CHAPTER-4

POLITICAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE ABBASID PERIOD (750-1258 A.D.)
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( 750 to 1258 A.D )

1. A brief description of Prior situation of Abbasid period:-

After death of prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him) in the year 632 A.D., four successive caliphs: (I) Hazrat Abu Bakr, (II) Hazrat Omar Faruqu., (III) Hazrat Utman Gani and (IV) Hazrat Ali (R:A.) were chosen by the people. After the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali in 661 A.D., Hazrat Moaweeya founded the Umayyad dynasty at Damascus. The last Umayyad caliph was defeated in 750 A.D. in the battle of ‘ZAB’ and the famous Abbasid caliphate commenced its way.

Weakness of the later Umayyads: - The fall of the Umayyads was caused by many factors, of which the weakness of the latter Umayyad Caliph was a main one. With the exception of Marwan -II, all the successors of Hisham were weak and inefficient rulers. They were neither soldiers nor statesmen. They neglected the affairs of administration and indulged themselves in comfort and pleasure of life. A large empire, distracted and disturbed by many troubles can not be preserved by the weak persons. It needed the hands of strong and talented ruler like Abdul Malik. As the Umayyads could not produce an able personality of that calibre, their disturbed empire collapsed.

1. Dr. A. Rahim, Islamic History, PP - 185 - 86.
**Irreligion of the Umayyads** :- The irreligious and immoral way of life some of the Umayyad caliphs greatly offended the honest Muslims of the time, who considered them unscrupulous and worldly minded. The Umayyad were the last to accept Islam and the idea prevailed among the Muslims that they accepted Islam in consideration that paganism was a lost cause and the new faith would promote the worldly gains.

**Degeneration of Umayyad Society** :- Due to luxury, wine and women the Umayyad society lost its vigour and energy. The Umayyad caliphs lived in luxury and they were imitated by the ruling Arab People. As a result they were degenerated and lost simplicity and purity which had previously accounted for their prosperity.

**Revival of tribal spirit** :- The revival of the old tribal spirit of the Arabs fostered by the Umayyad caliphs to suit the interests of their policy of 'divide and rule' greatly undermined the Umayyad dynasty. Because internal strife of the Hejaz-Arabs and Yeman-Arab added fuel to the flame of the troubles of the latter weak Umayyad rulers.

**Absence of definite rules of Succession** :- The absence of any definite rule of hereditary succession to the Khilafat was another cause of the weakness and fall of the Umayyad dynasty. The Alids and Shiaites, who never acquiesced in the rule of the Umayyads and never forgave them for their wrongs to the family of Ali who augmented their downfall.

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2. Ibid, P - 191
Dissatisfaction of Mawalis:

The dissatisfaction of Mawalis against chauvinism and aristocracy of the Arab in the Umayyad dynasty was one of the important causes of the downfall of the Umayyad dynasty. The Iranians looked back to their glorious tradition and could not submit themselves to the aristocracy of the Arabs. They looked for an opportunity to rehabilitate their position by overthrowing the Umayyads.

The collapse of the Umayyad dynasty was brought about by the master organiser Abu Muslim, the leader of the Abbasid propaganda. By his organising capacity Abu Muslim effected an alliance of all the anti-Umayyad forces and destroyed the House of Umayyad and built the House of Abbas in the Khilafat. When the Abbasids raised the standard of revolt, the people flocked to their standard as they were given to believe that under the new regime, Mahdi belonging to the House of the Holy prophet would appear who would usher in a new era of peace, prosperity and justice.

2. Foundation and expansion of the Abbasid period:

The third act or contribution in the great political drama of Islam is the Abbasid dynasty which is established by Abul Abbas Saffah. He was the first and also greatest Khalifā of the Abbasid dynasty that ruled from 750-1258 A.D(132-656 A.H) for 508 years, which was established after the overthrowing of the Umayyad dynasty. He was the founder of this dynasty and he had a terrible vengeance or retribution on the decline of the Umayyad family on account of their execution of his brother Ibrahim.

3. Mufti Shoukat Ali Fahmi, Makammal Tarikh-e-Islam (Urdu), Chapter-8, P-472
The Abbasid period, at the zenith of its power, extended from the shores of North Africa to Indus, from Red Sea to the Caspian Sea, and in to valleys of the North Western slopes of the Himalaya.

This dynasty of 37 caliphs reigning in Baghdad from 750-1258 A.D.(132-656 A.H.) descended from the prophet's uncle, al Abbas ibn Abd al Muttalib set up its rule on the ruins of the house of the Umayyads (661-750 A.D.) starting with subversive propaganda against the Umayyad, the Abbasids came into power in 750 A.D. The Abbasid was brought to an end in 1258 A.D. when Caliph Al-Musta'sim was put to death by Halaku.

Here, genealogy of the Abbasid dynasty be given accordingly.

1. As-Saffah
   ↓
2. Al-Mansur
   ↓
3. Al Mahdi
   ↓
4. Al-Hadi
   ↓
5. Harun-al-Rasid
   ↓
6. Al-Amin
   ↓
7. Al-Mamun
   ↓
8. Al-Mutasim
   ↓
   Muhammad
   ↓
9. Al-Wathiq
   ↓
10. Al-Mutawakkil
   ↓
12. Musta'in
   ↓
14. Al-Muhatadi
   ↓
13. Al-Muntasir
   ↓
15. Al. Mu'tamid
   ↓
16. Al. Mu'tadhid
The rule of the Abbasids lasted for over 508 years. The Abbasids are among the longest lived dynasties of history. The rule of Abbasids may be divided into two main periods:

1. The early Abbasid period (lasted from 750 - 945 A.D.)
2. The second period i.e. (The later Abbasid period lasted from 945 - 1258 A.D.)

The year 945 is the dividing line as it was during this year that power was captured by the Buwayhids and the Abbasid Caliphs lost their independence. The period of the early Abbasid extends to 195 years, while the period of the later Abbasid extends to 313 years. During 508 years of their rule, the Abbasids produced 37 rulers. During the period of the early Abbasids, there were 22 rulers during 195 years, while in the period of the later Abbasids, there were 15 rulers in 313 years.
1. THE PERIOD OF THE EARLY ABBASID (750-945 A.D.)

(A) The great Abbasid Period (750 to 833 A.D.) from As-Saffah to Khalifa Al Mansur (7 rulers)

1. **Abul Abbas As-Saffah (750-754 A.D.)** :-

On the fall of the Umayyads, Abul Abbas, the leader of Abbasids became the caliph. He claimed descent from Hazrath Abbas, an uncle of the Holy propheth (Peace be upon him). Once upon a time, prophet Muhammad (S.A.) told Abbas that Khilafat would be inherited from his ancestors.

It is also narrated by Abu Said Khurdi (R.A.) that Hazrath Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said that “when calamity will come to our ‘Ummat’, a person named As-Saffah will appear and he will bestow property to the people”. The voice of Hazrath Muhammad (S.A.) later on was proved exactly when As Saffah who was a very kind and soft minded person ascended the throne after destroying the Banu Umayyad dynasty. As Saffah and his followers occupied throne and established the Abbasid dynasty. 5

Nobody was doubtful about the conflict of Khilafat and Imam at a. Inch occurred amongst the Muslims. Such kind of conflict and calamity started just after the demise of Hazrath Muhammad (S.A.). It continued upto the reign of Hazrat Ali and till today also.

5. Prof. Masudul Hasan, History of Islam, P- 195- 96
It is also narrated that after the death of Hazrath Abbas, the leadership of the family developed on his son Abdullah. There after it developed by his son Ali. After Ali, the leadership of the family passed on his eldest son Muhammad, the leadership developed on his son Ibrahim. Ibrahim was killed by the Umayyad caliph Marwan 11. After death of Ibrahim, the leadership passed on his brother Abdullah Abul Abbas As-Saffah.

Here, diagram of genealogy of the Abbasids upto As-Saffah be given below:-

6. Islamic History, P-194.
Why he was called As - Saffah :-

After accession, Abu Abbas referred to himself as “As- Saffah” - the blood shedder and this became his sobriquet. The idea was to terrorise the people into submission, and make them understand that the Abbasids would rule through force and would not tolerate any opposition. In order to consolidate their rule, the Abbasids followed the policy of blood and iron. He killed a large number of people in his reign to destroy the victory of the Umayyads in cold blood. Thousands of persons were locked up in prison on the charge of rebellion, thousands lost their heads on the charge of the partisanship towards the Umayyads and the people in general were terrorised into submission. By dint of enormous blood shedding, he earned his nick name as ‘As- Saffah’ (The blood thirsty or the blood shedder). It is by this name that he became wellknown and famous in the history of the world.

Character:- As - Saffah was a mixture of opposities, cruelty and generosity. He was vindictive and mercilessly cruel to the Umayyads and the enemies of his family. But on the otherhand, he was humane, compassionate and also generous to his friends and his supporter. He was very effectionate father and a devoted husband.

Change of Capital :- The Umayyads had their Capital at Damascus but the Abbasids did not make damascuss their capital. Abul Abbas began his rule at Kufa. Kufa was the capital of Hazrat Ali, and the aim of the Abbasids was to restore the position as it existed before the usurpation of power by the Umayyads. Most of the people of Kufa had a soft corner for the Shias. The Abbasids, therefore, did not find the atmosphere at Kufa congenial to their rule. Khalifa As- Saffah built his residence a few miles away from kufa. So he accordingly shifted his capital from kufa to Anbar and named it Hashimiah as his capital. Another name of its capital is Madinatul Mansur. Hashimiah was a place where after Hashim, an early ancestor of the family dwelt in Al- Anber, which stands on the left bank of the Euphrates in the north of
Iraq. Today this site was quite waste. The sister city of Kufa, Al- Basara was abandoned for the same reason, because of his southern situation which made it unsuitable for a centre of Kingdom.

Massacre of the Umayyad Princes :- As Saffah appointed his uncle Abdullah, the victor of the battle of ZAB as the Governor of Syria. Abdullah invited all the Umayyad Princes in Damascus, about 80 in number, to a banquet. At a given signal, a band of executioners entered the banquet hall and clubbed all the Umayyad princes to death. Abdul Rahman, a grandson of the Umayyad Caliph Hashim was the Umayyad prince to escape from this massacre. He had fled to Morocco and then to Spain where he set up an Umayyad state. In a revengeful mood, the Abbasids broke open the graves of some of the Umayyad caliphs and burnt the dead bodies.

Revolts :- At the beginning of his rule the Abbasid had to face revolts in various corners of the country. These revolts were sponsored by the partisans of the Umayyads, by the partisans of the shias and by the Kharijites. But all the revolts against the Abbasids at different part of the country were crushed ruthlessly.

Capitulation of Wasit :- The short reign of As-Saffah was particularly spent in fighting the Umayyads and insecuring the Abbasid Khilafat. For the first time, in the history, the Caliphate was not conterminous with Islam. Spain, North Africa, Uman, Sind and even Khurasan did not fully acknowledge the New Caliph, Egypt's acknowledgement was more nominal than the real. Marwan's viceroy of Iraq, Yazid bin Hobaira who held the governorship of Wasit, the Umayyad capital of Iraq for eleven months.

As Yazid bin Hobaira refused to acknowledge the Abbasids, he put up an Alid, Abdullah a grand Son of Imam Hasan as a rival caliph.

Abbasid caliph sent a force to Wasit under the command of his brother Abu Jafar Mansur. Ibn Hobaira offered stiff resistance, but as he did not any help from outside, he was seized by Abu Jafar and Hussain bin Kahtaba. So, he agreed to capitulate on the grant of full amnesty. After occupying the city, Abu Jafar, under the direction of As-Saffah, went back on his pledge and Ibn Hobaira was put to death.

**Administrative policy of As-Saffah:** Khalifa As-Saffah executed a new modern policy in the administration of the khilafat. He discarded the Arab policy in maintaining the Arab Aristocracy in the government and society. He adopted international Policy in his administration. As-Saffah appointed all Muslims, Arab and non-Arab in the important departments and offices on the basis of their merit. He also rewarded all those persons who had rendered services for the cause of the Abbasid Khilafat. Abu Salmah Hafs bin Sulaiman was made the first chief ministers of the Khilafat. Abu Muslim Khurasani whose valuable services had obtained Khilafat for the Abbasids, was appointed as the viceroy of Khurasan Khaled bin Barmiak, a person who devotedly fought for the Abbasid Khalifat, was appointed as a chancellor of the exchequer. Many other Persian scholars and the other Muslims were rewarded with high distinct offices for excellent services. 8

**Murder of Abu Salmah:** The two most powerful nobles at the court of As-Saffah were Abu Salmah and Abu Muslim. On coming to power, As-Saffah appointed Abu Salmah as the minister, while Abu Muslim was appointed as the commander in chief and Governor of Khurasan. Abu Muslim and Abu Salamah felt jealous of each other. Abu Salmah had great influence over Khalifa As-Saffah.

8. Ibid, P - 196
He became jealous of his influence. So one night when Abu Salmah was returning from the court of Khalifa to his home, he was waylaid and assasinated by the men of Abu Muslim. Khaled Barmaki was, thereafter, appointed as the Minister.

**Death of As-Saffah:** After a short reign of five years, Khalifa As-Saffah died in 754 A.D. at an early age of 30. Before his death, he nominated his brother Abu Ja'far Mansur as his successor to the Khalifat. It is also mentioned As-Saffah died of smallpox in 754 after a short rule of four years.

**Criticism:** Abul Abbas Saffah waded to power through slaughter and he maintained power through blood shedding. As a ruler, he was cruel, vindictive and treacherous. In spite of his ruthless, bloody and iron polices, As-Saffah assumed the rule of a religious leader. He is a mixture of cruelty and generosity. He used to lead the friday prayers and on such occasion he donned the mantle of the Holy prophet. In private life he had pleasant manners and was generous. He had only one wife and led a pious life.

Writing of poems and songs were attractive peculiar to the khilafat of As-Saffah. Some renowned historian says that any one expert in any literature or music was awarded by As-Saffah. The following Ulamas and scholars of Islam breathed their last during the period of As-Saffah. Some are mentioned.

1. Za'id bin Aslam.
2. Abdullah bin Abu Bakr bin Hizm.
3. Abdul Malik bin Umaien Yahyah.

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9. *Makmmal Tarikh - e - Islam (Urdu), P- 480*
2. Abu Ja’far Al-Mansur (754-775 A.D)

**Accession of Mansur** :- As-Saffah was succeeded by his brother Abu Ja’far Abdullah who assumed the title of Al-Mansur. Although Abul Abbas Saffah was the founder of the Abbasid dynasty but the real founder and builder of this dynasty was Abu Ja’fah Abdullah Mansur. He was the son of Muhammad, a great grandson of Hadrath Abbas, an uncle of the Holy prophet. He was also son of a Berber mother Salmah. He was forty one years old at the time of ascending the throne in 754 A.D.

The accession of Al-Mansur is regarded as a landmark in the history of Khilafat. His reign introduced an era of exceptional splendour and glory in the history of Arab. He was regarded as a brilliant, scholar, literate and also a gifted ruler who established the greatness and glorious of the Abbasids in the field of culture and civilization. By dint of his remarkable skill and dexterity, khalifa Al-Mansur consolidated the Abbasid Khilafat and prepared the way and method for the greatness and glories of his successors. Although As-Saffah was the first Khalifa of his family, he had a short reign and did not get sufficient time to consolidate the Abbasid Khilafat. This important work of consolidation was done by Al-Mansur and hence he is counted as the Practical and real founder of the Abbasid dynasty. 10

**Revolt of Abdullah bin Ali** :- At first, Al-Mansur devoted himself to the task of consolidating the Abbassid Khilafat. He resolved to reform all rivals and pretenders to secure his throne and dynasty in the Khalifat of Islam. To achieve his aim and object he spared no pains and stopped no means, fair or foul.

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10. R.A Nicholson, A Literary History of Arabs, PP-254, 55
At the outset of his reign Al-Mansur had to face the revolt of Abdullah bin Ali, Governor of Sami (Syria) and victor of the battle of ZAB as a rival to the Khilafat and was determined to remove him. Abdullah was a claimant for the throne and he rebelled when Al Mansur succeeded to the khilafat. So, Al-Mansur sent forces to Syria under the command of Abu Muslim. In the battle of NISIBIN (754 A.D.) Abu Muslim inflicted a crushing defeat on Abdullah. Abdullah fled with his family to Basra where his brother Sulaiman was the governor. Al-Mansur deprived Sulaiman of his charge and imprisoned Abdullah. Abdullah was lodged in a house built over the foundation of Salt. When rains began, the fall of a heavy shower demolished the house and Abdullah was crushed to death.

**Influence of Abu Muslim in the empire:** Khalifa Al-Mansur considered Abu Muslim Khurasani as a very dangerous and poisonous to himself and his family. Abu Muslim was the most powerful man in the Abbasid dynasty. He was the national hero of the Iranians and was looked upon a prophet by many people of Khurasan and Iran that he could destroy the house of Abbas as he had built it by simply raising his finger.

The conduct and behaviour of Abu Muslim Khurasani towards the Khalifa was unregarded. Khalifa Al-Mansur sent a messenger to make a list of the spoils which had been obtained by Abu Muslim Khurasani in the battle of Nasibin. Abu Muslim used abusive and vulgar language towards the royal messenger and the Khalifa. He was so powerful that the Khalifa could not take any action against him for his show of disrespect.

When Abu Muslim was transferred from Khurasan to the province of Syria, his great and vast power began to weaken. He was returning from the field of
Nasibin to Khurasan. By lavish promises, he was induced by the Khalita to pay a visit to the court. He was received with great honour and respect at the court. He was favoured in many ways. By these the suspicions of Abu Muslim was removed and he was thrown of his guard. One day when he was in audience of the Khalifa in an unguarded way, he was killed by some men engaged by Al- Mansur in 775 AD. Thus Mansur unscrupulously removed a very powerful man, who might be in future a threat to this Khilafat.

The murder of Abu Muslim caused an insurrection among his followers in Khuras. They were defeated. Masudi says that the followers of Abu Muslim formed a sect of their own called Khurramis. They acknowledged him as their Imam and saviour. One section of the Khurramis taught that he was still alive and would soon re-appear to do justice on earth. Another section believed that he was dead and the Imamate passed to his daughter. 11

Shi'ite revolt: The members of Alis’ family could not forget that they were the truthful and rightful claimants of the Khilafat. They thought that the Abbasids deceived them and usurped. Popular two great grandsons of Imam Hasan named Muhammed and Ibrahim, had ambitions for the Khilafat. In Madinah and Mecca they had great influence. Muhammed declared him as Khalifa in Madinah. The people of Madinah offered him allegiance Muhammad as caliph declared the deposition of Mansur. Mansur’s deputy in Madinah was removed and imprisoned. The whole of Hejaj and Yamen accepted Muhammed as the Khalifa. Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik, two prominent Jurist of that time gave their verdict in favour of Muhammad. 11

11. Ibid, P-260
Mansur sent a force under the command of his nephew Isa bin Musa to attack Madinah. The cause of Muhammed was betrayed, and only 300 persons were left with him to defend his cause. In the battle that followed, Muhammed and his followers were killed to a man and Madinah was restored to the Abbasid rule. Even his old father Abdullah was treated by Mansur with great severity.

Muhammad’s brother Ibrahim raised the standard of revolt at Basrah. Mansur sent a force to Basrah. In that battle that took place outside Basrah, the Abbasids were defeated. Ibrahim, thereafter marched with the force from Basrah to Kufa. In the meantime Madinah had fallen, and Isa bin Musa was commissioned to take action against the advancing forces of Ibrahim. In the battle that took place outside Kufa in the closing month of 762 A.D. Ibrahim was defeated and killed. After this the Alid’s rebellion which continued for three months, came to a close.

Repressive measures of Al-Mansur: As an aftermath to Abbasid-Alid civil war, Al-Mansur adopted repressive measures on an intensive scale. Most of the surviving members of the families of Muhammad and Ibrahim were arrested and lodged in prison, and their properties were confiscated. Those who had espoused the cause of Muhammad and Ibrahim in any way, were subjected to torture. In Madinah, Imam Malik was flogged. In Baghdad Imam Abu Hanifa was arrested and put in jail, where he died.

Byzantine raids: The Byzantines invaded the Muslim dominions and penetrated for some distance in the Muslim territory causing considerable havoc. In the meantime Khalifa Mansur had to deal with raids of the Byzantines. He repulsed them and forced the Byzantine emperor to sue for peace. By the peace treaty that followed, a truce was declared for a period of seven years. 12

12. Ibid, P-263.
Disturbances of Rawaindhas :- In the reign of Mansur, a sect of Fanatics arose in Persia known as Rawaindhas. The Rawaindhas had a peculiar belief; they believed that the Khalifa was God incarnate. They came to the Khalifa’s palace and shouted, “It is the house of our lord, he giveth us food to eat and water to drink.” This caused agitation among the people and Mansur took strong action against the Rawaindhas. Mansur had arrested 200 leaders of the Rawaindhas and lodged in prison. They stormed the prison and rioted all around and also they wanted to kill Mansur. Troops however, came in time to deal with the situation. People shut their doors to the Rawaindhas and they were massacred.

Khurasan :- Khalifa Mansur had face some troubles in the eastern part of his empire. The governor of Khurasan rebelled in 758 A.D. Mansur sent Prince Mahdi, who suppressed the rebellion of Khurasan.

Tabaristan :- In Tabaristan, the ruling Ispahend cast off subordination to Islam. Prince Mahdi defeated him in several engagements, making captive of many men and women. After this successful campaign, Tabaristan was annexed to the Arab empire in 760 A.D.

Daylam :- After this time the turbulent people of Daylam rose in revolt. Being a Mountainous country the royal forces found some difficulty in overpowering the people of Daylam. Ultimately the revolt was successfully suppressed and Daylam was annexed to the Abbasid empire.

The Khazaras and Kurds of Armenia and Mosul gave much trouble to the Abbasid Khilafat. Mansur appointed Khaled bin Bermek as governor of Mosul who succeeded in restoring peace in that locality.
Foundation of Baghdad: Being relieved of rivals and rebels Khalifa Mansur felt free to build a worthy capital of his great empire. He felt that Kufa and Damascus would not be safe for his family, there were Alid’s influence in the former and Umayyad influence in the latter. He selected ‘Baghdad’, the summer garden of the Persian emperor Anushirvan as the site of his new capital. The construction of the capital began in 762 and by 766 A.D. a magnificent city rose on the west bank on the Tigris. Mansur's son Mahdi extended the city in the east of the river.

In beauty, splendour and magnificence, Baghdad was counted the first city of the world at that time, Baghdad soon rose to importance and in the medieval Period, all roads led to Baghdad which became a big trade emporium. According to the story of Alif-wa-Laila (Thousand and one night), the great splendour, prosperity and refinement reflect this city. Being situated in the Persian territory, Persian influence and culture predominated in the Abbasid capital as well as in the Abbasid Khilafat.

Death of Mansur: Khalifa made untiring attempts and hard labour to build the Abbasid Khilafat. Feeling his weak health, he nominated his son, Mahdi as his successor and instructed him in the affairs of administration. He, then, left for Makkah to spend his last days in peace and devotion in that Holy land. He breathed his last at Bir Maimun in 775 A.D. (148 A.H.) and was buried in Makkah.

Good qualities of Mansur: Khalifa Al- Mansur was considered as a deeply religious person and he had lofty theory of Kingship. He considered his Khilafat as a sacred trust and responsibility and exerted himself to discharge it faithfully.
Mansur looked after every minute details of administration himself and laboured untiringly for the welfare of the people and prosperity of the empire. 13

**Sense of Justice** :- Mansur has high sense of Justice. He himself set an example of strict obedience to the court of law. Summoned by the Qazi of Madinah on the complaint of some camel-owners, Khalifa Mansur appeared as an ordinary litigacy before the court. Though the judgement went against him, the justice-loving Khalifa admired and rewarded the Qazi for his fearlessness and impartiality in dispensing justice.

**Defects of Mansur** :- But there are some glaring defects which are the serious on his character. He was considered sometimes as a cruel, unscrupulous and vindictive. His murder of Abu Muslim and Abdullah and his severities to the member’s of Ali’s family are the dark spots of his character and Khilafat. The famous historian Suyuti Says, Mansur was the first who occasioned dissensions between the Abbasids and Alids.

As a ruler and statesman, Khalifa Mansur was without a rival in his time. He was the real and Practical founder of the Abbasid Khilafat. He removed all possible rivals and made the Abbasid dynasty safe and secure in the Khilafat. Mansur founded the sunni church in Islam and it became the source of strength to the Abbasid dynasty.

Khalifa Mansur introduced an era of liberal administration and progress in the Arab empire. He abandoned the scheme of conquest and devoted himself to the welfare and progress of the people. He constructed canals, wells and roads and established sarais, hospitals and madrassa throughout the empire. He set up a translation bureau called “Dar al Hikmah” for the translation of valuable works of the ancient scholars into Arabic.

13. Islamic History, P - 205
He gave liberal patronage to scholars and men of letters. Mansur encouraged the people to study of history, philosophy, medicine and astronomy. Scholars held high ranking position and post at his court. Khalifa Mansur, in this way, prepared the way for the great intellectual life under his worthy successors.

At last, it is found that name of some eminent scholars and men of letters lived during his reign are mention below—

1. Imam Abu Hanifa.
2. Imam Malik.
3. Abu Yazid Bustami and others.

14. Makammal Tarikh-e-Islam. P - 495
3. **Al Mahdi** (775 - 785 A.D.)

**Accession of Al-Mahdi** :- Khalifa Mansur was succeeded to the Khilafat by his son Muhammad who assumes the surname of Al-Mahdi in 775 A.D. Khalifa Mahdi was very humane and generous in character and mild and amiable in disposition. He was fatherly to his people. Due to his mild and generous rule, he healed the injuries caused to the people during his father’s administration. His talented viezier Yakub helped him in his work.

**Policies of Al-Mahdi** :- Mahdi’s character and rule are best reflected in his administration policy. He began his reign by releasing all prisoners except those who were convicted to treason, felony and dangerous crimes. Mahdi was kind to the Alids. He also released imprisoned Alids, restored their properties, gave them suitable allowances and treated them with sympathy. Mahdi restored to Makkah and Madinah the privileges with drawn by his father. He also returned the confiscated properties and fines of the dismissed officers of his father’s time. He gave away in charity a large sum of money to the Poor of Makkah and Hezaz. He fixed Pensions for the lepers and the imprisoned poor debtors. On the occasion of his first Hajj after accession, he distributed over one crore dirhams in charity. These measures made him popular.

**Public works** :- Mahdi constructed and rebuilt many mosques, schools and roads in the empire. A wide metalled road was constructed from kadeshia (near Baghdad) to Makkah. Inns and wells were provided for the convenience of pilgrims and travellers.

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15. K. Ali, A Study of Islamic History, P - 187
He enlarged the building of Haram-e-Ka’aba. He also established a postal service of mules and camels.

**Kindness to the enemies:**

Mahdi was generous to the fallen Umayyad family. A son of Marwan-II attempted rising in Syria. He was defeated and captured. Mahdi kept him in custody for sometime and then released him with a suitable Pension. Marwan-II’s widow Mazuna was treated with kindness and honour. Mahdi’s queen Khaizuran gave her an appartment in palace. Queen Khaizuran was a very talented lady. By virtue of her wisdom, sagacity and generosity, she distinguished herself in politics and administration. She had great influence over her husband. Her audience hall was crowded with courtiers, grandees and seekers for office or patronage.

It is narrated that in the reign of Al-Mahdi, a false prophet named ‘Hashim’ appeared in Khurasan. He was so called ‘Makanna’ because he put a veil around his ugly countenance. Makanna taught that the Deity from time to time incarnated himself in man and Adam, Noah, Abu Muslim and himself were God incarnated. He also started to preach immoral and wild doctrines and obtained a large followers. He defied several imperial forces but in the end he was defeated and killed in 779 A.D. 16

It is also narrated that Al-Mahdi was devoted to Hazrath Muhammad (peace be upon him) as because once upon a time, a person brought a pair of shoe covered with the cloth and said that this pair of shoe belonged to Hazrath Muhammad (S.A). On hearing it, Mahdi lifted the shoes and kissed it and put to the eyes and bestowed ten thousand valued prizes to that person. The people questioned him, “How have you come to know the shoes that belongs to Prophet Mohammad and have you any belief on the shoes of the prophet?”

16. Ibid, P – 190
He replied that he had seen prophet Muhammad (S.A) in the time of using it. So I should show due respect and honour towards it.

**The Zindiqs** :- Another heretic movement broke out in the country. These heretics were called ‘Zindiqs’. They did not believe in Allah, and favoured incestuous marriages. They preached immoral doctrines and became notorious for stealing children. Stern measures were adopted against these heretics. They were hunted out, and subjected to severe punishment.

**Campaigns against the Byzantines** :- In violation of previous treaties, the Byzantine Romans raided Asia Minor, ravaged and destroyed properties and lives and took a large number of women and children prisoners. Khalifa Mahdi himself advanced to punish the Romans accompanied by his generals and Prince Harun. The Romans were defeated and the Muslims forces advanced as far as the Bosphorus. In fear, Queen Irene sued for peace. A treaty was made. The Roman Queen paid an indemnity and agreed to pay annual tribute to Khalifa Mahdi. Harun was appointed viceroy of the western provinces of the empire.

**Death and assessment** :- While proceeding to Jurjan, Al-Mahdi died on the way at Masandán in 785 A.D (169 A.H) at an early age of 43. Before his demise he nominated his sons Hadi and Harun to succeed him to the Khilafat one after another. Al-Mahdi was only 43 years at the time of his death. He ruled for ten years only and during this period the country was prosperous. During his reign, agriculture, trade and commerce flourished a good deal. He promoted arts and learning. During his reign the society acquired a cosmopolitan character. The Persian costume became the fashion of his court.
The following scholars survived during his period: 17

1. Subah bin Abu Za’b Sufian Souri.
2. Ibrahim bin Adham.
3. Dau’d Jaihi Zahed.
4. Ibrahim bin Tahzar and others.

17. Makammal Tarikh e- Islam, P - 502
4. **Al Hadi (785 - 786 A.D.)**

**Accession of Hadi** :- Al Mahdi was succeeded by his eldest son Musa. During his childhood he was known as Musa Atbik. His upper lip was contracted. His father placed a servant in charge over him who whenever he saw his mouth open would say, “Musa draw your lips together.” (atbik), whereupon he would compress his lips on accession he assumed the surname of Al-Hadi. 18

**Alid revolt in Madinah** :- Mansur had been severe to the Alids. Mahdi reversed the policy of his father, and behaved generously with the Alids. Hadi reverted to the policy of Mansur, and revoked the Privileges of the Alids which had been allowed by Mahdi. In Makkah, the Abbasid Governor ill-treated some of the members of Banu Hasan on a false charge of drunkenness. This led to a revolt headed by Hussain bin Ali. The rising was quickly suppressed and Hussain was killed in an engagement of Fukh, six miles outside Makkah. The head of Hussain was cut off and sent to Hadi at Baghdad.

**Convenant of Succession** :- Hadi was a headstrong and hard-hearted youth. He did not appreciate his brother’s loyalty and wanted to exclude him from succession to the Khilafat in favour of his own son Jafar. As his mother Khaizuran was opposed to this, he did not allow her to interfere in the affairs of state. Hadi even imprisoned Harun’s principal adviser, Yahyah bin Khalid, and several other servant. From his behaviour, Harun felt danger and left the court for his personal safety.

**Idrisid dynasty** :- Hadi was not favourably disposed towards the Alids. Idris, a great grandson of Hasan escaped to Egypt and thence to Africa. With the help of the Berbers, he made himself master of Mauritonia and established a dynasty there. This dynasty was called Idrisid dynasty. It was the first Shia-ite dynasty in Islam.

18. *A study of Islamic History*, P – 195
Death and assessment: In the midst of family disputes, Al-Hadi died suddenly in 786 A.D. after a short rule of a year and a few months.

The period of the rule of Al-Hadi was too short to make any impact. He was capable but was rather self-centered and headstrong. During his rule, the Persian influence at the court increased. He ordered the celebration of the Persian New Year and other Persian festivals. Regarding his death, different accounts are mentioned. According to one account as given by Suyuti, he pushed one of his courtiers over a precipitous bank upon the stumps of a reed bed that had been cut. The courtier clung fast to Hadi and ultimately both of them fell on the reed bed. A reed penetrated his nostril whereby he died.

According to another account, he suffered from an ulcer in the stomach and died of this malignant disease.

According to yet another account, he was poisoned by his mother who was annoyed with him. 19
5. Harun Ar-Rashid (786-808 A.D.)

Accession of Harun - Ar-Rashid: In 786 A.D. (170 A.H.) at the age of 25, Harun the second son of Al-Mahdi, sat on the throne of the Khilafat with the title of Ar-Rashid. Harun was one of the most successful rulers in the history of the world. His accession marked the beginning of the glorious epoch in the history of Muslim rule in Asia.

Harun chose talented men in the service of his empire. He consulted his gifted mother Khaizuran in the affairs of administration. He made good use of talents of his Barmekide family. He gave the office of prime minister to his tutor Yahya bin Khalid Barmeki. He also appointed Yahya’s worthy sons, Fazal Ja’far, Musa and Muhammad in the responsible and important offices of the empire. They served the empire with devotion and distinction and contributed to the prosperity of his Khilafat.

Alids revolt: In the beginning of his reign, Harun Ar-Rasid had faced some troubles and hardships. A member of Ali’s family named Yahya bin Abdullah declared himself as Khalifa in Dailam, the northern part of ancient Media. Harun sent a force 50,000 men under the command of Fazal, who induced Yahya to submit with a promise of high office at the court of Baghdad. Yahya, however, demanded that the Khalifa should first give him a letter of pardon countersigned by high legal authorities. This was given and Yahya submitted. At Baghdad he was accorded with a warm reception. After some months Yahya was accused of conspiracy and confined in prison again. Khalifa Harun brought Imam Musa, Al-Kazim, son of Imam Jatar as-Sadiq, from Madinah to Baghdad, shortly after Musa also died at Baghdad.

Defensive measures in West: In the beginning of his reign, Khalifa Harun took defensive measures against Byzantine raids in the empire. He formed Mesopotamia and other border territories into a military province and named it ‘Al-Awasim’ (The defending fortresses). He strongly fortified the city of Tarsus. Under his direction, the Muslim forces gained successes against the Byzantines in Asia Minor. About this time Khazar inroads in Armenia diverted his attention.

Khazar inroad: In 799 A.D. the Khazars from across the Caucasus overran Azarbaijan and Armenia. For seventy days they ravaged the country and enslaved many Muslims. Harun sent an army against the Khazars and they were successfully dealt with.

The Khariji revolt: During the reign of Harun-ar-Rashid, the Khariji continued to be a headache for the administration. The Khariji revolt was led by Waleed bin Al-Tarif. Waleed was killed in an action, and the command was taken over by his sister Laila. She was noted for her beauty as well as bravery. Under leadership the Khariji won some successes. She came to be known to history as the Arab “Joan of Arc.” The Khariji revolt was suppressed after some heavy fighting, when Laila was prevailed upon to retire to her home.

Syrian trouble: In Syria serious trouble broke out between the northern and southern Arabs. It continued for two years. Ultimately, they were suppressed and peace was restored in Syria.

North Africa: When Harun came to power, conditions in North Africa were much disturbed. The province had a deficit budget and considerable funds had to be diverted from the revenues of Egypt to feed the province of North Africa. Harun Ar-Rashid gave over the charge of North Africa to Ibrahim bin Aghlab on his undertaking to restore law and order, and to pay a fixed amount to the Imperial
treasury every year, instead of taking any aid from Egypt. Ibrahim bin Aghlab founded dynasty which ruled over North Africa for about two centuries as a more or less independent power. 21

**Nomination of successors** :- Under the influence of Empress Zubaida, Khalifa Harun nominated his eldest son Amin as successor in 791 A.D. In 798 A.D. he made Mamun, his second son by a Persian Lady, as heir-presumptive. Amin and Mamun were appointed viceroy of the west and the east respectively. The Khalifa used to perform pilgrimage to Mecca and Medinah every year. In 802 A.D. he was accompanied in the pilgrimage by Empress Zubaida and his sons. At that time a document was made with the signatures of Amin and Mamun binding them to the arrangement of the succession. The document was deposited in the House of Ka’ba.

In this pilgrimage Empress Zubaida was greatly touched by the sufferings of the Makkans owing to the scarcity of water. To relieve their distress she constructed at her own expense a canal which still bears her name.

**Fall of the Barmekids** :- The glory of Harun’s reign was largely due to the meritorious services of the distinguished family of Barmek. The founder of this family was Khaled, son of Barmek, a chief priest of a Buddhist monastery at Balkh. Khaled helped the Abbasids in obtaining the Khilafat from the range of the Umayyads. He distinguished himself as a general and served the Khilafat of As-Saffah and Mansur with distinction as a finance minister. His son, Yahya was a tutor and counsellor of prince Harun, when Harun became Khalifa, Yahya bin Khaled was appointed as prime minister. His son, Yahya was a very efficient and enlightened administrator.

21.Ibid, p – 290
When Yahya became old, Harun gave the office of prime minister to his son Ja'far. Ja'far Barmeki was a foster-brother and boon companion of Harun. A wise and liberal, Ja'far greatly added to the glory and greatness of Harun's reign by his liberalism and culture.

**Causes of Fall:** The story tellers attribute the fall of the Barmekids to a secret marriage between Ja'far and Harun's sister Abbasa. The famous historian Ibn Khaldun does not believe this story and says that their great power and reputation were the real cause of their fall. They had seized all authority, civil military and revenue, so much so that Rashid was often forced to the necessity of asking for and obtaining from the chancellor small sums of money. Ibn Khaldun writes, "Their influence was unlimited and their renown had spread in every direction."

The unlimited power of the Barmekids naturally roused the jealousy and enmity of many courtiers and nobles. There was also the party conflict between Persians and the Arabs at the court. The Barmekids were Persians and hence there was Persians ascendency in the empire. The Arab naturally felt bitter and looked for an opportunity to restore their own influence in administration. Moreover, the Barmekids were Shias; the Sunnis wanted to revive their rightful place in the Khilafat. There was also personal rivalry and animosity of Fazl bin Rabi, the chamberlain and the leader of the Arab group. Fazl bin Rabi poisoned the mind of the Khilafat against the Barmekids whenever he got an opportunity. Spies also brought information that the Barmekids were plotting to overthrow the Abbasid Khilafat. All these factors combined to make the Khalifa suspect the Barmekids.

In suspicion, Khalifa Harun forgot their 17 years distinguished and loyal services. He ordered the execution of Ja'far and imprisonment of his father and brothers in 803 A.D. Their properties were confiscated. Yahya and Fazl died in prison, Muhammad was afterwards released.
Thus, the illustrious family collapsed. With their fall, Persian influence declined in administration and Arab influence revived. Fazl bin Rabi got the office of Prime minister.

**Death** :- From Rakka, Harun started to deal with the rebellion in Khurasan. He sent Mamun in advance to Merv and himself journeyed slowly with the rest of the army. On arriving at a village named Sanabad near Tus, the illness from which he had been suffering since he left Rakka, took a serious turn. Feeling that his end was approaching, he gave his last advice to the members of family, who were present in the Army, he advised them to observe their engagements faithfully; to be faithful to their Imams i.e. Khalifs and to remain united. He also asked them to take care of Amin and Mamun and to see that one did not rebel against the other. Khalifa Harun breathed his last on the 23rd of March 809 A.D. after the short reign of 23 years and six months.22

**Assessment of Harun** :- Khalifa Harun ar-Rashid is considered as one of the greatest rulers of Islamic history of the world. He was deeply religious and sincere in the observance of the rituals of Islam, yet fond of surrounding himself with the pomp and insignia of grandeur, “Harun impressed his personality on popular imagination and exercised great influence by his moral character on society.

Harun-ar-Rashid lives in history as a brilliant and enlightened ruler. His name became a legend for greatness and grandeur. In the field of fiction he lives as the hero of the Arabian Night. The name of his Zubaida is connected with the cannal that supplies water to Makkah. According to the assessment of Ameer Ali, author of History of the Saracens: “Weigh him as you like in the scale of historical criticism, Harun-ar-Rashid will always take rank with the greatest sovereigns and rulers of the world.”

22. History of Islam, P-212
According to P.K Hitti, author of History of the Arabs' : the ninth century opened with two important names standing supreme in world affairs - Charlemagne in the west and Harun -ar-Rashid in the east, and out of these two , Harun -ar- Rashid was the most powerful and presented the higher culture .

**Solicitude for people** :- Daily he performed one hundred prostration and distributed one thousand Dirhams to the beggers and the needy persons . He also himself led the caravan of pilgrims to the Hajj at nine times , on every occasion he gave away in charity large sum of money to the people . Khalifa Harun was solicitious of the welfare and happiness of his people . He used to travel in the streets of Baghdad by night to remedy injustice and to relieve the oppressed and the destitute . For the benefit of the people , he constructed many roads , canals, wells, bridges and established several hospitals, asylums, sarais, mosques, and madrasses .

**As a great soldier** :- Khalifa Harun was a born soldier, bold and dashing. He personally commanded armies and suppressed rebellions and disturbances. As a ruler, Harun was eminently successful and resourceful person. He maintained the integrity, peace, prosperity of his vast kingdom in the face of many internal and external troubles. His organisation of the postal system was marvel of the time. He encouraged agriculture, industry, and also commerce. As a result, there was unusual prosperity in his famous empire .

**Patronage to learning** :- Harun -ar-Rashid attracted to his capital, men of talent and learning. Doctors of law, Philosophers, Poets as well as Musicians, Singers and Wits flocked to his court. Baghdad became the centre of learning and culture during his liberal patronage .

23: Islamic History, P - 221
Harun patronized men of letters and also he used to present in the service, Ulama and Jurisprudents and obtained himself knowledge from them. For acquiring knowledge, he went to Imam Malik by taking his two sons named Amin and Mamun in Madinah. He organised a centre by name ‘Baitul Hakmat’ for composing, translation, writing and printing the books. In this centre, great talented persons and writers worked. Many works and books have been translated into many languages like - Unani, Persian and Sanskrit and other languages.

Scholars and Learned men who adorn the court Harun were :-

1. Asami, the grammarian
2. Ibrahim Masoli, the musician
3. Gabriel, the physician
4. Shafei Abdullah bin Idris,-
5. Isa bin Yunus
6. Sufian bin Suri and other learned men flourished in his reign.24
7. The great ‘doctor of law’ Abu Yusuf, was his chief Qazi. He gave systematic shape to the Hanafi school of law. Khalifa Harun himself was a poet and musician and first ‘Shatranj’ player. He elevated music to a noble profession and established a development for its studies. He enlarged the translation bureau of Mansur and spent money generously for its progress.
8. Hazrat Imam Malik.
9. Hazrat Musa Kazim, son of Imam Ja’far Sadiq.
10. Jarir bin Abdul Hamid

24: Ibid, P-222
12. Marwan bin Abu Hafsa, Poet
13. Abdur Rahman bin Qasim, student of Imam Malik

It is narrated that one day Ibn Sammak came to forward when Harun -ar- Rashid started to drink water. At that time, he said, 'O' Harun! stop for a while as because you became thirsty.' After drinking a glass of water, what amount of price for water would you pay?' Harun replied half of his kingdom. There after Ibn Sammak again said to drink remaining water of it. He drank and was asked again by Ibn Sammak, what amount of price would you pay of it. He replied whole Kingdom. The mystery of this is the whole empire of his Kingdom spent instead of a glass of water. On hearing this, Harun began to weep and got a lesson.

**Glory**: The glory of the name of Harun spread far wide of the world. The Chinese Emperor and Charlemagne, the king of his franks sent his envoys and gifts, Harun gave Charlemagne of gift of clock which was a marvel of mechanical art.

Khalifa Harun was really great in character and achievements. The only defect of his character was his occasional out-burst of suspicion and temper. On account of this he did some injustice to the Barmekids and the Alids. It can however be said that such instance are few and Harun exercised his autocratic power with great discretion and fairness.
6. **Amin** 809 - 813 A. D. (193 - 197 A. H.)

**Accession of Al Amin** :- After the death of Harun, his eldest son Amin ascended the throne of Baghdad. He was born from the womb of Zubaida who was slave of Harun. Zubaida was related to the tribe of Hashimi. Due to this reason, parents of Amin was blood related each other from the blood of Hashimi. Amin was only person in the entire Abbasid empire who was co-related from both side to Hashimi tribe. Amin was very beautiful and tall in figure that was naturally bestowed on him.25

Fazal bin Rabi, the chief minister of Harun, returned from Tus to Baghdad with the troops which Harun intended for Mamun. But Fazal bin Rabi placed these troops at the disposal of Amin and he was rewarded for this with the office of Vizeir. Amin was weak-minded, ease-loving and fond of pomp, pageantry and also hunting. He was interested in poetry, music and dancing. His court became the centre of musicians, songstresses and dancing girls. Amin introduced a wonderful ballet in which a “hundred beautiful girls in splendid attire docked with pearls and diamonds danced in rhythmical unison to the soft harmony of music.”

For his pleasure trips on the Tigris, he constructed five beautiful barges of different form. He gave himself completely to pleasures and left the reins of government in the hands of his ambitious prime minister Fazl bin Rabi.

25. D.S. Margoliouth, History of Islamic Civilization, p-142
It is noted that in his life time, Harun-ar-Rashid distributed his Islamic Kingdom in the hands of his two sons, Amin and Mamun, Eastern part of his Islamic empires i.e. Iraq, Hejaj to Syria, Egypt and Africa bestowed to Amin and western part of his empire i.e. Iran, Khurasan to Kabul, (Afganistan), Turkistan and Hindustan was handed over to Mamun. Both of them empowered as a supreme authority over specific region.

Mamun was the viceroy of the eastern provinces and was at Merv at that time of his father’s death. He was always loyal to his brother, Amin and when the latter ascended the throne, he sent his sincere greetings and welcomes. Mamun was a man of strong personality and character. With the help of his minister Fazal bin Sahal, he organised the administration of his province on an efficient basis and promoted the welfare of his subjects. Mamun was born of Persian mother. So, the persians loved him “as the son of their sister.”

Quarrel between brothers: While Mamun’s province prospered under his benevolent rule, Amin’s empire was drifting to ruin. Fazal bin Rabi mismanaged affairs of the empire. He also embittered the mind of Amin against his brother Mamun. This brought about quarrel and fratricidal war between the brothers. Of course, Fazal bin Rabi was principally responsible for this unhappy incident. But other factors also contributed to its progress. One of these was the weakness of Amin’s mind. He had no will of his own. He accepted whatever advice, the ambitious minister gave him against his loyal brother Mamun. The quarrel was accented also by the party conflict of the Arabs and Persians for power in the empire. The persian’s thought that Mamun’s administration represented their interests. So, when Amin and Fazal bin Rabi’s actions were found to be hostile to Mamun. They rallied themselves to help the son of their sister.26

26. Ibid, P - 203.
Fazal bin Rabi continually suggested to Amin to set Mamun aside from the succession. At first, Amin did not accept this suggestion of violating the will of his father and of being unfair to his brother, for whom he had love and affection. Ultimately he was induced to summon Mamun to Baghdad. Mamun scented danger and excused himself. Thereupon Amin was persuaded to depose him from the viceroyalty and stop his name from the 'Khutba'. A few days after, Amin nominated his infant son 'Musa' as successor and deprived Mamun of the claim to succeed him. Mamun replied to this breach of faith by drawing a cordon on his western frontiers. No person was allowed to enter his province without an examination. This was done so that Amin's men might not temper with his subjects. The breach between the brothers was complete. Amin brought the succession will of his father from the Ka'ba and tore it to pieces. He also sent against his brother an army of 40,000 under the command of Ali bin Isa.

**Battle of Rey and Hamadan:** Mamun had to fight in self defence. He sent his general Tahir bin Hussain with 40,000 soldiers. Tahir bin Hussain defeated and killed Ali bin Isa in a battle near Rey in May, 811 A.D. In giving Mamun, the news of victory, Tahir wrote, "The head of Ali is before me; his ring on me (an Tahir's finger); and his troops under me." Amin sent another army of 20,000 men under Abdur Rahman bin Jabala. Tahir defeated his army also and followed his victory by occupying the territories of Hamadan. Mamun despatched two other generals, Harathma bin Ayan and Zuhair to fight against the forces of Amin. They defeated Amin's generals in every engagement and occupied the whole of Persia. About this time Mamun declared himself as Khalifa.
The siege of Baghdad: Mamun’s victorious generals pushed on to Syria and Arabia and established the authority of Mamun in these provinces. Thereafter the three generals advanced towards Baghdad from different directions. They laid siege to the city. The siege continued for several months. Amin’s position became precarious. Many of his soldiers and supporters deserted in his diversity.

The eastern part of the city was occupied by Tahir. Seeing no hope, Amin decided to make him over to his brother, in whose fidelity he had great confidence. So, an agreement was made with Mamun’s generals that Amin would surrender himself to Harathma who would take him to Mamun at Merv. After a pathetic parting with the children, the unlucky Khaifa left the palace and boarded the boat with Harathma to cross the Tigris. As the boat proceeded to the east bank, some heartless persian soldiers of Tahir threw stones and arrows at it. It sank. Harathma was barely saved; Amin swam ashore. Some Persian soldiers seized him and put him in a house. In the night they killed Amin and his head was cut off. The following morning they exhibited his head on the walls of Baghdad in 813, A.D. (sept.). That was the end of the rule of Amin.

But Mamun did not expect that their quarrel would result in the tragic death of his brother, Amin. He sincerely mourned for him and punished his murderers. He adopted his brother’s son and daughters as their children. He gave them and their grandmother Zubaida all their properties and privileges. When Amin’s sons grew up, they were married to Mamun’s daughters.
Assessment :-  Al Amin was 27 years old at the time of his death and his rule extended over a short period of four years only. Most of this period was spent in the civil war. As a ruler, he proved to be incompetent. He was frivolous and easy going and left the administration of the affairs of the state to others who betrayed him. He was the first Abbasid Khalifa to be killed by his own people.

The following scholars lived during his reign :-

1. Abu Nawas, the poet.
2. Ismail bin Alia.
3. Sudusi, Historian
4. Abdullah bin Wahab, student of Imam Malik and others. 27

27. Makammal Tarikh - e - Islam (Urdu), P - 528.
7. Mamun, the great (813 - 833 A.D.)

Accession of Mamun: On the death of Al-Amin, Al Mamun was acknowledged as the Khalifa in 813 A.D. in the entire Abbasid empire. Under the advice of his Chief Minister Fazal bin Sahal, Mamun remained at Merv, and did not come over to Baghdad. Fazal bin Sahal appointed his brother Hasan bin Sahal as the Governor of Iraq. Fazal bin Sahal was an Ajami and his policy was to weaken the hold of the Arabs over the administration. He looked forward to shift the capital of the empire from Baghdad in Iraq to somewhere in Persia.

It is also mentioned that Mamun was born from the womb of Marazil, a non-Arabia slave. so Arabia and non-Arabia became a question between Amin and Mamun. The non-Arabia tried their untiring attempts freely in order to help Mamun against Amin because Amin was related to Arabia cast. For this reason they got victory and made Mamun as an Ajami (Non-Arabia) Khalifa at Baghdad. 28

Troubles in Syria and Kufa: An Umayyad named Nasar bin Sabath rose in violent rebellion in Syria to restore the Umayyad dynasty. He defined the imperial troops for five years. A person called Ibn Tabataba took up the cause of the Alids in kufa and rallied a large following again the Abbasids. An adventurer named Abu Saraya, joined Ibn Tabataba with his

28. Prof. Masudul Hasan, History of Islam, P - 216
people. They defeated the force of Hasan bin Sahal; Governor of Kufa and brother of Fazal bin Sahal. After this Abu Saraya poisoned Ibn Tabataba and chose another man of Ali's family named Muhammad bin Muhammad as chief. He obtained further victories and occupied Basara, Wasit and Madain, Makka, Madinah and fell into the hands of the Alids. Abu Saraya then advanced to capture Kufa. At this crisis, Hasan bin Sahal called in the aid of Harathama bin Ayan, whose timely arrival restored Abbasid authority in Kufa. Harathama fought vigorously against Abu Saraya and recovered Basara and other places. Facing the difficulties, Abu Saraya fled to Mesopotamia. He was afterwards captured and executed. After this Abbasid rule was re-established in Iraq and Arabia.

Murder of Harathama and revolt in Baghdad: After Harathama had quelled the Alid revolt and restored southern Iraq to the Abbasid rule, Harathama proceeded to Merv. He told Mamun with the bluntness of a soldier that in his absence from Baghdad the empire was drifting to ruin. He criticised the chief minister Fazal bin Sahal for his anti-Arab polices. Fazal bin Sahal took offence at such criticism and had Harathama killed.

Harathama's death led to violent reaction among the troops at Baghdad. They deposed Hasan bin Sahal and chose Mansur bin Mahdi, an uncle of Mamun as the Governor.

Nomination of Imam Ali-ar-Reza: Mamun, who was the ignorant of these developments in Baghdad, took a decision at Merv that fell like a thunderbolt on the Abbasids. He released that the members of the house of Ali had legitimate claim to that Khilafat. Desiring to restore them the Khilafat, Mamun nominated Ali Reza as his successor in 817 A.D. He also ordered the use of the 'Green', the colour of the house of Ali, in place of the 'Black', colour of the Abbasids. At this, the Abbasid
were enraged. They declared the desposition of Mamun and elected Ibrahim bin Mahdi as Khalifa. Disorders broke out in Baghdad and people had to form vigilant societies to save their life and property. Troubles and disturbances in Syria and Iraq continued in full swing and it seemed that the empire of Mamun would fall to pieces.

Fazal bin Sahal could not deal regarding the situation. Still he did not inform anything to Mamun. At this critical moments, Imam Ali ar - Reza informed the Khalifa the real state of affairs in the empire. Mamun came to know his mistakes. He immediately set out for Baghdad. Arrived at Sarakhs, Fazal bin Sahal was found murdered in his bath. When the Khalifa and his court had halted at Tus, Imam Ali Reza died suddenly in 818 A.D. Mamun lamented for the death of his friend and built a mausolum over his grave at Tus.

**Personal Rule of Mamun:** Mamun arrived at Baghdad in 819 A.D. and assumed the reign of government himself. All disorders disappeared and peace and prosperity were restored in the city with his arrival at Baghdad. The vigilant committees were dissolved and the ravages were repaired. Mamun reorganised the administration on an efficient basis.

**Marriage with Buran:** In 826 A.D. Mamun married Buran, a daughter of his Chief minister Hasan bin Sahal. The marriage was conspicuous for its lavish expenditure and gorgeous splendour. The festivities held in connection with the celebration of the marriage cost over fifty million dirhams.

**Babek:** A brigand by name of Babek made himself the master of Mazendran. He was a follower of the Khurramiya sect, and believed in the transmigration of souls.

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29. K. Ali, Islamic History, p - 229
and other heretic doctrines. He adopted guerilla tactics and in the mountains defended the various armies sent against him by the Abbasids. He allied himself with Byzantines and became a menace for the Abbasids. His terrorist activities continued throughout the reign of Mamun.

The Mu'tazilites: In 827 A.D. Mamun published an edict by which the Mu'tazilite doctrine was declared to be the religion of the state. The Mu'tazilites were rationalists. In place of orthodox belief of pre-destination that man is a free agent in the choice of good or evil. The orthodox held that the Quran is uncreated and eternal; the Mu'tazilites held that the Quran is created. They also held that there would be no corporeal sight. Eminent Islamic scholars like Ahmed bin Hambal disagreed with the Mu'tazilites doctrine and were arrested and lodged in prison.31

Byzantine Campaigns: When the Abbasid forces were engaged against Babek, the Byzantines who had allied with the Babek attacked the Muslim territories to create a diversion. Mamun built a strong military cantonment at Tyana and from there undertook campaigns against the Byzantine every summer from 829 to 833 A.D. In a campaign against the Byzantine while camping by the side of a stream in Asia Minor, Mamun came to suffer from malignant fever as a result of which he died.

Assessment of Mamun: Khalifa Mamun was estimated as the most distinguished ruler of the Abbasid family and his reign was counted as the most glorious age in the history of Khilafat. A contemporary annalist says, "None wiser than he ever ruled the Khilafat." Mamun possessed many eminent qualities and noted for his prudence, determination, clemency, judgement, sagacity, majesty and liberality. His tact and wisdom silenced even the Khariji fanatics. Once a khariji leader came to meet khalifa Mamun and asked him by what right, right of election or hereditary right, he occupied the Khilafat.

31.Ibid, P - 213
Mamun replied that by neither of these rights he came to the Khilafat; but his predecessor had left him in charge of the Khilafat; and if the Muslims agreed to the election of a khalifa, he would gladly retire from the responsibility of the Khilafat.

**As a benevolent ruler:** As a benevolent rule, Mamun had fatherly care for his people, peace, happiness and progress of the people were the ideals of his administration. In his reign, agriculture, industry, and commerce flourished and many benevolent educational institutions were established for the benefit of the public.

**Toleration and council of state:** Mamun’s toleration to other religion was commendable. He appointed non-Muslims in important offices. He also set up a council of state composed of the representatives of all communities to advise and aid the Khalifa in state affairs. This council of state was the first regular constitutionalism in the history of Khilafat.

**A Scholar statesman:** Khalifa Mamun was a scholar statesman. He was the most accomplished learned man of the time. A versatile genius, Mamun had extraordinary knowledge of the Quaran, Hadith, jurisprudence, philosophy and many other branches of knowledge.

**Progress of learning and culture:** It is the great intellectual awakening in his reign that has made his khilafat memorable in history. Himself a great scholar, Mamun gave liberal patronage to scholars and men of learning. His court became the resort of philosophers, astronomers, physicians, scientists, poets and other men of letters of every cast and creed.

Mamun considered that true happiness of his people consisted in education and culture. He enlarged translation bureau and raised it to a great academy for study and research. This was known as ‘Baitul Hikmah’ or the ‘house of wisdom’

It had various departments and they were placed under great scholars of the time.

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32. Allama Shibli Nu’mani, Al Mamun (Urdu), Lucknow, P − 3
1. Costa, son of Luke, was in charge of Greek and Syriac works under his supervision, books of Plato, Aristotle, Galen, Euclid, Archimedes and Ptolemy were translated into Arabic.

2. Duban - a Brahmin scholar, was given the work of rendering the Sanskrit books, mathematics, astronomy and others into Arabic.

3. Yahya bin Harun, who was in-charge of the translation of the ancient Persian works in Arabic.

4. Al Kindi - a famous philosophers who was employed as a professor in Baitul Hikmah.

5. Abbas - a well-known poet and the founder of Modern Persian poetry who was considered as the great traditionalist Bukhari.

6. Al Waqidi - a celebrated historian who flourished in the reign of Mamun.

Mamun established an astronomical observatory on the plain of Tadmore and engaged scholars for the study and research in astronomy and geometry. His astronomers made valuable contribution to knowledge. They discovered the roundness of the earth and many valuable informations about the solar system.

Abul Hasan invented the telescope from a tube.

Because of this momentous intellectual and cultural life, Mamun’s Khilafat is rightly regarded as the most glorious epoch in Saracenic history and has justly called the Augustan age of Islam.

Some other scholars are mentioned below who lived during his reign

1. Imam Shafeyee (His real name is Muhammad bin Idris, was buried in the palace of Farakeh).

2. Hazrat Ma’ruf Kurkhi. He was slave of Imam Ali Reza. He was new Muslim. He was very much devoted to God. His grave was situated in Kurkh.

33. Makammal Tarikhe - Islam, P - 539.
Accession of Mu’tasim: Shortly before his death, Khalifa Mamun nominated his brother Ishaq as his successor. He did not nominate his son Abbas, though he was an efficient and able young man and also popular with army, because he thought that the interests of the empire would be better served by his brother, who was an experienced and matured man. Moreover, he believed that brother would follow his policy more faithfully than his son. Ishaq came to Baghdad from Tartus, where he had accompanied his Khalifa brother, and ascended the throne in September, 833 A.D. with the name of Al Mu’tasim. Abbas swear allegiance to him; But his army held aloof. He ‘however’ persuaded them to recognise Mu’tasim as Khalifa. 34

Policy: Khalifa Mu’tasim was not a brilliant ruler like Mamun. But he faithfully followed the policy of his great brother. He took keen interest in the improvement of learning and knowledge and gave liberal patronage to teachers and learned. Science and philosophy flourished under such distinguished professors as Al. kindi, “the philosopher of the Arabs”. Mu’tasim continued also his brother’s religious policy. He believed in Mu’tazila doctrine and maintained it as a state religion. He appointed Mu’tasim in high offices of the state. His chief Qazi Ibn Abi Dawud was a Mu’tazila.

34. C. Brockelman, History of Islamic People, P - 287.
Under his influence, Mu'tazilite ideas dominated the life and thought of the empire. Imam Ahmed bin Hambal who still refused to accept Mu'tazilite doctrine, was mercilessly scouraged.

Like Mamun, Mu'tasim devoted himself to the welfare of the people. Under his benevolent rule, agriculture, industry and commerce prospered and people lived in peace and happiness. In one respect, Khalifa Mu'tasim did not follow the policy of his brother. He did not fulfill the building of the fort of Tyana which Mamun had started.

**Recruitment of Turkish Bodyguard:** - Mu'tasim made a fatal blunder in forming a new bodyguard consisting of the Turkish slaves. He thus added a new element in the army which was hitherto composed of Arabs and Persians. The newly recruited Turkish soldiers were commanded by their own officers and were directly under the Khalifa. Insolent in behaviour and heedless of life, they caused terror in the city when they rode in the streets. People raised hue and cry and the Khalifa shifted himself to Samarra with his favourite troops in 836 A.D. From this policy Samarra became his capital. Mu'tasim's policy of maintaining the Turkish corps proved the ruin of the Abbasid Khilafat. In the reigns of his weak successors these Turks became king-makers, making and unmaking Khalifas.

**The Jats:** - In the reign of Mu’tasim, the Jats of India appeared on the bank of the Tigris, and caused much trouble to the people of Baghdad and adjoining territories. The Khalifa sent forces against them and after seven month's fighting, they surrendered themselves to the Muslims generals. They were brought to Baghdad for the Khalifa to see the costume of the their women. Then they were settled on the
frontiers of Cilicia. The Roman raiders killed many of them and carried the rest as prisoners.

**The kill of Babek** :- Mu'tasim had to deal with Babek, who reappeared in Mazendran and ravaged Azarbaijan. The Khalifa sent his Turkish general Afshin against him. After three years fighting, Afshin defeated and captured Babek. He was carried to Sammarra and executed.

**Defeat of Theophilus** :- While the Khalifas forces were engaged against Babek, Byzantine emperor Theophilus attacked Muslim territories and killed several thousand people. He burnt to ashes Zibatra, the birth place of Mu'tasim. Mu'tasim advanced against the Byzantines. He crushed their forces at Ancryra and raged to ground Amorium wanted to advance further in Byzantine territory; but the discovery of a plot to assassinate him obliged him to abandon the idea.

**Revolt of Maziar** :- When the Khalifa returned to Samarra, he got the news of a dangerous rebellion under Maziar, a Magian prince of Tabaristan. After much fighting, Abdullah bin Tahir crushed the forces of Maziar and captured him. Maziar disclosed that Turkish general Afshin had instigated him to rebellion. On investigation his statement was found to be correct. Maziar was executed. Afshin was confined in his house and starved to death in 841 A.D.

**Death and Assessment** :- Mu'tasim died on the 15th January 842 A.D. at the age of 48. He was a formidable figure, a man of gigantic physique and great personal courage, devoted to war and hunting, a keen polo-player, but devoid of all cultural interests. He had grown almost uneducated. He was the last great Khalifa of the Abbasid dynasty. Gibbon remarks, “the glory of Abbasid family and nation expired during his reign.”

35.Ibid, P-290
He was octonary, and the figure "8" was of particular significance in his life and career. He ruled for 8 years, 8 months and 8 days. He was the 8th child of Harun- ar- Rashid. He was survived by 8 daughters. During his Khalifat he undertook 8 expedition. He left 8 million gold coins in the state treasury.
Accession of Wasiq: Wasiq, son of Mu'tasim ascended the throne of Khilafat at Baghdad at the age of 32 after the death of his father. He was an able and enlightened ruler who patronized art and letters and encouraged industry and commerce. He was the son of a Rumi slave named Qaratabas.

Revolt of the Arabs: The pro-Turkish policies of the Abbasid led to Arab revolt in various parts of the country. The Bani Qais raised the standard of revolt in Damascus. Wasiq sent a force under Raja bin Ayub Farazi to suppress the revolt. The revolt was suppressed with some difficulty.

In Palestine, a revolt was led by Abu Harb, the veiled one. After suppressing the revolt in Damascus, Raja bin Ayub Farazi led his troops to Palestine. Abu Harb was taken captive and sent to Samarra. This has serious repercussions in Arabia. Deprived of the opportunities to serve in the army and gain booty, the Arab tribes restored to pillage and plunder.

At last the revolts were suppressed and law and order was restored but it had created better feelings of discontentment among the Arabs.

Problem of Khalq-e-Quran: There was dangerous sedition and conspiracy by Mamun regarding the Khalq-e-Quran in Isalm. After Mamun, the believer of Khalq-e-Quran empressed to abandon the concept of it. So, during the time of Khalifa Mu'tasim, Imam Ahmed bin Hambal tried his level best so that this concept did not rise in Islam. But just after beginning of the reign of Wasiq, the sedition of Khalq-e-Quran again started in Islam.

36. Makammal Tarikh-e-Islam, (Urdu), P-545, 46
In 231 A.H. Wasiq asked Hazrat Ahmed bin Nazr who was a scholar of that time, about the concept of Khalq-e-Quran. In reply to that, he said “Quran is uncreated”. There raised disput and conflict amongst Islamic scholars about it.

Wasiq once asked to know the Islamic judgement regarding Khalq-e-Quran from the Islamic scholars. He immediately declared Islamic judgement to execute him who believed Khalq-e-Quran i.e Quran is created. On hearing this judgement, Wasiq murdered Ahmed bin Nazr. After killing him Wasiq hung up his dead body on the national high way of Baghdad.

The guard who was assigned to the dead body, expressed that at the time of death, Ahmed bin Nazr was reading ‘Sura Yasin’ of the Holy Quran. Besides him, innumerable Ulams were sentenced to death and was put in jail due to the same reason of Khalq-e-Quran. The historians express that famous traditionalist Abu Abdur Rahman, teacher of Imam Abu Daud, and Abdullah bin Razi, teacher of Imam Nisai, were captured on the point of Khalq-e-Quran. They were asked about it. They were telling the people that knowledge of Khalq-e-Quran was known to Hazrat Muhammad (S : A). They were asked again, why did Hazrat Muhammad (SA) not express the meaning of Khalq-e-Quran? In response to that, Imam Ibn Abu Daud told that knowledge is possessed by Hazrat Muhammad (S : A).

Abu Abdur Rahman asked a question that if it is said that prophet Muhammad (S: A) had sound knowledge on Khalq-e-Quran, instead of sound knowledge on it, why did prophet Muhammad not disclose the mystery of it? How it is possible to declare it as legal? On hearing this logical argument, Hazrat Abu Abdur Rahman exhausted all of them and Wasiq started laughing placing his hand on his face. He started saying that the point on which the Prophet Muhammad kept silence, the people must keep silence on the same point. After words Wasiq ordered
to bestow 300 *dinar* to Abu Abdur Rahman. Then after Wasiq did not harass any *ulamas* on the point of *Khalq - e - Quran*.

Wasiq was generous and kind-hearted. His Charity was unbounded and in his reign there was not a single medicant in the empire. Wasiq flavoured the Trunks and appointed a Trunk named Ashnas as sultan or lieutenant.

**Death and Assessment** :- Wasiq died in 847 A.D. after a brief rule of five years. He patronised literature, science and encouraged commerce and industry. He was a poet as well as a philosopher. He requested Hunain bin Ishaq, notable and efficient in Medicine and also Philosophy to write a book on this subject. So he wrote a book on medicine by named ‘*Kitabul ' Masai'l - e - Tibbiyah*’.

Fazal bin Yazid says that in the entire Abbasid dynasty. Wasiq’s name is esteemed as memoriser of poetry. He was well-versed in music and also author of many melodies. He could play with skill on the lyre. He was generous, liberal and enjoyed the reputation of the being second Mamun. By following rationalist polices he became unpopular with the orthodox circles.
Accession of Mutawakkil: Khalifa died without nominating a successor. The Chief Minister and other Amirs favoured Muhammad the minor son of Wasiq as the next caliph. The Turkish Generals favoured the nomination of Ja’far, a brother of Wasiq. The will of Turkish Generals prevailed and Ja’far became the caliph. On assuming power, Ja’far assumed the title of Mutawakkil. He was born from the womb Khuarzmi slave.

Policies of Mutawakkil: He had not been on good terms with his brother Wasiq. During the rule of Wasiq, Mutawakkil had been ill treated by the chief minister and other official dignitaries. On coming to power, Mutawakkil decided to reverse the policies to the previous regime and to take his revenge from such persons who had ill treated him in the previous regime. 37

Restoration of Orthodoxy: Immediately on assuming power, Mutawakkil restored fundamentalism and banned rationalism. He interdicted the so called the doctrine of the creation of the Holy Quran, and proclaimed that the Holy Quaran was not created. The rationalists were expelled from public offices, and discussions on science and philosophy were banned. All the fundamentalist scholars who had been held in custody by the previous regime for opposition to the dogma of the created Quran, including Imam Ahmed bin Hambal were set free. On the other hand Qazi Abu Daud, his son and prominent Mu’tazilites were put in prison and their properties were confiscated.

Anti-Shia Policies: Mutawakkil also oppressed the Alids. He was hostile to the Shias. He seized their property of Fadaq. The mausoleum of Imam Hussain at Kerbala was destroyed by him. He banned pilgrimage of Najaf and Kerbala.

Him's and Armenia's troubles: The early year of his reign was disturbed by rebellions in Armenia and Hims and the inroads of the Byzantine. The rebellions were suppressed after some killing. But the Byzantine inroads in Egypt and Asia minor were dangerous and serious. In 852 A.D., they ravaged the Egyptian coast, destroyed all the fortification near Tunis and carried many prisoners and booty. From the side of Asia minor, they raised as far as Diarbakr and returned with 10,000 prisoners.

Mutawakkil's weak and oppressive rule greatly undermined the integrity of the empire. His reign saw the rise of the ascendancy of the Turks in administration. This continued in the reigns of his successors who were mere puppets in the hands of the Turks.

Jews and Christians: Mutawakkil ordered the Jews and Christians to wear distinctive dress. They were forbidden to ride an animal other than donkeys and mules. They could not build new churches or synagogues.

Dhun Nun: In Egypt, the Sufi Dhun Nun profounded the doctrine of gnosis, the communication of man with God. The fundamentalist scholars held such a doctrine to be a heresy and wanted that punitive action should be taken against the Sufi. Dhun Nun was summoned to Samarra and presented before Mutawakkil. Mutawakkil put him many questions but found nothing wrong with his belief. He honoured him and allowed him to return to Egypt. 38

38. Ibid., p. 170
Earthquakes and other natural calamities: During the reign of Mutawakkil, a greater part of the country suffered heavily from earthquakes and other natural calamities. Mutawakkil undertook relief measures on a large scale. Special prayers were held to get divine mercy against such calamities.

Succession: Mutawakkil had originally nominated his eldest son Muntasir to succeed him. He was to be followed by his step brother Mutaaz. Mutazakkil was very much under the influence of his wife Qabiha. She prevailed upon Mutawakkil that her son Mutaaz should be nominated as his successor in preference to Muntasir. Mutawakkil asked Muntasir to renounce his right of succession. Muntasir refused. Thereupon Mutawakkil disgraced and humiliated Muntasir and revoked his succession on his own authority. That created bitterness between Mutawakkil and his eldest son Muntasir.

Death of Mutawakkil: The disinherited prince Muntasir, and the discontented. Turkish general Wasif and Bugha entered into a conspiracy to do away with the caliph. In a palace revolution, Mutawakkil was killed in 862 A.D. Mutawakkil was the first caliph to be killed by his own army. Thereafter there was an unbroken succession of the caliphs becoming helpless tools in the hands of military adventurers. Mutawakkil is a controversial figure in history. Some Sunni writers praise Mutawakkil for the restoration of fundamentalism. Some Shia historians like Ameer Ali, for obvious reasons, rate him as 'the Nero of the Arabs'.
11. **Muntasir (861-862)**

**Accession of Muntasir**: On the assassination of Mutawakkil, the Turkish Generals raised Muntasir, the eldest son of Mutawakkil to the throne. He was a Partner in the conspiracy that had culminated in the assassination of his father. His mother was a Greek Slave - Habshiyah. He is described as a man of middling status, robust of body and of engaging exterior.39

**Shia policies of Muntasir**: On coming to power Muntasir reversed the anti-Shia policies of his father. He rebuilt the mausoleum of Hadrat Ali and Hadrat Hussain that had been destroyed during the reign of his father. He removed the prohibitions that had been imposed by his father on the pilgrimage to Najaf and Kerbala. He restored the property at Fidak to the Alids.

**Policy towards disabilities of non-Muslims**: He withdrew all disabilities and restrictions that had been imposed by his father on the non-Muslims. He permitted the reconstructions of the churches and synagogues of the Christians and the Jews that had been closed down by Mutawakkil.

**His guilt**: Throughout his reign, Muntasir was hunted by the spectre of his guilt of murdering his own father. At one of the state functions, an inscription on a Persian carpet attracted his attention. The inscription read.

"I am Shiruyah, the son of Khusrow. I slew my father and did not enjoy the sovereignty for more than six months."

**His death** :- The Turkish Generals bridged Ibn Tayfur, the physician of Muntasir to poison the caliph. Ibn Tayfur proposed to Muntasir that in order to ward off maladies, he should be bled when Muntasir submitted to the bleeding process, Ibn Tayfur bled him with a poisoned lancet, and Muntasir died of that poison in 862 A.D. like Shiruyah.

**Assessment** :- The Muntasir ruled for Six months only, and this period was too short to make any impact. Muntasir is a controversial figure. Shia writers like Amir Ali describes him as a pious just sovereign, forbearing and generous in character, possessing keen intellect and honestly desirous of the welfare of his subjects.

Sunni writers reproach him for being the murderer of his father. In view of this heinous crime, his other qualities, howsoever good, pale into insignificance.
12. Musta'in (862 - 866 A.D)

Accession of Musta'in: Muntasir did not nominate anybody as his successor. The Turkish Generals and leading official dignitaries met to decide the question of succession. Mut'azz and Muwaid, the sons of Mutawakkil and the brothers of Muntasir were the rightful heirs to the throne. As the Turkish Generals had been responsible for the assassination of Mutawakkil in collusion with Muntasir they were afraid that if any one of the sons of Mutawakkil was raised to the throne he was likely to take revenge for the murder of his father. The Turkish Generals accordingly chose another prince Ahmed bin Muhammad bin Mustain as the caliph. On coming to power prince Ahmed chose for himself the title of Mustain. He was a brother of Mutawakkil. His mother was a slave concubine named Mukharik.40

House arrest of Mut'azz and Muwaid: Soon after the accession of Mustain, a plot was discovered, where under Mustain was to be deposed, and Mut'azz was to be installed as the caliph. The minister Ahmed bin Khasib was involved in the conspiracy. Mustain removed Ahmed bin Khasib from his office, confiscated his property, and exiled from him to Crete. Mut'azz and Muwaid were put under house arrest. They were confined to a part of the palace and restrictions were placed on their movements.

Scholars of his reign: During his reign, Imam Bukhari, Haris bin Miskin, Abdullah bin Humaid and Abu Tahir bin Sarhe died.

40 John Bagot Glubb, A Short History of the Arab Peoples, P - 170.
Murder of Atamish:— There were soon differences among the Turks, Mustain made Atamish in charge of Finance. The other Turkish Generals and dignitaries came to be dissatisfied with the financial policies of Atamish. Mustain was asked to remove him from office, but when he hesitated, Wasif and some other Turks had murdered Atamish.

Murder of Baghir:— Difference arose among the Turks General. The Turkish minister Atamish had already been killed. Thereafter differences arose between Wasif, Bugha, and Baghir. Wasif and Bugha had killed Baghir. Baghir was the man who had actually assassinated Mutawakkil.

The Turks considered that Mustain was also involved in the murder of Baghir. They, therefore, revolted against Mustain. Mustain was a captive in the hands of Wasif and Bugha.

A doggeral got current: 41

A Caliph in a cage,
Between Wasif and Bugha,
He says what they tell him,
And speaks as a parrot.

Disgusted with the state of captivity and unable to withstand the tyrannies of the Turkish Generals. Mustain fled from Samarra, but he refused.

41. History of Islam. P - 237
**Death and Assessment** :- On the refusal of Mustain to return to Samarra, the Turkish Generals declared Mut‘azz, a son of Mutawakkil as the caliph. The Turkish army under Mut‘azz marched to Baghdad. The people of Baghdad were no match for the Turkish army. The cause of Mustain was betrayed and he agreed to his disposition. He retired to Wasit where he died in obscurity.

He was a nonentity with no will of his own. He was a mere puppet in the hands of the Turk Generals. During his rule, the caliphate lost its prestige.
13. Mut'azz (866 - 869 A. D.)

Accession of Mut'azz: On the abdication of Mustain, Muta'zz became the Abbasid caliph. He was a son of Mutawakkil and was born of a Greek mother Qabiha. He was only nineteen years old at the time of his accession. Among the Abbasid caliphs, no other caliph came to the throne at such a young age. The Governors of Syria and Egypt did not offer allegiance to him. He sent forces to Saria and Egypt. The rebels were defeated and they offered allegiance to Mut'az.42

Succession: Mut'azz had originally nominated his brother Muwaid as his successor. Muwaid was involved in conspiracy. Mut'azz set aside the succession of Muwaid, scourged him and put him in prison where he died.

The Khawarij revolt: The Khawariji rose in revolt in Mosul. A greater part of the region of Mosul was occupied by the rebels. The Abbasid forces sent against the rebels were repeatedly defeated. During the reign of Mut'azz, the Khawarij held most of the Mosul district under their control.

The Alid revolt: In Tabaristan, the Zaidis consolidated their power and defied all efforts on the part of the Abbasids to overthrow their rule.

In Makkah there was an Alid revolt under Islamil bin Yusul. The Abbasid rule was expelled from Makkha. The Alids took possession of the town, and put the citizens to ransom. Then they marched to Madinah and occupied it. The Abbasids sent a force against the Alids but the situation could not be brought under control and a state of anarchy continued to prevail in the holy cities.

42. A Short History of the Arab Peoples, P - 179
**Autonomous states** :- During the reign of Mut’azz, the Saffarids rose to Power in Seistan, Kirman and Fars, and the Tulurids rose to power in Egypt. The establishment of these autonomous states encouraged centrifugal tendencies, and the Abbasid empire began to shrink.

**Abdication and death of Mut’azz** :- The murder of Wasif and Bugha did not ease the situation for Mut’azz. There was no money in the treasury, and no salary was paid to the army for four months. After murdering Wasif the army besieged the palace of the caliph and clamoured for the payment of arrears. The Caliph approached his mother to lend an amount of 50,000 dinars.

She refused to lend any money, although she had ample amount with her. When Mut’azz failed to meet the demand of the army, he was forced to abdicate. Then he was led to a hammam and forced to take bath under hot water. When he felt thirsty, water was denied. When his thirst grew, he was given snow water to drink. He drank the water and fell dead.

**Assessment** :- Mut’azz ruled for a period of three years only. He is reported to be the most beautiful person among the Abbasids. This beauty did not stand him in good stand. As caliph he proved a failure.

**Accession of Muhtadi** :- On the abdication of Mut’azz, the Turk - King -makers offered the throne to Abu Abdullah, a son of Wasiq. Abu Abdullah was pious by disposition, and he said that he could not accept the throne until he had seen Mut’azz, and he absolved him of the oath of allegiance that he had taken to him. The Turk Generals produced Mut’azz before Abu Abdullah. Abu Abdullah offered to act as a mediator between Mut’azz and the Turks, and get him restored to power. Mut’azz said that he was no longer competent to carry the burden of the caliphate. He
absolved Abu Abdullah of the oath of allegiance that he had taken to him. Thereafter Abu Abdullah assumed the office of the caliph and adopted the surname of Muhtadi.

Reforms of Muhtadi: Muhtadi was chaste, pious, just and firm. As a ruler he tried to emulate the example of the Umayyad caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz. He followed an austere way of life and forbade all extravagant practices at the Abbasid court. He put down all wanton pastimes and forbade singing. He administered justice with an even hand, and took stern measures to prevent the oppression of the people by the functionaries of the state. 43

At this stage there were two main factions among the Turk. One faction was led by Salih bin Wasif who was in charge of finance. The other faction was led by Musa bin Bugha. Musa bin Bugha was at the time operating against the Alwis in Tabaristan. Qabiha, the mother of Mut’azz apprehended harsh treatment at the hands of Salih bin Wasif. She went into hiding appealed to Musa bin Bugha to come for her help. Salih bin Wasif sacked the palace of Qabiha and recovered considerable wealth all of which was confiscated.

43. Ibid, P - 191.
**Death and Assessment** :- The Turks besieged the capital, and no help could come from outside. The Turks wanted Muhtadi to abdicate. He rebuked them for their faithlessness. Some non-Turkish troops chose to defend Muhtadi. The loyal forces were however, outnumbered, and Muhtadi died fighting. The rule of Muhtadi lasted for barely a year. Muhtadi was wise and generous, and had his life been spared, he was likely to prove a capable ruler. It is unfortunate that he fell a victim to intrigues, and died fighting against his own army. That shows the sorry state of affairs to which the Abbasid empire had been reduced.
15. **M'utamid (870-892 A.D.)**

**Accession of M'utamid** :- After the death of Muhtadi, Abul Abbas Ahmed, son of Mutawakkil and a brother of Mut'azz who was in prison was released by the Turkish Generals and installed as the caliph assuming the title of M'tamid. He was born of a Greek mother, Fityan by name. He was twenty five years old at the time of his accession.

**Change of Capital** :- He shifted the capital from Samarra to Baghdad. He chose to be a constitutional ruler, and vested all executive authority in his brother Muwaffiq. Because of the change of capital, and the strong government set up by Muwaffiq, the Turkish guards, who had been so aggressive in the previous reigns were kept in restraint.

**The Saffarids** :- In 870 A.D., the year of the accession of M'utamid, Yakub bin Laith founded the Saffarids rule in Sistan, Kerman and Fars. In 873 A.D., Yakub conquered Khurasan and Tabaristan as well. Thereafter he marched to Baghdad. In the confrontation that took place at Hulwan, Yakub was defeated and he had to retreat to Seistan. He died soon after. His successor, Amr bin Laith made peace with the Abbasid government, and obtained the authority to rule over the lands he held.

**The Samanids** :- In Transoxiana, the Samanids came to power. A Turkoman horde from across the Jaxartes invaded Transoxiana. The Samanids expelled the invaders from their territory. The caliph invested the Samanids with the government of Transoxiana and Commissioned them to check the inroads of the pagan Turks.
The Tulunids: In the west, the Tulunids came to power in Egypt and Syria, and they became an autonomous power. Ahmad bin Tulun, the founder of the Tulunid rule died in 844 A.D and was succeeded by his son Khummaruwayh.

Mu'tamid's escape to Egypt: M'utamid was a nominal ruler and real power vested in his brother Muwaffiq. M'utamid chafed under the strong rule of Muwaffiq. In 883 A.D; the caliph left the capital with the intention to escape to Egypt and seek asylum with the Tulunids.

Death and Assessment: Muwaffiq died in 891 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Abul Abbas. The death of Muwaffiq brought no relief to M'utamid in the matter of the exercise of authority. Abul Abbas proved stronger than his father Heretofore, M'utamid had nominated his son as his successor. Under the pressure of Abul Abbas, M'utamid was forced to revoke the nomination of his, and appoint Abul Abbas instead as his successor.

M'utamid died suddenly in 892 A.D. It was suspected that he had been poisoned. He ruled for 22 years, but his rule was nominal.

Scholars of his reign: a) Imam Muslim
b) Imam Abu Daud
c) Imam Tirmidhi
d) Imam Hasan Askar
e) Hz. Ibrahim Adhem Balakhi. 44

44. Makammal Tarikh-e-Islam, P-130.
16. **M’utazid (892 - 902 A. D.)**

**Accession of M’utazid**: M’utamid was succeeded by his nephew Ali Abbas who assumed the title of M’utazid on accession. He was born of a Greek mother, Sawab. **Saffah, the second**: M’utazid was active, bold, intrepid, wise and vigorous. He had a grave exterior which inspired awe. He was very fierce and knew no mercy for his opponents. For his ruthlessness, he came to be known as Saffah, the second.

He set up a strong administration and ruled with a firm hand. He expelled vagabonds and bad character from the city of Baghdad who had become a menace to the city. He forbade booksellers to sell books of philosophy and polemics. He prohibited un-Islamic practices. He enforced the Islamic law of inheritance and abolished the escheat office.

He prohibited the practice of the celebration of the Magian New Year Day. He changed the New Year Day from March to June, which came to be known as the M’utazid New Year’s Day. 45

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Qatrun Nida :- M'utazid married Qatr-un-Nida, a beautiful Tulunid princess, a daughter of khummaruwayh. Like the marriage of Mamun to Buran, the marriage of M'utazid and Qatr-un-Nida also became a legend conspicuously for its superb magnificence, gorgeous splendour and lavish expenditure. The dowry among other things included 4,000 jewelled Waistbands.

Death and Assessment :- M'utazid died in 902 A.D. His rule lasted for ten years. M'utazid was a man of prowess and great personal courage. He had the reputation of engaging a lion single handed. On his death-bed, he kicked his physician who fell down dead. He introduced reforms and made efforts towards strengthening the administration.

If M'utazid would have come to power before the assassination of M'utawakkil, he might have been able to restore the prestige of the Abbasids.
17. **Muktafi (902 - 907 A.D.)**

**Accession of Muktafi** :- M'utazid was succeeded by his son Muktafi. Muktafi was born Turkish mother Jijak. He was 26 years old at the time of accession.

**Reforms of Muktafi** :- Muktafi reformed the administration and adopted liberal polices. He destroyed the underground prisons of his father, and converted them into places of worship. He restored to the people the lands and the gardens that his father acquired for building his palaces. All who had any grievance against the administration could apply to him for redress. He looked into all complaints personally, and made an earnest effort to redress the grievances of the people, these measures made Muktafi popular and the people blessed his rule.46.

**The Qaramatians** :- During his reign, the menace of the Qaramatians grew in magnitude. Campains taken by the Abbasids against the Qaramatians proved inconclusive. In one of the campaigns, Yahya bin Zakaria, the leader of the Qaramatians was killed. The command of the Qaramatian was thereafter taken over by Hussain, a brother of Yahya. Hussain had a mole upon his face which he pretended to be the token of his "Mahdihood." He declared himself as the Mahdi and took over the title of Al- Muddaththir. He declared that there was a reference to him in Surah Lxxiv "A Muddaththir" of the holy Quran. In Syria a greater part of the province was occupied by the Qaramatians. Muktafi took the field in person against the Qaramatians. In an action, Hussain was killed, but the fury and violence of the Qaramatians did not abate thereby.

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46.Ibid, P - 255
On the otherhand, the Qaramatians stepped up their subversive activities in Iraq as well. In 906 A. D. The Qaramatians captured Kufa and came to threaten Baghdad.

**Death and Assessment** :- Muktafi died in 907 A. D. after a short reign of five years only. He was a just and wise ruler, but the general conditions were so much disturbed. The Qaramatians continued to be a great menace during his reign, and in spite of his best efforts, the Qaramatians could not be suppressed by him.
18. **Muqtadir (907 - 932 A.D.)**

*Accession of Muqtadir*: Muktafi was succeeded by his brother Muqtadir. He was born of a Turk mother Sa‘ab. He was only 13 years of age at the time of accession. He was the youngest person among the Abbasids to come to the throne 47

The chief minister Abbas bin Hasan favoured the succession of Muqtadir, but most of the other nobles opposed the succession on the ground that Muqtadir was too young to hold the throne. These nobles decided to depose Muqtadir, and installed Abdullah, son of M‘utazz as the caliph. When Abdullah was offered the throne, he said he would accept the offer subject to the condition that there was no bloodshed. He was assured of a peaceful accession.

Abbas bin Hasan who was opposed to the deposition of Muqtadir was murdered. Thereafter Muqtadir was deposed and Abdullah was installed as the caliph who assumed the name of Al - Murtaza. Murtaza now asked Muqtadir to vacate the palace. There was now a sudden change in fortune. When the men of Murtaza entered the palace to turn out Muqtadir, people of Murtaza were defeated and driven out of the palace. The people of Baghdad rose in favour of Muqtadir and rushed to the palace. Murtaza was deposed, and Muqtadir was restored to the throne. The nobles who had sponsored the caliphate of Murtaza were hunted out and put to the sword.

47. F. Cajori, *A History of Muslims*, P - 502
The Hambalites: During his reign, the Hambalites, the followers of Imam Hambal created a law and order problem for the administration. They interpreted a verse of Sura xvii of the Holy Quran to mean that Allah would place the Holy Prophet of Islam on His Throne beside Him. Others said that this merely means that the Holy Prophet would have the authority of intercession. The controversy led to a blow between the Hambalites and others. Many persons were killed. The special hatred of the Hambalites was directed against philosophical works. The Hambalites seized such works from the libraries and book-shops and burnt them in public.

The Byzantines: Across the borders the Byzantines became aggressive. In a confrontation against the Byzantines in 926 A.D. the Abbasids forces met a reverse, and the Byzantines captured Damietta in Egypt, slaughtered the Muslims and converted the mosques into churches. In 928 A.D. the Byzantines advanced into Armenia, and captured the city of Khalat where they tore down the pulpit in the main mosque, and set up the cross in its place.

Death and assessment: When Muqtadir was restored to the caliphate, Munis fled to Mosul. Here he gathered strength and invaded Baghdad in 932 A.D. Muqtadir was advised that he would lead the Baghdad force in person for seeing him at the helm of affairs most of the men in the army of Munis would join the Baghdad force. This expectation did not materialise and Muqtadir died on the battlefield. Muqtadir enjoyed a long reign of 25 years.

Muqtadir was weak and he had little hold over power. Political power during his period came to be wielded by his ‘harem’, Sha’ab the mother of Muqtadir ruled like a Queen Regent, and held regular audiences to redress grievances and decided cases. Muqtadir established a hospital at Baghdad which was known as the Muqtadiria Hospital.
19. Al Qahir (932 - 934 A.D.)

Accession of Qahir: On the death of Muqtadir, Amir Munis wanted to make Ahmad, a son of Muqtadir as the caliph. This was opposed by other nobles who installed Abu Mansur Ahmed, a son of Muathadid as the caliph. On assumption of office he took the title of Al-Qahir. He was born of a slave mother, Fitnah.

Histreatment of the family of Muqtadir: He was cruel and merciless by nature. He was of a vindictive bent of mind, and he with violently with those who were favoured by his predecessor. He scourged the mother of Muqtadir, confiscated the properties of the prominent nobles of the time of Muqtadir.

Chastiser of the enemies of God: At the court one faction was led by Ibn Yaqut while the other faction was led by Ibn Muqlah. Qahir supported Ibn Yaqut. That won for him the hostility of Ibn Muqlah. He conspired with Munis and another dignitary Amir Baliq to depose Qahir and install Abu Muhammad, a son of Muktafi as the caliph. When Qahir came to know of the conspiracy, he enticed Munis and Baliq and put them to death. Ibn Muqlah concealed himself but his house was burnt. The properties of the conspirators were confiscated. That gave Qahir sufficient money to disburse the pay of the troops. That made him popular with the troops who conferred on him the title of "Chastiser of the enemies of God". This was engraved on the coins. The son of Al Muktafi who was proposed to be installed as the caliph by the conspirators was immured by Qahir between two walls.

Ban on Music and drinking: Qahir issued a decree banning music and prohibiting the use of wine. He arrested all singers, and forbade the employment of
infamous people. He broke all instruments of idle diversion. In spite of such decree he did not himself relinquish intemperance, nor desist from listening to music. 48.

Assessment: The violent and bloodthirsty nature of Al Qahir made him unpopular. He carried a javelin with him which he never cast aside till he had slain a man with it. When he was asked by Army to abdicate the palace, he refused to abdicate. Thereupon he was blinded and deposed. He was lodged in prison for some year.

Qahir’s rule lasted for barely two years. His reign was marked by turbulence, conspiracies and bloodshed. The affairs of the state were sadly neglected and the Abbasid state came to slide downhill on the path of disintegration. After deposition Qahir lived for 16 years and died in 950 A.D. He was the first Abbasid ruler to be blinded and reduced to beggary.

48.Ibid, P - 505
20. **Al - Radi (932 - 940 A.D.)**

**Accession of Al - Radi:** On the deposition of Al - Qahir, Abul Abbas Muhammad, a son of Muqtadir was installed as the caliph. On assuming office, he adopted the surname of Al Radi. He was born of a Greek mother, Dahalum.

**The Abbasid empire:** With Al Radi disappeared the vestiges of whatever dignity and prestige had been left to the caliphate. The Abbasids empire once a mighty state was now a mere ghost of its former self.

- The Umayyads ruled in Spain.
- The Fatimids ruled over Egypt and North Africa.
- The Hamdanities ruled over Mesopotamia.
- The Qaramatian ruled in Yamama and Bahrain.
- The Buwayhids ruled in Persia.
- The Daylamites ruled in Tabaristan and Jurjan.
- The Samanids ruled in Khurasan and Transoxiana.

The Abbasid rule had come to be confined to Baghdad and its environs. 49

**Ibn Abil Azakir:** In 935 A.D., a heretical movement under Muhammad bin Ali Al - Shalmaghi commonly known as Ibn Abil Azakir became a headache for the Government. He claimed to possess the divine power to bring the dead to life. When his claim was proved to be a fraud he was executed along with his prominent followers.

Amir - ul- Umara :- Al Radi had no hold on power, and he became a puppet in the hands of military adventurers. By a coup Muhammad bin Raiq, the Governor of Basara and Wasit seized power, and Radi was forced to confer the title of Amir - ul-Umara on him. All executive authority came to be vested in the Amir - ul-Umara, and the caliph was reduced to the Status of a Phantom. In 938 A.D. by another coup Ibn Raiq was overthrown and power was captured by another Turkish General Bajkan who was in turn vested by Al - Radi with the title of Amir -ul-Umara.

Main events during his reign :- During the reign of Al -Radi, Abdur Rahman III, proclaimed himself as the caliph in Spain. Now there were three caliphs in the Muslim world - the Abbasids in Baghdad, the Fatimids in North Africa and the Umayyads in Spain.

In Hejaj, the Qaramatians continued their ravages and during a greater part of the reign of Al - Radi, the annual pilgrimage to the Holy kaaba remained suspended. In the east the Buwahyids rose to importance in Persia.

Death and Assessment :- Al- Radi died in 940 A.D. He was hardly 32 years old at the time of his death. His rule lasted for 6 years only. He is described as a beneficent and liberal ruler who patronised learning and led the army in person. Because of the turbulence of the period, whatever good qualities he had, could not come into full play, and the peace of disintegration of the Abbasid power could not be arrested.
21. Muttaqi (940-944 A.D.)

**Accession of Muttaqi** :- Al Radi was succeeded by his brother Abu Ishaq Ibrahim who assumed the surname of Muttaqi on accession. He was born of a slave mother Zohra. The entire Period of his rule was marked by turbulence, coups and counter coups.50

**Coups and Counter Coups** :- At the time of his accession, power vested in Bajkam as Amir - ul- Umara. In 941 A.D. Bajkam was assassinated, and another Turk - General Kurtakain became Amir - ul -Umar. Ibn Raiq who had in the meantime consolidated his position at Wasit attacked Baghdad, overthrew Kurtakain, and became the Amir - ul - Umar. Another General Abul Hassan Ali Al Baridi led a counter revolt. In the confrontation Ibn Raiq was defeated. Ibn Raiq fled to Mosul, and he took the caliph along with him. In the absence of the Caliph, the royal palaces in Baghdad were ransacked.

Soon there was another outbrea led by a Turkish general Tuzun. The Hamdanid ruler was driven away from Baghdad, and Muttaqi was forced to confer the powers of Amir - ul- Umara.

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50.Ibid - P - 257, - 58
Soon there were differences between the Caliph and Tuzun, and the Caliph once again sought refuge with the Hamdanids. The Hamdanids marched with a large army to engage Tuzun. The two armies met at Ukbara at some distance from Bagahdad. The Hamdanids were defeated, and they along with Muttaqi retreated in order to disorder to Mosul.

As Muttaqi left Raqqah, Tuzun proceeded to meet him half way. Muttaqi received by Tuzun between Anbar and Hit. The Caliph was received with all respect and then escorted to the camp. In the camp, Tuzun went back on his promises. Muttaqi was placed under arrest and deposed. His eyes seared with hot iron and he was blinded. Muttaqi was led to an island in the Tigris where he was imprisoned. He remained in the prison for 25 years until he died.

when Al-Qahir heard that like him Muttaqi had also been blinded, he said “We are now two, needing a third.”

Assessment: Muttaqi’s rule lasted for four years only, and the entire period was crowded with coups, outbreaks and insurrections. He was allowed no rest, and had to move from pillar to post. Personally he was very pious and righteous. He used to fast and Pray much. He never touched wine. He used to say that he needed no boon companion but the Quran. These qualities, however, could not stand him in good stand, and as a ruler, he proved a failure. He was the second Caliph to be blinded.
22. Mustakfi (944-945 A.D.)

Accession of Mustakfi: Mustakfi Muttaqi was succeeded by Abul Kasim Abdullah, a son of Muktafi. On assuming the caliphate he adopted the title of Mustakfi. His mother was a slave concubine named "Amlah-un-Nas" (the most beautiful of mankind). He was 41 years old at the time of his accession.

Amir-ul-Umara: At the time of his accession, Tuzun was the Amir-ul-Umara. Tuzun died soon after. On the death of Tuzun, Nasir-Ud-Daulah, the Amir of Mosul, aspired for the office of the Amir-ul-Umara. The army opposed his appointment. They supported the candidature of Shirzad who had been the deputy of Tuzun. Mustakfi had no option but to appoint Shirzad as the Amir-ul-Umara. In lieu of the support of the army, Shirzad as Amir-ul-Umara raised the pay of the army personnel. There was no money in the treasury, and the additional expenditure had to be met by levying additional taxes on people. That caused great discontentment among the people and they revolted against the administration.

Deposition of Mustakfi: Muizz-ud-Daulah as Amir-ul-Umara concentrated all powers in his own hand and the caliph was reduced to a cipher. The privileges of the caliph were cut down and he was allowed a meagre subsistence allowance. That created bitterness between the caliph and the Amir-ul-Umara.

51. Sayed Amir Ali, A Short History of the Saracens, P-303
The caliph Planned to seek some outside help against Muizz-ud-Daulah.

One day Muizz-ud-Daulah visited the caliph. Two of the Daylamites stepped forward towards the caliph who stretched forth his hand thinking that they wished to kiss it. They, however, pulled him from his throne, and put him under arrest. The contingent of the Daylamites plundered the palaces of the Caliph until nothing was left therein. He was third Abbasid caliph to be blinded. The rule of Mustakfi lasted for less than two years. With Mustakfi the position of the Abbasid caliph was reduced to that of a stipendiary of the Buwayhids.

Mustakfi tried to get ride of his masters, but he failed. He remained in the prison for three years and died in 948 A.D. According to Suyuti, he had adopted the Shia-faith to please his masters, but that did not help him in any way.

**End of the Early Abbasid Period** :- Now we should draw our attention towards the end of the Early Abbasid period. The Period of the early-Abbasids lasted from 750 to 945 A.D.

The Second Period which may be called the Period of the later Abbasids lasted from 945 to 1258 A.D.

The Year 945 is the dividing line as it was during this year that power was captured by the Buwayhids.

During the period of the Early Abbasids there were 22 rulers in 195 years.

Now we are ready to start the chapter of the second period which may be called the Period of the later Abbasid that lasted for 313 years. During the period the Abbasid empire was ruled by 15 rulers.
2. The period of the Later Abbasids (945 to 1258 A.D.) (313 Years.)

(A) THE BUWAYHID PERIOD (945 to 1055 A.D.)

From Al Muttih to Al Qaim, only four rulers

23. (i) Muttih (945 - 974 A.D.)

**Accession of Al Muttih**: On the deposition of Mustakfi, the Buwayhids who were Shia proposed to acknowledge the Fatimid Shia caliphs as the caliphs. They were advised that Sunni caliphs were likely to dominate over them. For the consideration of personal power, the Buwayhids decided to continue with the Abbasids caliphs but would treat them as puppets. Abul Kasim Al Fazal, a son of Muqtadir was installed as the Caliph. He chose for himself the title of Al Muttih. He was the son of a slave concubine named Masghalah. During the first year of his office he was allowed a meagre stipend, and was not allowed to reside in the royal palace. 52

**The Shia doctrines**: The Buwayhids took specific measures to promote doctrine. Muawiyah, Yazid and other non-Shia Caliphs were publicly cursed. The 10th of Mohrram, the day of the martyrdom of Hadrath Hussain was celebrated as a day of mourning. On the 12th of Dhul Hajj, the festival of Ghadir Khum was officially celebrated, the significance, where of, according to the Shia’s claim was that the Holy prophet had declared Ali to be his successor on that day.

52. Ibid - P - 303 - 4
**Death of Muttih**

Muizz-ud-Daulah, the Amir-ul-Umara died in 967 A.D. He was succeeded by his son Bakhtiyar who was awarded by Muttih the title of Izz-ud-Daulah. Izz-ud-Daulah was incapable and under him the state of affairs rapidly deteriorated.

To meet the needs of administration, Bakhtiyar had to levy additional taxes on the people. That created discontentment in the state, Bakhtiyar pressed Muttih to provide money for undertaking Jihad. Bakhtiyar maintained his pressure. Ultimately Muttih was forced to sell all property and hand over the proceeds to Bakhtiyar for financing the campaign against Byzantines. Bakhtiyar pocketed the money and did not undertake the jihad against them.

The unwise policies of Bakhtiyar caused considerable discontentment among the people. At the top there was armed conflict between the Turks and the Daylamites. As a result of these conflicts, Baghdad was captured by the Turks Amir-ul-Umara. In 973 A.D. Muttih suffered from an attack of paralysis and he lost the power of action. He abdicated in 974 in favour of his son and retired at Wasit where he died in 975 A.D.

Muttih enjoyed long spell of reign of 29 years but this was a colourless rule.
Accession of Al-Taii

Accession of Al-Taii :- On the abdication of Al-Muttih, his son Abu Bakr Abdul Karim became the caliph. On assuming office he took the title of At-Taii. His mother was a Slave concubine named Hazar. 53

Izz-ud-Daulah :- At the time of accession of At-Taii, the Turkish General subuktugin was the Amir-ul-Umara. He died in 975 A.D. and that provided opportunity to Izz-ud-Daulah who was at Mosul to stage a comeback. Izz-ud-Daulah appealed for help his cousin Azad-ud-Daulah, the ruler of Fars for help. The combined forces of Izz-ud-Daulah and Azad-ud-Daulah marched to Baghdad. The Turks were defeated and Izz-ud-Daulah was reinstalled as the Amir-ul-Umara.

The army clamoured for the payment of arrears, and there was no money in the treasury. Azad-ul-Daulah advised Izz-ud-Daulah that he should sit at home and declare that he was not interested in exercising authority.

Izz-ul-Daulah was under the impression that Azad-ud-Daulah would exercise power as an interim measure only and when things settled down, power would be restored to him. Azad-ud-Daulah had, however, no intention of restoring the power to Izz-ud-Daulah. He brought the matter to the notice of Rukn-ud-Daulah, the father of Azad-ud-Daulah, and the head of the Buwayhid family.

53. Ibid, P-305
Rukn-ud-Daulah who loved his nephew Izz-ud-Daulah as much as his son-Azad-ud-Daulah took strong notice of the matter and directed Azad-ud-Daulah to retire from Baghdad and hand over the power to Izz-ud-Daulah. Ruknud-Daulh died in 976 and Azad-ud-Daulah became the Amir-ul-Umara after defeating Izz-ud-Daulah at Baghdad. The caliph conferred on him the title of Shams-ul-Millat.

**Sams-ud-Daulah** :- Azad-ud-Daulah died in 982 A.D. and succeeded by his son Samsam-ud-Daulah. He levied additional taxes. That created general unrest and discontentment. Due to public opposition, he had to withdraw the tax levy.

**Sharaf-ud-Daulah** :- Profiting by the disturbances in Baghdad, Sharaf-ud-Daulah, a step-mother of Samsam-ud-Daulah with his forces against Baghdad. In the battle that took outside Baghdad Samsam was defeated and taken captive. He was blinded. Sharaf-ud-Daulah now assumed the authority as Amir-ul-Umara.

**Baha-ud-Daulah** :- Sharaf-ud-Daulah died in 989 A.D. and was succeeded by his brother Abu Nasr who assumed the title of Baha-ud-Daulah. There were soon differences between At-Taii and Baha-ud-Daulah. In 991 A.D. Baha-ud-Daulah deposed At-Taii and forced him to abdicate. He was however, allowed to live in the royal palace where he was treated with due respect and courtesy. He died in 1002 A.D.

**Assessment** :- At Taii ruled for 17 years. He was very weak and incapable. He was virtually a prisoner in the hands of the Buwayhids.
25. (iii) **Al-Qadir (991-1031 A. D.)**

**Accession of Al-Qadir** :- On the deposition of At-Taii, a cousin of At-Taii, Abul Abbas Ahmed bin Ishaq bin Muqtadir was installed as the Caliph. On assuming the caliphate he took over the throne in the name of Al-Taii resided in the palace of Al Qadirand was treated with due respect and courtesy. 54

**The Buwayhids** :- Like his predecessors, Al Qadir remained a prisoner in the hands of Buwayhids ruler Baha-ud-Daulah died in 1012 A. D. and was succeeded by his son Sultan-ud-Daulah. Sultan-ud-Daulah was overthrown by his brother Mushruf ud Daulah in 1025 A. D. which authority came to be vested in his brother Jalal-ud-Daulah.

**Religious activities of Al-Qadir** :- As by this time the Abbasids had lost all hold on power, Al-Qadir, as the Abbasid caliph, could merely watch the political events from a distance, but had no power to shape the course of events.

Deprieved of political power, Al-Qadir, devoted his time and energy to the promotion of religion. He led the life of a pious Muslim. He spent a greater part of his nights in prayers. He gave a greater part of his income in charity and almsgiving. He studied Fiqh under Abu Bisher al-Harawi, a Shafiite scholar. Al-Qadir himself was a jurist of considerable eminence.

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54. Philips K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, P - 62
He presided at synods of religious divines and made an effort to consolidate the spiritual authority and prestige of the Abbasid caliphate. The M'utazilites became active and tried to propagate their doctrines. Al-Qadir wrote a number of pamphlets condemning rationalism and insisting upon conformity as essential to fundamentalism.

**Death and Assessment.** Al-Qadir died in 1031 A.D., at the age of 87. His rule lasted for 40 years. It was the longest rule among the Abbasids. Most of the Abbasids rulers died young. Among the Abbasids, Al-Qadir attained the longest age. Al-Qadir aspired to be another Umar bin Abdul Aziz, but as he had no political power to exercise he could achieve little. In religion he supported the fundamentalist view. The Sunni writers and historians praise his conduct.
26.(iv) **Al Qaim (1031 - 1077 A.D.)**

**Accession of Al Qaim** :- Al Qadir was succeeded by his son Abu Jafar Abdullah. His mother was an Armenian lady, Bad-rud-Duja. On assuming office he took the title of Al-Qaim.

**Deposition of Al Qaim** :- Al Ratbah, Al Basasiri mustered a force. He also secured help from the Fatimids. Al Basasiri allied himself with the brother of Tughril Beg, Inal, and incited him to revolt against his brother. At the outbreak of revolt, Tughril Beg left Baghdad to take action against his rebellious brother.

As soon as Tughril Beg left Baghdad, Al Basasiri marched to Baghdad and recaptured it. He deposed Al-Qaim and proclaimed the Fatimid caliph Al Muntasir as the caliph of Islam. Al Qaim was transported to the prison at Aanah about Hit on the Euphrates. For about a year, Al Qaim languished in the prison, while in the mosques in Baghdad, the Khutbah was read in the name of the Fatimid caliph. 55

**Restoration of Al-Qaim** :- Tughril Beg suppressed the revolt his brother, and then marched to Baghdad. In the confrontation that followed Al-Basasiri was defeated and killed, and Baghdad was recaptured by Tughril Beg. Al Qaim was released from the prison at Aanah brought to Baghdad with due respect and restored to the office of the caliphate. In turn, Al Qaim placed two crowns on the head of Tughril.

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55. Ibid - P - 275
Beg indicative of his supremacy over the Arabs and the Persians. He was invested with seven robes, emblematic of the seven countries of Islam under the authority of Tughril Beg. Tughril Beg was proclaimed as the sultan of the east and the west.

**Main events in the reign of Al-Qaim:** In spite of his restoration, the position of Al Qaim as caliph did not improve in any way. For him the coming of the Seljuks in the place of the Buwayhids or Al Basasiri merely meant a change in masters. He continued to be a figurehead and all executive authority vested in the Seljuk Sultan. Al-Qaim had to further suffer the humiliation of marrying his daughter to Tughril Beg.

It was the first occasion when an Abbasid prince was married to a non-Abbasid. Tughril Beg died soon after the marriage and was succeeded by his nephew Alp Arslan.

At the battle of Malaz Jard that took place in 1071 A.D. between the Muslims and the Byzantines, the Byzantines were defeated, and their emperor Romanas was captured alive by the Muslims. As a result, the Muslims became the Masters of Asia minor. These conquests were, however, not made in the name of the caliph, these were made in the name of the Seljuks.

**Death and Assessment:** Al Qaim died in 1077 A.D. He ruled for 46 years which was the longest period of rule among the Abbasids.

Al Qaim was a man of comely appearance and attractive countenance. He was austere, pious, charitable, benevolent and prompt to do justice. He was assiduous in the cultivation of literature, and skilled in writing. He was God-fearing and spent most of his time in prayers and religious devotions. After his release from Prison and restoration to the caliphate, he never slept except on the prayer mat.
Accession of Al Muqtadi: Al Qaim had only one son Zakhirat-ud-Din Muhammad who died during the lifetime of his father. Al Qaim was succeeded by his grandson Abul Qasim Abdullah bin Muhammad. He was a posthumous child and was born six months after the death of his father. His mother was a slave concubine Arjawan. On assuming the caliphate, he took the title of Muqtadi. He was only 19 years at the time of coming to power.

Policies and main events: Al Muqtadi was intelligent, pious, virtuous, and noble. He expelled all the bad characters from the court. He adopted the policy of measure for the suppression of immorality. He made an attempt to assert himself, but he was no watch for the paramount Seljuk. He had, therefore, no option but to lie low and remain a figurehead.

Within the capital, peace was disturbed by frequent riots between the Hambalites and the Hanafies. These riots were suppressed with some difficulty after a good deal of blood had been shed. The period saw the rise of the Assassins, the Nihilists of Islam. They let loose a reign of terror in the country, and those who were opposed to them were murdered under mysterious circumstances. 56

Sultan of Seljuk: The Seljuk Sultan Malik Shah married his daughter to Muqtadi. She died after a few years leaving a son who was brought up by Malik Shah. Muqtadir nominated his elder son Mustazhar as his successor.

Malik Shah wanted Muqtadi to nominate his younger son Jafar born of the daughter of Malik Shah as his successor, Muqtadi avoided the issue. So Malik Shah threatened him and also wanted to depose him. After threatening Malik Shah went hunting in the interior of the country, and died within ten days and Muqtadi was thus saved from the obligation of revoking the nomination of his elder son as his successor.

**Death of Muqtadi**

On the death of Malik Shah, at the instance of Turkham Khan, the wife of Malik Shah, Muqtadi nominated the younger son of Malik Shah as the Sultan. Mahmud died within two years and power was captured by Barkiaruq, the elder son of Malik Shah in 1094 A.D. Malik Shah signed the investiture in favour of Barkiaruq, and died thereafter under mysterious circumstance. It was suspected that he was poisoned by his female slave Shams-un-Nahar.

Muqtadi ruled for 17 years and died at the young age of 36. He had many good qualities, but he could not make any impact on the administration.
28. (ii) **Al-Mustahzar (1094 - 1118 A.D.)**

**Accession of Al Mustahzar** :- On death of Al Muqtadi, his son Abul Abbas Ahmed became the caliph. On coming to power he assumed the title of Mustahzar.

**The Crusades** :- The reign of Al-Mustahzar saw the outburst of the crusades. The burnt of the crusades was faced by the Seljuk chiefs and the Fatimids and the Abbasid caliph did not come into the picture directly. Nevertheless he felt concerned at the loss of Muslim territory. The crusaders captured Jerusalem in 1099 A.D. Most of the Muslim inhabitants were massacred. Some refugees from Jerusalem poured in to Baghdad and there they told their tale of woe of the Muslim in Jerusalem, but they could do nothing against the crusaders. The Caliph appealed to Burkiaruq and Muhammad who were fighting among themselves to sink their mutual differences and fight unitedly against the Crusaders. The appeal had no effect, and Muhammad and Burkiqaruq continued to fight. When Muhammad became the Sultan a combined Muslim force marched to Palestine in 1113 A.D. The Muslim won an initial victory against the Crusaders, but then the Muslims Chiefs quarreled among themselves and withdrew from Palestine. 57

57.Ibid, P - 44
Assessment: Al-Mustahzar died in 1118 A.D. His rule lasted for 24 years. Keeping in view the turbulence of the period a long reign of 24 years points to some good qualities of the caliph. He was pious, generous, and learned. He left for the loss of the power of the Caliphate and although the guardian Seljuks fought amongst themselves the caliph nevertheless found himself in doing anything tangible in restoring the glory of the Abbasids.
29. (iii) **Al-Mustarshid (1118-1134 A.D.)**

**Accession of Al-Mustarshid**: Mustahzar was succeeded by his son Abu Mansur Al-Fazal. On accession he assumed the surname of Mustarshid. He was 27 years old at the time of his accession. A step brother of Mustarshid, Abul Hasan, did not take the oath of allegiance and fled to Dabis Sadaqa, the Amir of Hilla. The Amir welcomed him. Mustarshid sent a message to Abul Hasan to return to Baghdad. He instead went to Wasit and captured it. Mustarshid sent a force to Wasit. Abul Hasan was taken captive and brought to Baghdad. He was pardoned by Mustarshid and granted favours.

During his reign, Dabis bin Sadaqa, the Amir of Hilla gave considerable trouble to the administration. Sultan Muhammad had, in an expedition against Hilla, killed the ruler, Sadaqa. Dabis the ruler of Hilla on coming to power vowed vengeance for the murder of his father. He raided various cities of Baghdad across the borders of Hill, and restored to loot and plunder. A force was sent against Dabis, and he was forced to withdraw to Hilla. Dabis asked for conciliation but his request was not granted by the Sultan and the Caliph.58

**The Caliph and the Seljuk Sultan**: Under Mustarshid, Sultan Mahmud was the Seljuk Sultan with the capital at Hamadan. Since the assumption of the office of the Sultanate by the Seljuqs, all executive authority was exercised by the Seljuq through their Resident at Baghdad. Mustarshid assumed most of the authority himself, and the Seljuq Resident brought this state of affairs of the notice of Sultan Mahmud. Sultan Mahmud thereupon decided to march at the head of a force to Baghdad to reassert the Seljuq authority.

58.Ibid, P - 50.
When the Caliph came to know of the intention of the Sultan, he asked him to postpone his visit to Baghdad as due to the war with Dabis the country of Iraq was suffering from economic distress and was not in a position to make any provision for his army. Sultan Mahmud disregarded this advice and pushed on to Baghdad. He occupied the main part of Baghdad. Some of the allies of the caliph crossed over to the side of the Sultan. At this stage the Sultan instead of attacking the forces of the caliph offered peace. Mustarshid was not strong enough to fight. He, therefore, accepted the offer. Sultan Mahmud waited on the Caliph and offered apologies. The caliph returned to his palace. Sultan Mahmud appointed Imaduddin Zangi as his Resident at Baghdad, and himself returned to Hamadan in 1127 A.D.

Sultan Mahmud died in 1130 A.D. On his death, his son Daud was installed as the Sultan at Hamadan. Daud, thereafter revolted in Azarbaijan. Masud led a force to Azarbaijan and he took the caliph with him. Under the pressure of Sanjar, Masud released the caliph. It was undertaken that the caliph would pay a ransom to the Sultan as well as an annual subsidy. Masud encamped at Maragah, and there the caliph made preparations for return to Baghdad. At night some of the Batinites entered the camp of the caliph and assassinated him in 1134 A.D.

**Assessment**: The rule of Mustarshid lasted for 16 years. He was a man of awe-inspiring presence, and he tried his best to restore the Abbasid caliphate to its early glory.
30. (iv) **Al-Rashid (1134 - 1135 A.D.)**

**Accession of Al Rashid** :- On the assassination of Mustarshid, his son Abu Ja'far Mansur became the caliph. He assumed the surname of Al-Rashid. He was 20 years at the time of his accession.

**Deposition of Al-Rashid** :- At the outset of his reign, Al-Rashid developed difference with Sultan Masud. Al Rashid held Sultan Masud responsible for humiliation and murder of his father Mustarshid, and burned with the urge to take revenge. Many Seljuq Amirs opposed to Sultan Masud take Shelter with Caliph at Baghdad. Even Daud, to whom Sultan Masud had married his daughter by way of conciliation revolted against the authority of Sultan Masud, and joined the rebel Seljuq Amirs at Baghdad. The caliph repudiated the sultanate of Masud was accordingly omitted from the *Khutba* in Baghdad, and was substituted by the name of Sultan Daud. 59.

Sultan Masud sent an emissary to Baghdad for the Purpose of negotiation with the Caliph. The negotiations failed, and Sultan Masud marched at the head of a force to Baghdad. The Sultan besieged Baghdad, but failed to capture it. He raised the siege after two months and with drew. A few months later after mustering more forces Sultan Masud attacked Baghdad again. He allies except Imad-ud-din Zangi of Mosul deserted him. Unable to withstand the forces of Sultan Masud, Al-Rashid left Baghdad for Mosul along with Imad-ud-din Zangi.

After capturing Baghdad, Sultan Masud declared Al Rashid to have been deposed. In his place, his uncle Muktafi was installed as the Caliph.

**Assessment** :- The rule of Al-Rashid lasted for less than a year. After his deposition he died within a year. According to Jalal-Uddin Suyuti, Al-Rashid was eloquent, versed in letters, and poet. These qualities, however, were of no avail and he lost his throne as well as his life soon after his accession to power.
Accession of Al-Muktafi:

On the deposition of Al-Rashid, Abu Abdullah Muhammad, a son of Al Mustahzar was installed as the Caliph. He assumed the surname Al-Muktafi. He was 40 years old at the time of his accession. He enjoyed a long spell of reign expanding over twenty-five years. His rule is divisible into two periods. The first period of Seventeen years from 1135 to 1152 A.D. was the period of the Seljuq tutelage. The last period of eight years from 1152 to 1160 A.D. was the period of the Caliphate.

The Period of Seljuq tutelage:

During this period, the Caliph Al-Muktafi had to lie low. At the outset of his rule there was the danger of Al-Rashid-staging a comeback. After deposition Al-Rashid left for Mosul. From there went to Azarbaizan. Here some Amirs joined him and he mustered a large force. Sultan Masud marched against this force. At the confrontation that took place at Maragah, Sultan Masud was defeated. Al-Rashid thereupon marched to Iraq in a bid to recapture power. Masud pursued him. The allies of Al Rashid left him, and he had to abandon the Iraq campaign. He returned to Isfahan where he was murdered by his slaves. The death of Al-Rashid made Al Muktafi secure in the Caliphate.

60. Ibid, p. 154.
Al Mustarshid had promised to pay an annual subsidy to Sultan Masud. The Sultan demanded this subsidy from Al-Muktafi. Al-Muktafi pointed out that the state treasury was empty and the palaces of the Caliph had been ransacked by the Seljuq and as such there were no means with him to pay money. Thereupon Sultan Masud further ransacked the Caliphate palace, and Al-Muktafi was deprived of furniture and facilities for transport. A story goes that al last, the Caliph pronounced curses on Sultan Masud for 40 days, and on the fortieth days Sultan Masud was dead.

**The Period of Independence** :- With the death of Sultan Masud in 1152 A.D. Al-Muktafi threw off the tutelage of the Seljuq and became independent. The Seljuq forces occupied Hilla, Takrit, Kufa and Wasit. The Abbasid forces expelled the Seljuqs from these places.

Some of the military expeditions were led by the Caliph personally. Muhammad II the Seljuq Sultan made efforts to regain the sultanate, but all such efforts were frustrated by the Caliph.

**Death of Al-Muktafi** :- He died in 1160 A.D. at the age of 25 years. He was learned, well-read, brave, just and noble. He succeeded in throwing off the tutelage of the Seljuq.
Accession of Al-Mustanjid: Muktafi was succeeded by his son Abul Muzaffar Yusuf. He was the son of an Armenian lady Taoos. At the time of the death of Muktafi, a concubine of Muktafi conspired that her son Abu Ali should succeed Muktafi. Abul Muzaffar Yusuf was called to visit his dying father, and there some maids hired by the mother of Abu Ali fell on him with daggers. Abul Muzaffar Yusuf escaped the attack. The maids who had lodged in prison. On ascending the throne, Abul Muzaffar Yusuf assumed the surname of Al Mustanjid. He was 45 years old at the time of coming to the throne.

Main events of the reign of Al-Mustanjid: Although by this time, the Abbasid Caliphs had overthrown the yoke of the Seljuq sultanate, the rule of the caliph had come to be confined to a part of Iraq. Thus the main events which took place on the fringes of the Muslim dominions concerned the local Amirs, and the Abbasid caliph merely watched such events from a distance.

The revolts of Arab tribes, Banu Khafaja and Banu Asad were suppressed by the Abbasid troops. They were expelled from Iraq.

61. Prof. Masudul Hassan History of Islam, P - 293
When Mustanzid came to the throne, Sulaiman was the Seljuq Sultan. He proved to be a nonentity and failed to have a grip on the state affairs. He was deposed in 1161 A.D. He was succeeded by Arsalan Shah. Mustanzid refused to allow the Seljuqs to interfere in the affairs of the caliphate.

In the west the political scene was dominated by Nuruddin Zangi. He inflicted a defeat on the crusaders in the battle of Harim. He won a victory against the Byzantines. Thereafter he interfered in the affairs of Egypt. Nuruddin sent force led by Shirkhuh to Egypt. The force succeeded in its mission and Shirkhuh was installed as the prime minister of Egypt.

**Death of Mustanzid and assessment** :- He died in 1170 A.D. He really fell a victim to party faction at his court. His courtiers were Abu Jafar, while other party was led by Qutubuddin and Azuddin. The Caliph favoured Abu Jafar. In the meantime Mustanzid fell ill. His physician prescribed ‘Hamam’ as a cure. The Caliph was not inclined to this treatment but he was forced by way of solicitude to undertake a bath in the Hamam. When the Caliph entered the Hammam, the door was closed. He was suffocated to death, and only his dead body was found from the Hammam. It was given out that he had died while taking a bath.

Mustanjid was distinguished for his justice clemency. He was a man of intellect, and was a poet of considerable eminence.

During his reign, Hazrath Shaikh Abdul Qadir Zilani died in 561 A.H.
33. (ii) Al-Mustazii (1170 - 1179 A.D.)

Accession of Al-Mustazii: Al Mustanjid was succeeded by his son Al-Hasan Abu Muhammad. He was the son of an Armenian mother Ghadhada. At the time of his accession, he was 29 years old. On assuming office, he took the surname of Al-Mustazii.

Main events of the reign of Mustazii: The rule of the Abbasids remained confined to a part of Iraq and they were not involved in the main events that took place in other part of the country.

In the east, the disintegration of the Seljuq rule proceeded apace. The Seljuq ruler Arsalan made frantic efforts to be recognised as the Sultan by the Caliph. Mustazii did not agree to the proposal, and the Seljuqs were no longer strong enough to enforce the proposal through force. Arsalan died in 1176 A.D. and was succeeded by Tughril Beg who happened to be the last ruler in the line. In the west, Nuruddin Zangi died, and the political stage came to be dominated by Salahuddin Ayubi. The Fatimid rule in Egypt was extinguished in 1171 A.D. when Khutba came to be read in Cairo in the name of the Abbasid Caliph Mustazii. That added considerably to the prestige of the Abbasid Caliphate. Salahuddin wrested Jerusalem from the Crusaders, and that was a matter of much rejoicing by the Muslims.

Death of Al Mustazii and assessment: He died in 1179 A.D. His rule lasted for nine years. He was 39 years old at the time of his death. He was noble, just and generous. In the reign of Mustazii the rival Fatimid Caliphate of Cairo was extinguished and Egypt, Syria and North Africa were restored to the authority of the Abbasid Caliphate.

34. (iii) **Al Nasir (1179 - 1125 A.D.)**

**Accession of Al Nasir** :- Al - Mustazii was succeeded by his son Ahmed Abul Abbas who assumed the surname of Nasir on accession. He was 22 years old at the time of his accession.

**Main events of the reign of Al Nasir** :- When Al - Nasir came to the throne, the Abbasid Caliphate was independent as it had thrown off the yoke of the Seljuq Sultans. In spite of independence the rule of Caliph was confined to a part of Iraq, and elsewhere autonomous states had sprung up which owed nominal allegiance to the Caliphate, but were otherwise fully independent in the management of the affairs.63

In the west, the political stage in the closing years of the 12th century was dominated by Salahuddin Ayubi. Salahuddin extended his conquests. He conquered Syria, Mosul, Halb, Hejaz and Yemen. He conducted campaigns against the crusaders, and recaptured Jerusalem. He was a great hero of Islam, Salahuddin died in 1193 and that marked the end of an epoch.

In the east, when Al- Nasir came to the throne, Tughril Beg III was the Seljuq Sultan. Tughril Beg tried to win back the status enjoyed by the early Seljuq - Vis - a - Vis the Caliphate. Al- Nasir did not acceed to the proposal. That strained the relations between the Caliphate and the Seljuqs. Al-Nasir supported Khawarzam Shah as a counterpoise to the Seljuq. In an action at Ray in 1194 A.D. the Khawarzam Shah Alauddin Turkush defeated Tughril Beg. Tughril Beg was taken an captive. His head was cut off and sent to the Caliph. That was the end of the Seljuq rule, and their territory was occupied by Khawarazam Shah.

Death and Assessment: Al Nasir died in 1225 A.D. His rule lasted for 46 years from 1179 to 1225 A.D. That was the longest reign among the Abbasid Caliphs. During this period the country enjoyed peace and prosperity. Al-Nasir allied himself with Khawarazam Shah to overthrow the Seljuqs.

The following scholars died during his reign:

1) Shahabuddin Qutabullah, a scholar.
2) Wahdud-Din Anwari, a poet.
3) Khan A'zam Khaqani, a famous emperor of Poets.
4) Hazrat Nizam uddin Ganjawee.
5) Zahir uddin Faryabee, a Muhaddith.
6) Imam Fakhruddin Razi.
7) Hazrat Nazmuddin Kubra.
35. (iv) \textbf{Al Zahir (1225 - 1226 A.D.)}

**Accession of Al Zahir** :- Al Nasir was succeeded by his son Abu Nasir Muhammad who assumed the title of Al-Zahir an accession.\textsuperscript{64}

**Policies of Al-Zahir** :- Al Zahir came to power at the age of 52. He was a man of religious bent of mind, and power had little attraction for him. He adopted caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz as his model and tried to follow in his footsteps. When he ascended to the throne he did not give expression to any joy. He was asked, "Do n't you rejoice?" He replied, "Verily the harvest is blighted." His courtiers said, "May God prosper you!" He said "what can a man earn who opens his shop late in the afternoon."

He led a simple life, and enjoined upon others around him not to indulge in pomp and show. His father was a man of the world. He had levied numerous taxes, and had taken pains to fill up the treasury. He had confiscated the properties of many persons, and all those against whom there was any suspicion of disloyalty were lodged in jails.

Al Zahir reversed the policies of his father. He opened the gates of the prisons, and most of the prisoners were released. He remitted all the oppressive taxes. He was solicitous of the welfare of the poor and the distressed.

\textsuperscript{64}Ibid, P - 295
Death and assessment: Al Zahir breathed his last in 1226 A.D. His rule lasted for barely a year. He was a just, mild and benevolent ruler. He introduced some laudable reforms, but due to the very short period of his rule these reforms did not have much impact on the administrative set up.
Accession of Al Mustansir: Al-Zahir was succeeded by his son Abu Jafar Mansur, who assumed the surname of Al-Mustansir. His mother was a Turkish lady. He came to the throne at the young age of twenty-five.

Main events of the time of Al-Mustansir: In the reign of Al-Mustansir during the 3rd and 4th decades of 13th century, the Franks were a source of trouble in the west, and the Mongols were responsible for disaster in the east. After the death of Salahuddin Ayubi, the Ayubis had lost their original luster, but they were still capable of contending against the Franks. Although the crusaders continued to hold territories in Syria and Palestine, but they had come to be contained and their further progress was held up. In the east, the Mongols were on the march. They had occupied Transoxiana and overthrown the Khawarzam shah. They were now advancing in Persia and their next target was the Assassins.

Literary activities of Al-Mustansir: Being unable to control the course of political events, Al-Mustansir concentrated on the promotion of literary activities. He sought the society of men of wisdom and piety. Zealous in good works, and earnest in advancement of virtue he founded many mosques, ribats and hospitals. His crowing achievement was the establishment of a University at Baghdad on the eastern bank of the Tigirs, which was known after him as the Mustansirah University. The building of the University took six years to complete. In order to equip the library of the University, 160 camel loads of books were brought from various parts of the country. To emulate the good work of the Caliph, a college was set up at Damascus which specialised in the study of Traditions (Hadis).

65. Dr. A. Rahim, Islamic History, 245
Death and assessment: He died in 1242 A.D. after a rule of 16 years. He was a man of literary bent of mind. He was a just ruler and came to acquire a name for delivering judgements. He framed new laws and introduced reforms. If he had come to power during normal time his reforms and good works would have made an impact and led to tangible results. The University built by him was destroyed by the Mongols sixteen years after his death. All the good work done by Al-Mustansir ultimately proved to be an exercise in futility.
Accession of Al-Must'asim: Al-Mustansir was succeeded by his son Abu Ahmed Abdullah who assumed the surname of Al-Must’asim on accession.

Main events of the time of Al-Must’asim: Al-Must’asim came to power at the time when the crisis had depended and he had neither the will nor the strength to face the crisis. His period of rule was marked by disturbances and disorder at home, and disaster abroad.

At the outset of his reign, the country came to be rocked by Hanafi-Hambali, and Shia-Sunni riots and disturbances. In these the Shia who were in minority suffered most, many shias were killed, and their headquarter, karkh, a suburb of Baghdad was destroyed. The Minister of Al-Must’asim, Muwayyid ud-Din Muhammad bin Kami was a Shia. He turned a traitor, and entered into secret correspondence with the Mongols inviting them to invade Baghdad. The Minister advised the Caliph that as the finances of the state were tight the strength of military force should be cut down. In pursuance of this advice, Must’asim disbanded the army that his father had built. The retrenched personnel took to trade and business. 66

In the east, the Mongols continued their march. They freely resorted to loot and plunder. Many cities were destroyed, and countless Muslims perished. The Caliph could do nothing to hold up the advance of the Mongol hordes.

After overthrowing the Khawarazam Shah, and capturing Khurasan, the Mongol forces under Halaku advanced along the Shores of the Caspian sea. The Strongholds of the Assassins fell before the Mongol on laught. In 1257 A.D., Halaku reached Hamdan, and from there he sent an ultimatum to the Caliph.

- Al-Mustasim wavered. There was treachery in the camp of the Muslims, and before the Caliph could take and decision or make arrangements for the defence of Baghdad, Halaku with his horde was at the gates of the city. The Mongols besieged the city. The Baghdad forces were no match for the Mongol army; they made a feeble resistance, and ultimately, with the increase in the Mongols pressure, surrendered.

The population of Baghdad was mustered on a plain outside the city. The Shias were spared and the rest of the population running into several lakhs was mercilessly massacred. Halaku had the caliph Al-Musta'sim put in a sack, and then trampled upon under the hooves of the Mongols horses. The city of Baghdad was subjected to plunder and thereafter put to flames. The fire raged for several days and nights, and thus the city of Baghdad once the glory of the civilised world was no more. With the fall of Baghdad and the tragic end of Mustasim, the Abbasid rule was extinguished, and they disappeared from the Political history after having ruled for over 508 years from 750 to 1258 A.D., one of the longest rules of any dynasty in history.

**Assessment**: According to Amir Ali (History of the Saracens), Al-Mustasim was weak, vacillating, and fond of pleasure. With the Mongols on the ravage, the Abbasid needed a strong man of crisis who could settle things with the Mongols to the advantage of the Muslims. Al-Mustasim failed to be the man of crisis and this failure did not merely extinguish the Abbasid dynasty, it was a serious blow to the cause of Islam.
CAUSES OF THE DOWNFALL OF THE ABBASID KHILAFAT

The Abbasid empire was one of the longest rules in history. The Abbasid Khalifas wielded for more than a century, wielding greater authority than even the Persian and the Roman emperors. After that their power steadily declined and then the empire diminished. Though they dragged on their existence, they become so much powerless that their authority was hardly felt even in the capital city. The Turks, the Buwaids, and the Seljuqs shorn them of all their temporal powers and left them with religious power, as the de jure head of the Muslim state. The Abbasid Khilafat continued to exist in this powerless state for some centuries. It was finally terminated by Hulakuns; a grandason of Chengis Khan, who invaded Baghdad in 1258 and killed the last Abbasid Khalifa, Al Must’asim.

Causes of downfall :- We can, nevertheless, recount the causes that were responsible for the downfall of the Abbasid dynasty. They are mentioned below:

(1) Al Musta’sim, the last Abbasid Khalifa :- Al Musta’sim was the last Abbasid Khalifa. He was weak, vacillating and was unable to control the Mongols ravage 67.

(2) Weakness and incompetence :- The principal cause of the fall of the Abbasid dynasty was the weakness of the later Khalifas. The Abbasid dynasty produced five Khalifas, but out of these hardly four Calphs namely Mansur, Mahdi, Harun, and Mamun could lay claim to greatness, the rest were mediocres not very capable. Some of them were exceptionally brilliant ones. With Mutawakkil however, there...

67. Islamic History, Dr. A. Rahim, P-274, -75.
began a succession of incompetent rulers who possessed neither the qualities of a soldiers nor of an administrator to deal with the daily increasing complex problems of a vast empire.

More over, in the pursuit of comforts and pleasures, the later Abbasid Khalifas neglected administration and left the reins of government in the hands of the minister and officials. As a result of this, the power of the Khalifa steadily declined in the empire.

(3) Neglect of army: In that age, the empire depended chiefly on army. The Abbasid Khalifas neglected the army organisation. In consequence of this, the army lost its discipline and morale. They became ease-loving and army leaders indulged themselves in the policies at court, instead of taking the field to defend the empire and suppress.

(4) Vastness of empire: The vastness of the Abbasid empire was also its defect. There was no sufficient means of communication in that age. The movement of troops from the Capital to suppress rebellions in outlying provinces would take long time and by the time when the Khalifa’s army reached the province.

The situation there would go out of control. Hence the integrity of a big empire having the inadequate means of communication, could not be maintained by a strong and energetic ruler. But under weak rulers it was sure to crumble into pieces. In the Abbasid empire also the same thing happened. 68

68. Ibid - P - 275.
(5) **Supremacy of the Turks** :- The Supremacy of the Turks in the later period of the Abbasids was one of the causes of this fall. Their ascendancy in the empire removed them from the position of influence and position of the Abbasids, which disappeared at the court of the Khalifas. The arrogance of the Turks and their high-handedness further irritated their feelings. Hence they lost interest in the Abbasid Khilafat and established independent dynasties in the empire.

(6) **Defect in provincial administration** :- There were defects in the provincial administration of the Abbasids. Extensive power were given to the provincial governors. Sometimes the provinces were given to governors in hereditary right. This facilitated the establishment of independent dynasties in provinces. The Aghlabids of Africa and Tahiries of Khurasan illustrate this fact. The governors were also the commanders of the Provincial forces. Besides, military governorship and feudal system became common in the later days of the Abbasids. This naturally weakened the central authority and helped in the disintegration of the empire.

(7) **Racial enmity** :- Racial enmity between the Arabs and non-Arab Persians, Turks, Berbers was also a cause of the disintegration of the Abbasid empire. The Arabs thought that the Khilafat was theirs and they were jealous of the rise of the Persians in the Abbasid administratikon. The Arabs and Persians were equally jealous of the Turks, as they were of one another. Even the Arabs fell into two sections: the Hejaz - Arabs and Yeman - Arabs. Their rivalry and conflict greatly contributed to the weakness and disintegration of the Abbasid empire.

Even among the Muslims there arose many religo-political sects, such as the Shiaites, Kharijites, Carmathians, Ismailites, Assassins and others, which created confusion in the empire and added to the process of its disintegration.
(8) **Economic Decay:** Economic decay of the empire in the later period of the Abbasid rule was also responsible for its decline and fall. The imposition of taxes for the interest of the ruling class discouraged farming and industry. The constant rebellions, troubles and strifes left many cultivated lands desolated and forlorn. There were also floods, famines and epidemics which greatly impoverished many provinces of the empire. This economic decay contributed to a large extent to the Political decay of the Abbasid empire.

(9) **Invasion of Halaku:** When the Abbasid empire was thus decaying and tottering to its fall, the great Mongol general Halaku dealt upon it to severe a blow and the dynasty collapsed. In 1236 Halaku invited Khalifa Al-Must'asim to join in exterminating the Assassins; but the Khalifa did not respond. After destroying the Assassins, Halaku turned towards Baghdad and sent the Khalifa an ultimatum, demanding his surrender and the demolition of the outer city wall. The reply of the Khalifa was evasive. Halaku thereupon laid siege to the capital. In panic, the Khalifa and his courtiers made an unconditional surrender. The Mongol rushed into the city and caused rivers of blood. The last Abbasid Khalifa Mus'tasim was put to the sword with his courtiers and members of the family. Thus the Abbasid dynasty of Baghdad came to a close. The Mongols massacred, ravaged and plundered the great city of Baghdad. According to Ibn Khaldun, one million and six hundred thousand people perished in the slaughter of six weeks.” For three days the street ran with blood and the water of the Tigris was dyed red for miles along its course.” They also destroyed the centres of learning and culture (1258 A.D.) 69

69. Adib - P - 278.
CONTRIBUTION OF ABBASIDS IN THE FIELD OF ART, CULTURE & LITERATURE

A. Scientific and literary progress during the Abbasid period.

The new epoch for scientific progress and literary upliftment during the Abbasid period has been stated that this period is called golden period in the history. It occupies an important rule not only in the Islamic history but also in the world history for the cultivation of education, science, culture and civilization. The seed of scientific and literary progress was sown in the Umayyad period but was blossomed fully in the Abbasid Period.70

Most of the Abbasid Khalifas particularly Al Mansur, Harun Ar-Rashid and Al Mamun were liberal patroniser of learning and knowledge. Under their patronise, Many books written in Greek, Syriac, Persian, Sanskrit and other languages were translated into Arabic for the development of science and literature. At this time, a large number of Muslim scholars rendered the world famous books of Galen, Plato, Aristotle. It is noted that if they were unable to do the same, the name of them should not be memorized in the page of encyclopaedia. If we consider minutely, we must mention that the Muslims scholars are counted as the heir and pioneer for modern civilization. They not only continued the translation and research works but also boardeasted and sent to Europe through Syria, Spain and Silicy.

70. K Ali, Islamer Itihas (Bengali), P - 349.
Dr. Cambell, a reputed Britist Scientist, in his book 'Arabian medicine' writes,

"When Europe was lying torpoid in the depth of intellectual obscurity and gloom in the dark ages; culture and civilization were spread in the Islamic states under the high patronage of the Caliphs of Baghdad and Cordova; at a time, when Barons of Ladies of Medieval Europe could not even sign their names, almost evry adolescent boy and girl in Islam could read and write freely with ease.71

In his famous book 'History of Human society, Professor Frank Blackmore of the University of Kansas writes, "In every country that was conquered, the first duty of Islam was to build a mosque in which Allah would be worshipped and his prophet honoured. Attached to this mosque was a school where people were taught to read and study the Quran. From this initial point they enlarged the study of art, literature and all branches of sciences - sstronomy, mathematics, physics, chemistry, philosophy etc. and through the application of these sublim things, they collected the treasures of art and learning wherever these could be found. From imitation, they passed on to the great field of creation and great advances were made to the sum of human knowledge. Schools were founded, great Universities established and libraries were built which laid the permanent foundations of knowledge.

71. M.H. Sayed,(ed) Science and Islam, P-21
The Muslims, particularly the Abbasid Khalifas and patronised scholars made phenomenal progress and growth in science and literature.

It is also mentioned that in the 9th century, the Muslim scholars patronised by the Abbasids were real flag bearer for civilization. They introduced the gate of new civilized epoch. With the help of foreign books Khalifa Mamun opened an independed department in his kingdom for only translators. He founded ‘Baitul Hikma’ at Baghdad in 840 A.D. and the translation department attached to it. Costa Greek, son of Luke Sirio and Yahyah bin Harun were appointed to render the Persian books into Arabic. For the act of Translations. Many scholars from every cast and creed without any crimination, were appointed to do the same. As a result of their untiring research works, each and every branches of science and literature like grammar, logic, mathematics, linguistic, geography, history, chemistry, zoology, botany, medicine, astronomy, philosophy, physics etc. were flourished during the Abbasid period. 72

72. Islamer Itihas (Beng.) P - 349, 50.
Contributions of the Abbasids in the different fields:

1. EDUCATION:

Education was highly developed in the Abbasid society. The Caliphs were educated and cultured and also extended liberal patronage to Education and learning. The educational institutions were graded and comprised elementary schools, schools for senior students and institutions for advanced students. The formal education of children usually began at the age of six when they were admitted to elementary schools. The elementary schools were generally attached to mosques. At the elementary stage boys and girls read together.73

The curricula for elementary schools included reading, writing, grammar, traditions and arithmetic. After completing education in the mosque school, a student could seek admission to an educational institution meant for senior students. The syllabus of studies at such institution included theology, jurisprudence, lexicography, rhetoric and literature. In the institution for advanced studies, the curricula included astronomy, geometry, philosophy, music, medicine and other studies.

The Abbasid Caliph, Mamun set up an academy known as Baitul Hikma which served as an institution of higher learning. Under the Seljuqs, Minister Nizamul Mulk set up a University at Baghdad known as Nizamiyah university. It was a residential institution. Islamic scholar like Imam Ghazzali taught at this University.

73. The Cambridge History of Islam, P.M. Lambton Holt, P – 285
Later the Abbasid caliph Mustansir set up another University at Baghdad known as the Mustansiriyah University. Numerous colleges were set up in various parts of the country. Some of the colleges in Khurasan, Persia were Sadiyya, Bahaqiyya, Astrabadiyyah, and Isfararaya. Some of the colleges in Syria were Rihyya, Amaniyya, Tarkhaniyya, and Sharifiyya. Some colleges in Egypt were - Rambiyya, Nasariyya and salahiyya.

2. **MEDICINE**

The first progress in the field of science under the patronize of the Abbasids was the science of medicine and the art of surgery. The Umayyad caliphs encouraged the physicians to develop the science of medicine but it was really improved during the Abbasid period. Many translators and physicians patronised by the Abbasids made remarkable advance on the subject of Medicine.

During the reign of Al Mansur, the translation works of Greek science was begun in full swing in the Jandeshpur college in Iran. Bakhtishu was the chief physician of this college. Al Mansur invited Jurgis, son of Bakhtishu to come to his court. The family of Bakhtishu started to reside permanently at Baghdad since that time. They have been serving as physicians of the Caliphs since centuries.74

According to Syed Ameer Ali, author of 'The Spirit Islam', the science of medicine and the art of surgery, the best index of a people's genius and the sever test to the intellectual spirit of a faith, were developed

to the highest degree by the Arabs. Professor K. Hitti acknowledges that in the creative use of drugs, the Muslims made remarkable advance. They established the first apothecary shop, they produced the first pharmacopea.75

During the 7th and 8th centuries, some important medical works of Greek, Persia and India were translated into Arabic.

The translators included:

1. Hunayn bin Ishaq (He translated seven books of Arabian Christian Hippocrates and also the works of Galen, Poll and he also rendered the materia medica of Dioscorides).
2. Isa bin Yahya.
3. Thabit bin Qurra.
4. Qusta bin Luqa and
5. Yuhanna bin Musawiah.

The physicians who became famous during the Abbasid period for the cultivation of science of medicine were At-Tabari, Ar Razi, Ali bin Abbas and Avicenna.

At-Tabari was house physician of Caliph Al-Mutwakkil, under the patronize of the caliph, he wrote Firdaus-ul-Hikma which dealt not only with medicine but also with philosophy, astronomy and zoology. It was written based on the Greek, Persia and Indian medical works.

Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Zakaria al-Razi (d. 925 A.D.) is rated as the greatest physician of the Islamic world. He was the greatest clinical and observational physician of the medieval time. He wrote over 200 books, half of them are related to medicine. Some of his works included:

1) Kitab al Mansuri (Ten volumes treatise dealing with great medicine).
2) Al Judari wal Hasbah.
3) Al Hawi (on small pox, and measles) 76

Jurjis bin Jibrail was an eminent physician of the Abbasid Caliph Al Mansur. He was also incharge of the medical centre at Jandeshaper in Iran. Jibril bin Bakhtishu was a prominent physician of the time of the Caliph Harur-ar-Rashid and Al Mamun. During the time of Al Mamun, there were as many as 860 registered physicians in Baghdad alone.

Geber (Jabir bin Hayyam), the well-known chemist wrote an important work on pharmacology.

Ali bin Al-Abbas al Majusi (d. 994 A.D.) is known to west as Haly. Abbas was the physician to Adud Daula Maliki in Siraj. He wrote the celebrated work kitab al Maliki, an encyclopaedia dealing with the theory and practice of medicine. He was the first physician to write about the capillary system and the way in which a child is born.

76. Ibid, P - 85
He also wrote Kamil al Sina’ah. Abu Ali al Hussain bin al Sina (d. 1037 A.D.) known to the west as Avicenna was the most distinguished Muslim physicians of the medieval times and was known as the prince of the physicians. His great work on medicine entitled “canon of medicine” dealt with general medicine. 77

Besides the above, Some other eminent physicians are patronised by the Abbasid caliphs.

Hospital

The Muslims endowed hospitals as a matter of religious obligation. Under the caliph Al Mamun, there were 60 hospitals in Baghdad which was the wonder of the age. Nurudding Zangi built a hospital at Damascus.

3. ASTRONOMY

The study of astronomy in a scientific way began among the Muslims under the Abbasid caliphs. The first official astronomer under the Abbasids was Muhammad Al Fazari (d. 777 A.D.) He wrote a treatise on astronomy based on the Sanskrit work Siddhanta. He was the first to make an astrolable.

77. Dr. (Mufti) M. Mukarram Ahmed, Science in Islam - 218.
Under the Caliph Al-Mamun, the study of astronomy was stipulated. He set up an institution 'Darul Hikma' (House of Wisdom) to which an astronomical observatory was attached. Astronomers made systematic observation of celestial movements and verified the fundamental elements of the Greek 'Almagest', including the obliquity of the ecliptic, the Precession of equinoxes, and the length of the solar year, with the aid of these observations. Astronomical tables known as 'Tables of Mamun' were compiled. Mamun got a degree of meridian measured by following a method which was superior to that of the Greeks. During this period the size of the earth was calculated from the measurement of a degree on the shores of the Red Sea. Some eminent astronomer who are patronised by the Abbasid mentioned below:

1) Mashaallah - He, an early Arab astronomer, flourished during the reign of the Abbasid Caliph Al Mansur. He wrote a treatise on the astrolabe, the ancillary sphere and the movements of the heavenly bodies. He came to be known as "The Phoenix of the Arab".

2) Musa Khawarzami - The name of Al Khawarazmi is memorable in the astronomy. He left many fundamental contributions on astronomy. He translated the Indian astronomical tables Siddhanta, into Arabic, and wrote a commentary on them. He wrote a book 'Nirganto' an astronomy which created revolution in the east and the west. With the help of this book, Ali Ibn Sina continued his research work on astronomy and also wrote many books on this subject.

78. Dr. Shahid Ashraf, (ed), Scientific Culture in Islam, P-280.
79. Ibid, P-282
3) **Abul Abbas Al Farghani** - He was also eminent astronomer patronised by the caliph Al Mutawakkil. He wrote a treatise entitled 'Elements of Astronomy'. The introduction of Astronomy on the Christians Europe is attributed to the translation works of Al-Farghani. He supervised the erection of a milometer at Fustat during the reign of Al Mutawakkil.

4) **Thabit bin Qurrah** - He was an prominent astronomer of the ninth century. He propounded the theory of the oscillatory motion on the equinoxes. The ninth century sphere to the eight sphere of Ptolemaic astronomy is also added by him.

5) **Abdur-Rahman Sufi** - He is known as the author of Al Kawakib ul Thabitha (Fixed stars), a masterpiece of observational astronomy. The book contained a map of fixed stars. Al Sufi is rated as an outstanding astronomer.

6) **Abu Sahl al Kuhi** - He studied the movements of planets and made researches regarding the summer solstice and the autumnal equinox.

7) **Abul Wafa al Busjani** - He also introduced the use of the secant as well as the tangent in astronomical observations. He wrote a simplified version of the Almagest of Ptolemy.

4. MATHEMATICS

It is the wonderful contribution of the Muslim scholars who made remarkable advance and progress in the Mathematics, during the Abbasid Period. According to T.W. Arnold, in a fact, the Muslims were the inventor of plain and spherical Trigonometry. At the time of the Abbasids the Greek learnt knowledge of mathematics from theMulims. The Indian system of reckoning using the nine Arabic numerical with a point for Zero (o) and application of decimal fractions were introduced by the Muslims. The Arabs taught the western country the knowledge of numerical numbers.

Arithmetic, statistic and other sciences were discovered by the Muslim scholars. They, at first, rendered the ‘Euclids Geometry’ and used the arithmetic in to geometry. They also developed quadratic equations. 81

Some mathematicians who contributed their life for the cultivation mathematics during the Abbasid period are mentioned below:

1. Al Khawarazmi - The first celebrated mathematician among the Muslims was Muhammad bin Musa Al Khawarazami who flourished during the 9th century. He was the principal figure in the early history of Arab Mathematics. He is known as ‘the father of Algebra’. He has the distinction of being the author of the oldest Arab work on Mathematics Kitab -ul- Jama wat Tafriq.

81. Dr. Shahid Ashraf (ed), Scientific Culture in Islam P - 280.
His book Hisab al Jabr wal Muqabla is an outstanding work on Algebra which contains analytic solutions of linear and quadratic equations. It was later on developed by Omar Khayyam. Omar Khayyam and Al Beruni were two other great mathematicians and scientific minds of Islam.

2. Al Kindi, the famous Muslim philosopher, was a competent mathematicians as well. In his arithmetic he dealt with the division of fraction and extraction of square and cube roots.

3. Al Beruni the celebrated historian produced some important works on mathematics. He made a special study of the problems of numerical series and the determination of the redius of the earth.

4. Abul Wafa Busjani who flourished during the 11th century is regarded as one of the greatest mathematician. He was the first to point out the generality of the sine theorem in relation to spheres and triangles. He wrote a book on geometry, Kitab ul Hindsa.82

82.Ibid, P - 281 - 82.
5. CHEMISTRY

After materia medica, astronomy and mathematics, the Muslims contributed their life for the development of chemistry. The Arabs call chemistry as 'Al Kimiya' and from the word chemistry is derived. The study of Al-Chemy, Chemistry has been started since the reign of Khaled bin Yazid Mawayia but it was also well-developed during the Abbasid period.

Mr. Hamvolt says, "The Muslims are called the inventor of modern chemistry and their achievements are none to second."

Some outstanding chemists who are patronised by the Abbasids are mentioned below:-

1. Jabir bin Hayyan :- He is known to the West as Geber who flourished during the 8th century is known as 'Father of Chemistry'. He is credited with the discovery of several chemical compounds. He wrote hundred books on chemistry in which he described the processes of calculation, evaporation, crystallisation and sublimation.

It is also mentioned that he wrote 500 books on chemistry. Among these, Kitab-al-Rahman, Kitab-e-Al-Tazmi and Al Zibak al Sarki are more memorable.83

2. Ar. Razi :- The ninth century produced Zakaria ar-Razi known to the West as Rhazes a great name in Chemistry. He wrote Kitabul Asrar, a classic of chemistry dealing with the chemical substances and their application.

He also contributed his valuable service to the modern chemistry regarding distillation, salution, calcination, filtration, amalgamation creation etc.

3. **Al Kindi** :- He was a great chemist. His treatise Kitab - Kimya-al Itr (book of Perfume, chemistry was very useful for Islamic chemical industry.

6. **PHYSICS**

The Abbasid caliphs also played an important role for the growth of physics. The Ninth Century produced Abu Yusuf bin Ishaq known as Al Kindi. One of the most eminent physicists. He wrote 265 books on various aspects of physics. He determined specific gravity through hydrostatic balance. He wrote on matter, space, time and motion. He is rated as "one of the Twelve Subtest minds."

The three sons of Musa bin Shakir, who flourished in the court of the Abbasid caliph Al-Mamun wrote - ‘The Book of Artifices’ which dealt with over a hundred mechanical processes.84

Al Zahiz used hydrostatic balance to determine specific gravity.

Abul Faizal Zazari wrote ‘The Book of knowledge and Mechanical contrivances, a standard work on mechanics.

During the Abbasid period, there were botanical gardens in Cordova, Baghdad, Cairo, Fez and some other cities. These were the finest gardens in the world. According to Sarton (author of An Introduction to the History of Science) the Muslims advance in botany—much beyond the state in which it had been left by the Greeks and augmented the herbolegy of the Greeks by the addition of 200 planets.

During the ninth-thirteenth century many Muslim botanists rose to prominence. Ibn-Nahshiya produced his book 'Nabateau Agriculture', an important work on Agriculture.

Ibn Hajaj produced a work on botany entitled 'Sufficient'. It was regarded as a masterpiece.

During the 12th Century Ibn Arabi produced a treatise on botany.85

8. **ZOOGOGY**

The Abbasid caliphs played a significant role in the field of zoology. Some eminent Zoologists patronised by the Abbasids are mentioned below:

1) **Al Asami** :- Al Asami who flourished during the 8th Century is regarded as the first Muslim authority on Zoology. He wrote several treatise on the camel, the sheep, the horse and other animals.

2) **Abu Ubaidah** :- He wrote a number of books on the zoology of the horse in the ninth century.

3) **Al Zahiz** :- Al Zahiz who flourished during the ninth century is regarded as the greatest Zoologist of the Muslim world. His book 'Kitabul Haywan' (Book of the Animals) is the most famous work on Zoology. He was the first scientist to note changes in birds lives through migrations. He was also the first scientist to describe the method of obtaining from the animal offal by distillation.86

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9. PHILOSOPHY

The Muslim advanced more in the philosophy than the other scholars of other nations. Philosophy as defined as real knowledge that is gained by man. The Muslims are called pioneer of philosophy for the Europeans.

Philosophy is meant for reasoning process in order to gain truth. It leads men to real path and also helps to acquire truth. Islamic philosophy is based on Quran and Hadis. Man is the best creation of all creations in the world and to acquire knowledge is principal duty for men.

Although the main source of Islamic philosophy is based on Quran and Hadis but it is more developed after the development of Greek philosophy and also influenced by it. It is also mentioned that after the conquest of Persia and Rome, the conquerers of Persia and Rome accepted Islam and later on they became famous philosophers in the world.87

In the Islamic history, the philosophers are classified into two groups - 1) Liberal group- i.e Aristotelian 2) Orthodox group - i.e Islamic philosophers.

The philosophers who are influenced by Aristotelian known as Aristotelian philosophers. Al Kindi, Al farabi, Ibn -e-Sina, Ibn-e-Rushd, Ibn -e-Tufai and others are included in the Liberal group. The philosophers who are influenced by the Quran and Hadis known as Orthodox or Islamic philosophers. Hazrat Ali, Abdullah ibn -e-Abbas, Imam Za'far Sadiq, Imam Ar - Razi and Imam Ghazzali are included in the Orthodox group. Islamic philosophy became very strong by the intellectual thinking of Imam Ghazzali.

The Abbasid caliphs patronised many philosophers in order to develop philosophy in the Kingdom. Some prominent philosophers are mentioned below.

1) Al Kindi - Abu Yusuf al Kindi (d. 873 A.D.) known as the "Philosopher of the Arabs." was the first Muslim thinker who systematised the study of philosophy among the Muslims. He wrote 265 books on philosophy.

2) Ar Razi - Zakaria al Razi (d. 925 A.D.) professed the existence of five eternal principles in meta physics, namely the creator, the soul, the matter, time and space. His principal work is Al Ilmul Ilahi - (Divine Science). He stood for Equality of man.”

88. M. M. Sharif, A History of Muslim Philosophy, P - 25
3) **Al Farabi** - He is rated as philosopher, Mathematician, Astronomer, Physicist, Chemist and Singer also. He wrote many books.

4) **Ibn Sina** (d. 1037 A.D.) an Iranian philosopher adopted a combination of the deductive and inductive methods and considered logic to be an introduction to all other subjects. He is counted as philosopher, mathematician, linguist, physician and also poet. He wrote 125 books on different subjects. Some of his works are - *Kitab Shifa al Nafs* (The book of the healing of the Soul), *Kitab al Najat al Nafs al Isharat wal Tanbhihat* (The book of hints and warnings).

5) **Imam Ghazzali** - Imam Abu Hamid al Ghazzali (d. 1111 A.D.) was the most richly endowed thinker of Islam. He wrote 400 books. His *Ihya ul-ulum ud-din* is remarkable book on science and religion.

10. **HISTOGRAPHY**

The Abbasid period produced historians who have new orientation to historical thinking and writing. The histories produced by the Muslim writers were of great depth and dimensions than the previous histories. The histories written by the Muslim authors were characterised by accuracy, scientific assembling of facts and their objective approach. The Muslim historiography helped indirectly to shape the present day historical thinking.

The 7th century produced Ali bin Muhammad bin Abdullah Madani. He wrote copiously on the history of Islam. He is cited by later historians as an authority.
on Islamic history. His collection correspondence between Hazrat Ali and Amir Muawiyah is regarded as an important and reliable source.

The 8th century produced two great historians namely -
1) Hisham bin Muhammad bin al Sayyib al Kalabi.
2) Muhammad bin Umar al Waqidi.

Al Kalabi wrote over 150 books on history out of which only three have survived. His well known book is Kitab-ul-Hisham.

The ninth century produced also the following historians -
1) Al Baladhari, 2) Al Dinawari.
3) Ibn Qutaibah 4) Yaqubi
5) Ibn Hisham and 6) Ibn S’ad.

Al Baladhari (Ahmed bin Yahya Baladhari) wrote Futuh-ul-Buldan which deals with the history of Muslim Conquests. His book Ansab ul Ashraf was originally spread over forty volume and presented the biographies of eminent Muslims.

The 10th century bestowed three great historians namely - 1) Al Tabari
2) Al Isfahani 3) Masudi.

Muhammad bin Jarir Abu J’afar at Tabari is regarded as “Father of Islamic History,” and one of the worlds greatest historians. He wrote a book on universal history entitled ‘Annals of Tabari’ which is an important historical work remarkable for its accuracy and Comprehensiveness.
Great historians of the 11th century include Ibn Miskawayh, Al Beruni, Utbi, Al Bakri, Al Quratbi, Ibn Hayyan and Ibn Hazm.

Al Breuni, the celebrated luminary of the court of the Ghaznawid Sultan Muhmud wrote Kitab-al-Hind which provides the most authentic account about ancient India. He also wrote Al Aathar-ul-Baqiah (vestiges of the past) 89

11. GEOGRAPHY

The wish to know the unknown is natural habit for man which did encourage the Muslim to study Geography. Regarding this, Philips K. Hitti says, 'Due to need of sacred meeting, mosque's Qibla for K'abah Sharif and for prayer (Namaj), the Muslims are bound to study geography. The Muslims made remarkable development in Geography and their contribution is considered as valuable asset in the world history. When the European Scientists expressed forcefully that the world is plain, the Muslim, then, remarked against them that it is glob. 90

89. Prof. Masudul Hasan, History of Islam, P - 646.

90. Ibid - P - 638 - 39.
Under the influence of Greek, discussion of scientific geography was started in Islam. The Muslim rendered the Greek books into Arabic. As a result of translation, they are able to recognise the geography of Ptolemy. Through the Ptolemy's books, the Muslim's Geographical Knowledge raised to prominence. They not only translated Greek book into Arabic but also preserved, consulted and developed them.

The Abbasid Caliphs exercised a vital role for the promotion of Geography in their Kingdom. Some Geographers patronised by the Abbasids are mentioned below:

1) **Hishab al Kalabi** - He is the first noted figure among the Muslims in the field of geography. He flourished during the early years of the ninth century. He made scientific study of the geography of Arabia.

2) **Sulaiman al Tazi** - The first description of China and India was written in Arabic by a Persian merchant at Tazi.

3) **Ibn Khudad Beh** - He was the Sahib-i-Barid' under the Abbasid wrote Kitab-al-Masalik wal Mumalik was the official route book.

4) **Al Khawarazami**, the well-known mathematician was a celebrated geographer as well.

5) **Al Kindi** - He was also famous philosopher as well as geographer.

6) **Others geographers namely** - 1) Nasir Khusraw, 2) Al Beruni, 3) Al Zamakhshari 4) Al Masudi etc.
12. CALIGRAPHY

During the 9th century Ali bin Ubaida bin Rihani patronised by the caliph Al Mamun was the principal calligraphist. He invented a new style of calligraphy which came to be known as the Rihani script.

During the 10th Century Ibn Muqlah was the most famous calligraphist. His right hand was cut off under the orders of the Caliph Al-Razi, but yet he could write elegantly with the left hand.

Ibn al Bawwab called Ibn al Sitri was the most well-known calligraphist of the eleventh century. He invented the ‘Muhaqqiq’ script which was an improvement on the Rihanib script. He established a school of calligraphy at Baghdad.

Yaqut at Mustasimi was the court calligrapher under Al Must’asim, the last Abbasid Caliph. He invented a new style which came to be known as the Yaquti.

During the Abbasid period mosques came to be embellished with verses from the holy Quran. Rules were framed for the length, breadth and curves of letters.

13. **Painting**

The Abbasids contributed their life to develop painting. The Abbasid Caliph Mansur set up upon the dome of his palace the figure of a horseman.

The Caliph Al Amin had his pleasure boats fashioned like lions, eagles and dolphins. Al Must' asim had his palace at Samarra decorated with exquisite frescoes of female figures.

The Caliph Mutawakkil employed Byzantine painters for the mutual decoration of his palace. These frescoes represented court scenes.

The Caliph Al Muqtadir had a gold and silver with eighteen branches planted in a huge tank in his palace. On either side of the tank there were statues of fifteen horsemen dressed in brocade and armed with lances as if ready to move in combat.92

In the early years of Islam, books were not illustrated. The first book to be illustrated was Al Sufi's Astronomy Produced in the early years of the eleventh century.

In the 12th and 13th centuries Kalila-wa-Damnah and Al - Hariri's 'Maqamat' were illustrated.

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92. History of Islam - Prof. Masudul Hasan, P - 684.
14. ARCHITECTURE

In order to develop the architecture, the Abbasids contributed their life. The Abbasid Caliph Al Mansur founded the city of Baghdad. It was a circular city enclosed by parallel walls. In the centre of the city stood the Palace and Capital of the Caliph. The great mosque of Baghdad was attached to the palace. To build the city of Baghdad over one lakh craftsmen and labourers were employed for a period of four years.

In the 9th century the Abbasids built up the town of Samarra further upstream the Tigris. Many palaces and mosques were built there. The 'Jaswaq ul-Khaqani' palace built by Al Must'asim was the most famous palace. The great mosque of Samarra built by the Caliph Al Mutawakkil was a spacious mosque where one lakh devotees could pray at a time.93

At Raqqa on the Euphrates, some pleasure houses and palaces were constructed by the Abbasids. Raqqa was the favourite residence on the caliph Harun-ar-Rashid.

Caliph Al Mutawakkil built another town, Jafaria, further north of Samarra. Here two mosques were constructed, the royal mosques and the mosque of Abu Dulaf.

93.Ibid - P - 691
In the 10th century Adul-ud-Daula, the Buwayhid Sultan built a hospital complex on the banks of the Tigris.

During the 13th century, Caliph Mustansir constructed the Mustansariya University on the bank of the Tigris.

Ibn Tulun, who was the Governor of Egypt during the Abbasid period, constructed a new city in Egypt north of Fustat. Here he built a congregational mosque known as Ibn-i-Tulun mosque.

Al Mahdi constructed numerous works of public importance. He built up a road from Baghdad to Makka. He enlarged the building of Harun-e-Kaaba. He established a postal service of mules and camels. He also constructed sarais (inns) for the convenience of the travellers.94

15. HANDICRAFTS

During the Abbasid period, Chinese white porcelain was produced. In ceramics the artists of the Period invented lustre painting, a method of applying a metallic sheen to glazed faience to splendid effect. Besides lustre Painting, the potters of the period produced ceramics with the cobalt blue painting on a creamy white ground.

94 Ibid-P-692
Stone ware was a specialty of the period and stoneware for everyday domestic use was produced in several cities. Great progress was made in the production of silverware and metalware. The goldsmith of Baghdad enjoyed fame for their jewellery work.

Fine cloth was manufactured in several cities. Kufa became famous for its silk and silk handicrafts known as Kuffiyeh. Tustar produced beautiful brocade. Sus acquired fame for its satins.

Most of the cities in Persia acquired fame for the production of carpets of beautiful designs. Basara developed as a centre for the manufacture of soap. Antioch, Aleppo and Damascus were great centres for the production of glassware, lamp shades and vessels of beautiful designs.95

16. MUSIC

Under the Abbassids, musical activities were promoted and patronised. The Abbassid Caliph Al Mahdi patronised Abdullah bin Wahab commonly known as Siyat. It is said that his song warmed the chilled more than a hot bath. A prominent female singer of the Period of Al Mahdi was 'Basbas'. She was patronised by the Abbassid court. Dananir, a prominent singer, enjoyed the patronage of Yahya Barmaki. During the rule of Harun-ar-Rashid the most prominent musician was Ibrahim al Mosuli. He was regarded as the greatest of the musicians in versatility.95

95.Ibid, P - 694 - 95
Ibn-Jami, a step son of Siyat was also patronised by Harun ar Rashid. He was known for his sweet voice. Bazl was a prominent female singer who enjoyed the patronage of Harun-ar-Rashid. Fitna, a slave girl of Jafar Barmaki enjoyed fame as a sweet singer. Zalzal, was a master musician who devised the musical instrument ‘Ud al Shabbul’. Yunus Al-Khatib wrote on the theory of music. Al Khalil wrote Book of Notes and Book of Rhythms.96

During 9th century, some of the Abbasid Caliphs were themselves good musician. Ibrahim bin al-Mahdi, a step brother of Harun-ar-Rashid, enjoyed fame as a master singer. The Caliph Wasiq could play on the lute. He composed over a hundred new melodies. The Abbasids Caliph Muntasir and Al Mu’tazz were good musicians. Al Mutamid was a good musician.

Mukhariq, pupil of Ibrahim al Mosuli was a master singer of the age of the Caliph Al Mamun. Ishaq bin Ibrahim al Mosuli flourished during the reigns of Al Mamun and Al Mutawakkil.

Some female singers of the 9th century of Abbasid Period were - Alluya, Unayda, Shariyya and Naem.

17. LITERATURE

The Abbasid Period is marked by a remarkable Progress in Arabi - literature specially in poetry. Abu Nawas, who flourished under Amin, is regarded as the equal of the famous pre-historic Poet Imrul-Qais. Othbi Abu Tammam and Buhtari were the brilliant poets of Period. But the fame of Mutannabi has overshadowed his predecessors. Most distinguished of the Persian poets were Daqiqi, Firdausi, Unsury, Anwari, Fariduddin Attar and Jalaluddin Rumi and Abul Faraz under the patronage of the Abbasids. The dying Persian literature and poetry got a new lease of life. Abbas, the father of modern persian language, was a contemporary of Khalifa Al Mamun.97

Al Mahdi promoted arts and literature, agriculture, trade and commerce to flourish a good deal during his reign. The Caliph Harun al Rashid was fond of learning. He attracted to his capital men of talent and learning. Doctors of law, philosophers, poets as well as musicians, singers and wits flocked to his court. Under his liberal patronage, Baghdad became the home of learning and culture.

During 9th century, some of the Abbasid Caliphs were themselves good musician. Ibrahim bin al-Mahdi, a step brother of Harun-ar-Rashid, enjoyed fame as a master singer. The Caliph Wasiq could play on the lute. He composed over a hundred new melodies. The Abbasids Caliph Muntasir and Al Mu’tazz were good musicians. Al Mutamid was a good musician.

Some of Scholars during his reign mentioned below:

1) Asami, the grammarian
2) Ibrahim Masoli, the musician
3) Gabriel -, the physician,
4) Shafei Abdullah bin Idris
5) Isa bin Yunus
6) Sufian bin Suri and others learned men flourished in his reign.
7) The great ‘doctor of law’ Abu Yusuf, was his chief Qazi.

He gave systematic shape to the Hanafi school of law. Khalifa Harun himself was a Poet and musician.

The Caliph Mamun has made his Khilafat memorable in history. Himself a great Scholar, Mamun gave liberal patronage to scholars and men of learning. His court became the resort of philosophers, astronomers, physicians, scientists, poets and other men of letters of every cast and creed.

He also enlarged the translation bureau and raised it to a great academy for study and research. This was known as Baitul Hikmah or the House of wisdom. It had various departments and they were placed under great scholars of the time.

Cost, son of Luke, was in charge of Greek and Syriac works. Under his supervision, books of Plato, Aristotle, Galen, Euclid, Archimedes and Ptolemy was translated into Arabic.

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98. Ibid, P - 282
Yahya bin Harun was in charge of the translation of the ancient Persian works into Arabic.

Duban, a Brahmin scholar, was given the work of rendering the sanskrit books, mathematics, astronomy and others into the Arabic languages.

Manmun encouraged study and research in this academy with liberal grants.

Al Kindi, the famous philosophers, was employed as a professor in Baitul Hikmah.

The well-known poet, Abbas, the founder of Modern Persian poetry, the great traditionalist Bokhari and the celebrated historian Al Waqidi flourished in the reign of Mamun.

Al Radi as well as Al Qaim gave liberal patronage of art and learning. Azud-Dawlah also extended liberal Patronage to Scholars and the learned under a staff of 24 physicians for study and research.

A typical figure of the times was Abu Muhammad ibn al-Muqaffa, a person who entered the service of Isa ibn Ali uncle of the first two Abbasids Khalifas and became a convert to Islam, though many regarded his conversion as insincere. He translated from Pahlavi or old Persian the book *Kalila wa Dimna* into Arabic.99

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There is a legend that the Sindhind, the Hindu revised form of Brahmagupta's Siddhanta, was translated into Arabic as early as the reign of Al Mansur.

During the reign of Abbasid Khilafat, the Muslims cultivated the science of jurisprudence and evolved there from an independent system. Their system fiqh, was based on the Quran and the Hadith. To meet the complex needs of the growing society, the application of sound judgement became essential. Thus arose the four orthodox schools of thought led by Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik, Imam Shafei and Imam Ahmed Hambal.100

100. Ibid, P-220.