Hamdan pursued him until he was able to capture him. It was reported that he jumped on him and tightened his grip on him, so his companions rushed to hold him back and tied him up. Then he was led to the Caliph Al-Mu'tadid in chains, and his reward was that Hamdan bin Hamdoun was released⁽⁴⁾.

After Al-Shari was captured, he was taken to Baghdad to be disgraced before the

(1) Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Tabaqat al-Shu'ara*, p. 90; Al-Murtada's *Amalis*, Ghurar al-Fawa'id wa Durar al-Qala'id, p. 145; Ibn Asakir, *History of the City of Damascus and Mention of its Merits and Naming of the Early Inhabitants*, Vol. 23, p. 384; Yaqut al-Hamawi, *Dictionary of Writers, Guidance of the Intelligent to Knowing the Writer*, Vol. 4, p. 145; Ibn Khallikan, *Deaths of Notable People and News of the Sons of the Age*, Vol. 2, p. 492; Al-Dhahabi, *History of Islam and Deaths of Famous People and Notable Figures*, pp. 10, 269.

(2) Al-Ya'qubi, *History of Al-Ya'qubi*, Vol. 2, p. 400; Ibn Khallikan, *Deaths of Notable People and News of the Sons of the Age*, Vol. 2, p. 492; Al-Khoei, *Minhaj Al-Bara'ah in Explaining Nahj Al-Balagha*, Vol. 19, p. 159.

(3) Al-Husayn ibn Hamdan al-Hamdani, the prince Abu Abdullah al-Taghlabi, the uncle of Sultan Sayf al-Dawla, came to the Levant to fight the Tulunid dynasty in an army assigned by al-Muqtafi. He came to Damascus to fight the Qarmatians during the days of al-Muqtadir, who appointed him governor of Diyar Rabi'a. He invaded

and conquered fortresses and killed many Romans. Then he rebelled and Ibn Ra'iq came to fight him. Ra'iq fought him and captured him in the year 303 AH. He was imprisoned in Baghdad and then killed in the year 300 AH. He was the one who promised al-Mu'tadid to bring him Harun al-Shari in exchange for releasing Abu Hamdan ibn Hamdan, whom al-Mu'tadid had captured and imprisoned in Baghdad. He was able to capture Harun and bring him to al-Mu'tadid in Mosul in 283 AH/896 AD. See: Ibn Asakir, *Tarikh Madinat Dimashq wa Dhikr Fadlha wa Tasmiyat min al-Awwal Who Settled It*, vol. 14, p. 58; al-Safadi, *al-Wafi bil-Wafiyat*, vol. 12, p. 223.

(4) Al-Tabari, *History of Nations and Kings*, Vol. 10, p. 44; Miskawayh, *Experiences of Nations and Succession of Aspirations*, Vol. 4, p. 503; Ibn al-Athir, *The Complete History*, Vol. 6, p. 490.

punishment was carried out. An elephant was prepared for him, decorated with brocade, and a seat was set up on its back for him to sit on. He was dressed in a colorful brocade garment, and a colorful silk cloak was placed on his head, to show his humiliation after his movement had exhausted the state and burdened it with soldiers and expenses. Then he was ordered to be crucified. When he was raised on the wood, he called out at the top of his voice: "There is no judgment but for God, even if the polytheists hate it." He was a follower of the Sufriyyah sect⁽¹⁾. Ibn Kathir⁽²⁾ mentioned the news of his crucifixion, and that Al-Mu'tadid ordered his crucifixion. "He ordered the crucifixion of Harun Al-Shari, who was a Sufriyyah." When he was crucified⁽³⁾, he said: "There is no judgment but for God, even if the polytheists hate it."

Second: Crucifixion for intellectual reasons:

The Abbasid state (132-334 AH) witnessed the emergence of numerous intellectual and philosophical movements that challenged the official doctrine and sparked controversy over religious and social issues. In the face of this challenge, the caliphate resorted to harsh punishments, the most prominent of which was

crucifixion, with the aim of deterring thinkers and opponents who espoused ideas considered a threat to the ideological and political unity of the state. The Abbasid state adopted this punishment based on accusations of heresy or atheism, charges that were often used as political cover to eliminate intellectual opponents⁽⁴⁾. Among the most prominent cases was the punishment of crucifixion, which was imposed on individuals such as al-Afshin (226AH/840AD) on charges of heresy and treason. This demonstrated the extent to which the Abbasids treated dissenting ideas as a direct threat to the political and religious order. Al-Tabari documented the details of al-Afshin's trial, where it was reported that the state viewed his ideas and behavior as contradictory to official Islam, so he was starved to death and then... He was crucified as a clear message to anyone who dared to challenge the state intellectually⁽⁵⁾. The punishment of crucifixion also included many thinkers and heretics, such as Mazyar ibn Qarn, who was accused of being linked to Persian intellectual movements hostile to Islam⁽⁶⁾.

In 225 AH/840 AD, Mazyar ibn Qarn⁽⁷⁾, a descendant of the Qarnavid dynasty, rulers of Tabaristan, and heir to a long-established Zoroastrian tradition, rebelled against the

(1) Abu Zakariya al-Azdi, History of Mosul, p. 147; Ibn al-Athir, The Complete History, vol. 6, p. 490.

(2) The Beginning and the End, Vol. 11, p. 84.

(3) The term "Safri" refers to the Sufriyya sect, one of the oldest Kharijite sects. They emerged after the Battle of Siffin in 37 AH/657 AD. It is one of their most important sects, and many sects emerged from it. They differ from the others in that they do not kill the women and children of their followers. Their name, Shia, goes back to Abdullah ibn al-Saffar al-Tamimi, who was with Ibn al-Zubayr when the Caliphate was declared in Mecca. See: al-Shahrastani, al-Milal wa al-Nihal, vol. 1, p. 137.

(4) Al-Tabari, History of Nations and Kings, Vol. 9, pp. 350-352.

(5) Ibn al-Athir, The Complete History, Vol. 5, p. 150.

(6) Al-Yaqubi, History of Al-Yaqubi, Vol. 2, pp. 498-500.

(7) Mazyar ibn Qarn (d. 225 AH/840 CE): A Persian Zoroastrian prince from the Qarnavid dynasty who ruled the Tabaristan region in northern Iran. He rebelled against the Abbasids, driven by a desire for political independence and a revival of ancient Persian religious traditions. His name was associated with populist movements opposed to Islamic authority, which prompted Caliph al-Mu'tasim to arrest him and execute him by crucifixion in Baghdad after accusing him of heresy and conspiring with al-Afshin. See: Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 6, pp. 145-152.

Abbasid Caliph's governor in Khorasan, insisting on sending taxes directly to al-Mu'tasim, thereby bypassing the state. Although this incident appeared to be an administrative and political dispute, it had serious ideological implications. Some sources indicate that Mazyar sought to revive Persian identity and the Zoroastrian religion among the inhabitants of the Tabaristan mountains. He was also accused of communicating with the commander al-Afshin, who was accused of heresy and secret opposition to Islam. According to al-Tabari's account, al-Mu'tasim ordered Mazyar's arrest and brought to Baghdad, where he was executed by crucifixion⁽¹⁾.

In the year 300 AH/912 AD, Mohsen Al-Alawi⁽²⁾, who was known as Ibn Al-Rida, appeared in some of the works of Damascus. At that time, that region was under the authority of Ahmed bin Kayghlugh⁽³⁾. His appearance was considered a challenge to the existing authority, which prompted the governor of Egypt, Ahmed bin Kayghlugh, to prepare an army to confront him.

(1) Al-Tabari, *History of Nations and Kings*, Vol. 9, pp. 130–137.

(2) Mohsen bin Jaafar bin Ali bin Muhammad bin Ali bin Musa bin Jaafar bin Muhammad bin Ali bin Al-Hussein bin Ali bin Abi Talib (may God be pleased with him). See: Abu Faraj Al-Isfahani, *Maqatil Al-Talibin*, p. 550.

(3) Ahmad ibn Kayghlugh: He is Prince Abu al-Qasim Ahmad ibn Kayghlugh, one of the leaders appointed by al-Muqtadir to rule Egypt. After that, al-Radi appointed him to rule Egypt when he was eighty years old. He was a poet and a man of letters. He ruled Egypt, but wars broke out between him and Muhammad ibn Takin until he secured the matter. Then Muhammad ibn Tughj was appointed as the prince of Egypt on behalf of al-Radi, who handed Egypt over to him. See: al-Safadi, *al-Wafi bil-Wafiyat*, vol. 7, p. 197.

A fierce battle took place between the two sides, during which the confrontations escalated until Ahmad ibn Kayghlugh defeated Muhsin al-Alawi, who was killed on the battlefield. His head was cut off and sent to Baghdad to be presented to Caliph al-Muqtadir. As a means of defamation and deterrence, his head was erected on the new bridge on the western side of Baghdad⁽⁴⁾.

Conclusion

1- It is evident that the punishment of crucifixion in the Abbasid era was not limited to being merely an administrative or legal measure; rather, it was a political and religious tool with complex dimensions, used by the authorities to control the intellectual and sectarian landscape. Crucifixion was a means by which the authorities sought to strengthen their control over society and undermine any threat posed by dissenting thought.

2- The state used the punishment of crucifixion to curb the activity of intellectual and religious movements that it considered contrary to or threatening the official doctrine. This reflected a repressive policy aimed at suppressing dissenters, especially Kharijites and heretics.

3- The punishment of crucifixion contributed to controlling religious discourse and curtailing the freedom of scholars and thinkers who espoused opposing views or doctrines. Therefore, it served as a tool to weaken movements that the state viewed as a threat to its existence, which led to a weakening of intellectual diversity in society.

(4) Al-Masudi, *Muruj al-Dhahab wa Ma'adin al-Jawhar*, Vol. 2, p. 170; Abu Faraj al-Isfahani, *Maqatil al-Talibin*, p. 550; Sabt Ibn al-Jawzi, *Mirat al-Zaman fi Tawarikh al-A'yan*, Vol. 16, p. 405; al-Dhahabi, *Tarikh al-Islam wa al-Wafiyat al-Mashahir wa al-A'lam*, Vol. 22, p. 37; Ibn Taghri Bardi, *al-Nujum al-Zahira fi Muluk Misr wa al-Qahira*, Vol. 3, p. 180.

4- The research shows that decisions related to the punishment of crucifixion reflected the close intertwining of religious and political dimensions. Crucifixion was not a neutral decision; rather, it carried a clear political message. Carrying out this punishment in public places was intended to intimidate other dissenters and demonstrate that any threat to faith or religious unity would be met with severe punishment.

5- This research provides an in-depth look at how religious and political sanctions were used in the past, and reflects the conflicts that Islamic societies have experienced throughout their history, contributing to an understanding of the relationship between power and religion in historical and political contexts.

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