

= Abdul Amir al @-@ Jamri =

Sheikh Abdul Amir al @-@ Jamri ( pronunciation ; SHAYK @-@ AHB @-@ dehl @-@ ah @-@ MEER @-@ al @-@ JAHM @-@ ree Arabic : ??? ?????????? ?????? ; 1 March 1938 ? 18 December 2006 ) was one of the most prominent Shia clerics and opposition leaders in Bahrain . He was also a writer and a poet .

Born in the village of Bani Jamra , al @-@ Jamri became a Hussaini khatib ( Shia preacher ) after finishing primary school . At the age of 21 , he began his Islamic studies , first in Bahrain and later in the religious institute of Al Najaf , Iraq , where he remained for 11 years . He returned to Bahrain in 1973 and was elected to the newly formed parliament . The parliament was dissolved two years later by the Emir , Isa bin Salman al @-@ Khalifa , after it had rejected the State Security Law . In 1977 , al @-@ Jamri was appointed as a judge at the High Religious Court of Bahrain . He held the position until 1988 , when he was briefly arrested due to his criticism of the government .

Al @-@ Jamri is most notable for his role during the 1990s uprising in Bahrain . As the lead figure of the opposition , he succeeded in bringing Islamists , liberals and leftists together against the monarchy . The events began in the form of petitions in 1992 and 1994 calling for restoration of the parliament and reinstatement of the suspended constitution , but led to widespread violence and the death of 40 individuals . Due to his civil rights activity , al @-@ Jamri was imprisoned between April and September 1995 , before being arrested again in January 1996 and imprisoned until July 1999 , which was followed by a year and a half of house arrest .

In January 2001 , al @-@ Jamri was released along with other opposition activists . The new emir , Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa , proposed a reform plan , the National Action Charter of Bahrain , which was accepted by the opposition and later gained widespread popular support . A year later , Hamad issued a new constitution which al @-@ Jamri said fell short of the opposition 's demands . Disappointed , al @-@ Jamri soon fell ill , suffering from a series of strokes and eventually dying of multiple organ failure .

= = Early life and Islamic studies = =

Al @-@ Jamri was born in the village of Bani Jamra , Northern Bahrain , on 1 March 1938 . His full name was Abdul Amir bin Mansoor bin Mohammed bin Abdulrasool bin Mohammed bin Hussain bin Ebrahim bin Makki bin Suleiman bin Makki al @-@ Jamri al @-@ Bahrani ( Arabic : ?????????? ?? ?????? ?? ?????? ?? ?????????? ?? ?????? ?? ?????? ?? ?????????? ?? ??? ?? ??????? ?? ??? ??????? ????????? ) , although he was also known by his kunya Abu Jameel ( Arabic : ??? ????? ) . His father ? known as Mansoor or Nasir ? was a Quranic teacher , owner of a textile workshop , and head of a " devout Shia family " . Al @-@ Jamri 's father taught him the Quran and basics of Islamic prayer when he was 6 , although died four years later . Al @-@ Jamri finished formal education at Budaiya primary school when he was 12 , before becoming a Hussaini khatib ( Shia preacher ) , learning from other well @-@ known khatibs in his village such as his cousin , the renovator Shia khatib Mulla Atiya al @-@ Jamri . He also obtained a job in the Manama Souq , working there until 1962 .

In 1957 , al @-@ Jamri married his cousin 's granddaughter , Zahra ' Yousif Atiya al @-@ Jamri , who was 16 at the time . In his book The Story of My Life , al @-@ Jamri devoted a section to speak about his marriage , in which he described it as a happy one and praised his wife for her patience and loyalty . They had 10 children together : 7 sons and 3 daughters . One of their sons is Mansoor Al @-@ Jamri , editor @-@ in @-@ chief of Al @-@ Wasat newspaper .

In 1959 , al @-@ Jamri began his religious studies in Bahrain . He was taught by Sheikh Abdulla al @-@ Bahrani ( died 1961 ) and Sheikh Baqir al @-@ Asfoor . In 1962 , following the death of his mentor , al @-@ Jamri traveled to Iraq to study Islamic theology and law in the religious institute of Al Najaf . Mentored for two years by Ayatollah Mohammad Baqir al @-@ Sadr and Abu al @-@ Qasim al @-@ Khoei , he reached the stage of independent research ( Bahth al @-@ kharij ; Arabic : ??? ?????? ) , the highest level of study in religious seminaries . He also wrote several religious articles which were published in Iraqi newspapers and magazines . In the country , al @-@ Jamri used the pseudonym Abdulla Mansoor Mohammed in order to avoid trouble when passing through

customs in Saudi Arabia , Kuwait and Iraq , where it was believed that the prefix " Abdul " should only be used with the name of God . The pseudonym also helped him evade Iraq 's Ba 'athist regime of Saddam Hussein following an anti @-@ Ba 'athist speech which al @-@ Jamri gave in 1970 . Spending 11 years in Iraq , al @-@ Jamri returned to Bahrain in 1973 . Between 1973 and 1981 , al @-@ Jamri was a frequent host on Bahrain TV , giving religious talks on Islamic occasions such as Ramadan and Ashura . In 1985 , he founded a small hawza in the mosque next to his house .

= = Member of Parliament = =

Bahrain became independent from the United Kingdom in 1971 and the Constituent Assembly of 1972 had drafted a new constitution by 1973 . Like his study colleague Isa Qassim , al @-@ Jamri initially wanted to complete his religious studies and did not care much about politics . His mentor in Iraq , Mohammad Baqir al @-@ Sadr , issued a binding fatw? for participation in the 1973 parliamentary election . Al @-@ Jamri and five others formed the " Religious Bloc " which adopted a wide program including supporting the labor 's union and demands , forbidding trade of alcoholic beverages , and separating men and women in education institutes . The bloc also called for prohibiting male doctors from treating female patients ( especially in pregnancy ) as well as other demands connected to traditional Islamic customs . Al @-@ Jamri was elected to the National Assembly of Bahrain , ranking second behind Isa Qassim .

In August 1975 , the constitution was suspended and the assembly dissolved by the Emir , Isa bin Salman al @-@ Khalifa , after it had rejected the State Security Law . The act ? also known as " the precautionary law " ? was proposed by the British adviser Ian Henderson . It gave police wide powers of arrest and allowed individuals to be held in prison without trial or charge for up to three years ( renewable ) for suspicion " that they might be a threat to the state " . Al @-@ Jamri was a member of a foreign relations committee , and an outspoken critic of the State Security Law .

= = 1977 ? 1988 = =

In the period from 1975 to 2001 , the Emir ruled by decree . Human rights activists and opposition leaders made repeated allegations of systematic torture , the arbitrary arrest of thousands , and assassinations , all of which were denied by the authorities . Bahrain 's Shia population widely claimed that they were being discriminated against by the government , and that they were being treated as second class citizens .

= = = Judge = = =

In 1977 , the government offered al @-@ Jamri the opportunity to serve as a judge at the High Religious Court of Bahrain ( Shia branch ) . Al @-@ Jamri agreed after Abu al @-@ Qasim al @-@ Khoei issued him with a religious permit to do so . The decision was controversial within Bahrain , as many Shia clerics had refused to participate in the government @-@ run judiciary ever since its foundation in the 1920s . Al @-@ Jamri held the position until June 1988 , when he was suspended due to his criticism of the government .

= = = Political activism = = =

Following the 1979 Iranian Revolution , and continuing throughout the 1980s , the intensity of Bahrain 's political situation sharply increased . Al @-@ Jamri , who was then participating in several petitions , was questioned multiple times and put under strict surveillance by the Security and Intelligence Service . In 1984 , the Islamic Enlightenment institution , with which al @-@ Jamri was associated , was closed by the government . The government also closed other places of meeting and prohibited public seminars . Al @-@ Jamri however opened his house for daily meetings , also offering a weekly space for public debates ; he continued to do so despite several government attempts to stop him .

In 1988 , the situation came to a head when al @-@ Jamri ignored a final warning by the government . In June , he was dismissed from his job as a judge . In August , his son @-@ in @-@ law Abduljalil Khalil was arrested and sentenced to seven years imprisonment . In September , his elder son Mohamed Jameel was arrested and sentenced to ten years . The authorities then ordered al @-@ Jamri 's arrest ; on 6 September , Colonel Adel Flaifel and a number of security forces arrived at his house . Al @-@ Jamri 's wife rushed to the nearby mosque and called people from its speakers . Amid neighbors ' protests , security forces decided to let al @-@ Jarmi go after only an hour 's detention .

= = Role during the 1990s uprising = =

= = = Background = = =

There was a time of civil strife in Bahrain from 1994 to 1999 , during which leftists , liberals and Islamists joined forces to demand democratic reforms . The uprising was the largest in the country 's history , and included widespread demonstrations and violence .

In 1992 , a petition was signed by 280 leading figures in civil society , demanding the restoration of parliament , reinstatement of the suspended constitution , the release of political prisoners , and the start of a reconciliation dialogue . The government rejected their demands and instead set up a thirty @-@ member appointed " Shura council " assigned with " commenting " on government proposed legislation . In 1994 , another petition was launched with the same demands , this time open to all citizens . Organizers said that they had collected over 20 @, @ 000 signatures .

Violence broke out in June 1994 when riot police used tear gas on 1 @, @ 500 demonstrators who had organized a sit @-@ in in front of the Ministry of Labor . The protesters were campaigning against the increasing rate of unemployment , which had reached 15 percent . Over the following years , many opposition leaders were arrested and others exiled . Some protesters used Molotov cocktails to attack " police stations , banks and commercial properties " . Riot police used tear gas and rubber bullets , some of which were fired at the crowd from police helicopters . It was also reported that police used live ammunition in some cases . Overall , about forty people were killed , including several detainees who were in police custody ( allegedly due to torture ) , and at least three policemen .

During the uprising , al @-@ Jamri " rose to prominence " , becoming the lead figure among the opposition , who saw him as " their father figure and spiritual mentor . " To the Shia , he was their " spiritual leader " . He was a " chief architect " and a signatory of the 1992 and 1994 petitions . He was also the informal leader of the U.K.-based Bahrain Freedom Movement . Al @-@ Jamri , himself a Shia Islamist , had good relations with secular and liberal opposition forces and united them into " an effective opposition movement " . Due to his civil rights activity , the pro @-@ democracy cleric was arrested and placed under house arrest for years .

= = = First arrest = = =

In 1995 , following clashes between security forces and students , the government accused al @-@ Jamri of having links to Iran and seeking to establish an " Islamic republic " in Bahrain . Al @-@ Jamri denied the accusations . Nevertheless , on 1 April the government imposed a blockade on al @-@ Jamri 's home of Bani Jamra , placing him and 18 members of his family under house arrest . At least one man was killed and 16 others injured during clashes with police . That day became known locally as the Black Saturday . Two weeks later , al @-@ Jamri was transferred to a detention center . Along with other opposition figures he was released on 25 September 1995 , following a deal with the government to calm down the situation in return for opening up talks on the restoration of parliament . Tens of thousands of Bahrainis gathered to welcome al @-@ Jamri following his release . He gave a speech in which he promised to stay loyal to the hopes and sufferings of the Bahraini people .

= = = Second arrest , trial and conviction = = =

On 23 October , al @-@ Jamri and other released opposition activists began a 10 @-@ day hunger strike in his house to protest what they called the government 's failure to fulfill its pledges . Tens of thousands gathered in solidarity with the activists on the final day of the hunger strike ( 1 November ) . On 21 January 1996 al @-@ Jamri was detained again along with 7 other opposition leaders , including Abdulwahab Hussain and Hassan Mushaima , following the collapse of the talks . The arrests provoked further unrest . The activists denied the charges of forming a militia group called " Bahraini Hizbullah " or receiving support from Iran .

Al @-@ Jamri spent 3 and a half years in prison , during which he allegedly spent the first 9 months in solitary confinement and was closely observed during the remaining period . On 21 February 1999 , about three years after his arrest , al @-@ Jamri 's trial before the State Security Court began . On 7 July , the court convicted him on charges of " spying and inciting unrest against the royal family " . Al @-@ Jamri was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and fined BD5.7 million ( US \$ 15 million ) . British politician George Galloway , Human Rights Watch , International Pen and Amnesty International led campaigns in solidarity with al @-@ Jamri . The latter also named him a prisoner of conscience .

= = = Release , reconciliation and disappointment = = =

Emir Isa bin Salman died suddenly on 6 March and was succeeded by his eldest son , Hamad bin Isa al Khalifa . The new emir pardoned al @-@ Jamri and released him a day after his conviction ( 8 July ) , but placed him under house arrest until 23 January 2001 . Before getting pardoned , al @-@ Jamri had to appear on national television and read a " humiliating letter of apology " to the Emir . Repeated meetings between commissioners of the Emir and al @-@ Jamri were held during the house arrest period . Subsequent days saw the release of further political prisoners , and exiles were allowed to return . On 8 February , al @-@ Jamri and 3 other opposition leaders ? Abdulla al @-@ Ghuraifi , Abdulwahab Hussain and Ali Rabea ? met with the emir to discuss his reform plans , the National Action Charter of Bahrain .

The Charter called for the introduction of a constitutional monarchy , an independent judiciary , and a bicameral legislature composed of a lower house of elected representatives and an upper house of appointed legislators . The Charter also granted equal rights between men and women , and recognised all Bahraini citizens as having equal political rights , including the entitlement to elections and political candidacy . In the 8 February meeting , the government promised that " the new political arrangements will not invalidate the 1973 constitution and that the upper appointed house will be for consultation only . " The next day , after leading Friday prayer , al @-@ Jamri delivered a famous speech , starting with " Allah is my witness , I have missed you as much as Jacob missed Joseph " , before Abdulwahab announced that the opposition had decided to accept the reform plan . The National Action Charter was voted on in a referendum on 14 and 15 February , gaining massive popular support ( 98 @.@ 4 % ) . In November 2001 , the Al Wefaq Shia political society was founded , with al @-@ Jamri being seen as its mentor .

On 14 February 2002 , the Emir introduced the new constitution of 2002 , which gave him wide @-@ ranging powers and gave the upper appointed house more powers than the elected lower house , including the right to legislate . The " honeymoon " period between the opposition and government was over ; al @-@ Jamri stated his disappointment with the new constitution , stating that it fell short of the opposition 's demands . " [ T ] his is not the type of parliament we had demanded , " he said .

= = Illness and death = =

Then under house arrest , in May 2000 al @-@ Jamri suffered a heart attack . He was taken to the Bahrain Defence Force Hospital , where he underwent surgery . During his stay at the hospital , he

was visited by the King and Prime Minister . In May 2002 , al @-@ Jamri traveled to Germany for spinal surgery . While undergoing medical checkups , it was discovered he had a thrombus behind his eye , which had developed when he was in prison . Following the surgery he suffered a stroke , also developing kidney problems and a blood infection , soon falling into a coma . He woke from the coma on 30 June , but shortly after suffered a second stroke , resulting in internal bleeding , and incapacitating him for the rest of his life .

On 27 January 2003 , al @-@ Jamri was transferred from Germany to Sultan bin Abdulaziz Humanitarian City in Saudi Arabia , where his medical condition improved slightly . He returned to Bahrain on 12 July and was welcomed by hundreds of his supporters . His medical condition deteriorated again as he suffered from repeated respiratory problems and another stroke , and in the end he lost the ability to speak . In the early morning of 18 December 2006 , al @-@ Jamri was rushed by ambulance from his home to Salmaniya Medical Complex , where he was announced dead . The cause of death was heart and kidney failure .

= = Aftermath = =

= = = Funeral = = =

Although al @-@ Jamri 's death was announced in the morning , the mourning processions only began after the sunset Maghrib prayer . The funeral course was changed several times . Ultimately , it began at 6 : 00 in Muqsha village before moving along the west side of Budaiya highway to Bani Jamra , where al @-@ Jamri was buried at 10 : 00 . The weather was extremely cold for Bahrain , yet thousands showed up wearing black mourning clothes and carrying black flags . According to a number of Al @-@ Wasat writers , the funeral was the largest in the modern history of Bahrain .

= = = Successor = = =

Following the 2002 deterioration of his health , al @-@ Jamri 's position as a political and religious leader of Bahrain 's Shia opposition was taken over by his lifelong friend , Ayatollah Isa Qassim . Qassim was less revolutionary than al @-@ Jamri , having opposed the 1992 and 1994 petitions , but his views were kept private , in part as a sign of respect for al @-@ Jamri . Al @-@ Jamri 's role as leader of the opposition remained empty , as the opposition became fragmented .

= = Publications = =

Al @-@ Jamri wrote several books and poems ( in Arabic ) . He kept writing poems even when he became bedridden . His books include :

Women in Islam .

Islamic Duties .

Islamic Teachings .

The story of my life .