INTRODUCTION

History of Islamic literature and culture dates back to the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) who ushered in a new era. On the foundation laid by him and by his great successors who are generally called Khulafa-i-Rashidun a great edifice of Islamic Culture was built by the U. avi Khulafa, who besides creating a global Islamic state were the harbingers of the Islamic Culture too.

During the first and a half centuries of Islam, that is, upto the emergence of the Abbasi Khilafah a lot of academic work which was of seminal nature was done by the Ulama of this period. They in fact belonged to the second generation of Muslims generally termed as the Tabiun in the annals of Islam. Their contributions, oral or written, enriched almost all the branches of Islamic learning that included both religious and rational studies.

Great emphasis was laid, quite naturally, on the formative Islamic Sciences such as Quranic Studies, Hadith literature and Figh (jurisprudence) material. Eminent rather greatest jurists flourished during this period. In the first generation they included Urwah b.Zubayr, Hārān Rasari Zuhri and their disciples who raised the second generation of the Muslim jurists such as Ibrahim Nakhai, Hamīd Layth,
Abu Hanifah, Awzai, Malik b. Anas and the like. They created, patronised and enriched the fiqh literature in this phenomenal period.

The second generation of the Muslim jurists were in fact bridged the Umavi and Abbasi Khilafah. Political compartmentalisation as well as academic segregation are not historical fact. Both political and academic processes continue uninterruptedly. However, the Islamic legacy of academics particularly that of the legal and juridical expositions of the first phase of Islam was inherited by the scholars of the Abbasi Khilafah.

After the early political holocaust and academic stagnation the scholars of the great Abbasi period picked up the thread from the point where they had left it. In this connection efforts of great Abbasi Khulafa like al-Mansur, al-Mahdi, Harun, al-Mamun and al-Mutasim can not be ignored. Their state patronage gave a filling to the flourishing current of the academic of the period.
The first phase of Abbasids—till the period of Wathiq Billah—was distinguished for academic activities and had a high standard of literature and politics both. This period is marked by the domination of Arabo-Persian elements, freedom of thought to a great extent and by the influence and power of Mutazilah and creation of a literature that was followed for a long time. This period is also distinguished for the transmission of Arabic language and literature on a universal basis. The books written in foreign languages were translated into Arabic. All these developments made this period different from the previous one and consequently it was called the 'global period'.

From the intellectual standpoint, the movement of translation began during the reign of Abu Jafar al-Mansur and his successors. The Persian and Indian books were translated into Arabic. The interest of scholars increased in the Arabic and Shariah Sciences, Languages, history, jurisprudence, hadith and so on. The number of experts in these branches of knowledge were rising as was the case with the books in these sciences. Dignity, grandeur and cultural position of Abbasid Khilafah and its flourishing culture and civilization are considered great landmarks in the history of Islam.

From the political point of view, Abbasid Kingdom was very powerful, highly influential, dominating the world politics. It had wider relationship with other Kingdoms. The Abbasid rulers were potent and mighty. They were capable to control the organs of the government, crush all the rebellions within the country and defend the territory of Islam from the Byzantine. The people in this period lived a comfortable life and felt safe and secure.

The period in which Ibn Mazah al-Bukhari lived was the period of foreign military attacks. In this period two attacks from foreigners were made upon the Islamic countries. The Islamic State and its rulers suffered badly and a big portion of Islamic Lands were taken away from the Abbasids.
These military attacks were actually launched by the Crusaders of the West as well as by the Tatars of the East. Most of the Caliphs in this period were Saljuqs but they were followed by some Abbasid Khulafa such as al-Zaher, Al-Mustansar and Al-Mustasim, who was the last ruler of the Abbasid dynasty. (5)

This period is divided into two parts:

The first part relates to the crusades. Their main reason was the religious fanaticism in the West against Muslims. In these military expeditions the European Kings and army commanders played the key role in order to collect the booty and acquire the Islamic Lands under the pretext of restoration of the Holy city from the Muslims. They looked at the Islamic lands with an eye of land hunger and aggrandisement. They continued to attack till they acquired Jerusalem in 492 A.H./1097 A.D. The Ayyubid rulers tried a number of times to defeat the crusaders but the continuous military assistance to the enemies of Islam made these efforts unsuccessful. It was the period of Imad al-Din Zangi when these attacks were stopped with courage and valour. During the period of Nur Uddin and Salahuddin the political authority was restored to Abbasids. The Fatimid sermon was discontinued during the regin of
Al-Mustazi in 667 A.H./1268 AD\(^6\). Salahuddin Ayyubi succeeded to unify Egypt and Syria in 577 A.H./ and declared the holy jihad against crusaders. Hittin was one of the battle fields in which Europeans suffered utter defeat. Salahuddin Ayyubi conquered Jerusalem in 583 A.H./ 1187\(^7\).

The Abbasids remained in power till the Turk Mamlukids captured the Islamic lands in 648 A.H./ 1250 A.D.\(^8\)

The second part of this period represents the Mongol invasion from the East which left the total destruction behind it in all the regions where they passed from. The Islamic world suffered heavy calamity and disaster. The Mongols entered Baghdad, the capital of Abbasids, in 656 A.H./ 1259 A.D. killed the caliph and his family members and destroyed all other things. The Abbasid Kingdom thus collapsed. The Mongols marched towards Syria and confronted with the Mamlukids who defeated them in the battlefield of Ain Jalut where their assault come to an end.\(^9\)
Notes and References:

4. Ibid, p.16.
5. Ibid, p.78
6. Ibid, p.78
7. Ibid, p.89.
8. Ibid, p.93.