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Chapter 12: The time of Al-Rashid

The Caliphate reached Harun; the world shone for him; the affairs went well with him; and he attained from his world all that which he desired and wanted. His influence included most part of the earth, to the extent that he addressed the clouds, saying: "Go wherever you want; your kharaj (land tax) will come to me!"¹

Kharaj (land tax) was brought to him from all the Islamic countries. His capital Baghdad became the bride of the world and a store for the biggest public treasury in the world. The distinguished persons, the geniuses, and the artists from among all the peoples headed for it. The merchants, the officials, the drinking companions, the singers, and the dissolute in it were excessively rich.

The wonderful palaces were built according to the Arabic-Persian beautiful architecture spread in it. Baghdad and its fascinating gardens became the embellishment of the East. It became the greatest capital of the most important empire history witnessed.

In it were the Palace of Immortality (Qasr al-Khuld), which was likened to the abiding garden which the Allah-fearing are promised, the Palace of Peace (Qasr al-Salam), which was likened to these words of Him, the Exalted, the abode of peace with their Lord. Rivers flowed beneath these palaces full of intensely white and deep black-eyed women the like of the hidden pearls.

Harun sat on the throne of the Islamic, great Caliphate. He was the absolute master and obeyed spiritual ruler. He controlled all the powers of the state and the fates of the society. He gave to whomever he pleased and prevented from whomever he pleased. He was not questioned about what he did and not reckoned about what he wasted. That is because he was the shadow of Allah on His earth and His vicegerent over His creatures, just as they say.

He undertook the office of the Caliphate while he was in the prime of youth. He tasted nothing of the hardships and ordeals of the days, nor was he hardened by experience. The authority spontaneously came to him after a plot made by his mother al-Khayzaran and his prime minister, Yehya al-Bermeki.

They managed to assassinate al-Hadi. They succeeded in designing that plan and put an end to him very quickly.

None of the members of the royal palace came to know of it. Harun also did not know that, for he was detained. He did not know all the affairs. After the plot had been carried out, al-Hadi had been killed and become a motionless body in his palace, Yehya hurried to the prison and walked towards al-Rashid, who was sleeping. He woke him, and he got up in terror. Yehya said to him: "Rise, Commander of the faithful!"

Al-Rashid became angry, so he rebuked him, saying to him: "You always terrify me due to your admiration for my succession! You are fully aware of my condition with this man (al-Hadi). If he hears of this, what will my affair with him?"

Yehya smiled at him and said to him: "Al-Hadi has died. This is his ring. His minister al-Herrani is at the door." Al-Rashid rose happily. He immediately went to the palace where his brother's corpse was. He came to know of the affair. He spent that night there.

It was a historical night full of important events of which were: Al-Rashid left prison and was appointed as a caliph. His Persian slave girl, Merajil, born him a male baby, and he named him 'Abd Allah, who is better known as al-Ma'mun. Concerning that night, they said: "It was the night of the caliphs." On it a caliph died, a caliph was given the pledge of allegiance, and a caliph was born.

In the morning al-Rashid rose and performed the prayer over his brother and buried him in the garden of his palace.² Then the notable men of Baghdad went to al-Rashid to pledge allegiance to him. When the White Palace was full of the people from among different classes, Yousif b. al-Qasim b. Sabeeh al-Katib ascended the pulpit and addressed them, saying:

"Surely Allah, the Great and Almighty, has made his vicegerent Musa al-Hadi die and appointed al-Rashid as Commander of the faithful. He (al-Rashid) has promised to have mercy on the people, to establish justice, to spread the truth among them, to protect their souls and their honors from the disobedient apostates."

Then he turned to the people and asked them to hurry to give the pledge of allegiance, saying: "Rise to your pledge of allegiance and give the bargain of your faith." The people hurried to give al-Rashid the pledge of allegiance and declared their pleasure with him. All things were completed in the White Palace. So al-Rashid decided to leave 'Iyabad and to go to Baghdad. However, Yehya advised him to delay, that he might prepare for him popular festivals.

Nevertheless, al-Rashid did not yield to that. He along with his procession immediately headed for his capital (Baghdad). When he approached it, the masses received him with cheers, and the women uttered trilling cries of joy from the balconies of the palaces. So it was a wonderful, popular celebration. When it was time to pray, al-Rashid went to the mosque along with a great procession.

He led the people in prayer, and those who were not present in the White Palace pledged allegiance to him. After he had finished the prayer and taken the pledge of allegiance, he went to his royal palace. In the following day, he held a meeting attended by the politicians and high-ranking men. He summoned Yehya al-Bermeki.

When he stood before him, he entrusted him with the office of the prime minister, gave him the ring, and said to him: "O My father, you have seated me in this place through your blessed opinion and your good management. I have entrusted the affair of the subject to you and regarded you as responsible for it.

Therefore govern according to your viewpoint, employ whomever you please and depose whomever you please. For I will not be a supervisor along with you in anything."³ A poet composed a poem before him, saying:

Do you not see that the sun was ill, but when Harun has become a caliph, its light has shone.

*And the world has been clothed in beauty through his face. So Harun is its Caliph and Yehya is its minister.*⁴

Yehya received the seal of the ministry. He was entrusted with all the executive and administrative powers. He was also entrusted with the fates of the state. Accordingly, he neither consulted nor resorted to anyone in respect with his work. Al-Rashid depended on him when he was in the prime of youth, and he supported him, freed him from need to watchfulness, and mental troubles. He devoted himself to life pleasures such as music, singing, and jokes in the gatherings of the witty.

As for Yehya, he purified the organs of government from the hostile elements or those friends of the past reign. He also took care of developing and constructing the country. He spent part of the budget on land reform, constructing bridges, industries, and other constructional projects that widened the civilization in Baghdad, to the extent that the world bloomed and fascinated the people.

Fascinating gardens and charming flowers such as jasmine and pomegranate blossom spread in Baghdad. The luxurious palaces of the 'Abbasids and of the Beramika also spread in it. The Palace of Immortality and other than it from among Harun's palaces towered over it. 'Ali b. al-Jahm has described one of them in a wonderful poem, saying:

Many a dome of a king as if that the stars reveal their secrets to it.

The delegations fall down in prostration when it manifests to their eyes.

Many a fountain whose flow is (high) in the sky, and it does not fall short of its flowing.

It sends back to the rain clouds what they send down to the earth from the direction of their copious shower.

When its fire is kindled in Iraq, the brilliance of its light illuminates al-Hijaz.

It has balconies as if that spring had clothed them in gardens through their light.[5](#)

That civilization progress depended on al-Beramika, for it was they who placed the life of luxury and lavishness in Baghdad, developed the mental and constructional life in it.

The most important thing is that many historians gave Harun the nickname of the Caliph of the Muslims and the Commander of the faithful. They described him as the greatest of all the caliphs in taking care of the Islamic affairs. They said: "He put the precepts and laws of the Qur'an in practice."

They also said that he renounced the world and turned away from the forbidden things. Ibn Khaldun said: "He (Harun) avoided and refrained from the forbidden things. He enjoyed that which was made lawful to him."

Ibn Khilikan said: "Surely he (Harun) performed a hundred rak'as a day."

A historian exaggerated when he added him to the level of those good and complying with their religion from among the Orthodox Caliphs. However, the measures narrated from him in respect with his fiscal policy and other than it from among the affairs of his general police clearly indicate the opposite of that which his followers mentioned such that he was distinguished by fear of Allah and sticking to the religion.

That is because the nature of his fiscal police was selfish use, plundering the wealth of the Muslims, spending a great part of the public treasury on the mischievous and the dissolute. His nights were full of all kinds of singing and amusement. He spent a lot of money on the slave girls and the singers while the community did not enjoy the enormous revenues that came to the public treasury.

The government did not appoint any amount of money to spread knowledge and sciences and to send away ignorance from the Islamic peoples. Besides it did not spend anything on developing the economy and industry in the country.

When we carefully consider his other policies, we find that he faced the 'Alawids and their followers very severely and strictly. He treated them just as his grandfather al-Mansur did through the policy of violence, tyranny, and persecution, just as we will talk about that.

Any way, there is no relationship between the fear of Allah and righteousness ascribed to him with the reality of his conduct and policy. Yes, without doubt, he was the most brilliant political personality history has ever known in the Islamic world and other than it. That is because, through his skill and ability, he was able to control most regions of the world, to the extent that his name became brilliant in the east and the west.

He got a wide reputation history has rarely recorded to the kings and the sultans other than him.

However the affair of this does not concern us; rather the thing that concerns us is that his policy in all its

plans was far away from the Islamic principles that are the criterion, in reality, of the Islamic government.

So whoever of the rulers applies them to the reality of his policy, then he is of the Orthodox Caliphs we respect a lot. Whoever turns away from them is not regarded as among the Muslim caliphs, and it was not correct for him to be the representative of this Islamic, great office.

The following is a brief account of that which reported from Harun, whether in the political fields or in the world of manners and morals; they all oppose the Islamic principles and do not suit any firm program of them.

His Fiscal Policy

Before we speak about Harun's fiscal policy, we have to deal with the fiscal policy in Islam. Islam has taken very severe precautionary measures in respect with it. It has made it incumbent on the state not to spend any of it on things other than the interests of the Muslims and their economic development. It has not permitted the president of the state to choose for himself and his relatives anything of it.

The proof of that is the conduct of Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family. That was when his only dear daughter the mistress of the women of the world, Fatima, the chaste, peace be on her. She asked him to grant her a servant to serve her with the affairs of her house, for her hands blistered because of the hand mill. However, he answered her generously and asked her to glorify, praise, and magnify Allah.

Through that, he, may Allah bless him and his family, gave a lesson to those who undertake the affairs of the Muslims, that they may take precautionary measures in respect with their properties and do not spend any of them on things other than their interests.

This luminous policy was followed by Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, testamentary trustee of Allah's Apostle, May Allah bless him and his family, and gate of the city of his knowledge. An example of that, his brother 'Aqeel was afflicted with neediness and poverty. He took his children, who were shaggy and dust-colored out of misery, whose face were black as if that they were blackened by darkness, as the Imam, peace be on him, said.

So he went to him, but the Imam prevented and blamed him. Such a way was useless, and he insisted on asking him. Accordingly, the Imam showed him the Islamic justice. He heated a piece of iron and drew it nearer to his body, so he cried because of its heat with the crying of one who suffered from a serious illness.

This hot piece of iron was about to burn 'Aqeel, so he left in terror and sadness. The Imam did that to show the world that the public treasury belonged to the Muslims, and that the president of the state had no right to spend it according to his wishes and his low desires.

When the companions of Imam ‘Ali came to know that money played an important role in attracting great part of people, they asked him to change his policy in respect with distributing money, that he might singled out the nobility and the notable men with part of it. They said to him: “Commander of the faithful, give these properties. Give preference to this nobility from among the ‘Arabs and Quraysh and include the people whose opposition you fear.”

However, the Imam, peace be on him, answered them with the words of justice and truth: “Do you order me to seek victory through tyranny? If the money belonged to me, I would equally divide it among them. Just imagine how much more (one should be just) when the money belongs to Allah!”

This is the precept of Islam in respect with the properties of the Muslims. They belong to them all. It is not permissible for the head of the state to spend them lavishly on his wishes and low desires and strengthening his authority. Islam has ordered them to be spent on:

1. The deprived, the orphans, the widows, and the disable. Therefore, it is incumbent on the state to specify for them part of the public treasury, that they may lead a pleasant life and are free from need to that which in the hand of men.
2. Those who are unable to maintain their families. So the state is responsible for remedy their lack with something of the public treasury.
3. The debtors who cannot find money to repay their debts provided that they should not spend it illegally.
4. Those who are not able to get married because of the paucity of that which in their hands.
5. General projects leading to economic and industrial development of the country and increasing per capita real income.
6. Putting an end to unemployment, securing work for civilians, and improving the conditions of their livelihood. That is because Islam regards poverty as a social disaster; so it is obligatory to put an end to poverty and to remove its effects.
7. Education, removing illiteracy, spreading science and knowledge among people. That is because the community cannot develop itself and reaches its objectives unless science prevails and knowledge spreads among all its circles.

These are some affairs of which Islamic fiscal policy takes care. However, Harun and other than him from among the Umayyad and ‘Abbasid kings achieved nothing of that on the arena of life. Rather they swallowed Allah’s wealth just as camels swallowed spring plants. They lavishly spent the properties of the Muslims on dissolution and prostitution, and on warring against the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt), the summoners to truth and justice.

Anyhow, through his fiscal policy, Harun deviated from the Islamic policy in this respect. That was when he, his family, his ministers, and his servants went too far in wasting and spending lavishly on themselves, while the community led a life full of exhaustion, tiredness, and straits.

His general Budget

The greatest budget of the Islamic state was that at the time of Harun. For he had money the like of which none of the Muslim kings had. Ibn Khaldun reported that the money carried to the public treasury amounted to 7500 Cantars a year.⁶ Al-Jahshyari estimated the total revenues in about five hundred million, two hundred and forty thousand dirhams.⁷ It is worth mentioning that the dinars at that time was of great importance cannot be compared to that which we have today.

A ram was sold for a dirham, a camel for four dinars, sixty ratl (a weight) dates for a dirham, sixteen ratl oil for a dirham, and eight ratl cooking fat for a dirham. The wage of an excellent builder was five habba. It was well-known that the habba was one-third a dirham during their days, and the danak was one-sixth a dirham.⁸

According to this the budget of the state of Harun was, according to the price of the Iraqi current dinar, two billions, two hundred and twenty millions, nine hundred and sixty thousand dinars.⁹ It was a great budget the like of which no government before that of Al-Rashid had.

These revenues were collected from the following:

1. Land tax (al-kharajj), which was an amount of money or of crops imposed on the lands of those polytheists before the Conquest (feth).
2. Poll tax (al-jizya), which was that the Zimmis paid to the Islamic state, that it may protect them. Meanwhile it is instead of the taxes were taken from the Muslims. It had no harm of the Zimmi when it was taken from him, as the enemies of Islam say. It was in exchange for the services and interests the state rendered to them and other than them.

The poll tax the Zimmi paid at the time of al-Rashid was different according to his wealth. It ranged from eight to fourteen dirhams. It was not taken from woman, the poor, and the young.¹⁰

3. Alms (Zekat), which is an important revenue. It is due on the following:

A. The two currencies: gold and silver. The minimum amount of gold is twenty dinars. Whoever has it, it is incumbent on him to pay a half dinar. If the amount is more than twenty dinars, it is obligatory on him to pay two Qirats for every four (dinars). The minimum amount of silver is two hundred dirhams. The zekat on it is five dirhams.

When it increases and comes to forty dirhams, then a dirham is due on it whatever it amounts. The

Muslim jurists have mentioned some conditions for the zekat of the two currencies; zekat is not obligatory unless these conditions are available.

B. The three kinds of livestock: camels, cows, and sheep of various kinds such as handsome Arabian camels (al-‘Iraab), Persian camels (al-Bekhaati), cows, buffaloes, goats, and sheep. The conditions concern them should be available such as the minimum amount, freely grazing livestock, and the like, according to what the jurists have mentioned.

C. The four crops: wheat, barely, dates, and raisins. There should be available conditions such as the minimum amount, and other conditions the jurists have mentioned.

Zekat is an Islamic duty for which the Islamic state fights and regards him who does not pay it as an apostate. It is enormous revenue that satisfies many affairs of the state and the needs of the poor. It had a special divan in Baghdad and had many branches all over the country.

These are some state revenues Islam established to satisfy its economic affairs. They are huge revenues. If the Islamic government put them into practice, no fiscal lack would befall it, and it would be in no need of loans from foreign countries that place it among the regions of their influence.

Besides, if the Islamic governments spent their budgets on the interests of the Muslims and follow the Islamic fiscal policy, poverty and deprivation would not spread among the houses of the society, atheist thoughts and weak principles that threaten their entity, subject them to distress and destruction would not invade them.

On whom is the public treasury spent?

Surely the properties collected for Harun’s budget set a record in their greatness, as we have mentioned. Unfortunately, not much of it was spent on the interests of the Muslims. Rather it was spent on giving variety to pleasures, desires, building palaces full of singers and the dissolute.

It was also spent on the poets who devoted their mental activities to praise, laudation, giving noble qualities to Harun and regarding him as one of the caliphs who were careful of the affairs of the Muslims.

Anyhow, Harun spent a lot of the public treasury on his pleasures, which are as follows:

Gifts to Singers

Harun went too far in spending on the singers. He gave to them wide wealth and spent on them enormous properties, while it was incumbent on him to spend them on the interests of the Muslims, not on the things that spoiled morals and excited desires. The historians have mentioned many examples of his gifts to them. If they were collected, they would be a big book.

We will mention some of them as proofs of his wasting the wealth of the community. They are as follows:

1. Abu al-'Atahiya recited to him the following poetry lines:

May my father be ransom for whom there is strong, little love in my heart, and it has been stolen. O Banu al-'Abbas, there is among you a king from whom kindness branches.

The whole of Harun is good. All evil has died since he was born. Ibrahim al-Mousili sang him a song through these lines, and he gave to him a hundred thousand dirhams and a hundred garments. [11](#)

2. His singer Ishaq al-Mousili narrated, saying: "I went out along with al-Rashid to al-Hira. When he stopped at it, he ordered the lunch to be brought. He had lunch, and then he slept. So I seized the opportunity of his sleep and went away. I rode (my mount) and went around al-Hira. I looked at a garden and headed for it. I found a handsome young man. I asked the young man to allow me to come into the garden, and he allowed me.

I came into it and came to know that it was one of the gardens on the best earth and the greatest of them in water. I went out and asked him: 'Whose garden is this?' 'To one of the Asha'itha,' he answered. 'Does he sell it?' I asked him. 'Yes,' he replied, 'and it is for sale.' 'How much is it?' I asked him. 'Fourteen thousand dinars,' he answered. 'What is the name of this places?' I asked him. 'Shamara,' he replied. So I said:

"O Shamara gardens, there is nothing like you in view. I have ophthalmia that has made the doctor tired.

Your earth is camphor; your light is a flower giving a good scent after plowing.

"When Harun woke and ordered me to sing him a song, I sang him these lines. So he said: 'Woe unto you! Where is Shamara? I told him about the story. So he ordered fourteen thousand dinars to be given to me, and I bought it.'" [12](#)

3. Yehya al-Mekki sang Harun a song and delighted him, and he said to him: "O Yehya, rise and take what is in the house." Yehya thought that there were carpets and garments in the house. However, he found in it notes and coins. They were carried before him. When they were counted, they were fifty thousand dirhams. [13](#)

4. Yehya sang him a song through this poetry line

When does the thousands meet with all the camels that ascend a valley and descend to a valley?

So Harun had wine until evening, and then he ordered ten thousand dirhams to be given to him. [14](#)

5. Al-Rashid became angry with al-Mousili and ordered him to be imprisoned. One day he sat and remembered his good songs, so he said: "If al-Mousili was present, our affair and delight would be perfect." Accordingly, one of those who were sitting with him said to him: "Commander of the faithful,

shall we bring him? He did not commit a great crime.” So he sent for him. When he stood before him, he ordered him to sing him a song. So he sang him a song through this poetry line:

Ni‘man’s belly exudes musk when she walks among ashamed women. Al–Rashid became delighted. He ordered the shackles to be untied. Then he ordered him to be covered with robes of honor, and ordered thirty thousand dirhams to be given to him. [15](#)

6. Ibrahim al–Mousili sang al–Rashid one of his best songs, and he became so delighted that he said: “I have never heard a song greater in gathering generosity, delight, and good skill than this one!” So Ibrahim asked him: “If a man granted you two hundred thousand dirhams, would you be delighted at it or at this song?”

“By Allah, I am more delighted at this song than the two million dirhams,” al–Rashid replied.

“Why do you not give me two hundred thousand (dirhams)?” asked Ibrahim.

So, al–Rashid immediately ordered two hundred thousand dirhams to be given to him. [16](#)

7. Dehman al–Ashqar sang him a song through this poetry line:

If we enter and you are our Imam, then it is enough for our mounts to see you as a guide.

One day I remembered you at al–Dayr, so the prostitutes shone, to the extent that they came up to the throat.

O Malik’s mother, if the time ended you, then the fatal death will do the same to me.

Al–Rashid became delighted, asked him to repeat the song several times, and then he said: “Ask me for something.”

Dehman said: “I wish that you would give al–Henī’ and al–Merī.” They were two country estates whose corps amounted forty thousand dinars. It was said to Harun: “Commander of the faithful, these two country estates are too great that you have not given them to him.” “There is no way to get back what I have given,” he retorted, “but try to buy them from him.” So they bought them from him for a lot of money. [17](#)

8. One night Harun and his drinking companions chatted with one another, and one of them sang him a song through Jereer’s poetry line:

Surely those who left early in the morning are still on your mind and have left in your eye dripping water (like) a spring.

So he became delighted, admired these poetry lines, and said to his friends: “Whoever composes poetry lines similar to these will take this purse of money from me.” They tried to do that but did nothing. So the

servant who was standing behind him: “I will do it for you, Commander of the faithful.” “Do as you like!” retorted Harun. The servant went to al-Natifi and told him about the story. Al-Natifi came in to ‘Enan, and she composed that, saying:

Through the words you have said, you have exited in my heart the illness that is till hidden.

Its fruits have ripened in their foldings, they were watered of the love water and drank their fill. My master, those who say that hearts love when they love are liars.

He brought them to al-Rashid, and asked him about him who composed them. He told him about the affair, and he bought the slave-girl for thirty thousand dirhams. He let her stay with him for some days, and then he gifted her to one of his special associates. [18](#)

These are some examples the historians have mentioned in respect with Harun’s gifts to the singers who represented mischief and dissoluteness at his time. Such an action opposes Islam that has made it forbidden to spend money on all things made forbidden by Allah. In the meantime it opposes the Islamic economy that has required the rulers over the Muslims to spent money on the interests of the Muslims, their economic and scientific development, and establishing vital projects that bring about the prosperity of the country.

Surely this excessive spending wasted the wealth of the community and paralyzed its economic movement; it is one of the things Islam has made forbidden.

Yet another example of Harun’s wasting the properties of the Muslims is that which Abu al-Ferejj narrated: “Very beautiful and perfect slave girl was gifted to al-Rashid. One day he was alone with her; he brought out all songstresses of his house, and had breakfast. So the number of his slave girls who sang him and the servants who offered him wine was two thousands. They wore the best kinds of clothes and jewels. Um Ja’far heard of that, and she became displeased with it.

“So she sent for ‘Aliya and complained to her of that. So ‘Aliya sent to her (a letter saying): ‘Do not let this terrify this. By Allah, I will return him to you. I have decided to compose poetry and to set melody and teach it to my slave girls. Therefore, send all your slave girls to me. Clothe them in different kinds of garments, that they may take part in singing with my slave girls.’

Um Ja’far did what ‘Aliya had ordered her. When the time of the afternoon player came, al-Rashid did not feel when ‘Aliya suddenly came out of her room, and Um Ja’far came out of her room along with two thousand slave girls and the rest of the slave girls in the palace. They were dressed in strange garments. They all sang the poetry ‘Aliya had composed, saying:

“He is separated from me, and my heart is not separated from him.

“O You who have stopped associating with me, with whom have you “Intended to associate?

“Accordingly, al-Rashid became delighted and rose on his leg, to the extent that he received Um Ja'far and 'Aliya. He was too pleased that he said: 'I have never seen a day like this day! Mesrur, do not let any dirham in the public treasury. Scatter them all!' The amount he scattered on that day was six thousand dirhams. None has ever heard of the like of that day.”¹⁹

This is the excessive recklessness in respect with the properties of the Muslims and the disobedience to the will of Islam and its precepts that has made that forbidden.

His Gifts to the Poets

Harun went too far in spending money on the poets. He generously spent properties on them. He enriched them, for they went too far in praising him and giving him the qualities of the Allah-fearing, the protection of the religion and keeping it. They described him as the shadow of Allah on earth.

They said that Allah would not accept deeds except through Harun's pleasure and showing obedience to him. They also said that if Harun was discontented with someone, then prayer and acts of worship would not benefit. This meaning has clearly been mentioned in what Mansur al-Nimri has said:

If someone discontents Harun, he does not benefit by the five prayers.

Surely noble deeds and kindness are valleys. Allah has placed you where they widen. If you raise a man, then Allah raises him. And whomever of the peoples you push down is pushed down. Harun employed those poets as mouthpieces of propagation and buffoonery.

So they, through what they composed, spread among the people that Harun was the protector of Islam, that he was the representative of the Islamic justice on earth, and that he spread the truth all over the country. Among those who described him as the representative of justice and the protection of the religion is Dawud b. Razin, who said:

Through Harun light appeared in all cities, and through his just conduct the right way has been established.

He is the Imam who is busy (thinking of) the selfness of Allah, and the most thing of which he takes care is invasion and the hajj.

The eyes of the people become narrow because of the light of his face when his bright view appears before the people.

An Umayyad person praised him through a poem in which he has mentioned:

O One entrusted by Allah, I say the words of one with intelligence, truthfulness, and lineage.

You have an excellence over us; and we have through you the excellence over all the Arabs.

‘Abd Shams followed Hashim, and they both belonged to one father and mother.

Therefore, bestow upon our womb relatives, for ‘Abd Shams was ‘Abd al-Muttalib’s uncle.

So he ordered a thousand dinars to be given to him for each a poetry line; and then he said to him: “If you increase us, we will increase you.”²⁰ The poets went too far in praising him, elaborating on and lauding him. He also went too far in giving them generously and bestowing on them.

One of his gifts to them is that which has been narrated by al-Teberi, who has said: “Sa‘eed b. Muslim b. Qutayba al-Bahili came in to al-Rashid in his gathering of poetry, and the poets were reciting to him their poems. He said to him: ‘Commander of the faithful, there is a Bedouin from Bahila at the door. I have never seen a person greater than him in poetry.’

He permitted the Bedouin, and he came in. The Bedouin was wearing a silk jubah and a Yemeni cloak. He tied it in the middle, and then he bent it on his shoulder. He folded his turban on his cheeks and loosened a tassel of it. He recited him an excellent poem on praising him.

In his gathering were al-Kesa’i, Ibn Selem, and al-Fadhl b. al-Rebi‘. When he finished, al-Rashid said to him: ‘I hear you as one who approves (your poetry), and denies you as one who accuses you. If you yourself have composed this poetry, then compose two poetry lines in respect with these.’ He indicated with his hand to al-Amin and al-Ma’mun, who were present there. So he said:

They are its two ropes, may Allah bless them; and you, Commander of the faithful, are its pole.

The top of the dome of Islam was built by ‘Abd Allah after Muhammad, so its two sticks shook.

Accordingly, al-Rashid gave to him a hundred thousand dirhams.²¹

Ashja‘al-Selmi, who was disagreeable to him, came in to al-Rashid and said to him: “Commander of the faithful, I think you have to permit me to recite a poem to you. That is because if I do not attain my wish from you today, then I will never attain it. Al-Rashid asked him: “How is that?”

Ashja‘ said: “For I have praised you through poetry. I think neither I nor those other than me can compose something better than it. If I do not shake you on this day, I will be deprived of that to the end of the time.”

So al-Rashid said to him: “Give. Therefore, we will hear (it).”

So he recited to him his poem until he reached:

And over your enemy, O Muhammad’s cousin, are two observers: the light of the morning, and the shadows of darkness.

So if he is careful, you terrify him; and if he raves, you will pull out your clement swords.

Al-Rashid said: "By Allah, this is the good praise and the correct meaning, not that with which you busied my ears this day." On that day a group of poets recited poems to him. Then he recited to him his poem in which he has said:

His father was a king; and his mother was from among the good people to whom belongs the glowing lamp of the community.

On the tops of the basin-shaped valleys of Mecca, they drank the pure water of the prophethood.

When Harun heard these two poetry lines, he was about to fly out of happiness. Then he said to him: "O Ashja', you came in to me and you were the most disagreeable of all the people to me; and now you are going to leave me while you are the most lovable of the people to me."

So Ashja' asked him: "What has this position made me acquire?"

Al-Rashid said: "Riches. Therefore, ask whatever you wish."

Ashja' said: "One million dirhams."

Al-Rashid said: "Give it to him."²²

Al-Asfahani said that the total amount Ibrahim al-Mousili took was more than two hundred thousand dinars.²³

The books of history are full of his plentiful giving to the poets and their rear stories with him. We do not doubt that generosity is a good, high quality that is when the person spends on others something of his private properties. However if he spends on them lavishly something of the properties of the Muslims, then he betrays Allah and the Muslims.

His spending lavishly on Food

Harun spend lavishly on food. He spend on it ten thousand dirhams a day. Perhaps, the cooks cooked him thirty kinds of food.²⁴ Al-Asma'i narrated, saying: "One day I came in to al-Rashid. While he was eating al-Faludhej²⁵, he asked me: 'What have the Arabs said about this?' I answered: 'The Arabs have no Faludhej. However, they have something similar to it concerning which al-Shammakh has said:

When my mother went to visit her family, she fell upon al-'akem, which was not available.

A measure of pressed dates was mixed with two measures of wheat; and a measure of fat sat on it.

They are provided with tails like andirons; it is like men's heads cut off and not gathered together.

If you have yellows, then this is your medicine; and if you are hungry, then this is the day when you become full.

So Harun laughed and gave him the plate that was before him. One day he called his cook, and when he stood before him,[26](#) he said to him:

-Have you food of slaughter sheep?

-Yes, I have various kinds of it.

Al-Rashid said: "Bring it along with the food."

When the food was brought, al-Rashid took some of the meat. Ja'far al-Bermeki laughed. So al-Rashid asked him: "Why are you laughing?"

Ja'far answered: "Nothing, Commander of the faithful, I have remembered a conversation took place yesterday night between me and my slave girl."

Al-Rashid said to him: "By my right against you, I want you tell me about it."

Ja'far said: "Until you eat this mouthful."

When al-Rashid took it out of his mouth, Ja'far asked him:

"How much is this food along with the meat?"

Al-Rashid replied: "Three dirhams."

Ja'far retorted: "No, by Allah, Commander of the faithful. Rather, four hundred thousand dirhams."

Al-Rashid asked: "How is that, Ja'far?"

Ja'far answered: "A long period before this day, you commanded your cook to fix you mutton, but it was not available with him. And I said to him: 'The kitchen should not be void of mutton.' Accordingly, we slaughter a sheep for your kitchen every day. That is because we do not buy mutton from market. So we have spent four hundred thousand dirhams since that day.

The Commander of the faithful, had not requested mutton except this day. So I laughed because the Commander of the faithful had nothing of it except this mouthful. So has the Commander of the faithful bought it for four hundred thousand dinars."[27](#)

Food along with small pieces of fish in gold containers was put before Harun. So he sent for the head of the cooks. When he stood before him, he said to him: "Did I not tell you that the pieces of fish should not be small?" So he answered him: "Commander of the faithful, this year I have placed the fish among the food as an ornament."

Harun asked him about their price, and he answered him: "They cost four thousand dirhams." The most delicious fruit was brought to him from the Islamic countries. The 'Abbasid kings after him went too far in

spending on food, to the extent that they requested different kinds of birds and meat from the remote places and spent a lot of money on bringing them.[28](#)

All these things are regarded as violating the Islamic regulations and rules that require the head of the government to be moderate and not to waste the properties of the Muslims.

[His Spending lavishly on Slave Girls](#)

Harun was fond of slave girls and desirous for enjoying them, to the extent that he went too far in that and deviated from the way of justice and Islamic law. The historians have mentioned many examples of his fondness of that. They have narrated his story with Ghadir, the slave girl of his brother al-Hadi. Ja'far b. Qaddama[29](#) has narrated about her, saying: "Ghadir was the best of the people in beauty and singing.

Al-Hadi loved her very much. One day while she was singing him a song, a thought came to his mind. So one of his special associates who were present there asked him about that, and he answered him: "I think that I will die, and that my brother Harun will marry my slave girl after he undertakes the caliphate after me."

So it was said to him: "I seek refuge for you with Allah, and that He may advance all (people) before you." So he ordered his brother Harun to be brought before him. He told him about the thought came to his mind, and he answered him with that which was a must on of that.

However, he said: "I am not satisfied until you swear (by Allah) that when I die you should not marry her." He swore by Allah. Yet al-Hadi took a full oath from him, that he should perform the hajj on foot, divorce his wives, release his slaves, and to dedicate his possessions to charitable purposes.

Then he ordered her to swear by Allah just as he did to his brother, and she swore by Allah. One month after that, al-Hadi died and al-Rashid undertook the caliphate. He sent for Ghadir and proposed to her. So she asked him: "What shall we do toward the oath?" He answered: "I will expiate on behalf of all and perform the hajj on foot."

She responded to him, and he married her. He loved her so much that he put her head in his lap. When she slept, he did not move until she woke. One day, while she was sleeping, she woke in terror. She wept, and he asked her about her condition. She said to him: "I dreamt of your brother and heard him saying to me:

You have broken my promise after I had neighbored the inhabitants of the cemeteries.

You swore before me through your lying, dissolute oath.

And you, Ghadira, have married my brother. Truthful was he who named you Ghadir.

You have become among the men of tribulation and one of the women having eyes with a marked

contrast between white and black, and who go and come.

The new mate will not enjoy you; and the calamities will not turn away from you.

And you will follow me before the morning.

By Allah, Commander of the faithful, it is as if that I heard them, and as if that I wrote them in my heart. I have forgotten no word of them. So al-Rashid said to her: "This is a confused dream." So she said: "No." She became disordered and shook all over until she died before him.[30](#)

This is an example of his fondness of slave girls and his disobedience to the Islamic Law through his breaking the oath he gave to his brother for that he would not marry her. Besides he opposed the Islamic Law when he married her because she was in her waiting period; Islam has made that forbidden and decided that it is forbidden for husband to marry the woman in such a state forever.

Yet another example of his fondness of slave girls is that he abandoned his slave girl Marida, and then he remorse for that, to the extent that he was about to die due to his love for her. He showed pride toward starting her with peace, and she also showed pride to start him with peace.

So he unwillingly showed patience and was about to die. His minister al-Fadhli b. al-Rabi' understood that, so he sent for al-'Abbas b. al-Ahnef and told him about the affair and said: "Say something about that." And he said:

Both lovers are avoid; they blame each other and angry with one another.

She has turned away, and he has turned away. They both are tired of that which they treat.

Surely if an experience lasts long, forgetfulness will creep into (hearts) because of it. Then the request will be difficult.

Al-Fadhli sent him these poetry lines, and he became very pleased with them. Before al-Rashid completed reading them, al-'Abbas composed other two poetry lines in this respect:

The lover must have a pause between reunion and desertion.

If desertion lasts long, he will come back to his lover.

Al-Rashid approved that and said: "I will make peace with heart." Then he went to her and made peace with her. Marida came to know of the reason for the poetry lines, but she did not know him who composed them. She sent for al-Fadhli to ask him about him. He told her about him. So she ordered him to be given one thousand dinars.[31](#)

Al-Rashid also ordered him to be given two thousand dinars. He also fell in love with a slave girl. So he ordered his minister Yehya to buy her for one hundred thousand dinars. Yehya regarded this sum as

much and did not intend to pay it. So al-Rashid became angry with him.

Yehya wanted to explain to him the amount spent on such things of which the government made no use. So he changed this sum into dirhams, and they amounted a million and a half dirhams. He put them in the corridor through which al-Rashid passed to perform the ritual ablution. When al-Rashid saw them, he regarded them as many. So he understood his extravagance. In the mean time he felt that Yehya disobeyed him.³²

Al-Rashid gave a lot of money to his slave girls. The historians narrated that he sent al-Hereshi to the district of al-Mousil, and he collected to him a lot of money from the remainders of the land taxes. He brought it to Harun, and he ordered all of it to be spent on some of his slave girls.

The people regarded that as great and talked about it. Semi madness befell Abu al-'Atahiya because of that, so Khalid b. al-Azher asked him:

-What wrong with you Abu al-'Atahiya?

-Glory belongs to Allah! Why is this plentiful money given to such a woman? ³³ Surely these huge gifts to his slave girls made the good discontented with him and those who clung to their religion bear a grudge against him. That is because he broke the Islamic law in respect with the properties of the Muslims when he spent them on things other than their interests.

Anyway Harun was very fond of slave girls; he adored them. For his sexual desires he paid no attention to the things made forbidden by Allah. For example, he loved the slave girl his father al-Mehdi had already married. However, she refused him and said to him: "It is not lawful for you to marry me, for your father had married me." He loved her too much that he sent for the jurist Abu Yousif and asked him: "Do you have anything concerning this affair?"

So Abu Yousif gave a religious decision contrary to the Book of Allah and the Sunna of His Prophet, saying: "Commander of the faithful, shall we believe all the things a slave girl claims? Do not believe her because she is not reliable!"

Abu Yousif gave a verdict suitable to Harun's low desire and turned away from that which Islam legislated concerning believing women in respect with their marriage. Ibn al-Mubarak commented on this measure, saying: "I do not know at whom I shall wonder: Shall I wonder at this (Harun) who has put his hand in the blood of the Muslims and their properties and does not pay attention to the sacredness of his father?"

Or shall I wonder at this community that has turned away from the Commander of the faithful? Or shall I wonder at the jurist of the land? He said: 'Violate the sacredness of your father, carry out your pleasure, and I am responsible for that!'³⁴

Abu Yousif gave many religious verdicts according to Harun's desires that oppose the Islamic precepts.

Yet al-Rashid lavishly spent on him for that. Abu Yousif gave a religious decision appropriate for Harun's inclination, and he ordered a hundred thousand dirhams to be given to him.[35](#)

Anyhow, al-Rashid went too far in associating with the slave girls. He had a slave girl called Haylana. The slave girl lived with him for three years. Then she died, so al-Rashid grieved for her very much, and then he elegized her, saying:

I have said when they buried you and regret occupied my heart: Shall I go? No, by Allah! Nothing will please me after you to the end of the time!

Al-'Abbas b. al-Ahnef elegized her with forty poetry lines, so al-Rashid ordered forty thousand dirhams to be given to him.[36](#) Al-Rashid was too fond of slave girls that he went too far in acquiring them, to the extent that their number was two thousands. His slave girls were from different countries:

Some were from Rome, some were from al-Sind, and some were from Persia.[37](#) Al-Rashid bought a slave girl from al-Mousil for thirty-six thousand dinars.[38](#) The inhabitants of Baghdad talked about a slave girl called Kheneth. The slave girl was given the nickname of Dhat al-Khal (the possessors of the beauty spots). She charmed the poets and the singers. Yet al-Rashid bought her for seventy thousand dinars and made her live in his palace.[39](#)

He bought all those beautiful slave girls offered for sale. His palace had no slave girl bought for less than ten thousand dirhams or dinars.[40](#) These slave girls required too much expenses such as ornaments, clothes, and decoration.

It is worth mentioning that these too much expenses were not of his private properties; rather they were of the Islamic Public Treasury, and that Islam made it for bidden to spend anything of it on such affairs.

His Fondness of Jewels

Harun was too fond of jewels and precious stones that he spent a lot of money on buying them. He bought a ring for a hundred thousand dinars.[41](#) He had an emerald bar longer than a cubit. He wore a very precious bird-like ruby crown. The value of the crown was a hundred thousand dinars.[42](#) As Harun was fond of jewels, he sent al-Jewheri, al-Kindi's grandfather, to the leader of Sarandib to buy jewels from him.[43](#)

He scattered jewels over his slave girls without reckoning. He had a very beautiful slave girl. The slave girl refused her share when Harun gave her jewels similar to that of his slave girls. So he was displeased with that. One day he scattered jewels on his slaves, and they picked them, but that slave girl did not stretch her hand out to them.

Then he ordered better jewels to be brought. They chose, and he said to that slave girl: "Why do you not choose as your friends do?" She answered: "If the thing I choose is available, I will do." Then she took

him by the hand and said to him: "This is my choice from among the jewels of the world." So he admired her and called her Khalisa (the pure one).[44](#)

Al-Bayqehi mentioned that al-Rashid bought jewels for two hundred thousand dinars and gave them as gift to al-Beramika. His children followed him in acquiring jewels and giving them to those loyal to them. For example, al-Ma'mun gave a thousand pearl stones to his wife Bouran on her wedding night.

He ordered carpets to be spread for her. Each carpet was brocaded with gold, pearls, and corundum. The whiteness of the pearls covered the yellowness of gold.[45](#) Al-Amin drank out of crystal glasses inlaid with precious jewels.[46](#) The value of the jewels that were safe from plundering when al-Ma'mun killed his brother al-Amin was one million, a hundred and sixteen thousand dirhams.[47](#)

Besides the entourage and the slave girls had too many jewels and precious stones bought for plentiful money plundered from the public treasury, for there was none to ask and punish them for spending it illegally!

[The Extravagance of Zubayda](#)

The princess Zubayda amassed enormous properties. She spent the properties of the Muslims on her pleasures. She bought a good musician for three hundred thousand dinars [48](#) and gave the musician as gift to 'Abd Allah, son of Musa al-Hadi. She ordered her maids to wear pearls.

Then she became too fond of pearls that she wore sandals inlaid with jewels in her palace.[49](#) She bought a pearl rosary for fifty thousand dinars.[50](#) One day she sent for her husband al-Rashid to see him. When he came to her, Ibn Jaami'sang them a song from behind a curtain, saying:

It neither thundered nor lightened, but it made for us a circle.

The water flowed according to a regulation of it. If the water found a place of tearing, it would tear it.

We spent the night, and she spent the night on her pillows until the eye of the morning appeared sleepless.

Accordingly, Zubayda ordered her servant to give a hundred thousand dirhams to Ibn Jami'for each poetry line. So al-Rashid said: "Abi al-Fadhli's daughter has overcome us and preceded us in showing generosity to our guest and friend." Then he sent him dinars as equal as to the dirhams she had given to him.[51](#)

Ashja b. 'Amru al-Selemi came in to Muhammad al-Amin, aged four years, to teach him. He said in respect with him:

His father was a king; and his mother was from among the good people to whom belongs the glowing lamp of the community.

On the tops of the basin-shaped valleys of Mecca, they drank the pure water of the prophethood.

So Zubayda ordered a hundred thousand dirhams to be given to him. Surely this money given to this poet and others represent part of wasting the properties of the Muslims. Although misery prevailed the people, Zubayda and her husband spent this enormous money on such things made forbidden by the Islamic Law.

Another example of her extravagance is that al-Rashid regarded staying at al-Riqqa as good, so Zubayda said to the poets: "Whoever describes Medinat al-Selam (the City of Peace, Baghdad) through poetry lines that pleases the Commander of the faithful, I will make him rich." So a group of them described it. Among them was al-Nimari, who said:

What are in Baghdad of good fashions and of wonders for the world and the religion?

When the east wind blows and the night is deep-black, it comes together among the branches of the plants of sweet basil.

So al-Rashid approved it and returned to Baghdad. As for Zubayda, she gave a jewel to al-Nimri. Then she sent someone to buy it from him for three hundred thousand dirhams.⁵² She ordered a carpet to be made for her. The carpet contained all kinds of animals and birds. The picture of each bird was made of gold and its eye was made of pearl. It was said that she spent on it about a million dinars.⁵³

Zubayda used a tool made of gold and inlaid with jewels. She wore a garment of top embroideries and estimated at fifty thousand dinars.⁵⁴ She fell ill for three times, so Dr. Bekhtshiyu' treated her, and she gave him a hundred thousand dinars for each time.⁵⁵

The historians have mentioned many examples of her extravagance and lavish expenditure. She wasted the properties of the Muslims, whilst Islam ordered them to be spent on the poor and the deprived.

[The Lavishness of al-Beramika](#)

Al-Beramika dazzled the people with their lavish expenditure and their great gifts to the poets and the writers. They regarded money as worthless and unimportant. That is because the public treasury was at their hand and the organs of the government were under their control. None asked and reckoned them for that. So they went too far in practicing pleasures and desires.

The gatherings of singing in their palaces were more than those in al-Rashid's ones. They were greater in the instruments of amusement. They had the singers the like of whom was not available in the country, especially as it concerns Fouz and Ferida. Al-Rashid thought that he was in the Garden when he attained al-Beramika's places decorated with containers inlaid with jewels, full treasuries, silk pillows full of embroideries, slave girls wearing silk and jewels and received him with perfumes none came to know what they were, for they were sweet-smelling.⁵⁶

Um Ja'far had a hundred maids who wore different kinds of clothes and ornaments.⁵⁷ Ja'far built a palace on which he spent twenty million dirhams.⁵⁸ Al-Dimyari has mentioned: "Ja'far possessed all the country estates. When al-Rashid passed by country estates or gardens, he asked about them, and it was said to him that they belonged to Ja'far."⁵⁹

Al-Beramika spent a lot of money on affecting noble deeds and attracting hearts to them. They gave money without reckoning. Al-Fadhli gave sixteen thousand dirhams to a person, while the person asked him for four thousand dirhams.⁶⁰ He gave to the commander of his police four million dirhams.⁶¹

Al-Beramika went too far in giving money. Al-Khetib al-Baghdadi has mentioned: "When Yehya (al-Bermeki) rode (his mount), he gave two hundred dirhams to those who asked him in the road." A poet came to Yehya and recited to him:

O Namesake of the chaste one, two gardens have been given to you through the favor of our Lord.

Whoever passes by you in the road gets two hundreds of your giving.

Two hundred dirhams to the one like me is few; they are given by you to him who asks to be given quickly.

Yehya approved his poetry and ordered twenty thousand dirhams to be given to him.⁶² Abu Thumama praised al-Fadhli b. Yehya, an orator, saying:

To al-Fadhli belongs the day of al-Taliqan and before it, on the day when he inflects on Khaqan.

There is no two days like his two days that lasted for two successive campaigns.

He closed the fortified borderline cities and returned the friendship of the Hashimites after the disunion, so their mountain passes are close to each other. You have preserved the government of the group of Hashim from that two swords may be pulled out among them.⁶³

That is the government, not that one because of its confusion the news became great and the two arbitrators scattered. So al-Fadhli gave him seven hundred thousand dirhams⁶⁴ and bestowed a robe of honor on him. Raja' b. 'Abd al-'Aziz asked Yehya for some money, and he gave him seven hundred thousand dirhams.⁶⁵

Al-Qali mentioned that a poet came in to al-Fadhli b. Yehya, and a servant came out and told al-Fadhli of his newborn baby, so the poet said to him:

Those who seek generosity, the spear, the sword, and the arrowhead rejoice at the newborn baby from among the family of Berek.

The hopes spread out because of his favor, especially when he is from among the children of al-Fadhli.

So he ordered a hundred thousand dirhams to be given to him. Then the poet recited to al-Fadhli another poem, and he gave him another hundred thousand dirhams.⁶⁶ An 'Abbasid ruler usurped a village called al-Rughab. So their owners brought a suit against him before a judge, but the judge decided the suit for the 'Abbasid ruler.

The ruler threatened them and ordered them to leave the village. Accordingly, they sought help from Ja'far, and he helped them through buying the village for twenty millions dirhams and gave it as a gift to their owners.

For this reason a poet praised him for his favor, saying:

The generosity of his hands returned al-Rughab when its inhabitants were in the same position with respect to an armless fisherman.

They believed in losing it and their destruction, and the time threatened them with a more difficult day.

So he freed it for them when they were in a critical situation.

None other than him was hoped to release it; the generous is hoped for all difficult affairs.

Those far and near talked about that generosity of al-Beramika.⁶⁷ Ja'far minted for himself big gold dinars, that he might give it to the people. He wrote on both faces these two poetry lines:

Man a yellow (dinar) of the minting of the house of the kings. On its face Ja'far's face appears. It is one above a hundred. If a poor person attains it, he becomes wealthy.⁶⁸

They generously gave and granted without reckoning the properties to the poets and the writers. They poets praised them with the best attributes, heaped laudation and praise upon them. For example, Ashja'al-Selemi praised Ja'far, saying:

Ja'far's noble traits and deeds spread among the people just as the sun does.

A king whose soul rules high ranks; and reason is the best policy of soul.

When the kings see him, they change loud speech into whisper.⁶⁹

Yazid b. Khalid better known as Ibn Hesiya praise al-Fadhli b. Yehya, saying:

Do you not see that generosity descended and came to Ja'far's palm of the hand.

If the sky of Abu al-'Abbas rains heavily, then what a drizzle and what a downpour!

Muslim b. al-Waleed praised Ja'far, saying:

The misfortunes of the time turned away from Ja'far's neighbor; and his asker caught precious desires.

He is the sea whose flowing covers the valley of the earth, and whose coasts reach the borders of the country.

If there was nothing in his palm of the hand except his soul, he would give it generously; therefore, his asker should fear Allah.

Allah has a sword the like of which is not available on earth. You strike with it and Yehya fight with it.

The poets went too far in praising and magnifying them, for they received from them many properties and gifts, to the extent that the market of poetry and literature was active. To that a poet referred when he said:

What we have found of the generosity of Fedl b. Yehya is that he has made all the people poets.

Anyway, those enormous properties al-Beramika gave to the poets were of the public treasury of the Muslims. That is because they had had no money before they undertook the ministry. The historians have narrated: "Khalid b. Bermek was a governor over Tebristan, al-Ray, and Demawand. Al-Mansur punished him, accused him of taking three thousand dirhams, and threatened him with killing.

Khalid was unable to pay them from his personal property. He sought help from his companions, and they gave him some of it, and al-Khayzaran gave him a lot of it. Then al-Mehdi interceded with his father for him, and he exempted him from the remainder."⁷⁰ However, when he and his sons were entrusted with authority, they controlled the wealth of the 'Abbasid government.

So they possessed villages, gardens, and other things whose number was not accounted and whose value was not known. They had a good village in every corner, a fruitful garden on each creek, a valuable possession in every city and town. Their annual income was millions of dinars.⁷¹

Of course this abundant wealth they had during that short period of time resulted from their possessing alone the properties of the Muslims and their plundering the possessions of the government. They made use of their political influence in playing with the public treasuries to which money was collected from all the Islamic regions.

These examples we have mentioned of Harun, his family's, and his ministers' extravagance indicate his high treason toward the Muslims, his possessing alone their wealth, and his violating the sacredness of Islam.

[His Letter to Sufyan](#)

As Harun deviated from the moderate way and wasted the properties of the Muslims, the righteous men were displeased with him and turned away from him. He tried to meet with Sufyan al-Thouri. So he wrote him a letter and filled the letter with cajolery and showing affection to him, that he might respond to

his purpose, and he would use that as a means to deceive the general populace. In it he has mentioned:

From the servant of Allah, Harun, the Commander of the faithful.

To his brother in Allah Sufyan b. Sa'eed al-Thouri.

No then, O My brother, you have come to know that Allah has made the Muslims as brothers, and I have made you as a brother with a brotherhood through which I will never cut off your rope, and from which I will never cut love for you. I have the best affection to you and the most complete will.

Were it not for this authority with which Allah had entrusted me, I would go to you, even if creeping. That is because of the love for you I find in my heart. All my and your brothers visited me and congratulate me on that to which I came. I have opened the public treasuries and given them grand gifts through which my soul has become happy and I have become delighted.

I have found you slow. I have written you many letters telling you of my strong yearning for you. O Abu 'Abd Allah, you have come to know of the excellence of the visitation to the believer and communicating with him. Therefore, when this letter of mine reaches you, then hurry! Hurry!

Sufyan's Answer

When Sufyan received Harun's letter, he threw it away and said to his righteous brothers: "Let one of you read it, for I ask Allah's forgiveness that I may touch a thing an oppressor had touched. When he read it, he (Sufyan) ordered them to write him an answer as follows:

From the dead person.

To the servant deceived by hopes, Harun, who is deprived of the sweetness of faith and the pleasure of the recitation of the Qur'an. Now then, I wrote to you to inform you that I have cut off your rope and affection to you. You have made me a witness against you through your confessing against yourself in your letter through your plundering the public treasury of the Muslims.

You have spent it on something other than its right and employed it in something other than its concept. You are not content with that which you have done. You are far away from me when you wrote to me to make me as a witness against you. I and my brothers who were present when your letter was read have borne witness against you. We will bear witness against you when we stand before Allah, the Just Judge, tomorrow.

O Harun, you have spent the wealth in the public treasury of the Muslims without taking their consent. Are those whose hearts have been reconciled, those officials appointed over them on the earth of Allah, the Mujahid in the way of Allah, and the wayfarer content with your deed? Are those who know the Qur'an by heart and men of knowledge satisfied with your deed?

Are the orphans and the widows pleased with your deed? Does a group of your subjects consent to that? Therefore, Harun, tie your loincloth, prepare an answer to the question, and a gown to the tribulation. Know that you will stand before Allah, the Just Judge. So fear Allah in respect with yourself, for you have deprived of the sweetness of knowledge, asceticism, and the pleasure of recitation of the Qur'an, and sitting with the good. Your soul has permitted you to be an oppressor and an Imam of the oppressive.

O Harun, you have sat on the throne, worn the silk, lowered the curtains in front of your door, and likened yourself through the proof to the Lord of the worlds. Then you have seated your chamberlains before your door and your curtains. They wrong the people and do not treat them with justice. They punish those drink wine while they themselves drink wine.

They commit fornication while they punish those who commit it. They steal while they cut off the hands of those who steal. They kill but they kill those who kill. You and they should establish these prescribed punishments against yourselves before you establish them on the people.

Therefore, Harun, what will you do when the caller on behalf of Allah calls out: muster the oppressive and their helpers? You will stand before Allah and your hands are shackled to your neck. Nothing will untie them except your justice and fairness. The oppressive will stand around you; you will be in front of them and lead them to the fire.

It is as if that I saw you, O Harun, seized by the neck and taken to the place of driving, and that you saw you good deeds in the balance of those other than you, the evil deeds of those other than you along with your own deeds in your balance, a tribulation on a tribulation, and a darkness on a darkness. Therefore, Harun, fear Allah in respect with your subjects and keep Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, in his community.

Know that this authority has come to you and it will go to those other than you. In this manner the world does toward its inhabitants one by one. Some of them have supplied themselves with deeds that will benefit him; and some of them have lost their lives in this world and the next. Be careful and be careful not to write to me after this (letter). That is because I will not write you an answer. Greetings! Then he sent this letter open without folding and sealing.[72](#)

This immortal letter indicates that Sufyan had great faith, bravery, and self-negation. That is because he showed Harun his arbitrary deeds in respect with the properties of the Muslims and his possessing alone their wealth, and that he was responsible for his conducts and would be punished because of them before Allah, the Most High.

Besides he told him about the corrupt organs of his government. He told him that they betrayed the community and plundered its wealth. Moreover, he told him that he and the members of his government had to establish those prescribed punishments against themselves before they established them against thieves and criminals, due to the fact that they were the source of corruption and crime on earth.

It is not correct to regard Harun as among the caliphs who kept the Islamic entity and teachings because of his deeds that contradicted the essence of Islam.

Ibn Khaldun's Statement

Ibn Khaldun went too far in sanctifying Harun. He acquitted him from extravagance and treason. He has said: "The man (Harun) did not commit any forbidden thing from among the great sins with the men of the creed. Indeed those people were far from practicing extravagance and luxury in their clothes and ornaments and the rest of their needs because of their coarse desert life and the simplicity of the religion they did not leave."⁷³

Ibn Khaldun was among those who did not write for history and serving the community. Rather he wrote for a special party far from the essence of reality. In many of his researches he lowered the curtain on the reality. He served the government or the environment. Through that he has wronged Islamic history.

Indeed to judge that Harun was innocent of extravagance and wastefulness does not fit the events on which the historians have unanimously agreed and that indicate that Harun wasted and plundered the properties of the Muslims. None of the writers has agreed with him on this statement. Ahmed Amin, known for his deviation from Islam and his partiality, has not agreed with him when he said:

"We do not agree with him (Ibn Khaldun) on that which is concluded from his statement that he (Harun) was far from extravagance and luxury, that he led a simple life, and that he did not commit a forbidden thing. For this is also excessiveness in the sanctification Harun's conduct does not show, especially as it concerns rhetorical proofs.

For the nearness of his time to that of al-Mansur does not require that he lived as he did. Indeed he declared several times that luxury and comfort at the time of al-Rashid was more than that at the time of al-Mansur. If the nearness of the time was enough as a proof, we would not see that al-Ma'mun, whose time was near to that of al-Rashid, follow his behavior.

"The wonder is that he has specified long chapters in which he has dealt with describing the civilization, the comfort, and the luxury during the days of al-Rashid, al-Amin, and al-Ma'mun and their giving variety to food and drink.

It is he who has agreed with al-Mas'udi and al-Teberi on what they have narrated in respect with the wedding of al-Ma'mun and Bouran, daughter of al-Hasan, and that al-Ma'mun gave her during her dowry on the night of her wedding ceremony a thousand stone of corundum and kindled ambergris candles, each one weighed Mann (a dry measure =815, 39 g). He ordered carpets to be spread out for her. Each carpet was woven in gold and inlaid with pearls and corundum."⁷⁴

Is this not going too far in luxury? Did the nearness of the time of al-Ma'mun to that of al-Rashid make the people lead a simple life just as the nearness of the time of al-Rashid to that of al-Mansur did, as he

says?

Indeed Ibn Khaldun is mistaken in his describing the time of al-Rashid with simplicity, and that he and his people were far from extravagance and luxury.⁷⁵

Al-Joumerd's Defense

Not only Ibn Khaldun stood alone in this weak speech but also Dr. 'Abd al-Jebbar al-Joumerd shared him in that. When he found no way to criticize those reports indicating al-Rashid's going too far in practicing extravagance, he began searching for him excuses and justifications.

He has said: "If we study the social and the then prevailing situation, and (if) we remember what we have previously said in respect with the amount of the properties the state taxes produced to the public treasury, which is nowadays equal to the public treasuries of more than ten states, the amount of luxury and lavishness of some special classes, the degree that competition reached for winning praise and attracting the public opinion through the poets, the writers, the narrators, every possessor of tongue and opinion, who are like the moving newspapers at this time; if we knew all these things, then we would give some right to this generous and munificent one (al-Rashid) if it was not all of it." ⁷⁶

He has also said: "Indeed al-Rashid was worthier than those other than him in giving and in greater need of praise and good reputation than these (i.e., al-Beramika), due to the fact that he was a caliph and superior to the rest of the people. Nevertheless, he was open-handed by nature.

He found the environment around him (full) in the violence of the madness of lavishness and expenditure, so he kept pace with it, that he might keep the balance of his fame; and he found in that neither affection nor trouble as long as the land tax (kharajj) of the state was in great inflation."⁷⁷ An excited sentiment urged professor al-Joumerd toward Harun, for he refused to condemn him for his deviating from the way or to record against him any criticism from that on which the historians have unanimously agreed.

Then he began to look for remote justifications to correct his mistakes in a weak manner far from the reality of thinking. As for his statement: "Indeed the budget of the state reached the top in inflation, that the extravagance of the special classes reached the zenith, and that they began to acquiring praise and laudation through the poets and the writers," it cannot be regarded as a justification for spending the properties of the Muslims on his pleasures and his purposes which were not adopted by Islam, which required the ruler to spend the properties of the state on developing the economic condition and securing the noble, free life for citizens.

According to the Islamic Law, it is forbidden for man to waste his own properties as well as that of men. That is because he should guarantee them and is responsible for spending them on illegal purposes. As for his need of praise and good reputation, it is not adopted by the Islamic Law, which orders the ruler to

take precautionary measures in respect with the properties of the Muslims and not to spend them on any kind of personal propagation that brings no fruit or benefit to the Islamic society.

As for that the environment around Harun was in the violence of the madness of lavishness and expenditure, and he was forced to keep pace with it, that he might keep the balance of his fame, such things cannot be used as justifications for exempting him from the responsibility before Allah.

For he, according to the Islamic Law, is responsible for his possessing alone the properties of the Muslims; like wise, he was responsible for the conducts of his people due to the fact that he was the caliph of the Muslims and ruler over them. It was incumbent on him to lead them to guidance and show them the straight path.

Surely these justifications mentioned to set right Harun's mistakes in his fiscal policy are a kind of tribalism which is the misfortune from which the Islamic world has suffered in the past and in the present time, for it has hidden the truth, misled the public opinion in many sides of its ideological life, and placed the Muslims at the end of the caravan.

It is incumbent on those who make researches on Islamic History and deal with its affairs in the light of Islam to be free from their traditional tendencies and to be loyal to the truth, that they might serve their community and their society.

Indeed it is incumbent on us to manifest to society the ideal, unique figures from among the Muslim men who turned away from tyranny and oppression, raised the slogan of justice, and demanded the rulers to put into effect the high principles Islam brought and who met because of that the most violent kind of problems and the greatest of them in tiredness and ordeal.

So we should boast of them and praise them. We should make the young follow their laudable deeds. As for those who plundered, made mischief, regarded as lawful all forbidden things such as honor, blood, wealth, spread the forbidden and corruption among the Muslims, they should be sent far from the high positions in Islam.

We must give proofs of the great sins they committed in respect with their community and their country. After this brief account of the fiscal policy followed by Harun, we have to return to deal with his other deeds, which indicate that he did not cling to the religion, and that he practiced the pleasures made forbidden by Allah.

His Fondness of Singing

Harun was fond of singing from his childhood, for he grew up in the laps of the songstresses. As he was so fond of singing that a large number of female singers and musicians gathered in his palace;⁷⁸ and his palace included different kinds of musical instruments. It was he who classified the singers into classes and ranks.

Accordingly, Ibrahim al-Mousili, Ibn Jami', and Zelzel, the drummer, were in the first class. Zelzel drummed; al-Mousili and Ibn Jami'sang. As for the second class, it included Ishaq, Seleem b. Selam, and 'Amru al-Ghezzal. As for the third class, it included those who played on the stringed instruments and lutes. Harun became delighted when he heard them singing.[79](#)

He ordered the singers to choose a hundred songs, and they did. Then he ordered them to choose ten of them, and they did. Then he ordered them to choose three of them, and they did.[80](#)

Ibrahim al-Mousili promised al-Hadi not to sing for anyone after him. When he died, Ibrahim al-Mousili did not sing anyone a song as a sign of fulfilling the promise. When al-Rashid ordered him to sing, he refused to do that. So he ordered him to be thrown into prison. He did not release him until he sang a song in his gathering.[81](#)

An example of Harun's fondness of singing is that he fell in love with three songstresses from among his slave girls, who were called Seher, Diya', and Kheneth. He composed poetry in respect with them; of that which he composed concerning them are the following poetry lines:

The three young ladies have possessed my rein and dwelled in all the places in my heart.

Why do men obey me while I obey them, but they disobey me?

That is nothing except the power of love through which they have a power stronger than that of mine![82](#)

Ibrahim b. Sa'd al-Zuhri, a pseudo clergyman, went to Baghdad. Al-Rashid honored him and asked him about singing, and he gave a religious verdict according to his desire making singing lawful. Ibrahim went to a traditionist to hear from him the traditions narrated by al-Zuhri.

He heard him singing, so he said to him: "I was desirous to hear from you, but, now, I will hear no tradition from you." So al-Zuhri said to him: "Therefore, I do not want to lose you. I must sing a song when I relate a tradition in Baghdad." The story became famous in Baghdad. Al-Rashid heard of it, so he sent for him and asked him about the tradition of al-Mekhzumiya whose hand the Prophet, May Allah bless him and his family, cut off in respect with stealing the ornaments.

So Ibrahim asked for 'ud (a lute). So al-Rashid asked: "The 'ud (rod) of the brazier?" "No," he replied, "but the 'ud (lute) of singing." So al-Rashid smiled. Ibrahim b. Sa'eed understood the reason beyond his smile, so he said: "O Commander of the faithful, perhaps, you have heard of the tradition of the foolish who hurt me yesterday and made me resort to swear by Allah?"

Al-Rashid said: "Yes." He ordered a lute to be brought to him, so Ibrahim sang him:

O Telha's mother, indeed the separation has come! The residence has become little, for the departure will be tomorrow!

“Which one of your jurists hate singing?” al-Rashid asked him.

“He whom Allah has tied (lit. Protected),” replied Ibrahim.

“Have you heard anything from Malik b. Anas in this respect?” asked al-Rashid.

“No, by Allah,” replied Ibrahim, “but my father told me that they met during an invitation to food took place in the (district) of Banu Yerbou’. They were then great, and Malik was less than them in the Islamic science of jurisprudence and in capability. They had tambourines, stringed instruments, and lutes. They sang and played. As for Malik, he had a square tambourine. He sang them:

Sulayma has reunited us; therefore, where is her meeting? Where?

She said to her friends (of the same age): Our meeting has shone! Come! Indeed life has become good to us! Come![83](#)

This attitude indicates that the people and the traditionists paid no attention to the Islamic precepts. This jurist gave a verdict contrary to the Islamic Law to seek nearness to Harun and to attain something of his world. Harun was too fond of singing that he asked his sister ‘Aliya to sing him a song, and she said to him: “By your life, I will compose a poem on you; I will sing you a song.” Immediately she said:

Your sister is ransom for you. You have been gifted with a favor to which we find no equal at the time!

Except immortality, and that is the nearness to you, my master! May the nearness to you continue and the subsistence lasts longer![84](#) Then she sang him another song, and he became very delighted with it. ‘Aliya was on top of those songstresses at that time. The embarking of her own family on amusement centers, dissoluteness, and fornication encouraged her to do that, and made her follow them pulling the tails of treason and disgrace! Abu Firas al-Hemedani reviled the ‘Abbasid family because of her, saying:

Does ‘Aliya belong to you or to them? Does Ibrahim, head of the singers, belong to you or to them? Any way, singing spread greatly in the time of Harun, to the extent that it was regarded as one of man’s necessary needs. Male and female singers were in the public places, in the streets, in the house of those rich and poor.

The people were too fond of it that when a singer sang a song on the bridge, they overcrowded around him, to the extent that they feared that the bridge would break down.[85](#) Some of them banged their heads against the pole due to the good singing.[86](#) The prices of the slave girls who sang well became high.

The better the slave girl sang, the better her price was. It was Ibrahim al-Mousili who taught them singing. When a slave girl mastered it, her price became high. Abu ‘Uyayna al-Muhelebi said in respect with a slave girl called Eman, whom he loved and whose price her master rose:

When I saw Eman’s master, I said: He has greatly increased her price.

May Allah not reward Abu Ishaq al-Mousili good and kindness on behalf of us.

He has come to us as a messenger through Satan's inspiration through which he has increased the prices of the songstresses. Because of the singing that is like the drunkenness of love, and to which hearts and ears incline.[87](#)

Corruption spread during that time. The people went too far in practicing dissoluteness. They were encouraged to practice that by their king Harun. For they saw that he did not leave pleasures and singing, to the extent that he sent for his brother Ibrahim b. al-Mehdi to sing him songs.[88](#) As Harun embarked on singing, he had abundant knowledge of all kinds of it.

For this reason Ibrahim al-Mousili said to Ibn Jami', the singer: "By Allah, I do not know that there is someone on earth knows singing more than the Commander of the faithful, Harun al-Rashid." Ibn Jami'said to him: "You are right, by Allah! He has listened to singing for twenty years and he is very clever!"[89](#)

Accordingly, his son al-Amen followed him in this respect. He was fond of singing even if during his most critical hours. He was listening to singing when he was besieged. He was listening to the singers' songs when the catapult stones fell on his carpet.[90](#)

The spread of singing inflicted heavy damages on the Islamic society. For it spoiled the morals, corrupted the society, and sent it far from the Islamic teachings that aimed at earnestness and prohibited men from practicing mischief and dissoluteness. The people were so morally corrupt that they became sad and sorrowful when Ibrahim al-Mousili died.

A poet elegized him and lamented for him, for he lost singing and amusement, saying:

The amusement has become residing beneath the earth in the district of the beloved ones.

When al-Mousili died, amusement died out through the good of the brothers and the companions.

The songstresses wept over him out of sadness, and so did amusement and pure drink.

The stringed instruments of the gatherings lamented for him, to the extent that the lute had mercy on the beat of the drum.[91](#)

Another poet elegized him, saying:

Al-Mousili died, so did the cheerfulness of the lutes and the songstresses.

Any cheerfulness subsists, the life of al-Mousili subsists throughout time.

Flutes and amusement centers will lament for him; and the old wine in the large jugs will help them.

The dead before this time were elegized through the lamentation of horses, swords, missing food bowls and guests. However, during the time of Harun, they were elegized by love, wine, and lute. Without doubt, this resulted from the disorder of the religion and the corruption of the thought in the people's souls, to the extent that this horrible neglect grew among them.

His Drinking Wine

Harun drank wine and became addicted to it. He invited his special slave girls when he wanted to drink it.⁹² Perhaps he undertook giving wine to his drinking companions. Hammad b. Ishaq related on the authority of his father, who said: "One night, al-Rashid sent for me. I came in to him. I found him sitting and there was before him a slave girl wearing a shirt, wide trousers, and veil decorated with flowers. The slave girl looked like a pearl. When he saw me, he said to me: 'Sit down!' I sat down.

Then he said to me: 'Sing!', and I sang him:

"The brown-red horse complained of running and explained that he would "speak if he could.

"He asked: 'To whom does this (poem) belong?' 'To me, Commander of the faithful,' I replied. 'Sing me the song of Ibn Surayjj,' he demanded. I sang it to him, and he became delighted, drank a Ratl (a weight) of wine, gave a Ratl of wine to the slave girl, gave me a Ratl, and then he said: 'Sing!', and I sang him:

"My yearning has become excited after the hair of my temples has become as "white as lightning.

"It has made me feeble. And the lightning has yearned for this love since the "ancient time.

"So he asked: 'To whom does this poem belong?' 'To me,' I replied. 'I heard another poem concerning it,' he retorted. 'Yes,' I replied, 'the poem of Ibn Mihriz.' 'Sing it,' he demanded. I sang him the song. So he became delighted, drank a Ratl, gave a Ratl of wine to the slave girl, and gave me a Ratl of wine. Then he said to me: "Sing!" And I sang him:

"O Fatim, slow in some of this coquetry! If you have decided to desert me, then be nice to me!"

"However he said to me, 'I do not like this poem. Sing me the poem of Ibn Surayh, and I sang him the poem. He drank a Ratl of wine, gave a Ratl of wine to the slave girl. Then he asked Ishaq to tell him about the days and the stories of the Arabs."⁹³ He gave to his companions glasses full of wine,⁹⁴ and so did they.

Reeq narrated, saying: "I was before al-Rashid; and his brother al-Mansur was with him. They were drinking. A slave girl called Khelub came in to them. The slave girl was carrying two glasses full of wine. There was along with her a boy carrying a lute. She sang them a song while the two glasses were in her hands. Her singing was:

May Allah greet you, my bosom friends, whether I was died or alive!

If I say something good, then it is good to you. If I say error, then it is error.

So they drank the wine and opened the letter. They found in it: ‘My two masters, your sister composed this poem today and dictated it to the slave girls. After I had had breakfast, I sent it to you. I have sent you some of my drink, my greetings, and the most skillful one of my slave girls,⁹⁵ that she may sing you a song.’ His sons followed that.

Al–Amin never gave up drinking wine. So his minister al–Fadhl b. al–Rabi‘described him, saying: “His glass occupied him and his cup busied him. He went on his amusement, and the days went on destroying him. He drank out of glasses laid with jewels.”⁹⁶ During his first days, al–Ma‘mun drank on Tuesday and Friday. Then he became addicted to wine from his going to al–Sham (Syria) to his death.⁹⁷

When the people came to know that their king Harun became addicted to drinking wine, they also became addicted to it. Wine spread among most circles and included those poor whose houses were not void of it. The poets wonderfully described it, to the extent that Abu Nu‘as sanctified it through his poetry, saying:

Praise wine through its boons, and call it by its best names!

Dr. Taha Husayn commented on this poetry line, saying: “Is the first hemistich of it not glorification of wine? Is the second hemistich of it not sanctification of wine? Is this poetry line, though simple and innocent, not of the words of the greatest kinds of dissoluteness?

Does it not contain mockery and sarcasm at the religion? Does the Qur’an not remind you? Do these words of Him, the Exalted, not remind you: ***And Allah’s are the best names; therefore call on Him thereby? (Qur’an, 7: 180).*** ”⁹⁸ Abu Nu‘as drank wine openly though he came to know that it was forbidden, saying:

If they say (that wine is) forbidden, say: (It is) forbidden, but pleasure is in the forbidden!

He also said:

Give me wine to drink and say to me that it is wine, and do not give it to me to drink secretly when openness is possible! Abu Nu‘as drank wine openly and described it in public because he came to know that the ruling authority became dissolute and turned away from the Islamic teachings that made it forbidden. The Holy Qur’an has clearly prohibited it. Allah, the Most High has said:

O you who believe, intoxicants and games of chance and (sacrificing to) stones set up and (dividing by) arrows are only an uncleanness, the Shaitan’s work; shun it therefore that you may be successful. The Shaitan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allah

and from prayer. Will you then desist? (Qur'an, 5:90-91).

However, Harun and other 'Abbasid kings paid no attention to the things made forbidden by Islam. They drank wine by day and night. Unfortunately, some people regard these dissolute persons as among the Imams of the Muslims and justify the great sins and the abominable things they committed.

As for al-Joumerd, he went too far in defending Harun. He said that Harun never drank wine, and that he drank nothing except grape juice which was not made forbidden by Islam.⁹⁹ Indeed these justifications indicate tribalism that represent no scientific fact, for the historians have unanimously agreed on that Harun drank wine and became addicted to it.

His Playing Backgammon

Harun committed all the forbidden things in Islam. Among that is his playing backgammon that is a kind of gambling Islam has made forbidden. Ishaq al-Mousili narrated on the authority of his father that one day he played backgammon for the robe of honor Harun worn and for that which he worn. He gambled with al-Rashid, and he won that game.

When al-Rashid won, Ibrahim rose and took off his clothes, and then he said to him: 'We must be loyal to the rules of backgammon. You have won, so I must be loyal to you. Therefore, wear my clothes.' So al-Rashid said to him: "Woe unto you! I wear your clothes?" "Yes, retorted Ibrahim, "If you want to treat me with justice. If you do not treat me with justice, then you are able and capable."

"Shall I ransom for you," asked al-Rashid. "Yes," answered Ibrahim. "What is the ransom?" asked Harun. "You say, Commander of the faithful," replied Ibrahim, "for you are more appropriate for speech." "I will give to you all that which I have worn," said Harun. "Ordered it to be given to me,

" Ibrahim demanded. Harun ordered clothes other than those he had worn. He took off his previous clothes and gave them to Ibrahim.¹⁰⁰ Harun played chess when traveled by the Tigris.¹⁰¹ Accordingly, his sons followed his example. His son al-Amin played backgammon with his minister al-Fadhli b. al-Rabi'.¹⁰²

The historians narrated that he played with the scepter. He threw arrows at the target. He played the ball with the bat.¹⁰³ His two sons imitated him in that. Al-Ma'mun went to the field of playing every day.¹⁰⁴ A day after the pledge of allegiance to him, al-Amin ordered a field for those who played and for those who beat a ball with a rod to be built around Abu Ja'far's palace.¹⁰⁵

Indeed at the time of Harun amusement prevailed, prostitution became general, dissoluteness spread, morals declined, and virtues were buried. If Harun had sat on the throne of the caliphate for a longer time, the Islamic state would have declined to a very low level with the ugliest declination, as Dr. Mustefa Jewad said.¹⁰⁶

Surely Harun's deeds indicate that he was corrupt and that he did not follow any religious rule. He went too far in practicing pleasures, to the extent that his royal palace became a café including all kinds of prostitution and dissoluteness. It was rarely void of the dance and singing parties and drinking wine. It was also an arena for oppression, tyranny, and dictatorship.

Harun's government did not represent Islam. Al-Rashid realized this aspect, so he pretended some Islamic aspects. He attended the gatherings of the pseudo clergymen, and they preached to him. He showed weeping out of fear of Allah.

He also went to the Sacred House of Allah (Mecca) to perform the hajj, for he wanted to deceive those naive and simple-minded, and to delude them that he was clinging to his religion and taking care of the affairs of Islam, and that he was the opposite to the Umayyads who neglected the affairs of the religion during their reign. Professor 'Amru Abu Neseer referred to that when he said:

“Indeed the 'Abbasids accused the Umayyad caliphs of weakness in religion. So it was an act of the truth in respect with this condition that they had appeared before the people with a new appearance showing respect to the religion and strengthening the Islamic beliefs.”[107](#)

Certainly Harun and other 'Abbasid kings had no purpose when they showed some religious rites except that they intended to mislead and deceive the public opinion through that their government protected Islam, defended its principles and objectives. Yes, their achieving the great conquests apparently indicate that they took care of the affairs of Islam.

However, if one carefully considers that, he will come to know that they did that to widen the area of their kingdom, spread their authority, enslave the peoples, and to control their economic resources. If they had been sticking to the interests of Islam, as it is said, they would have regarded the Muslims as equal through a truthful, just policy and put the Islamic precepts into practice.

Yet, we have never witnessed anything of that. The books of history are full of disgraceful pictures of their amusement and dissoluteness, their disparaging humane values, their possessing alone the affairs of the Muslims, and their forcing them to lead a life of abasement and enslavement. There was no shadow of the Islamic government aiming at developing life and raising the level of thought.

The Imam's Attitude

The attitude of Imam Musa, peace be on him, toward Harun's government was distinguished by severity and violence. For he made it forbidden for the Muslims to cooperate with it in all fields. This attitude clearly appeared through his conversation with Saffwan. He said to him:

“All things issue from you are good and well except one thing.” Saffwan burnt with grief and his soul melted, for he was sure that he did not incline to any act of disobedience; so he asked the Imam:

-May I be your ransom, which a thing is it?

-Your hiring your camels to this tyrannical one (i.e., Harun).

-I was neither joyful nor ungrateful when I hired them to him, neither for hunting nor for amusement. However, I have hired them to him for this road (i.e., the road to Mecca). I do not do that by myself; rather I send my servants with them.

-O Saffwan, do you take wage from them?

-Yes, may I be your ransom.

-Do you want them to subsist until you take your wage from them?

-Yes.

-Whoever wants them to subsist belongs to them; whoever belongs to them will enter the fire.

In his conversation, the Imam, peace be on him, expressed his strong vengeance and his intense displeasure with Harun's government. This attitude is strict and resulted from the core of the Islamic thought that declared war without leniency against the oppressive and the despotic, and made it forbidden for the Muslims to cooperate with them in all conditions.

Allah, the Most High, has said: And do not incline to those unjust, lest the fire touch you. (Qur'an, 11: 133)

Besides through this decision of his, the Imam, peace be on him, displayed the severe resistance of Islam toward the unjust. That is because he made it forbidden for the Muslims to incline to them and to desire for their subsistence, even if that serves their personal interests that link them to their oppression and tyranny.

For whoever loves the subsistence of the oppressive belongs to them and will be mustered with their group in the fire hell.

In a tradition of his, the Imam, peace be on him, warned his Shi'ites against taking part in Harun's government and undertaking a job in his state. He, peace be on him, said to Ziyad b. Selema: "O Ziyad, if I was thrown down a tremendous height and cut into pieces, it would be more lovable to me than that I undertook a work for them or walked on a carpet of a man of them. [108](#)

The Imam, peace be on him, resisted Harun's government with this intense resistance because following him would efface justice, change the Law of Allah, erase the truth, give life to falsehood, and destroy Islam. For this reason, he made it forbidden for his Shi'ites to cooperate with him, but he, peace be on him, excluded those who through their jobs could save the Muslims from oppression and tyranny, and granted the needs of the believers.

He, peace be on him, regarded that as lawful as it is in his conversation with 'Ali b. Yaqteen, who was excluded from following the unjust. We will explain that in a chapter of this book.

Certainly the Imam's attitude toward Harun's government is frank and clear. It required destroying his government and removing his kingdom. We will explain that he used only a negative resistance as means to achieve that. He did not think of anything other than that, due to the fact that he came to know that it would fail. We will mention that when we deal with the ordeals of the 'Alawids during his time.

Harun severely punishes the 'Alawids

Harun inherited from his grandfather al-Mansur violent detest and strong enmity toward the 'Alawids. So, from the beginning of his reign, he treated them rudely and wreaked his wrath upon them. He swore by Allah to uproot and kill them. He said: "By Allah, I will kill them (the 'Alawids) and their Shi'ites (followers)." [109](#)

He sent a big group of them to the fields of execution, buried part of them alive, threw many of them into the dark cells of prisons, and subjected them to other painful tragedies. The following is an account of some of them:

Harun banishes them from Baghdad

When Harun al-Rashid sat on the throne, he issued a royal decree ordering the 'Alawids to be immediately banished from Baghdad to Yethrib, and the authorities banished them from it. [110](#)

Indeed al-Rashid practiced a severe pressure on the family of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family. As they had come to know that he detested and hated them, they wandered aimlessly about the villages and the countryside in disguise lest someone should recognize them.

Terror and fear surrounded them. The police went too far in following and pursuing them; the intelligence and the security forces spread to look for them. They arrested some of them. Then they sent them to graves, prisons and to some of Harun's ministers, that they might send their heads as gifts on his birthdays.

May Allah take revenge on this tyrannical, arrogant one (Harun) for his subjecting the progeny of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, to exhaustion, and severe punishments, and for that he paid no attention to the sacredness of their grandfather, the Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family.

His disparaging them

Harun employed all his efforts and abilities to destroy the 'Alawids and to defame them. He gave a lot of money to some poets to dispraise them. The key to access to him, to communicate with him, and to

obtain some of his world was through this way. Aban b. 'Abd al-Hameed admonished al-Beramika for their preventing him from reaching al-Rashid, and they said to him:

-Why do you want to do that?

-I want to find favor with him like that Merwan b. Abi Hefsa found.

Al-Fadhli asked him: "That person has a certain way in that; and his way is dispraising Abu Talib's family. Through this way he finds favor and according to it he is given. Then follow this way, that we may do (the same to you)." So Aban paused for a while, and then he said: "I do not regard that as lawful."

"What shall we do," retorted al-Fadhli, "seeking the world is not attained except through the unlawful." At last, Aban sold his life in the hereafter for his life in this world. He withdrew from his thought. He composed a poem and dispraised them in it, saying:

By the right of Allah, I call on him who is a Muslim; I have included in what I said the Arabs and the non-Arabs. Is the uncle of Allah's Apostle is closer in degree to him (the Apostle) or the cousin in the rank of the lineage? And which one of them is more appropriate for him and his covenant? And who has the right to inherit that which he has made obligatory?

So if 'Abbas is more entitled to your children, and 'Ali was after that for a reason, then 'Abbas's children inherit him just as the cousin is veiled from the uncle's inheritance!

He showed his poem to al-Fadhli, and he said to him: "Nothing more wonderful than your poetry line has reached the Commander of the faithful!" Then he went to al-Rashid and recited them to him, and he gave him (money) and brought him nearer to him. [111](#) Harun gave great wealth and enormous properties to those poets who disparaged the 'Alawids. For example, Merwan b. Hefsa recited to him his poem in which he has mentioned:

'Abbas's children are luminous stars; when a star sets another appears.

The fortresses of 'Abbas's sons are (available) during all impasses; they are the heads of the high spears and the cutting swords.

The kingdom whose dynasty and pulpits have become strutting through you congratulate you.

Your father is the friend of the chosen one excluding the Hashimites in spite of your enviers.

So Harun gave him five thousand dinars and a robe of honor. He ordered ten Roman captives to be given to him. Moreover, he ordered him to be ridden on one of his special horses. [112](#)

Harun gave these enormous properties to this poet because he satirized Ahl al-Bayt, the members of the house, peace be on them, praised the 'Abbasids, and indicated that he was worthier of the Prophet than the 'Alawids.

Yet another example of that is that Mansur al-Nimri came in to Harun and recited to him his poem in which he satirized Imam 'Ali's family, saying: Say to al-Hasan and al-Husayn's children: Stick to right affairs.

Remove from you the untrue wishes and dreams regarded as falsehood.

You were kind to Yehya b. 'Abd Allah when he was on the verge of death.

If you had punished him because of what his hand committed, you would have dealt him a fatal blow.

You have showed generosity toward 'Ali's family a favor that is not small.

When you hurt them, though wrongdoers, you feel pricking of the conscience.

I (complain) to Allah of the falsehood of 'Ali's children and of the great falsehood of their statement.

They call the Prophet father, while one of the lines of (Surat) al-Ahzab refuses (that). [113](#)

After al-Nimri had finished reciting the poem, Harun said to him: "Woe unto you! A thing has been in my soul for twenty years. I have been unable to manifest it, while you have showed it in this poetry line, 'When you hurt them....'" Then he said to al-Fadhl b. al-Rabi':

"Take al-Nimri by the hand, let him enter the public treasury, and let him take whatever he pleases." Al-Rabi' let him enter the public treasury where there was nothing except twenty purses of money. He carried them (and went away). [114](#)

Mansur al-Nimri affected inclination to Harun and enmity toward the 'Alawids. However, he harbored friendship to them. So an opponent of his informed al-Rashid against him and told him that he secretly maintained Shi'ism. He recited to him Mansur's poem in which he lamented for the murder of the master of martyrs, Imam al-Husayn, peace be on him.

The poem is as follows:

A luxurious, neglect one from among the people willed; they busy the people with the false.

The Prophet's children are killed; and they wish the killer the abiding gardens.

Woe unto you, O killer of al-Husayn! You have borne a burden weighing heavily on the bearer.

Which favoritism have you given to Ahmed in respect with his family?

With which face will you meet the Prophet while you took part in killing him?

Come on! Seek his intercession tomorrow or do not come to his heavenly water along with those drinkers.

I have no doubt about him who killed him; rather I have doubt about him who killed him.

O you who blame me, indeed I love Ahmed's children; therefore earth is in the blamer's mouth!

I had adopted that on which your religion depended, but I had not reached any benefit through your religion.

Your religion is turning away from the Prophet; and one who turns away from the Prophet's family is like him who communicates with them.

In his poem, Mansur has dealt with the complaint of Fatima, peace be on her, and demanded him who took vengeance on those who wronged her, saying:

She is wronged, while the Prophet is her father. She turns her eye full of tears in all directions.

Are there not enthusiastic ones to show anger for her through pulling out the swords and thin, sharp spears?

His following poetry lines were recited to Harun:

The Apostle's family and those who love them hide themselves out of fear of killing. The Christians and the Jews are safe, while the community of monotheism harasses and terrifies them.

So Al-Rashid burnt with rage and anger. He ordered him to be brought immediately. The police went to him, but they reached on the night when he died and was buried. [115](#) Al-Rashid said: "I have decided to exhume and burn him." [116](#)

The Muslims at that black period were afraid of mentioning the laudable deeds of Ahl al-Bayt, the members of the house, peace be on them. No poet dared to praise them and lament for them. If he had done that, he would have subject himself to vengeance and torture. For example, Ibn Herema [117](#) praised them in his following poetry lines:

Whatever I am blamed for love for them, indeed I love Fatima's children.

The children of the daughter of him who brought the clear verses, the religion, and the standing Sunna.

He was asked about the one who said them, and he denied that he had not said them. He cursed the one who said them, so his son criticized him for that he cursed himself, and he had come to know that he had said them. However, he said to him: "O my little son, this is better for one than that Ibn Qehtebea takes him." [118](#)

The people turned away from mentioning Ahl al-Bayt, the members of the house, peace be on them, out of fear of Harun. Besides some of those who renounced Islam and turned away from it openly cursed them and criticized them, that they might seek nearness to al-Rashid.

An example of that is Merwan b. Abi Hefsa disparaged the dignity of Fatima, mistress of the women of the world, peace be on her. He said that she ground with a hand mill, and that Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, married her to 'Ali, who was miserable and poor. Accordingly, Ibn al-Hajjaj [119](#) refuted his words, saying:

Your statement on Fatima, the chaste, belongs to someone very fond of and fascinated by hostility.

You have reviled her because of the hand mill and the grains she ground, while your food is still grains not ground.

And you said that Allah's Apostle married her to a miserable one, while she was miserable, daughter of a miserable one. [120](#)

Merwan b. Abi Hefsa violated all the Islamic sacred things and values to seek nearness to Harun. He attacked the dearest of all the people to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, and the most loveable to him, his pure part, mistress of the women of the world (Fatima), peace be on her, that he might attain something of Harun's comfort and world.

As for the attributes through which he tried to criticize the mistress of the women, they were the most distinguished of her attributes. She had no defect when she ground grains for her children and her husband without seeking someone's help.

For her father, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, did not buy her a servant to help her with her home affairs, while she was the dearest of his children to him. Through that he, may Allah bless him and his family, gave a lesson to the rulers of the Muslims in respect with taking great care of the Muslims' properties and turning away from choosing any of them.

As for her marriage from Imam 'Ali the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, though he was miserable and poor, that is because there was no equal to her except him. In respect with the subject of marriage, Islam pays no attention to material and wealth; rather it pays attention to chastity and excellence.

It never takes into consideration life pleasures as long as man has a sound religion. In the Islamic history, since its dawn, there is none has talents, perfection, genius, firm thought, and strong faith like those Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, had. Was there under the sky of the Muslim community anyone better and higher than him, that the Prophet might marry his dear daughter to him?

However, those persons who did not understand the Islamic teachings looked at the highness of personality through one corner that was wealth and property. For this reason they criticized and disparaged the mistress of the women, the equal to Meryam, daughter of 'Umran, in sacredness and chastity. That is because she married Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, who was poor and had

no money.

A Terrible Massacre

Harun's tyrannical soul had neither mercy nor compassion toward the 'Alawids, for he committed the most horrible crime history has recorded against them. He ordered a group of them to be executed on one night in a sorrowful way. Hemid b. Qehtebe, a headsman, related that terrible tragedy. 'Ubayd Allah al-Nisaburi narrated, saying: "I came in to Hemid b. Qehtebe in the month of Remedan. He ordered a lunch to be brought.

Then he invited me to have food, so I said to him: 'O Emir, this is the month of Remedan. I am not sick, nor have I an illness that makes fast breaking obligatory. Perhaps the Emir has an excuse in respect with that.' He said to me: 'I have no illness that makes fast breaking obligatory. Then he wept.'" After he had had the lunch, 'Ubayd Allah turned to him and asked him about the reason for his weeping, and he answered him:

-When I was at Tus, Harun sent for me at a dark night. When I stood before him, he asked me:

-How is your obedience to the Commander of the faithful?

-I sacrifice my soul and property for him.

So Harun bowed his head, and then he let me go. Shortly after that he sent for me. When I stood before him, he asked me:

-How is your obedience to the Commander of the faithful?

-I sacrifice my soul and property for him.

So Harun smiled, and then he allowed me to go. When I came into my house, the messenger came for the third time, saying: "Respond to the Commander of the faithful." When I stood before him, he asked me:

-How is your obedience to the Commander of the faithful?

-I sacrifice my soul and property for him.

So he smiled and said: "Take this sword and carry out the servant's orders. I took the sword. The servant walked in front of me until he led me to a closed house. There was a well in the middle of the house. In it there were three closed rooms. He opened one of them, and I found in it twenty persons; they were ranging among old, middle-aged, and young.

Then he said to me: "Indeed, the Commander of the faithful is commanding you to kill these (people);

they all are the sons of ‘Ali and Fatima.”

He took them out one by one, and I beheaded them. Then he threw their bodies and their heads into the well. Then he opened the second room where there was twenty persons and said to me: “Indeed, the Commander of the faithful is commanding you to kill these (people); they all are the sons of ‘Ali and Fatima.”

He took them out one by one, and I beheaded them. Then he threw their bodies and their heads into the well. Then he opened the third room where there was twenty ‘Alawids. He took them out one by one and ordered me to kill them. I executed nineteen of them, and there remained an old man, who said to me: “Woe to you!

Which an excuse will you have on the Day of Resurrection when you meet my grandfather, Allah’s Apostle, May Allah bless him and his family, and you killed sixty persons from among his grandsons? So I shook all over with fear. A violent shock befell me, so the servant looked at me angrily and rebuked me. For this reason I killed that old man and threw him in that well.

Then he turned to ‘Ubayd Allah and asked him: “Do my fasting and my prayer benefit me while I killed sixty persons from among the children of Allah’s Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family? I have no doubt that I will be immortal in the fire!” [121](#)

If the ascription of this massacre to him was correct, [122](#) then it would indicate that he had no faith in Allah and the Last Day. For he violated the things made forbidden by Allah and unjustly shed the blood of the family of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family.

His demolishing the Shrine of al-Husayn Al-Rashid was unable to stand and flamed up with rage when he saw the Muslim masses frequently and in groups visit the shrine of the plant of the sweet basil of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, and master of the youth of the Garden Imam al-Husayn, peace be on him.

So he ordered the custodian of the Holy Shrine, Ibn Abi Dawud that he might wreak his wrath and torture upon him. When he stood before him, he said to him angrily:

“What has made you live in al-Hayr?” [123](#)

“Indeed, al-Hasan b. Rashid [124](#) has put me in that place,” answered Ibn Abi Dawud.

So al-Rashid shook his head and ordered him to be brought immediately, saying: “I think that this has been planned by al-Hasan.” When he stood before him, he asked him: “What made you put this man (Ibn Abi Dawud) in al-Hayr?” Al-Hasan asked him for sympathy, saying: “May Allah have mercy on him who placed him in al-Hayr. Um Musa [125](#) ordered me to place him in it and to give him thirty dirhams a month.”

So al-Rashid became calm and said: "Return him to al-Hayr and give to him what Um Musa had given to him." [126](#) Shortly after that al-Rashid ordered the Holy Shrine and the neighboring houses to be demolished. He ordered the nabk tree beside the Holy Grave to be uprooted. [127](#)

Moreover he ordered the land of Karbala' to be plow, that he might efface the traces of the Pure Grave. However, Allah took vengeance on him. For he died in Khuresan before the end of the year. [128](#)

Al-Rashid's effort failed and his plot came to nothing. Al-Rashid's name and glory, and those of the Umayyad and 'Abbasid kings, and other than them from among those who showed enmity toward the master of martyrs, peace be on him, died. However Imam al-Husayn has remained as a symbol of immortality.

His name is mentioned in all the languages on earth. Millions of Muslims frequently and in groups visit his Holy Shrine; they hold mourning ceremonies for them. The pure shrines in Karbala' will remain as immortal symbols for humanity, increase in importance and greatness throughout the stages of history.

Al-Husayn will remain on top of honor and glory until Allah inherits the earth and those on it.

Harun orders the 'Alawids to be executed and assassinated

The tyrannical, Harun, ordered a large group of the 'Alawid great figures to be executed and assassinated, while they were the best of the Muslims in knowledge, piety, and sticking to religion. We will mention some of them and explain the murders and the severe punishments to which they were subjected:

1. 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Imam Zayn al-'Abidin

His kunya was Abu Muhammad. His mother was the daughter of Sa'eed b. Muhammad b. Jubayr. He was entrusted with authority by al-Hasan b. 'Ali, who was martyred in Fekh.

Al-Rashid said to al-Fadhl b. Yehya: "Have you heard that there is a male of them (the 'Alawids) in Khuresan?" Al-Fadhl answered: "No, by Allah! I did my best, but none of them has been mentioned to me. However, I heard a man mentioning a place where 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan lived."

When al-Rashid heard of that, he sent for him, and he was brought to him. 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan stood before al-Rashid, and he said to him: "I have heard that you gather the Zaydis and summon them to go out in revolt along with you."

'Abd Allah begged him and denied that, saying: "O Commander of the faithful, I adjure you before Allah in respect with my blood. By Allah I do not belong to this class, nor have I a name among them. The possessors of this affair are contrary to me. When I was a boy, I grew up in Medina, walked in its deserts and hunted hawks. I intended to do nothing other than this."

However al-Rashid's heart was not flexible for his seeking sympathy, and he ordered him to be detained in a prison of his. This 'Alawid person was imprisoned for a long time, to the extent that he was fed up with prison, so he sent a letter to Harun and filled it with cursing and abuses.

When al-Rashid read the letter, he burnt with rage. According he ordered him to be transferred from prison. Then he summoned Ja'far b. Yehya and ordered him to keep him with him. On the following day, corresponded to Nouruz 'Id, Ja'far advanced him, beheaded him, washed his head, put it in a handkerchief, and sent it to al-Rashid as a gift along with a group of gifts. [129](#)

Ja'far committed this crime because he came to know that the most precious gift given to al-Rashid was the murder of the children of Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family. For it delighted him, and made him have great confidence in him.

2. Al-'Abbas b. Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah b. Imam Zayn al-'Abidin

His Kunya was Abu al-FadhI. His mother was Um Selema, daughter of Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn. He came in to Harun and spoke with him for a long time, and he said to him: "O Son of the doer!" So al-'Abbas became exited and answered him with some severe words, saying: "That is your mother to whom the slave traders came one after the other!"

This was the statement of the free who do not yield to force and authority. When al-Rashid heard that, he boiled with anger. He ordered him to be brought nearer to him. Then he rose, hit him with an iron bar, and killed him. [130](#)

3. Idris b. 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan b. al-Hasan b. Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him

His mother was 'Atika, daughter of 'Abd al-Melik b. al-Herth, a famous, poet. Idris took part at the Battle of Fekh. He and his retainer called Rashid escaped it. He went out. Then he headed for Egypt. He arrived in it at night. He sat at the door of a man from among the followers of the 'Abbasids.

The man heard his words and went out. Idris advanced himself to him. He asked him not to tell anyone about him, and he responded to his words. The man lodged him at that night and entertained him well. A caravan wanted to go to Africa. The man sent Rashid with the caravan. He remained with Idris.

He took him through another road for fear that he might be captured. They continued their walking along the road until they reached Tenja and Fas. There Idris propagated his beliefs and spread his objectives, to the extent that the Barbers responded to him and pledged the allegiance to him. Al-Rashid heard of that, and he took a great care of his affair.

He complained of his affair to his prime minister, Yehya al-Bermeki, and he said to him: "I will take care of his affair for you." He summoned Sulayman b. Jerir al-Juzri, a Zaydi theologian. He promised him

enormous properties if he assassinated Idris, and his wicked soul responded to him.

He gave him a deadly poison, and he went covering the country until he reached Idris. He secretly told him about his doctrine. He told him that he escaped from the authorities because he was a Zaydi theologian. As a result Idris was intimate with him and brought him near to him. The Zaydis met him, and he gave them lectures and lessons on their doctrine.

When Idris was sure of his loyalty, Sulayman took out for him a bottle of perfume, and said to him: “The like of it is not available in this country.” Idris took it. He smelt it, and it poisoned him. He remained alive during the daytime. Then the poison acted on him, and he joined the Most High Comrade (Allah). It was said that he gave him a grilled fish as a gift. When he ate it, he died soon.

A follower of the ‘Abbasids prided himself on killing Idris, saying:

O Idris, do you think that you will escape the Caliph’s scheme? Or an escape will protect you?

Either he will catch up with you or you will reside in a country where no daytime finds the right way to you.

If his displeasure draws the swords, they grow longer and ages become short because of them.

He is a king as if that death obeyed his order, to the extent that it is said that fates obey him.

He was buried there. His wife was pregnant. Then she gave birth to a male baby, and the baby was called Idris. They waited until he became a grown-up and pledged allegiance to him. Through that the government of Banu al-Hasan was formed in Morocco, and their state was called Daulet al-Adarisa (the State of the Idrisis). [131](#)

4. Yehya b. ‘Abd Allah b. al-Hasan b. al-Hasan b. ‘Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him.

His kunya was Abu al-Hasan. He was a man of great importance and a high rank. He had a remarkable position with the Muslims. We deal with some of his affairs and conditions as follows:

A. His distinguishing Features

He was short and handsome in face and body. The progeny of the prophets was recognized through his face. A spy of Harun’s described him saying: “He was medium-sized and brown. His brownness was beautiful. He was good-eyed and big-bellied.”

B. His Scientific Position

He was among the great men of knowledge and virtue. He narrated hadith (tradition) and narrated many traditions on the authority of Imam Ja‘far al-Sadiq, peace be on him. He narrated traditions on the

authority of his father, his brother, and Aban b. Teghlab. Mukauwal b. Ibrahim, Bekkar b. Ziyad, Yehya b. Musawir, and 'Amru b. Hammad narrated traditions on his authority. When Malik b. Anas saw him, he rose for him and seated him beside him.

C. His Early Life

Yehya grew up in the house of Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him. The Imam gave him many of his sciences and appointed him as one of his testamentary trustees. When he narrated traditions on the authority of Imam al-Sadiq, he said: "My dear Ja'far b. Muhammad, peace be on him, related to me." He witnessed the severe disasters and the black misfortunes that befell his family and the members of his house at the hands of the oppressive, and the tyrannical rulers.

D. His taking Part in the Revolt of al-Husayn

Yehya was among the heroes of the revolt of the martyr leader of the (Battle of) Fekh. He played an active role in it. He along with his companions struggled for a long time, that they might establish justice and equality in the areas of the Islamic society and to remove the government of the oppressive from among the 'Abbasids.

When the 'Abbasid troops arrested al-Husayn and killed him with that fearful and painful way, Yehya hid himself; and then he along with his brave companions escaped. They walked through the countries seeking a refuge.

E. His Flight to al-Daylem

Yehya had fear for himself and his companions of Harun. So he along with seventy men from among his companions secretly and in disguise went to al-Daylem. When they arrived in it, they were warmly received. His affair appeared. He summoned the people to himself, and they responded to him.

The people from all over the cities and the countries came to him. Al-Rashid was afraid of that, so he gave up drinking wine and busied himself with thinking of him. While he was busy thinking of his affair, a man came in to him and said to him: "O Commander of the faithful, I have a piece of advice." Al-Rashid said to Herthema: "Listen to what he says."

The man refused to tell him anything, saying: "It is among the secrets of the Caliph." So al-Rashid ordered him not to leave his place until he had finished one of his affairs. Having finished the affair, he sent for him. The man asked al-Rashid to order the people to leave the place, and he ordered those sitting with him to leave, and said to him:

-Give me what you have!

-Provided that you should protect me from the black and the red!

-Yes, and I shall treat you well!

-I was in one of Helwan inns and saw Yehya b. 'Abd Allah wearing a thick woolen jubbah and a thick woolen cloak. Some people were with him. They stop (at a place) when he stops (at the place) and leave (it) when he leaves (it). They sit far from him, that they may delude him who sees them that they do not recognize him (Yehya), nor are they his helpers.”

Al-Rashid said: “Do you recognize Yehya?” “In the past,” replied the man, “and that made my knowledge of him certain when I saw him yesterday.” “Describe him to me,” commanded al-Rashid. The man fully described him to him.

Al-Rashid said: “That is he! Have you heard him saying anything?” The man answered: “I did not hear him saying anything except that I have seen him. I have seen his retainer I had known. When it was time to prayer the servant brought him a washed garment, and he worn it.

Then Yehya took off a woolen jubbah and gave it to him to wash it. Then he performed a prayer after the declination of the sun. I think that he performed the afternoon prayer. He prolonged the first two (ruk'as) and canceled the last two ones.”

Al-Rashid said: “How good your father is! What you have memorized is good! That was the afternoon prayer, and that was its time with the people. May Allah reward you well and thank your effort. So who are you and where are you from?”

“I am one of the subjects of this state. I am from Meru; and my house is in the City of Peace (Baghdad).” Al-Rashid became grieved. Painful thoughts and bitter suspicions occupied his mind. He thought for a long time of that; and then he concluded that there was no way before him except battle.

F. Al-Fadhli goes out to war against him

Harun entrusted al-Fadhli b. Yehya with warring against Yehya b. 'Abd Allah. He supplied him with an army of fifty thousand fighters headed by brave military high-ranking commanders. He appointed him as a ruler over the mountainous district, al-Ray, Gurgan, Tebrestan, Qomas, Demawend, and al-Royan.

He gave him enormous money to give it to the military commanders and the poets. Al-Fadhli took the money to buy their consciences for it. He took his troops and advanced toward Yehya. He arrived in Taliqan and resided in it. He corresponded with the governor of al-Daylem. He promised to give him a million dirhams provided that he should facilitate Yehya's departure.

G. The scatter of Yehya's companions

When Yehya's companions heard that al-Fadhli came to war against him, they scattered from him and deserted him. They showed plentiful opposition and division toward him, so he addressed his Lord and supplicated him, saying:

“O Allah, thank me for my fearing the hearts of the oppressive! O Allah, if You decree victory for us over them that is because we want to strengthen Your religion; and if you decree victory for them, that is because You have chosen the good return and reward for your friends and their children!”

Al-Fadhl asked Yehya to make peace and not to shed blood; so Yehya found no escape from responding to him, for he had no supporters, nor could he take refuge in a strong support.

H. The Peace Treaty

A peace treaty took place between Yehya and al-Fadhl. The latter stipulated some conditions and sent them to Harun to sign them. Yehya asked some people to bear witness to that, and they did. After the peace treaty, ‘Abd Allah b. Imam Musa, peace be on him, went to Yehya and said to him: “O Uncle, tell me about what you have met.” Yehya retorted: “I was just like Hay b. Akhteb said:

“By your life, Ibn Akhteb did not blame himself, but whoever deserts Allah “is deserted.

“He struggled until he made his soul reach its excuse and shook all swords “to seek highness.” Yehya was forced to make peace with his opponent because his fighters scattered from him, the people deserted him, and none stood beside him except some good people from among his companions who were unable to protect and defend him.

I. His going to Baghdad

Yehya went to Baghdad and his soul was full of pain and sorrow due to the fact he came to know that Harun would not fulfill his promise. He along with his companions came in to al-Rashid, and he rose for him, embraced him, and showed him false affection. In the meantime he ordered a hundred thousand dinars to be given to him.

Yehya took the money and paid the debt belonged to al-Husayn, the leader at the Battle of Fekh, and he did not spent the rest of it. He resided in Baghdad. Al-Rashid set spies on him to watch him and to recognize his companions and the people who came to him. Meanwhile he was scheming to assassinate him.

He felt that, so he asked al-Fadhl to let him go to the Sacred House of Allah (Mecca), but he refused to respond to him. However, Yehya asked him again, and he let him go. Al-Rashid came to know of that, so he summoned al-Fadhl. He asked him when he stood before him:

-What is about Yehya b. ‘Abd Allah.

-In his place; he is residing with me.

-By my life?

Al-Fadhl felt that, so he said to him: “By your life, I have released him. He asked me through mercy from

Allah's Apostle, and I felt pity for him." Al-Rashid retorted: "You have done well! I had decided to release him!" Al-FadhI left, while Harun was boiling with anger and rage. Then he suspiciously looked at him and said: "May Allah kill me if I do not kill you!"

Having finished performing the hajj, Yehya returned to Baghdad. As al-Rashid was taking care of his affair and waiting for an opportunity, he sent for him and asked him:

-O Yehya, who is more handsome, you or I?

-Rather, you, Commander of the faithful. Indeed you are brighter in color and better in face.

-Who is more generous and munificent, I or you? These questions are proofs of Harun's vainglory, paucity of shame, impudence, going too far in committing sins, and recklessness.

-What is that, Commander of the faithful? What is that about which you asking me? The treasures of the land are collected to you, while I am poor. Harun felt shame of his question, so he asked him: Who is closer to Allah's Apostle, you or I? Yehya said: "I have answered you about two plans; therefore exempt me from this!"

Yehya tried to get rid of the answer due to the fact that he came to know that it would bring him about a problem of which he could not get rid. As he could not find escape from that, he asked him:

-O Commander of the faithful, if Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, was alive and proposed to marry your daughter, was it lawful for you to marry her (to him)?

-Yes, by Allah!

- If he was alive and proposed to marry my daughter, was it lawful for me to marry her (to him)?

- No.

This is the answer to what you asked.

Al-Rashid became angry and had no answer to refute him. Then he ordered him to be imprisoned again. He thought of his affair for along time. It appeared to him that he had to hold a meeting between him and 'Abd Allah b. Mus'ab b. al-Zubayr, who was the most hostile to the 'Alawids that he might find, through that, a way to accuse him of disobedience, that he might use that as a justification for breaking his covenant and killing him. As a result he brought them together, and 'Abd Allah said:

"O Commander of the faithful, this summoned me to pledge allegiance to him." Yehya said: "Do you believe this and consult him? He is 'Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr. He made your father and his children to enter the hill-pass (shi'b), set fire to them till 'Abd Allah al-Jedeli, the companion of 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, save them by force.

He did not call down blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, for forty Fridays in

his ceremony. So the people gathered around him, and he said: 'He (the Prophet) has bad household. If I call blessings upon him or mention him, they stretch out their necks, and rejoice at that. So I do not like to make them happy through mentioning him.

He did to 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbas that which you clearly know. That was when a cow was slaughtered before him and a hole was found in its liver. His son asked him: 'Father, do you not see the cow's liver?' And he said: 'My little son, in this manner Ibn al-Zubayr has left your father's liver!'

Then he banished him to al-Taa'if. When he was about to die, he said to his son 'Ali: 'My little son, join your people from among the children of 'Abd Menaf in Sham (Syria). Do not reside in a country where Ibn al-Zubayr has an authority! So he preferred for him the companionship of Yazid b. Mu'awiya to that of 'Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr.

By Allah, the enmity of this (man) toward us is the same. However, he has overcome me through you; and I have become weak through you. He has sought nearness to you through me, that he may attain from you what he wants."

Yehya went on giving proofs of Ibn al-Zubayr's hostility toward the 'Abbasids. So 'Abd Allah retorted: "What you claim is your oppression toward us and your seizing our power!" However, Yehya turned away from answering him and addressed Harun, saying: "Have we seized your power? Who are you, may Allah set you right? Make me know (you), for I do not know you!"

So al-Rashid looked at the ceiling lest laughter should appear on his face. As for Ibn al-Zubayr, he became ashamed and was unable to give an answer. Yehya turned to al-Rashid and said to him: "Therefore, it is he and his brother who mutinied against your father and said to him:

"Indeed from its nest, the dove on the Day of al-Shi'b exited the heart of a "lover with everlasting sadness.

"Surely we hope that our friendliness will return after the disagreement, "the hatred, and the grudge.

"And the state whose leaders' laws among us like those of an idol—"worshiping people will come to an end.

"They often sharpen our bones just as the artisans sharpen arrows with a "sharpener.

"Undertake the pledge of allegiance to you; and we will obey you. Surely "the caliphate belongs to you, O children of al-Hasan." Yehya went on mentioning what 'Abd Allah had said, so al-Rashid's face changed. 'Abd Allah took a strong oath that the caliphate did not belong to him.

Yehya asked him to take a special oath that was the oath for renouncing Allah's force and strength. 'Abd Allah refused to do that, so al-Rashid became angry with him; al-Fadhl kicked him and shouted at him and said to him: "Take an oath!" He took the mentioned oath. Shortly after he left his place, leprosy

befell him, and he died of it on the third day.

This story indicates that al-Rashid greatly took vengeance upon the 'Alawids and spared no effort to kill them paying no attention to their close kinship to Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, their dignity and excellence with Allah.

J. With Imam Musa, peace be on him

Shaykh al-Kulayni, may Allah have mercy upon him, mentioned that Yehya sent to Imam Musa, peace be on him, a letter in which he condemned his negative attitude toward him, and in which he criticized the Imam and his father Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on them. The letter reads as follows: Now then, I advise myself to cling to fear of Allah; and I advise you to cling to it, for its Allah's advice to the first and the last.

One of those who assisted Allah in spreading His religion and obedience to Him came to me and told me about your sympathy along with your desertion. I had consulted you about the summons to al-Ridha' from among the family of Muhammad, May Allah bless him and his family.

You veiled it; and your father had veiled it before you. In the past you claimed that which did not belong to you. You pinned hopes on that which Allah did not give to you. So you attacked (the people) and misguided (them). Therefore, I caution you against what Allah Himself has made you cautious.

Accordingly, the Imam wrote him a letter in which he has mentioned:

From Musa, servant of Allah, b. Ja'far b. 'Ali, taking part in humbling themselves before Allah and obeying Him. To Yehya b. 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan.

Now then, I caution you from Allah and of me myself. I inform you of His painful chastisement, and His perfect vengeance. I advise you and myself to cling to fear of Allah, for it is the ornament of speech and establishment of favors.

I have received your letter in which you have mentioned that I claimed, and that my father had claimed before. You have not heard that from me. Their witnesses will be written; and they will be questioned. Craving after the world and seeking it does not leave for its inhabitants a requirement for their life in the hereafter; to the extent that it spoils the requirement of their life in their hereafter in the world.

And you have mentioned that I discouraged the people from you because of my desire in that which is in your hands. If I was desirous, then neither a weakness in Sunna nor the paucity of insight in a proof would prevent me from your subject matter in which you are. However, Allah the Blessed and Most High, created men as mixed, wonders, and instinct.

Therefore, tell me about two words I ask you about: What is al-'utrif in your body? And what is al-Sehlejj in man? Then write me something good about that. While I am approaching to you, I warn you against

disobeying the Caliph (i.e., Harun). I urge you to do good to him and to obey him, and that you have to demand for yourself security before the finger nails take you and you are besieged from all places, so you will look for rest in all places, but you do not find it until Allah bestows his favor upon you, and the gentleness of the Caliph, may Allah keep him alive.

So he will give you security, have mercy on you, and keeps through you the womb relatives of Allah's Apostle, May Allah bless him and his family. And peace be on those who follow guidance. Surely it has been revealed to us that the chastisement will surely come upon him who rejects and turns back. [132](#)

We cannot depend on the narration because it is an incompletely transmitted hadith (mursala). In its chain of authorities it has been mentioned: "A companion of us narrated." Besides many men of the chain of authorities are unknown. Among them are Muhammad b. Renjwayh and 'Abd Allah b. al-Hekem al-Armeni. However, we have not found their names in the books of the traditionists we have. After this there is no way to depend on the narration and to have doubt about the state of Yehya.

Any way, we firmly believe that Imam Musa, peace be on him, adopted toward Harun the negative resistance and not the positive one due to the fact that he came to know that the positive resistance would fail.

He thought that his revolutionary cousins had not to war against this tyrannical (Harun) and his unjust predecessors, and that they had to propagate the doctrine of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be on them, and to mention the defects of their oppressive enemies. That is because this is the best way in putting an end to their opponents and their enemies.

K. Breaking the Security

Yehya harassed Harun, and he summoned the jurists of the time. He put before them the security he gave to him. They unanimously agreed that there was no way to break it except Abu al-Bukhteri, [133](#) who bought Harun his religion, drew upon him disgrace and loss. For he thought about the security and said:

"This (security) is invalid and abrogated. Yehya has rebelled and shed blood; therefore, killing him and shedding his blood is lawful." Accordingly, Harun said to him: "If it is invalid, then tear it up with your own hand." This sinful person took the document of security, spitted at it, and torn it into pieces. So al-Rashid gave him a million and six hundred (dirhams), and appointed him as a judge. Moreover he decided to execute Yehya.

L. His Martyrdom

The historians have differed over the way in which Yehya was martyred. It was said that Harun ordered him to be taken out of the underground prison in the dark night. When Yehya stood before him, he said to his policemen: "Take him and flog him a hundred times." They flogged him.

He felt severe pain, so he begged Harun and asked him through Allah and his close kinship to Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, to pardon him. However, Harun said to him: "There is no kinship between me and you." Then he ordered him to be returned to underground prison and said to his police:

-How much food do you give to him?

-Four loaves of bread and eight Ratls of water.

-Halve it!

Then he ordered him to be brought out on the second night and to be flogged a hundred times. Then he said to his policemen

- How much food do you give to him?

-Two loaves of bread and four Ratls of water.

-Halve it!

Then he ordered him to be taken out on the third night, while he was critically sick. They said to him: "He is invalid and seriously ill." However, he was not satisfied with that, so he said to them:

-How much food do you give to him?

- A loaf of bread and two Ratls of water.

-Halve it!

Then he ordered him to be released, and he died shortly after that. It was said that he ordered him to be bricked up in a wall alive. It was said that he gave him poison to drink. Then he ordered him to be taken to his royal court. He talked with him, but he did not answer him. So al-Rashid said to his companions:

"Do you not see that he is not answering me?" So Yehya put out his tongue, which was as black as coal due to the effect of the poison on it. Al-Rashid's face changed and said: "He wants to show you that I have given him poison to drink." Then he ordered him to be taken out, and he was taken out. However, he had died before he reached the middle of the house.

In another narration it has been mentioned that when he was seriously ill, Harun ordered him to be bricked up in a wall at al-Rafiq. He died in the year 177 A. H.

Yehya met his Lord as a happy martyr. He won Allah's good pleasure, while his opponent brought upon himself Allah's anger and displeasure. His murder brought about a clamor of sorrow among the Islamic circles. The poets elegized him. Among them was 'Ali b. Ibrahim al-'Alawi, saying:

O Place where a Sayyid died. There is no Sayyid like him on earth.

Guidance and generosity died after him. Death was called an aggressor because of him.
I have taken a lot of shame from his face. The beggar has taken much generosity to live on.

O his grave, the rain of Allah goes and comes to you.

He was for us like rain through which we quenched our thirst. He was for us like the star through which we followed the right way.

If the time has let us do as we like and betrayed us at the end of the sovereignty, shortly we will demand vengeance for him through the rightly-guided, revolutionary, Hasanid one.

Surely Yehya b. 'Abd Allah, glory, and dignity are in a grave.

Certainly Harun did not fear Allah, the Exalted, in respect with shedding the blood of the children of Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, and punishing them severely. This is a proof of that he violated the things made forbidden by Allah and deviated from the straight path. [134](#)

5. Muhammad b. Yehya b. 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan b. al-Hasan b. Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him

His mother was Khedija, daughter of Ibrahim al-Temimi. He was imprisoned by Bekkar b. 'Abd Allah al-Zubayri, the governor of Yethrib (Medina) by Harun. He harassed and made him heavy with iron, so Muhammad said:

Indeed I am of the people whom intense mishaps increase in severity and patience.

He was still imprisoned and harassed until he ordered him to be released from prison. When he stood before him, he ordered him to bring someone to bail him out. However, he found none to do that. So he said:

The stick is growing in an origin; the good stick has refused to split.

The children of the righteous who set (men) right. Whoever belongs to truthful fathers meets them where they are concealed.

So he ordered him to be returned to prison; and he remained in it until he died. [135](#)

6. Al-Husayn Bin 'Abd Allah Bin Isma'il Bin 'Abd Allah Bin Ja'far Bin Abi Talib, peace be on him

His mother was Hemada, daughter of Mu'awiya b. 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far. Bekkar al-Zubayri, Harun's governor over Medina, arrested him and severely flogged him until he died. [136](#)

7. Ishaq Bin al-Hasan Bin Zayd Bin al-Hasan Bin 'Ali Bin Abi Talib, peace be on him

His mother was a slave-wife. Harun ordered him to be imprisoned, and he died in prison. [137](#)

As the 'Alawids met tyranny and persecution, many of them fled. Among those who fled was Ahmed b. 'Isa b. Zayd b. Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him. He fled to Basrah. He secretly summoned the people to follow him. Harun became grieved because of his affair. He decided to give a lot of money to those who would bring him.

The spies looked for him, but they did not find him. They found his companion Hadir and brought him to al-Rashid. When Hadir arrived at the gate of al-Kerkh (in Baghdad), he shouted at the top of his voice, saying: "O Men, I am Hadir, the companion of Ahmed b. 'Isa b. Zayd al-'Alawi! The supreme authority has ordered me to be arrested!" So the policemen prevented him from speaking.

They brought him to al-Rashid. When al-Rashid saw him, he asked him about the place where Ahmed resided. Then he asked him about his helpers and supporters. Hadir refused to tell them anything about them. So al-Rashid threatened him with painful chastisement. Hadir paid no attention to his threat and his authority, saying to him:

"By Allah, if Ahmed was beneath this foot of mine, I would not raise it from him! I am an old man aged over ninety! Shall I end my deeds with leading you to the son of Allah's Apostle to kill him?" [138](#)

Al-Rashid became enraged, lost his mind and his choice. So he ordered him to be severely whipped, and he died of that. Then he ordered him to be crucified, and he was crucified in Baghdad. Accordingly, Ahmed remained hidden; and none had any piece of information about him. These are some tragedies and disasters Harun poured upon the 'Alawids. He continuously shed their blood.

Generally speaking, Harun spread among the 'Alawids murder, severe punishment, sadness, and mourning. So many of them fled in terror. They were pursued by the police and the spies. They witnessed matchless terrorism and harassment in horribleness and bitterness. As for what Imam Musa, peace be on him, met from this tyrannical (Harun), we have specified a chapter for it. In the chapter we have talked about the torture and harassment he met.

With this point we will end our speech about the time of Harun. Through what we have mentioned, we have understood large part of his dissoluteness and his paying no attention to the Islamic values. Harun did not leave the lute, drinking wine, and associating with the singers. He led a life of delight and amusement. He sank into pleasure, mischief, and dissoluteness.

The Muslim jurists have unanimously agreed on that the office of Islamic Caliphate should be undertaken by a person having all good inclinations such as knowledge, fear of Allah, clinging to the religion, and intense precautionary measures in respect with the Muslims' properties.

They have also stipulated other conditions such as that his royal court should be an Islamic base, a center of truth and justice, and a source for enjoining the good and forbidding the evil all over the country, that the ruling body should earnestly and actively work for the interests of society, develop the country in cultural and economic fields, remove all the factors of backwardness and decline, spread security, ease, and stability, pay attention to the economic life, and remove the shadow of misery and deprivation.

These are some duties of the supreme authority calling itself the deputy of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, and claiming that it represents the Islamic and religious reality. However, unfortunately, we witness no part of the Islamic, bright rule in the shadow of most of the Umayyad and 'Abbasid governments.

They did not put into effect the wide objectives Islam seeks. We see nothing at that time except immoderate oppression, making light of the rights of the community, possessing alone its wealth, spending it generously on the things made forbidden by Allah, pursuing the aware men who intended to establish social and political justice. Those good people represented by the 'Alawids met all kinds of terrorism, severe punishments, and pain.

After this, is it correct to say that the Umayyad and 'Abbasid kings are the protectors of Islam and successors of the Prophet, May Allah bless him and his family, over his community?

Anyway, Harun's deeds turned away from the truth and justice.

I (the author) think that it is necessary to mention that, for it is among the introductory reasons for having knowledge of Imam Musa's ordeal and tribulation at that terrible time void of all kinds of freedom and when the Imam and other thinkers suffered from the severest kind of ordeals and misfortunes.

- [1.](#) Subh al-A'sha, vol. 3, p. 270.
- [2.](#) Al-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 3 p. 568.
- [3.](#) Ibid., p. 903.
- [4.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol.5, p. 240.
- [5.](#) Ibid.,vol. 9, p. 114.
- [6.](#) Al-Muqaddama, pp. 117-118.
- [7.](#) Al-Wizara' wa al-Kittab, p. 288.
- [8.](#) Ahmed Ameen, Harun al-Rashid, p. 88.
- [9.](#) Al-Joumerd, Harun al-Rashid, vol. 2, p. 362.
- [10.](#) Al-Hakam al-Sultaniya, p. 175.
- [11.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol.,4 p. 74.
- [12.](#) Ibid, vol. 5, pp. 174-175.
- [13.](#) Ibid, vol. 6, p. 187.
- [14.](#) Ibid. p. 185.
- [15.](#) Ibid., p. 205.
- [16.](#) Al-Tajj, p. 41.
- [17.](#) Tarikh al-Khulafa', p. 116.
- [18.](#) Al-'Aqd al-Farid, vol. 3, p. 258.

- [19.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol., 10 pp. 172-173.
- [20.](#) Al-'Aqd al-Farid, vol. 3, p. 258. Al-Mas'udi, Murujj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 382.
- [21.](#) Al-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 261.
- [22.](#) Tabaqat al-Shu'ara', p. 252.
- [23.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol. 5, p. 20.
- [24.](#) Al-Mustatraf, p. 341.
- [25.](#) A kind of candy made from flour, water, and honey.
- [26.](#) Al-'Aqd al-Farid, vol. 3, p. 285.
- [27.](#) Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya, vol. 10, p. 26.
- [28.](#) Thimar al-Qulub, p. 428.
- [29.](#) Concerning Ja'far b. Qaddama, al-Khateeb al-Baghdadi has said: "He is among the Shaykhs and religious scholars of the writers. He has abundant literature and good knowledge. He has many books. He died in the year 319." Tarikh Baghdad, vol. 7, p. 207.
- [30.](#) Nisa' al-Khulafa', p. 46.
- [31.](#) Ibn al-Mu'taz, Tabaqat al-Shu'ra', pp. 356-357.
- [32.](#) Al-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 332.
- [33.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol.4, p. 67.
- [34.](#) Tarikh al-Kulafa', p. 291.
- [35.](#) Ibid.
- [36.](#) Nisa' al-Khulafa', pp. 54-55.
- [37.](#) Harun al-Rashid, p. 85.
- [38.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol.5, p. 7.
- [39.](#) Ibid., vol. 15, p. 85.
- [40.](#) Harun al-Rashid, vol. 1, p. 264.
- [41.](#) Ibn al-Athir, Tarikh, vol. 6, p. 44.
- [42.](#) Mattla' al-Budur, vol. 2, p. 138.
- [43.](#) Bayna al-Khulafa' wa al-Khula'a', p. 54.
- [44.](#) Ibid.
- [45.](#) Bayna al-Khulafa' wa al-Khula'a', p. 57.
- [46.](#) Al-Mahasin wa al-Masawi', p. 362.
- [47.](#) Mattla' al-Budur, vol. 2, p. 138.
- [48.](#) Sayyidat al-Bilat al-'Abbasi, p. 48.
- [49.](#) Bayna al-Khulafa' wa al-Khula'a', p. 55.
- [50.](#) Ibid. 54.
- [51.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol.6, p. 77.
- [52.](#) Tabaqat al-Shu'ra', p. 246.
- [53.](#) Al-Mustatraf, vol. 1, p. 98.
- [54.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol.6, p. 78.
- [55.](#) Mattla' al-Budur, vol. 6, p. 138.
- [56.](#) Hidart al-Islam fi Dar al-Salam, p. 112.
- [57.](#) Al-Jahshyari, p. 18.
- [58.](#) Al-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 10, p. 82.
- [59.](#) Al-Dimyari, Hayat al-Hayawan, vol. 2, pp. 172-173.
- [60.](#) Al-Jahshyari.
- [61.](#) Ibid.
- [62.](#) Tarikh Baghdad, vol. 14, p. 14. Wafayat al-A'yan, vol. 2, p. 44.
- [63.](#) He refers to the story of Yehya b. 'Abd Allah al-'Alawi when he revolted against the government of Harun in al-Daylem. Harun sent al-Fadhl b. Yehya to battle against him. However, a peace treaty was signed by the two parties, so no battle

took place between them. Will mention the story within the book.

- [64.](#) 'Asr al-Ma'mun, vol. 1, p. 141.
- [65.](#) Al-Mustatraf, vol. 1, p. 228.
- [66.](#) Al-Qali, al-Amali, p. 99.
- [67.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol. 17, p. 33.
- [68.](#) Al-Jahshyari, p. 241.
- [69.](#) Harun al-Rashid, vol. 2, p. 242.
- [70.](#) Ibn al-Athir, Tarikh, vol. 6, p. 8.
- [71.](#) Al-Imama wa al-Siyasa, vol. 2, p. 321.
- [72.](#) Al-Dimyari, Hayat al-Hayawan, vol. 2, pp. 188–189.
- [73.](#) Ibn Khaldun, Tarikh, vol. 1, p. 14.
- [74.](#) Ibid. p. 145.
- [75.](#) Duha al-Islam, vol. 2, pp. 1118–1119.
- [76.](#) Harun al-Rashid, vol. 1, p. 272.
- [77.](#) Ibid. 274.
- [78.](#) Al-Tamadun al-Islami, vol. 5, p. 118. It has been mentioned in this book that there were in his palace three hundred beautiful slave-girls who sang and played on musical instruments.
- [79.](#) Al-Tajj, pp. 40–42.
- [80.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol. 1, p. 7.
- [81.](#) Ibid. vol. 5, p. 162.
- [82.](#) Taziyyin al-Aswaq. Fout al-Wafayat, vol. 2, p. 391.
- [83.](#) Tarikh Baghdad, vol. 6, p. 84.
- [84.](#) Sayyidat al-Bilat al-'Abbasi, p. 28.
- [85.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol. 18, p. 127.
- [86.](#) Duha al-Islam, vol. 1, p. 91.
- [87.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol. 5, pp. 8–9.
- [88.](#) Al-Tajj, p. 37.
- [89.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol. 6, p. 174.
- [90.](#) Al-Tajj, p. 153.
- [91.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol. 5, p. 47.
- [92.](#) Al-Tajj, p. 37.
- [93.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol. 5, pp. 126–127.
- [94.](#) Ibid.
- [95.](#) Ibid., vol. 9, pp. 170–171.
- [96.](#) Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 10, p. 215.
- [97.](#) Al-Tajj, p. 153.
- [98.](#) Hadith al-Arbi'a', vol. 2, p. 109.
- [99.](#) Harun al-Rashid, vol. 1, p. 267.
- [100.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol. 5, pp. 69–70.
- [101.](#) Ibid., vol. 9, p. 64.
- [102.](#) Al-Fekhri, p. 55.
- [103.](#) Bayna al-Khulafa' wa al-Khula'a', p. 101.
- [104.](#) Tayfur, Tarikh Baghdad, p. 107.
- [105.](#) Al-Tabari, the Events of the Year 193.
- [106.](#) Sayyidat al-Bilat al-'Abbasi, p. 48.
- [107.](#) Harun al-Rashid, p. 75.
- [108.](#) Al-Shaykh al-Ansari, al-Makasib, Chapter on Authority undertaken by the Oppressive.
- [109.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol. 5, p. 225.

- [110.](#) Al-Tamadun al-Islami, vol. 4, p. 47.
- [111.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol. 20, pp. 75-76.
- [112.](#) Al-Tabari, Tarikh, vol.3, p. 473.
- [113.](#) He refers to this sacred verse: Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Apostle of Allah.
- [114.](#) Tabaqat al-Shu'ara', p. 246.
- [115.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol. 12, p. 20.
- [116.](#) Al-Shi'r wa al-Shu'ra', p. 258.
- [117.](#) Ibn Herema is Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. 'Ali al-Qarashi al-Fihri al-Medani. He is a creative poet. He lived through two generations. This has been mentioned in the book al-Kuna wa al-Alqab, vol. 1, pp. 435-436.
- [118.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol. 4, pp. 109-110.
- [119.](#) Ibn al-Hajjaj is Abu 'Abd Allah b. al-Husayn b. Ahmed b. al-Hajjaj al-Nili al-Baghdadi. He is a talented writer on top of the Shi'ite poets. It is said that he is equal to Imru' al-Qays in poetry. He was a contemporary of the two Sayyids: al-Radi and al-Murtada. He has a collection of poems. Al-Sharif al-Radi has chosen some of his poems and named them al-Hasan min Shi'r al-Husayn. He died in Jamadi al-Thaniya 27th, in the year 391 A. H. He was buried by the grave of our master Musa b. Ja'far. He asked the people to write on the stone of his grave the following Qur'anic verse and their dog (lay) outstretching its paws at the entrance. A copy of his collection of poems is available in the Library of Imam Kashif al-Ghita'. This has been mentioned in the book al-Kuna wa al-Alqab, vol. 1, pp. 245-247.
- [120.](#) Al-Manaqib, vol. 2, p. 97.
- [121.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 11, pp. 285-286. 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha'.
- [122.](#) It has been mentioned in the books al-Tabari's Tarikh and al-Nijum al-Zahira: "Hameed b. Qehtebea died in the year 158 A. H., and the caliphate of Harun al-Rashid was in the year 170." This opposes that the event took place during the days of al-Rashid. The nearest viewpoint to correctness is that this massacre took place during the days of al-Mansur.
- [123.](#) In the books Mu'jam al-Buldan and al-Sihah it has been mentioned: "Al-Hayr is the name of the Sacred City of Karbala"
- [124.](#) Al-Hasan b. Rashid is among those who narrated the traditions of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, peace be on him. He was among the Shi'ite great figures.
- [125.](#) Um Musa is the mother of al-Mehdi. She was the daughter of Yazid b. Mansur al-Himyari, a Yemeni king.
- [126.](#) Al-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 10, p. 118.
- [127.](#) Al-Menaqib, vol. 2, p. 19.
- [128.](#) Tarikh Karbala", p. 198.
- [129.](#) Maqatil al-Talibiyin, pp. 493-494.
- [130.](#) Ibid. p. 498.
- [131.](#) Al-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 9, pp. 14-31. Maqatil al-Talibiyin, pp. 487-491.
- [132.](#) Usool al-Kafi, vol. 1, pp. 366-377. 412
- [133.](#) Abu al-Bukhteri is Wahab b. Wahab b. Kuthayr b. al-Aswad al-Qadi. Abu al-Bukhteri al-Qarashi al-Medani lived in Baghdad. He was appointed a judge in Baghdad. He is accuse of (fabricating) traditions. Yehya b. Ma'in has said: "Abu al-Bukhteri was a liar and was the enemy of Allah." 'Uthman b. Abi Shayba has said: "Abu al-Bukhteri will be resurrected as a liar on the Day of Judgment." Ahmed has said: "Abu al-Bukhteri fabricated traditions." Al-Bukhari ordered (the people) to keep silent toward him. Abu al-Bukhteri died in the year 200 A. H. Al-Keshi has said that Muhammad b. al-Fadhl b. Shadan has said: "Abu al-Bukhteri was the greatest of all the people in telling lies." I (the author) do not know why al-Bukhari had ordered (the people) to keep silent toward Abu al-Bukhteri and not to deal with his traditions, though it is incumbent on us to purify the traditionists from such people who deviated from Islam and divided the Muslims.
- [134.](#) Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil, vol. 6, p. 5. Wafayat al-A'yan, vol. 1, p. 158, Paris edition. Jahshyari, p. 189. Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 10, pp. 84-89. Maqatil al-Talibiyin, pp. 463-486, Egypt edition. I (the author) have quoted most of these researches from the last book.
- [135.](#) Maqatil al-Talibiyin, pp. 495-496.
- [136.](#) Ibid., p. 497.
- [137.](#) Sharh Shafiyat Abu Firas.

[138](#). Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 154. In the book 'Umdat al-Talib it has been mentioned: "Ahmed was a great knowledgeable jurist and ascetic. His mother's name is 'Atiqa, daughter of al-Fadhl b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. al-'Abbas b. al-Harith, al-Hashimiya. He was born in the year 158 A. H. and died in the year 240 A. H. He became blind at the end of his lifetime."

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