(The Kings in the Age of the Imam Hassan al-Askari (A.S

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We should have a short break to talk - in brief - about the kings whom Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) was contemporary with, and give a picture about their conducts and the misfortunes, and distresses the imam suffered under their reigns.

Al-Mutawakkil

Al-Mutawakkil son al-Mu'tasim assumed the rule in 232 AH.1 In the same year Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) was born.2 When al-Mutawakkil assumed the rule, people were afflicted with a natural disaster that they had never seen before. A simoom blew in Iraq, and destroyed the plants of Basra, Kufa, and Baghdad and killed many travelers. It lasted for fifty days and reached Hamadan, Mosul, and Sanjar. It destroyed plants and cattle, prevented people from dealing in markets and walking in streets, and killed a large number of people.3 It might be a warning from the Heavens on the evil omen of the reign of this king.

When al-Mutawakkil was paid homage as king, Ubaydillah bin Tahir gave him as a present four hundred bondmaids at the head of whom was Mahbubah whom al-Mutawakkil became very fond of.4

His Characteristics

Al-Mutawakkil lived a life of frivolity with no tendency to seriousness. His life was full of amusement and joking. Historians say, 'No play, joking, or clowning appeared in the meetings of the Abbasid caliphs before al-Mutawakkil. When al-Mutawakkil assumed the rule, he brought all that to his meeting and then most of the upper class imitated him in that.5 He brought imitators, who imitated the gestures and voices of some people and did comic acts, in his meeting.6

He was very interested in pleasures and drinking.7 Banan and Zanam were two boy servants of his. They were skilled in playing and singing. One played the lute and the other blew the pipe. He did not drink except with their playing.8

His retinue curried favors with him by giving him as a present beautiful bondmaids and matured wines because he was exceesingly fond of both. Once, al-Fath bin Khaqan gave him, after he recovered from illness, a very beautiful bondmaid, a gold cup, a crystal vat full of wine, and a piece of paper having written in it some verses of poetry. Al-Mutawakkil admired that. Youhannah bin Maswayh, his special physician, said to him, 'O Ameerul Mu'minin, by Allah, al-Fath is more curative than me. Do not oppose what he advised you of!'9

He was preoccupied with sexual life. Historians say that he had five thousand concubines and

that he had slept with all of them. Abd said, 'By Allah, if al-Mutawakkil was not killed, he would not live longer because of the abundance of his sexual intercourses.'10

He was very fond of beautiful bondmaids and of talking with them. He loved a bondmaid called Qabihah. He said to Ali bin al-Jahm, 'One day, I went to Qabiha and saw that she had written my name with the ghaliyah (a kind of perfume) on her cheek. By Allah, I have not seen a thing more beautiful than the black of that ghaliyah on the white of that cheek. Would you please compose some verses on that?'

Once, he became angry at his bondmaid Mahbubah and left her alone for some time. He saw in sleep that she made peace with him. He sent one of his servants to see what the matter with her was. The servant came back telling him that she was sitting singing. He and his servant went to listen to her singing. She was singing some verses of poetry which pleased him. When she felt him, she came and told him that she saw in sleep that he came and made peace with her and so she recited this poetry. Al-Mutawakkil and his bondmaid went together to drink. He gave his companions good presents on the occasion.11

Al-Mutawakkil committed vices openly and he did not feel shy before people. Once, he played backgammon with his vizier al-Fath bin Khaqan. Judge Ahmad bin Dawud asked permission to come in to al-Mutawakkil. Al-Fath wanted to hide the backgammon but al-Mutawakkil prevented him and said, 'Do I do something before Allah and conceal it from His people?'12

He was reckless and did not fear Allah. His companions played chess before him,13 and if they knew that it displeased him, they would not dare to do that.

His recklessness and committing vices were known to all people. He asked his wife Reetah bint al-Anbas to unveil herself and to braid her hair like boys did, and when she refused, he divorced her.14 All people talked about that, but he was indifferent to any criticism.

From his other characteristics were haughtiness and pride especially on his last days when his rule became constant and firm. He was despotic, proud, and haughty towards people.15 He despised al-Buhturi, the emir of poets at that time, who praised him in his poems. Al-Mutawakkil incited Abul Anbas to harm and disgrace al-Buhturi who ran away saying, 'Knowledge has been lost and literature has perished.'16

His Enmity Towards The Alawids

Al-Mutawakkil's heart was full of enmity and spite against the Prophet's progeny. He tried his best to exhaust them. They met many misfortunes and distresses during his reign that they did not met from the unjust rulers before him. He imposed an economic blockade on them and officially prohibited any form of assistance to them. Whenever he was informed that someone helped them, he severely punished him and imposed a heavy fine on him.17 People refrained

from helping or associating with the Alawids for fear of the severe punishment of this tyrant. The economic blockade harmed the Alawids and exhausted them to a degree that one dress was used by some women of them. One of them wore it and offered the prayer and then another one and so on. They always patched it. They sat at their spindle semi naked with unveiled heads,18 whereas the tyrant al-Mutawakkil spent on his red nights millions of dinars, and donated, without measure, thousands to singers, drinking companions, and effeminates, but prevented the progeny of the messenger of Allah (a.s.) from receiving their rights and legal dues until he made them poor and wretched.

Besides, he made all the media in his government defame and degrade the Alawids. Mercenary poets, like Marwan bin Abul Janub, dispraised the Alawids and preferred the oppressors and tyrants to them. Al-Mutawakkil gifted those poets with gold and silver to go further in defaming the Alawids, thinking that these procedures would take Muslims away from the progeny of their prophet (a.s.). He was badly mistaken in that, for that made people believe more that the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) were the real leaders of the nation. All classes of people glorified and highly regarded them. They preferred them to all other people.

Al-Mutawakkil bore hatred and spite against Imam Ali (a.s.). He rejected him and declared his hatred and despise towards him openly. He made one of his effeminate servants dance and compare himself to Imam Ali (a.s.). This ugly doing provoked al-Muntasir, al-Mutawakkil's son, and made him kill his father.

Al-Mutawakkil was full of rage whenever he heard or saw crowds of people visit the shrine of Imam al-Husayn (a.s.) the master of the youth of Paradise, whereas the graves of his (al-Mutawakkil's) fathers and their cousins the Umayyads turned into dunghills in dark, dreary places, which became resorts for beasts. Those graves, with their misery and gloominess, spoke of the oppression and violence of their inhabitants against Muslims.

Historians say that the reason, which made al-Mutawakkil destroy the holy shrine, was that some songstress sent him her maids before he assumed the rule to sing for him when he drank, and when he became the caliph, he sent for her to send him a songstress but she was not there. It was said to him that she had gone to visit the holy tomb of Imam al-Husayn (a.s.). She was informed of that while she was in Kerbala. She hurried back to Baghdad and sent al-Mutawakkil one of her maids. He asked the maid where they were and she said, 'My lady went to perform the hajj (pilgrimage) and took us with her.' It was the month of Sha'ban. Al-Mutawakkil was astonished and said to her, 'Where did you perform the hajj in Sha'ban?' She said, 'To the tomb of al-Husayn.'

The tyrant was alarmed and angry when he heard that the pilgrimage was to the holy tomb of

Imam al-Husayn (a.s.). He arrested the lady of the maid and confiscated all her wealth, and ordered his officials to destroy the tomb. They refused insistently to destroy the tomb of the grandson of their Prophet. Then, al-Mutawakkil asked some Jews, headed by ad-Dayzaj, to destroy the tomb. They responded to him and destroyed the holy tomb in 237 AH,19 and destroyed all buildings around the tomb. They plowed the land around the tomb and made water flow over the land,20 but water flowed around the tomb without reaching it; therefore, it was called al-Ha'ir. A pleasant smell was emitted from the tomb, the like of which people had never smelt before.21

A nomad from bani Asad got the honor of visiting the holy tomb after it had been destroyed. He began smelling the earth so that it might guide him to the holy tomb. When he took a handful of earth, smelt it, and found it emitting a very pleasant smell. He cried and addressed Imam al-Husayn (a.s.) saying, 'May my father and mother die for you! How fine you are! How fine your tomb is, and how fine your earth is!' Then he recited the following verse,

"They wanted to hide his tomb from his companion,
but the fine smell of the tomb's earth guided to the tomb."

Muslims complained of al-Mutawakkil and abused him in their societies and meetings, and prayed Allah against him in their prayers. They wrote curses against him on mosques and walls. The following verses, which were composed by a poet who concealed his name for fear of the government, though it was ascribed to ibn as-Sikkit or al-Bastami,22 were memorized by people and spread among all classes of society:

"By Allah, if the Umayyads had killed the son23 of the Prophet unjustly,
his cousins24 did the same; here is his tomb destroyed!
They felt sorry that they did not participate in killing him,
So they chased him in the grave.'25

Kingdoms come and go, but al-Husayn (a.s.) with his mention and shrine remains as a shining star in the sky of the Arabs and Muslims for he has occupied the hearts of Muslims and his love flowed in their veins, whereas al-Mutawakkil and his likes are chased by the curse, wrath, and punishment of Allah.

Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) was in the prime of youth and he heard about the unjust decision that al-Mutawakkil had taken against the shrine of his grandfather, and about the severe punishments the visitors of the shrine faced from al-Mutawakkil. Surely these procedures caused him pains and distresses.

With Imam Al-Hadi

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) was the master of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) at that age. All the nation regarded,

glorified, and preferred him, due to his knowledge, piety, and virtues, to all others, and a part of the nation believed in his imamate. Al-Mutawakkil could not bear to see a great personality from his enemies, the Alawids, in the Muslim nation, whom all people talked highly about and whose talents and intelligence were mentioned in all meetings.

Mercenaries, opportunists, and the government agents began spreading lies against the imam saying that great monies were sent to him, and that he had determined to revolt against the Abbasid rule. Al-Mutawakkil became so upset and angry. He ordered his men to bring Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) to Samarra' the capital of the Abbasid state at that time. Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) and his family were brought from Medina to Samarra'. Al-Mutawakkil imposed house arrest on the imam and did not let him leave Samrra' after surrounding his house with detectives and policemen to watch all his activities, and to prevent the Shi'a from communicating with him.

After some time, al-Mutawakkil imposed an economic blockade on the imam and his family so that no money came to him from his followers except after hard efforts. The Shi'a followed all ways and means to take money to the imam. One of those means was that they pretended to sell oil, and inside the bottles of oil they sold to the Imam, they concealed money.

Some villain went to al-Mutawakkil and informed him about Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) falsely claiming that he had books, arms, and monies and that he might revolt against the government of al-Mutawakkil, who became worried and terrified upon hearing so. Al-Mutawakkil ordered some of his Turk policemen to attack the house of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) in the night and arrest him.

They attacked Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) unexpectedly and found him in a simple house wearing a garment of wool and there was nothing between him and the ground save a carpet of sand and pebbles while facing the qibla and reciting this saying of Allah, (Nay! do those who have wrought evil deeds think that We will make them like those who believe and do good that their life and their death shall be equal? Bad it is that they judge).26

They took him to al-Mutawakkil while he was in that state27 that represented the asceticism of prophets and spirituality of apostles. Al-Mutawakkil was drunk at the table of wine. When he saw Imam al-Hadi (a.s.), he offered him a glass of wine, but Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) shouted at him, 'By Allah, it has never mixed with my blood and flesh at all.'

Al-Mutawakkil asked the imam, 'Recite me some poetry!'

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) said, 'I seldom recite poetry.'

Al-Mutawakkil insisted on him saying, 'You must recite me some poetry!'

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) found himself obliged to recite some poetry, and so he recited the following verses that changed the ecstasy of al-Mutawakkil into sorrow and weeping,

“They were on the tops of mountains,
guarded by strong, brave men, but those tops sufficed them not.
After glory, they were taken down from their positions,
and put into holes. How bad an abode they dwelt in!
A crier called them after being buried:
Where are the thrones, crowns, and treasures?
Where are the faces that were at ease and luxury,
that curtains and screens were put before them?
The grave showed those faces where worms were fighting on them.
How long they ate and drank!
But after that long eating, they were eaten!”

Al-Mutawakkil was shaken and intoxication flew from his head. He began crying incontrollably. The attendants in the meeting feared for Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) that al-Mutawakkil might assault him and they thought that al-Mutawakkil would take revenge on him.

Al-Mutawakkil ordered his men to take the glasses of wine away from the meeting. He turned to the pure Imam (a.s.) and said to him reverently, ‘O Abul Hasan, are you in debt?’

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) said, ‘Yes, four thousand dinars.’

Al-Mutawakkil ordered four thousand dinars to be given to Imam al-Hadi (a.s.). He returned him back to his house with respect and honor.28

This event showed the jihad of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) and his fixed situation towards that tyrant. He did not care for his rule and power. He preached and warned him of the punishment of Allah and said to him (through poetry) that he would die and neither his armies nor his authority would save him from death, and that his delicate body would be food for worms in the grave. Certainly, al-Mutawakkil had never heard such preaching before. Instead, he filled his ears with the voices of songsters and songstresses. Finally, death came to him while he was between musicians and cups of wine.

Anyhow, Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) saw what happened to his father from al-Mutawakkil.

The Death of Al-Mutawakkil

Al-Mutawakkil and his vizier al-Fath bin Khaqan were killed after a plot concluded by al-Mutawakkil’s son al-Muntasir, Waseef, and Bugha the Turks. They attacked him in the night and cut him and his vizier by their swords into pieces so that his flesh could not be distinguished from his vizier’s.

Al-Mutawakkil was killed and a black page of debauchery, diversion, corruption, and oppression was folded, and people could breathe freely for a short time.

The Reign of Al-Muntasir

Al-Muntasir assumed the rule after the coup he led against his father. The Shi'a felt delight and joyful after the nightmare of oppression disappeared.

Al-Muntasir followed a rightly, fair policy towards the Alawids and the Shi'a. From the good he did to the Alawids were that he returned Fadak29 to the Alawids, cancelled the interdict on the entails of the Alawids and gave those back to them, deposed the wali of Yathrib Salih bin Ali, who treated the Alawids badly, and appointed Ali bin al-Hasan instead of him. He ordered him to treat the Alawids kindly and do good to them. He gave him some money to distribute it among the Alawids and among his family according to their ranks. Al-Muntasir permitted Muslims to visit the tomb of Imam al-Husayn (a.s.) after al-Mutawakkil had forbidden that and decreed severe penalties against whoever visited that holy tomb.

Poets praised al-Muntasir in their poems and people appreciated his favors and good situations towards the Alawids.

This noble man, who refreshed the hearts of the Alawids, did not live long. Death came over him in the beginning of his rule. Most of historians said he did not die a natural death but he was poisoned. The Turks assassinated him fearing that he might kill them and do away with their influence and domination over the Islamic nation.

The Turks bribed his physician ibn Tayfur by giving him thirty thousand dinars to assassinate him. Al-Muntasir was ill and the physician advised to bleed him. He bled him with a poisoned blade and he died soon.30 He died on Saturday, the fourth of Rabee' ath-Thani,31 248 AH and was buried in al-Jawsaq.32 By his death, people lost much. It was he who destroyed his father's throne, which was based on oppression and tyranny, and enmity towards the infallible imams of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).

The books of history at hand did not mention any meeting or event that took place between Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) and al-Muntasir. The certain thing is that the Imam (a.s.) was delighted for al-Muntasir's procedures towards the Alawids that returned to them safety and settlement which they missed during the reign of al-Mutawakkil. People, especially the Shi'a, were refreshed during his reign, though it was very short.

The Reign of Al-Musta'een

After the death of al-Muntasir, al-Musta'een assumed the rule on Sunday, the fifth of Rabee' ath-Thani in the year 248 AH. He was as a puppet controlled by the Turks. He had no political influence over the body of his government. One of the poets remarked on that,

"A caliph in a cage between Waseef and Bugha,
he says what they both say to him as a parrot does."33

Al-Musta'een before the Turks was as a corpse in a washer's hands. He had no power or authority. The state was run by the Turks while he was busy with lusts, pleasures, drinking, and listening to singing.

His Spite Towards The Imam

Al-Musta'een bitterly hated Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.). The following are some of the reasons that were behind his grudge towards the imam:

First, people, in their meetings, always talked about the imam's high position, talents, and intellect. Besides that, a good part of the nation believed in his imamate and followed him, whereas al-Musta'een, though he was the caliph, had no respect or value near Muslims.

Second, mercenaries and agents of the government often flattered the rulers by falsely informing against the imam, claiming that great monies came to him from the Shi'a and that he might rise in a violent revolt against the Abbasid rule. This made al-Musta'een fear the imam.

Third, from the reasons that made al-Muta'een bear a grudge against Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) was his fear of his (the imam's) son, the awaited imam (a.s.) whom the Prophet (a.s.) had brought good news about. Many true traditions said that it was he who would repair religion, do away with injustice and oppression, and relieve the oppressed and the wronged. The hearts of the Abbasids were full of fear from him thinking that he would do away with their rule, and therefore they bore a grudge against Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.). They put him under strict observation and sent women to spy on the birth of the awaited imam in order to arrest him.

Arresting The Imam

Al-Musta'een gave order to his policemen to arrest Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.). He was arrested and put into the prison of Ali bin Awtamish who was from the bitterest enemies of the progeny of Abu Talib. The authority insisted on this jailer to harm and press the imam, but he was affected by the imam. He changed and his grudge towards the imam was removed from his heart. He put his cheek on the ground out of humbleness to the imam, and did not raise his eyes before the imam out of glorification and respect. He turned to be one of the best people in thought and faith towards the imam.34

'Isa bin al-Fath was in prison with Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.). Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) said to him, 'O 'Isa, you are sixty-five years and a month and two days old.'

'Isa was astonished. He reviewed his birth date in a book with him and found it was as the imam told.

Then the imam asked 'Isa if he had a son and he said he had not.

Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) prayed Allah for him saying, 'O Allah, give him a son to be a

support for him. The best of support a son is…'

'Isa said, 'O my master, and you? Do you have a son?'

Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) said, 'By Allah, I shall have a son who will fill the earth with justice and fairness, but not now.'35

Fear of The Shi'a

The frightening news of the imprisonment of Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) reached all milieus of Muslims, who reacted in sorrow and desired to take revenge against the Abbasids. The Twelver Shi'a, who believed in the imamate of Abu Muhammad (a.s.), were shocked after they were informed that al-Musta'een had determined to kill their imam by ordering his chamberlain, Sa'eed, to take the imam to Kufa and assassinate him on the way.

Muhammad bin Abdullah and al-Haytham bin Subabah wrote a letter to Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) saying, 'May we die for you! We have heard news that worried and distressed us…'

Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) calmed them down and told them that no fear should be on him and that his oppressive enemy (al-Musta'een) would be deposed after three days. It was as he said.36

Amr bin Muhammad bin Rayyan said, 'Once, I went to Abu Ahmad bin Abdullah bin Tahir and found in his hand the letter of Abu Muhammad (a.s.) written in it: "I prayed to Allah against this tyrant (al-Musta'een) to take him after three (days).' On the third day, the Turks deposed him.37

The Deposition of Al-Musta'een

The Turks snubbed al-Musta'een and feared him. One day, he set out towards Baghdad. The Turks sent for him asking him to return to Samarra'. He refused and went on to Baghdad. They deposed him and took al-Mu'tazz out of prison and paid him homage as the caliph. They prepared a great army to occupy Baghdad. The two armies met and both sides suffered great losses but the war continued. At last, they agreed that al-Musta'een should announce his resigning and give the caliphate to al-Mu'tazz on certain conditions that they both agreed upon.

Al-Musta'een handed the caliphate over to al-Mu'tazz, who did not observe the conditions required from him and he put al-Musta'een in the prison of Wasit. He remained for nine months in that prison. The Turks felt fear of al-Musta'een although he was in prison. They took him out of prison and brought him to Samarra'. Al-Mu'tazz asked his chamberlain Sa'eed to kill him and he did.38 The author of al-Fakhri said he was weak in mind, reason, and administration, and that several seditions happened during his reign and his state was full of

troubles and confusion.39

The Reign of Al-Mu'tazz

He was az-Zubayr son of Ja'far al-Mutawakkil. He assumed the rule while he was in the prime of youth. He was experienced neither in politics nor in administration. The Turks appointed him as king to be, as a bridge for them to pass across in order to achieve their aims and wishes. He had no will or option.

He inherited from his fathers that enmity towards the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). He hated Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.). Once, he tried to kill him but he failed. He asked Sa'eed the chamberlain to take the imam to the palace of ibn Hubayrah and assassinate him there, but Allah saved the imam40 after some events took place that made them busy and diverted their attention from the imam.

Al-Mu'tazz ordered his men to arrest the imam and put him into prison, for he could not bear to hear all people talk about his virtues, vast knowledge, and piety; besides that, the imam was also the father of the awaited imam who would remove oppression and injustice and do away with the governments of the oppressive.

Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) became unable to bear the oppression of al-Mu'tazz any more, and so he prayed Allah to save him from the evils of this tyrant, and Allah responded to him after not long. Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) had told his followers about the deposition of al-Mu'tazz before it took place. He replied to Abul Haytham bin Subabah saying, 'After three (days) deliverance shall come to you.' On the third day, al-Mu'tazz was deposed.41

The Deposition of Al-Mu'tazz

After the prayer of Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.), Allah took revenge on al-Mu'tazz. Some Turk leaders asked al-Mu'tazz to give them their salaries, but there was nothing in the treasury. Al-Mu'tazz went to his mother, who was very wealthy, possessing millions of dinars, but she refused to give him any. When the Turks became desperate about getting their salaries, they attacked al-Mu'tazz.

They drew him by his leg, stung him with pins, and stood him under the sun on a very hot summer day saying to him, 'Depose yourself!' Then, they brought the judge of Baghdad and some prominent men and announced his deposition. Five nights after his deposition, the Turks took him to the bathroom. After washing, he felt thirsty. They did not give him water for a period, and then they gave him icy water and he died.42

The men of Salih bin Waseef followed after Qabihah, mother of al-Mu'tazz, and took her money that was about five hundred thousand dinars. They found wardrobes of her under the ground containing large amounts of money. They found one million and three hundred

thousand dinars in an underground room. They found a quantity of emeralds in a basket, large pearls in another, and rubies in a third. All this wealth was taken to Salih bin Waseef. He abused her and said, 'She exposed her son to killing for fifty thousand dinars while she had all this wealth!'43

The Reign of Al-Muhtadi

After the deposition of al-Mu'tazz by the Turks, al-Muhtadi, who was thirty-seven years of age, assumed the rule.44 He, like his fathers, bore a grudge towards Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) and afflicted him with distresses and pains.

He ordered his men to arrest the imam and put him into prison. He determined to kill him as he determined to annihilate all the Shi'a. Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) remained for some days in prison, where Abu Hashim was with him. He said to Abu Hashim, 'O Abu Hashim, this tyrant wanted to kill me this night, but Allah has cut his old. I have no son but Allah will give me a son.'45

Some of the imam's followers wrote to him, "We have been informed that he (al-Muhtadi) threatens your Shi'a and says, 'By Allah, I will remove them from the face of the earth.'

Imam Abu Muhammad replied, 'That is beyond his life. Count, from this day five days, and he shall be killed in the sixth day after disgrace, meanness, and lowness befall him.' It was as the imam said.46

The Turks became displeased with al-Muhtadi. They attacked him with daggers and killed him.47

The Reign of Al-Mu'tamid

The caliphate came to al-Mu'tamid while he was twenty-five years old.48 Historians say, 'He was dissolute, and interested in lusts and amusements. He was busy with music and singing paying no attention to his subjects. He committed sins that made people hate him.'49

In his reign, Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) died after meeting distresses and misfortunes from him.

He ordered his men to arrest Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) and his brother Ja'far and put them into prison. He instructed the jailer Ali bin Jurayn to inform him of his activities and his conversations at all times. The jailer told the caliph that the imam did not do anything that might oppose the Abbasid policy, and that he turned his back to this world and turned to Allah the Almighty. He fasted during the day and spent the night in worships.

Another time, the caliph asked the jailer to inform him about everything the imam did or said, and he answered with the same. He ordered him to set the imam free, send him his greeting, and apologize to him. The jailer hurried to the imam and found him ready to get out. He had

put on his clothes and shoes. The jailer wondered at that. He informed the imam of the decision of al-Mu'tamid. Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) rode on his horse but did not move. The jailer asked him why and he said, 'Until Ja'far comes.'

The jailer said, 'But he ordered me to set you free alone without him.'

The imam said, 'Go and tell him that I and he were taken together from the house. If I go back alone, there will be something that you know!'

The jailer went and told al-Mu'tamid what the imam said. He ordered him to set Ja'far free too. Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) left the prison while reciting, (They intend to put out the light of Allah with their mouths but Allah will perfect His light, though the unbelievers may be averse)50.51

Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) suffered different kinds of harms and distresses from al-Mu'tamid. He surrounded the imam with detectives and policemen to watch him and to chase all the jurisprudents, 'Ulama', and the Shi'a who tried to meet him. He remained under watch until he was assassinated with poison by the order of al-Mu'tamid.

Imam Abu Muhammad (a.s.) was contemporary with these Abbasid kings, who oppressed him, threw him into prison, and tried to do away with him, but Allah protected him from that by afflicting those kings with important events like rebellions or the domination of the Turks over them.

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17. Maqatil at-Talibiyeen, p.597.

18. Ibid., p.599.

19. Akhbar ad-Duwal, p.359.

20. Maqatil at-Talibiyin, p.598.

21. Maqatil at-Talibiyin, p.598.

22. Fawat al-Wafiyyat, vol.1 p.203.

23. Imam Husayn (a.s.).

24. The Abbasids who were the cousins of the Prophet (a.s.) and of Imam Husayn (a.s.).

25. Akhbar ad-Duwal, p.159, Tareekh al-Khulafa', p.347.

26. Qur'an, 45:21.

27. Rawdhat al-A'yan, manuscript.

28. Murooj ath-Thahab, vol.4 p.44-45.

29. Fadak was a very vast, fertile village that the Prophet (s) had donated to his daughter Fatima (s). It was rich of date palms and other fruitful trees.

30. Tareekh al-Khulafa' by as-Sayooti, p.357.

31. It is the fourth month in the Islamic lunar calendar.

32. Al-Anba' fee Tareekh al-Khulafa'.

33. Tareekh al-Khulafa', p.357.

34. Usool al-Kafi, vol.1 p.508.

35. Jawharat al-Kalam, p.155.

36. Muhaj ad-Da'awat, p.273.

37. Al-Ghaybah by Sheikh at-Toosi, p.132.

38. Tareekh al-Khulafa', p.358-359.

39. Al-Fakhri, p.132.

40. Dala'il al-Imamah, p.225, Muhaj ad-Da'awat.

41. Dala'il al-Imamah, p.225. Akhbar ad-Duwal, p.117.

42. Tareekh al-Khulafa', p.360.

43. Tareekh ibn al-Atheer, vol.5 p.344.

44. Murooj ath-Thahab, vol.4 p.124.

45. Muhaj ad-Da'awat, p.274.

46. Ibid.

47. Murooj ath-Thahab, vol.4 p.127.

48. Murooj ath-Thahab, vol.4, p.138.

49. Tareekh al-Khulafa', p.363.

50. Qur'an, 61:8.

.51. Muhaj ad-Da'awat, p.274