

Chapter 8: At the Time of al-Saffah

Kufa received the pledge of allegiance to Abu al-'Abbas al-Saffah with much silence out of fear, many worries and disorders. That is because the Umayyad government was still standing and controlling most Islamic regions.

Meanwhile the Umayyad king was camping on the bank of al-Zaab River along with a great army composed of over one hundred thousand horsemen from the Arab Peninsula, Syria, and Mousil; whereas the 'Abbasid Caliph had no forces except those in Khuresan and its outskirts and Kufa.

Neither Basrah nor Wasit entered the frame of the pledge of allegiance (to him), as well as the summons to the caliphate was to al-Ridha' from among the family of Muhammad, and the 'Abbasids were not mentioned. That is because the masses struggled for the 'Alawids, who were the first pillar for social justice and the guarantee of the interests of the community.

None thought that the 'Abbasids would assume the caliphate, for the souls were full of doubts about them. That is because some of them were famous for treachery and treason toward the community during its most critical conditions and hours. An example of them is 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbas. He betrayed Allah and His Apostle when he joined the camp of Mu'awiya in the dark night.

That was after he had taken a bribe to desert (Imam al-Hasan), the grandson of the Prophet, May Allah bless him and his family. The thing that made the Muslims increased their doubt about them is that they submissive to the Umayyad government throughout its periods of time and performed no positive deed in resisting the tyranny and oppression of the Umayyads.

Any way, Kufa received the procession of Abu al-'Abbas al-Saffah on Friday, Rabi' al-Awal 12, 132 A. H. when he was heading for the Mosque. After he had performed the prayer, Abu al-'Abbas al-Saffah went up on the pulpit, though he was ill, and delivered an eloquent, wonderful sermon in which he lauded the 'Abbasids, saying:

O People of Kufa, you are the place of love for us and the house of affection toward us. It is you who

have not changed from that and you have not been turned from that by the wrong of men of tyranny against you until that it has happened that you have lived in our time, and Allah has brought you our state; therefore, you are the happiest of all the people with us and the most honorable of them with us; I have added a hundred dirhams to the salary of each of you. So surely it is I the one who sheds (blood), makes things permissible, revolts (against the Umayyads), and makes them wail.

After him, his uncle Dawud delivered an eloquent speech in which he praised the 'Abbasids and dispraised the Umayyads, saying: O People, by Allah, we have come out for this affair not to increase silver and pure gold nor to dig a river nor to build a palace; rather the disdain of their usurping our rights and the angry for our cousins have made us come out. We have not hated your affairs; certainly your affairs had burnt us when we were on our beds.

The bad behavior of the Umayyads toward you, their abasing you, their possessing alone your Fayyi', your alms, and your booties made us intense toward them. To you belong the covenant of Allah, the Blessed and Most High, and the covenant of His Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family; and the covenant of al-'Abbas, may Allah have mercy on him, is against us that we shall rule among you according to what Allah has revealed, put into practice among you the Book of Allah, and behave toward the special groups and the general populace according to the behavior of Allah' Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family.

He made the people of Kufa desire for gifts and giving. He heaped promises upon them, so they craned their necks and listened to him. He emphasized to them that the new state would achieve for them political and social justice, and behave toward them with a behavior based on the pure truth.

Then Abu al-'Abbas al-Saffah descended the pulpit. He and his uncle Dawud b. 'Ali entered the princely palace. As for Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, he stayed in the mosque to take the pledge of allegiance from the people. He continued taking the pledge of allegiance from them until he led them in the afternoon, sunset, and evening prayers; and then he went on it until a late hour of the night. [1](#)

Abu al-'Abbas did not stay for a long time in Kufa, the 'Alawids' place; he went out of it and stayed in the camp of Abu Salam al-Khallal, in Hammam A'yun. Then he ordered al-Hashimiya (city) to be built, that it might be the capital of his government.

The Battle of al-Zaab

When Abu al-'Abbas al-Saffah undertook the office of the caliphate, he sent his military forces headed by Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Ali to fight against the Umayyad king, Merwan al-Himar (the Donkey). 'Abd Allah along with his great army walked and covered the desert; they met the army of the enemy at al-Zaab, near al-Mousil.

The standards of the 'Abbasids were carried by some men riding camels called al-Bukht. He used the

wood of willow and other trees along with them instead of spears. When Merwan saw them, he became terrified and asked those who were around him: "Do you not see that their spears are as thick as date-palms?

Do you not see that their standards on those camels are as black as black clouds?" While he was looking at them with a heart full of terror and fear, large groups of ravens flew and alighted in front of the army of 'Abd Allah, so their blackness connected with that of those black standards, and they became like the black night, so Merwan became very afraid and asked: "Do you not see that the blackness has connected the blackness, to the extent that they all have become like black, thick clouds?"

Then Merwan turned to a man beside him and asked him with terror and fear:

-Do you not know the commander of their army?

-'Abd Allah b. 'Ali b. al-'Abbas b. 'Abd al-Muttalib.

-Woe unto you! Is he one of al-'Abbas's sons?

-Yes.

-By Allah, I wish that 'Ali b. Abi Talib was in his place in that rank!

Merwan was sure of his inevitable fate; he wished that the conqueror would be Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, that he might meet them with pardon, kindness, and forgiveness. Any way, the man did not understand Merwan's statement and thought that he accused Imam 'Ali of cowardice, so he opposed him, asking:

-Why do you say that concerning 'Ali though he is brave?

-Woe unto you! Although 'Ali was brave, he was religious!

The religion is other than kingdom! We narrate on the authority of our old people that 'Ali and his sons had nothing to do with kingdom!² The fire of the war broke out between the two parties. Immediately the armies of the Umayyads were fully defeated. Merwan and some groups of his army escaped. They reached Mousil, but its inhabitants prevented them from entering it out of fear of the vengeance of the 'Abbasid, victorious army.

Then he headed for Harran but he was unable to stay in it. Accordingly, he went to the city of Hams followed by the 'Abbasid armies. Then he entered Damascus, and its governor wanted to help him, but he was unable to do that due to his short time. The enemy followed him. For this reason he headed for Jordan and found it hoisting the 'Abbasid standards. He left it and stopped in Palestine.

He came to know that Damascus was overthrown at the hands of the 'Abbasids, and he was full of terror. As a result he left his place in Palestine and headed for Egypt. He stopped in a village called

Boseer. He lived there in a church; nevertheless the armies of Salih reached him in a dark night. A bloody fight took place between the two parties. Merwan was killed during the fight. A Kufan cut off his head and took out his tongue, but a cat came and took it from him!³

With this fight the 'Abbasids put an end to the Umayyad government, which ruled people with oppression and tyranny, caused mischief in the land, exploited the properties of Allah, and enslaved his servants. Accordingly, Allah severely took vengeance on the Umayyads; He made their kingdom come to nothing and their victory become alienation; He has written to them disgrace and shame throughout times.

Merwan's head was carried to Abu al-'Abbas al-Saffah. When he saw it, he prostrated for a long time. Then he raised his head and said: "Praise belongs to Allah, Who has not leave our vengeance toward you and toward your people!

Praise belongs to Allah, Who has granted us a victory over you and made us overcome you! I do not mind when death strikes me, while I have killed a thousand Umayyads, and I have burnt Hisham's corpse for the sake of my cousin Zayd whose corpse they had burnt. Then he recited the following:

If they drank my blood, they would not quench their thirst, nor would the blood of them all quench my thirst!

Then he faced the Qibla, prostrated again, and recited the following:

Our people refused to treat us with justice, so the sharp swords in our right hands and drips blood have treated us with justice.

When they (the swords) mixes with the men's heads, they would leave them destroyed like ostriches' eggs destroyed on earth.

Then he turned to those who attended his gathering and said to them:

"As for Merwan, we have killed him for my brother Ibrahim. We have killed all the Umayyads for al-Husayn, those who were killed with him and after him from among the children of our uncle Abu Talib."⁴

Through that the kingdom of the 'Abbasids established, and al-Saffah became a king over the Muslims in all over their countries.

The Umayyads escape

When the Umayyad state collapsed, the Umayyads became fearful; their hearts were full of terror and dismay; for this reason some of them runaway into the desert. Among those who escaped were Merwan's two sons, 'Abd Allah and 'Ubayd Allah; along with them were a group of their womenfolk and of their companions. They headed for the country of the Nubians, and their king honored them. They sought refuge in his country, but he refused that out of fear of the 'Abbasid authorities.

Thus, they fearfully went out (of his country) and went to Bijawa, but its king fought against them. They went away heading for the Yemen while their souls were full of impatience and panic. Then they found two roads. There was a mountain between the two roads. 'Ubayd Allah took a group of them and followed one road, and 'Abd Allah headed another group and followed another road. They thought that they would meet each other after an hour.

They walked throughout the day; they wanted to come back but they were not able to. As for 'Ubayd Allah, he met one of the Abyssinian (military) vanguards. He warred against them, and finally he was killed. The Abyssinians took his companions as prisoners of war and plundered their supplies. Then they left them naked and bare-footed.

They (the Umayyad prisoners) were so thirsty that they urinated in their hands and drank their urine; they kneaded sands with it and ate it. Then they caught up with 'Abd Allah b. Merwan, who was more tired and exhausted than them. There were some women walking with 'Abd Allah b. Merwan. They were naked and bare-footed.

They felt pain after the long walk and drank urine, to the extent that their lips cracked open. They arrived in al-Mandib and stayed there in for a month. The people there collected something for them. Then they went out of it and headed for Mecca while they were wearing the uniform of the porters.⁵

Allah let down upon them this severe punishment and exhausting fear, so He has made them among the greatest lessons and examples to the enemies of peoples.

Genocide

The 'Abbasid government pursued the Umayyads and uprooted them without leniency and mercy. It killed and annihilated them everywhere. The following are some examples of the annihilation and severe punishment the Umayyads met from the 'Abbasid government:

1. In Basrah

Sulayman b. 'Ali killed and severely punished the Umayyads in Basrah. He executed a group of them. Then he ordered them to be drawn by the legs and to be put on the road, to the extent that dogs ate them. Some Umayyads hidden themselves such as 'Amr b. Mu'awiya, who was fearful and hid himself for a long time, to the extent that he felt that the earth was narrow, so he went to Sulayman b. 'Ali and stood before him, and he did not recognize him. He said to him while abasement and defeat appeared on his face:

–The (people in the) country has expelled me, (and I have come) to you; your favor has shown me the way to you. So either you kill me, and I will find rest or you send me safely, and I will be secure.

–Who are you?

He introduced himself to him, so he felt pity for him and said to him:

–Welcome! What is your need?

–Surely you are the most of the people (to protect) our womenfolk and the nearest of them to them, while they have fear for us.

–May Allah spare your blood and make abundant your properties!⁶ Then he gave him security and wrote a letter concerning that to al–Saffah, and he accepted it.

2. In Mecca and Medina

Dawud b. 'Ali killed a group of the Umayyads in Mecca and Medina. Ibrahim b. Haram recited him some poetry lines in which he urged him to continue pursuing and putting an end to them, saying:

May Allah not forgive Merwan, nor Umayya a complaint! What bad (their) tyrannical gathering is!

They were like 'Ad, so Allah destroyed them in the same manner through which he destroyed the erring from among (the people of) 'Ad. None of the Hashimites will accuse me of lying even if I account very much.⁷

Shaykh Muhammad al–Khudari felt sorry for what Dawud b. 'Ali did toward them, saying: "To the extent that he did not let any of them stay (alive) in order to satisfy the vengeful desire that clang to the hearts of the 'Abbasids, nor did that intense savagery make them ashamed."⁸

Al–Khudari felt sorry for killing the Umayyads, but he did not felt sorry for what they did to the family of the great Prophet such as killing them, taking them as prisoners of war, and what they inflicted on the free Muslims such as severe punishments, exhaustion, torture, and the like from among atrocities and scandals.

It was decreed for them to meet that, for Allah has ordained curse and disgrace for the oppressive and decreed that they shall meet their end full of loss and bad fate. Any way al–Khudari did not look at reality through anything but through a black perspective. Fanaticism ate his heart, and he adored his Umayyad masters. He wept for their conditions and felt pain for their fate!

3. In al–Hirah

When the affair went well with Abu al–'Abbas, he pursued them. When he found any of them, he executed him, that he might strengthen his kingdom and his authorities, please his 'Alawid cousins, and respect the sentiments of most citizens whom the Umayyad authorities afflicted with disaster. Sulayman b. Hisham b. 'Abd al–Malik asked him for security, and he gave him security. He and a group of the Umayyads came in to him in al–Hirah.

While they were sitting, his chamberlain came in to him and said to him: "O Commander of the faithful, a veiled, black man from al-Hijaz riding a highborn horse asking (you) for permission (to come in to you). He does not tell (me of) his name. He swears (by Allah) not to uncover his face until he sees you."

"This is my retainer Sadif. Let him enter," was the answer. Sadif entered. When he entered and saw al-Saffah surrounded by the Umayyads, who sat on cushions and chairs, he became angry and asked him to recite some enthusiastic poetry lines to him. He permitted him, and he recited them with anger and fury, saying:

The foundations of the kingdom has become firm through the masters including all good from among the 'Abbasids.

Through the chiefs who were advanced in the past, and (through) the firm, open-handed masters.

O Commander of those who are free from dispraise, O head who is the highest of all the heads,

You are the guide and guidance of the Hashimites! How many a people hoped for you after despair!

Do not release 'Abd Shams from his stumble! Cut off all his tall palm-trees and plants!

Let him settle where Allah settled him, in the abode of abasement and misery!

Their fear (of you) has made them show their affection (to you), while they have harbored malice against you!

Remember the death of al-Husayn, Zayd, and of the one who was killed by al-Mihras,

And the Imam in Harran who has become a hostage to a grave in loneliness and forgetfulness!

These poetry lines inflamed al-Saffah's heart; fury fully seized him, to the extent that it appeared on his facial expressions. One of the Umayyads felt that and said: "By Allah, the black man has killed us!"

Al-Saffah flamed with anger, so he shouted at the Khuresanis: "Take them!"

The Khuresanis took them and severely hit them with batons, to the extent that they fell to the ground on their faces. Then al-Saffah ordered the dining table to be spread on them, and it was spread on them. The food was put on it. Al-Saffah and his attendants sat and had food. They heard their moaning until they all perished. Delight appeared on the face of al-Saffah, and he said: "Throughout my lifetime, I have never eaten a meal more agreeable than this one!"

Then the food was raised from them. Their bodies were drawn and thrown away on the road, and most of them were eaten by dogs.⁹ Sadif looked at them, and he became delighted and tranquil. So he said: The Umayyads desired that the Hashimites would be pleased with them; and their (martyrs called) Zayd and al-Husayn would be in vain.

No! (I swear by) the Lord and God of Muhammad, (the Hashimites would not be pleased with them) until they annihilated their unbelievers and traitors. [10](#)

After al-Saffah had killed the Umayyads and erased them from the world of existence, he became delighted and rejoiced, so he said:

O Umayyads, I have annihilated your gathering, so how much more my (attitude would be) toward the past one.

That the fire will bring you together makes my soul good; it will compensate you (for your crimes) of its flame with evil compensation.

You have been afflicted with, may Allah not release you from your stumble, a jungle lion who rises against the enemies.

If my fury is due to past (things issued) from you, then I have been afflicted with you through something with which my Lord is pleased.

In this way was the end of the wrong-doers and enemies of nations; there end was killing, destruction, disgrace, and shame!

The 'Abbasids dig up the Graves of the Umayyads

The 'Abbasids pursued their Umayyad opponents while living, just as we have mentioned. Then they turned to their dead. They dug up their graves and burnt their remaining decayed bones. That took place when the 'Abbasid armies occupied Damascus. So 'Abd Allah b. 'Ali, commander-in-chief, commanded his fighters to disinter the graves of the Umayyads.

They dug up the grave of Mu'awiya b. Abu Sufyan and found nothing therein except a piece of thread like ash. They disinterred the grave of 'Abd al-Malik b. Merwan and found in it a skull. They dug up the grave of Yazid b. Mu'awiya and found therein remains looked like ashes. Then they took out the corpse of Hisham b. 'Abd al-Malik and flogged it, crucified it, and scattered it in the air. [11](#)

With this subject matter we will end our talk about the Umayyads and what happened to them such as defeat and destruction.

Al-Saffah and the 'Alawids

None expected that the 'Abbasids would undertake the caliphate, for the great revolt that overthrew the Umayyads was for the 'Alawids; the cheers of the demonstrators were summoning the people to follow al-Ridha' from among the family of Muhammad. This summons was the slogan of the revolutionaries who gave many sacrifices for it.

The 'Abbasids themselves did not dream of that, for al-Saffah and his brother al-Mansur had pledged allegiance to Muhammad Dhu al-Nafs al-Zakiya, but the fates withdrew the affair from the al-'Alawids and carried it to the 'Abbasids. When the Kingdom went well with Abi al-'Abbas, he did his best to please the 'Alawids.

He gave them many gifts, received them with different kinds of magnification and honor, put an end to their Umayyad opponents. The relationships between him and them were apparently clear and friendly, but, indeed, the 'Alawids were full of deep sadness and intense sorrow, for the 'Abbasids schemed against them and possessed alone the caliphate without asking their opinion.

Any way, the 'Alawids went to Abi al-'Abbas when he was in al-Anbar to congratulate him on his assuming the caliphate. But Muhammad and Ibrahim did not go to him. Al-Saffah had doubt of them; he turned to their father and asked him:

-What has prevented them from coming along with those who have come to me from among their household?

-They have not come not because of a thing the Commander of the faithful dislikes. Al-Saffah unwillingly and reluctantly accepted the excuse.

The thing that increased the worries and disorders of al-Saffah due to Muhammad and his brother is that when he built al-Anbar city to take it as his capital, he entered it along with his brother Abu Ja'far (al-Mansur) and 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan. While he was walking between them and showed them what was in the city such as factories and palaces, a slip of tongue issued from 'Abd Allah when he recited the following two poetry lines:

Do you not see that Jawshan builds palaces whose profits belong to the children of Nufayla.

He hopes that he will live as long as Noah did; and the Command of Allah happens every night.

Abu al-'Abbas's face turned yellow. So Abu Ja'far al-Mansur turned to 'Abd Allah and asked him:

-Do you think that your two sons will certainly undertake the caliphate?

-No! By Allah, I have not thought of that, nor have I wanted it. They were mere words ran on my tongue; I paid no attention to them. These words displeased al-Saffah. When the 'Alawids decided to go to Yethrib (Medina), he gave them many things, sent with them a man of his trustworthy men, and said to him:

"Provide lodgings for them; do your best to comply with their wishes. When you are alone with them, show inclination toward them and hatred toward us and their being more appropriate for this affair more than us. Account for me what they say and what issues from them during their travel and arrival."

When 'Abd Allah arrived in Yethrib, he held a meeting with his sons, and they asked him about all things, small and great. He explained to them the conditions and moved them to revolt (against Abu al-'Abbas). That man attended their meeting, and he memorized all their words. When he returned to Abu al-'Abbas, he informed him of all what he had seen of al-Hasan's sons, and he boiled with anger at them; and al-Mansur became very angry with them.

Those who sought nearness to the authorities created slanders saying that the 'Alawids had summoned the people to break the pledge of allegiance to al-Saffah. Al-Saffah had no patience with that, so he wrote to 'Abd Allah a letter in which he mentioned the following poetry line:

I want his friendship and he wants my death. The one who makes excuses to you is one of your bosom friends from (the tribe of) Murad.

Thus, 'Abd Allah sent him a letter in which he refuted his claims and wrote in the bottom of it the following poetry lines:

And how does he want that while you are from him in the same position with respect to him as the aorta is to the heart?

And how does he want that while you are from him and your lighter takes fire from mine?

And how does he want that while you are from him, and you are a head and guide for Hashim?[12](#)

Abu al-'Abbas made sure of that, and his fear calmed down; yet (his brother) Abu Ja'far al-Mansur urged and moved him to attack Muhammad and Ibrahim, so he rebuked him and said to him: "Whoever exerts pressure (on people) alienates (them); whoever is flexible regrets; and to feign inattention is among the qualities of the generous."[13](#)

He treated the 'Alawids with treatment of those politically experienced. He did not show harm or detested things toward them; rather he feigned affection and sympathy to them.

Imam al-Sadiq's Attitude

The attitude of Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, was distinguished by neutrality, resorting to peace and tranquility, and refraining from any political activity. The Imam came to know that any political activity would fail and would bring the community nothing except inclusive harm that would destroy the society and bring about to it many disasters and misfortunes. The Imam insisted on this sound plan on his attitude toward the 'Alawids and the summoners to the 'Abbasid state.

The following are explanations to that:

1. With the 'Alawids

Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, predicted that the 'Abbasids, and not the 'Alawids, would assume the caliphate after the overthrowing of the Umayyad government. He went too far in advising the 'Alawids and warned them against seeking rule. The historians have narrated many of his initiatives in this respect.

An example of that is that they have narrated that the 'Abbasids and the 'Alawids held a meeting during the Umayyad governments and decided to pledge allegiance to Muhammad Dhu al-Nafs al-Zakiya. So they sent for Imam al-Sadiq and presented that before him, but he prevented them from that and said to them:

"Do not do (that), for the affair has not come yet." 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan became angry and thought that the Imam envied his son; yet the Imam looked at him with a look of mercy and compassion, saying to him: "No! By Allah, that does not urge me, but this—indicating with his hand to Abu al-'Abbas al-Saffah, his brothers, and their sons are other than you."

The Imam rose excited, so 'Abd al-Samad and Abu Ja'far al-Mansur followed him and asked him: "O Abu 'Abd Allah, do you say that?"¹⁴ "Yes! By Allah, I say it and know it."

The Imam, peace be on him, went too far in advising 'Abd Allah, that he might turn away from that affair and not to involve himself and his two sons in it. He, peace be on him, said to him: "By Allah, neither you nor your sons will undertake it (the caliphate), but they (the 'Abbasids) will undertake it. Your sons will surely be killed."¹⁵

The Imam had taken this knowledge and inspiration from Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, for he was his testamentary trustee, inheritor of his knowledge, keeper of his wisdom, and place of his secrets. He, peace be on him, gave them a piece of advice to save them (from killing); he told them that they would not assume the caliphate.

If they had taken his advice, they would have saved themselves from destruction and hardships, and the community would not have been afflicted with their disasters. Any way, they, May Allah have mercy on them, are excused in this respect. That is because they met abasement and humiliation from those reckless authorities, which spared no effort to force them to follow what they disliked, so they went to the fields of struggle as free people and died honorable under spearheads.

We will in detail talk about that when we talk about the tyrannical one, Abu Ja'far al-Mansur.

2. With Abu Salama

When the Umayyad state was about to collapse under the pressure of the 'Abbasid Armies and their uninterrupted attacks against it, Abu Salama, called Wazir Aal Muhammad, thought that he had to hand

over the caliphate to the 'Alawids. Whether he was earnest and loyal or plotter and deceiver, he wrote (letters) to three of them and showed them his viewpoints; they were Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad, 'Abd Allah al-Mahdi, and 'Umar al-Ashraf b. Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him.

He gave the letters to one of their retainers who inhabited Kufa and said to him: "In the first place, go to Ja'far b. Muhammad al-Sadiq, peace be on him. If he responded, then you could cancel the other two letters. If he did not respond, then you could go to 'Abd Allah al-Mahdi. If he responded, then you could cancel the letter of 'Umar al-Ashraf. If he did not respond, then you could meet 'Umar.

The messenger traveled to Yethrib (Medina). When he arrived in it, he started meeting Imam Abu 'Abd Allah al-Sadiq, peace be on him, told him about the speech of Abu Salama and gave him the letter at night, and he, peace be on him, took it and said to him: "As for Abu Salama, he is a follower of other than me!"

The messenger said to the Imam: "Read the letter and answer it as you think."

The Imam said to his retainer: "Bring nearer the lamp."

The retainer brought it nearer, and the Imam put the letter into the fire, and it burnt. Thus, the messenger asked him:

-Do you not write an answer to him (Abu Salama).

-You have seen the answer!

Then he, peace be on him, recited the following poetry line of al-Kumayt:

O You who kindles a fire whose light is for other than you; and O wood gatherer whose woods in a rope of other than yours!

As a result, the messenger left him and went to 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan. He gave him the letter, and he read it and became delighted with it. On the following morning, 'Abd Allah rode (his horse) and went to the house of Abu 'Abd Allah al-Sadiq, peace be on him. He came in to him, and he rose for him, welcomed and magnified him, saying:

-O Abu Muhammad, what has brought you?

-It is too great to be described!

-What is it?

-This is Abu Salama's letter in which he has asked me to assume the caliphate at the time when our followers (Shi'ites) from Khuresan have come to him.

The Imam, peace be on him, became displeased and said to him: "O Abu Muhammad, when have the people of Khuresan been your followers? It was you who sent Abu Muslim to Khuresan; and it was you who ordered them to dress in black. Do you recognize any of them through his name or his voice? How have they become your followers, while you do not recognize them nor do they recognize you?"

'Abd Allah began arguing with him, and he, peace be on him, stopped his speech and said to him: "Allah has come to know that I have made it incumbent on me to advise all Muslims; therefore, how do I refrain from advising you? So do not make yourself desire for false things, for they (the 'Abbasids) will undertake this state; and a letter similar to the one that has come to you had come to me!"[16](#)

Through his brilliant speech, the Imam predicted an unknown period of time, enlighten it with his own knowledge, and removed from it all kinds of confusion and ambiguity. He foretold that the 'Abbasids would certainly assume the caliphate and that it was useless to oppose them. After some years his prediction and truthfulness concerning that became true.

Any way, the Imam fully understood the course of events, so he refused to accept Abu Salama's proposal, for the latter's proposal, if he was serious in it, was not due to his faith in the rights of Ahl al-Bayt; rather it resulted from losing his interests and hopes; why had he not responded with them before that time full of dangers?

For surely the 'Abbasid Armies that crept to occupy Iraq were not the followers of the 'Alawids. Rather they were the followers of the 'Abbasids, for their summons had great effects on them; therefore, how would the Imam respond to the summons of Abu Salama or walk on the unknown ways of those black trends surrounded by destruction and dangers? 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan responded to him, but he earned nothing from him except that he exposed himself and his family to inclusive destruction.

The affair of this summons was clear to the 'Abbasids; it made them worried and disordered, so they decided to kill him. The historians narrated that Abu al-'Abbas al-Saffah and Abu Ja'far al-Mansur agreed that al-Mansur had to go to Khuresan to visit Abu Muslim and to talk with him about the affair of Abu Salama and to ask him to assassinate him. As a result al-Mansur went there and met with Abu Muslim. He told him about the affair, and he asked: "Has Abu Salama done it? I will be sufficient to him on your behalf!"

Then he summoned one of his military commanders called Marar b. Anas al-Dabbi and commanded him: "Go to Kufa and kill Abu Salama wherever you find him!" Marar along with a group of his fighters headed for al-Kufa. Abu Salama chanted at night with al-Saffah, who affected pardon and pleasure with him. Marar and his fighters sat in his way. When Abu Salama came out at midnight, they hurried to kill him; in the morning they propagated that it was the Kharijites who killed him.[17](#)

Through that the affair of Abu Salama was over at the dawn of the summons to the 'Abbasids.

3. With Abu Muslim

When Abu Muslim came to know about the reality and treachery of the 'Abbasids, he attempted to hand over the authority to Ahl al-Bayt, peace be on them, thus he wrote to the Imam a letter in which he mentioned: "Surely I have shown the word and summoned the people to (refrain from) following the 'Abbasids.

Therefore, if you wish, then none is better than you!" The Imam, peace be on him, wrote him an answer in which he showed wisdom, awareness, and perceiving the realities of the affairs. In the letter he mentioned: "You are not among my followers, nor the time is mine!"[18](#)

Yes! How would Abu Muslim be among the followers of Imam Abu 'Abd Allah al-Sadiq, peace be on him, who was of great importance in Islam?

Certainly, the companions and the summoners to the Imam were good, cleaved to their religion, and preferred obedience to Allah to all things.

How would the Imam be pleased with receiving the authority from Abu Muslim, who regarded as lawful all the things made unlawful by Allah and unjustly shed the blood of the Muslims?

Abu Muslim repents

Finally Abu Muslim repented for the ruinous offenses and the sins he committed; he ascribed all things he done to al-Saffah. That was mentioned in the letter he sent to Abu Ja'far al-Mansur. In it he has mentioned: "I have adopted your brother as an Imam and regarded him as a guide to religion due to kinship and the will he claimed that it came to him.

So through me he lowered the darkness of error; and he placed me in the lasso of the discord. He commanded me to punish (the people) for suspicion, to kill them for accusation, and not to accept any excuse (from them). As a result, through his commands, I violated some forbidden things whose maintenance Allah decreed, shed blood who's sparing Allah made obligatory, withdrew the authority from its men and handed it to those other than them.

Therefore, if Allah pardoned me, then it would be through a favor of him; and if he punished (me), then it would be through what my hands had earned; **and Allah does not wrong the servants.**"[19](#)

In his letter, Abu Muslim has shown his repent, his barbarism, and his rudeness. Besides he has indicated that he, according to al-Saffah's commands, shed blood, violated forbidden things, made public panic, and spread terror. Abu Muslim has made a statement similar to the one mentioned above. He sent the statement to Abu Ja'far al-Mansur. In it he has mentioned:

"Now then, surely I have adopted a man as an Imam and a guide to the things Allah has made obligatory

on his creatures; the man was knowledgeable and had close kinship to Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family; he has deemed me as ignorant through the Qur'an, and he has altered it (the Qur'an) from its places craving after a little thing from which Allah has withhold his creatures; he is like the one who expresses with arrogance; he has commanded me to pull out the sword, to raise mercy, not to accept any excuse, and not to release (any person) from his stumble.

I have done that in order to make firm your supreme authority, to the extent that those who have no knowledge of you have come to know you; those who are your enemies have obeyed you; Allah has made you manifest after that disappearance, abasement, and lowness."[20](#)

In this important statement, Abu Muslim has mentioned al-Saffah's qualities such as deception, error, and being void of man's values.

He felt remorse and repent of the great sins he had committed, to the extent that he did no hope that Allah would forgive him them. He supplicated at 'Arafat: "O Allah, surely I am going to turn in repentance to you of that which I do not think that you will not forgive me it!"

He was asked: "Is it difficult for Allah to forgive you your sins?" He replied: "Certainly, I have woven a garment of oppression as long as the state belongs to the 'Abbasids. How many a female crier met me when the oppression became aggravated! Therefore, how will Allah forgive him whose opponents are these creatures?"[21](#)

Certainly, Abu Musa spoiled the affair of his life in the next world and sold his religion for establishing the 'Abbasid kingdom. He repented (of his sins) but repent does not benefit him. Allah will not be kind through pardoning and forgiving him who unjustly shed the blood of the innocent and spread in the country of the Muslims losing children, sadness, and mourning.

Al-Saffah dies

Al-Saffah became sick; he suffered from intense and severe pain for several days.

When he became critically ill and death was at hand, he sent for his nephew 'Isa b. Musa; in another narration (he sent for) his uncle 'Isa b. 'Ali. He handed him a closed letter and wrote on the envelope:

From the servant and friend of Allah,

To the family of Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, friends, and all the Muslims.

He asked him to keep his affair secret until he died, that he might read the letter to the people. None came to know whom he appointed as successor after him.[22](#)

Al-Saffah died on the night of Sunday, Dhu al-Hijja 12, 136 A. H.[23](#) When he died, 'Ali b. 'Isa shrouded him with his garment; he kept his death secret to the people. In the morning, he summoned some

'Abbasids and the high-ranking statesmen; and then he announced to them the death of al-Saffah. He brought to them the closed letter of the pledge of allegiance. He opened (and read) the letter before them; he found that al-Saffah had appointed his brother Abu Ja'far (al-Mansur) as successor after him, and that he had appointed his nephew 'Isa b. Musa b. Muhammad as a hire apparent.

Then he commanded those present to pledge allegiance to Abu Ja'far al-Mansur. After that he buried him in his palace according to his will.²⁴

Al-Saffah's lifetime ended in this manner full of shedding blood and violating the forbidden things. He ended his lifetime with imposing his brother al-Mansur as a caliph over the Muslims, and he was the wicked of the creatures of Allah and the vilest of all Muslim rulers in meanness and deviation from justice. For he spared no effort to make the Muslims poor, to spread panic and fear all over the Islamic world, just as we will mention it in detail.

With this point we will end our talk about Imam Musa, peace be on him, during the time of al-Saffah. As a result, during his youth and prime of his lifetime, he witnessed the ordeal and misery of the Islamic society during those terrible periods when he lived, for when he got rid of the tyranny and oppression of the Umayyads, he became under the pressure of the 'Abbasid government.

So he suffered from tyranny, despotism, wrong, and exhaustion; and the 'Abbasid authorities went too far in making poor the Muslims, plundering their wealth and generously spent it on dissoluteness and prostitution, just as the condition was during the Umayyad government. Of course, such practices had great effects on the life of Imam Musa, peace be on him, and on its carrying sadness and sorrow.

1. Ibn al-Athir, Tarikh, vol. 4, p. 325.
2. Ibn Abi al-Haddeed, Sharh Nahjj al-Balagha, vol. 7, p. 134.
3. Mukhtasar Akhbar al-Khulafa'.
4. Ibn Abi al-Haddeed, Sharh Nahjj al-Balagha, vol. 7, p. 131.
5. Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh, vol. 3, pp. 84-85. Ibn 'Abd Rabba, al-'Aqd al-Fareed, vol. 3, pp. 198-199.
6. Al-Kamil, vol., 5, p. 206.
7. Mukhtasar Akhbar al-Khulafa', p. 4.
8. Al-Muhadarat, p. 49.
9. Mukhtasar Akhbar al-Khulafa', p. 10.
10. Al-'Aqd al-Fareed, vol. 3, p. 207.
11. Al-Kamil, vol. 5, p. 205.
12. Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 97.
13. Shadharat al-Dhahab, vol. 1, p. 159.
14. Maqatil al-Talibiyyin, p. 555.
15. Ibid.
16. Al-Mas'udi, Muruj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 184. Al-Aadaab al-Sultaniya, p. 137.
17. Al-Tabari, the Events of the Year 132 A. H. Abu Muslim was killed in Rajab 15th. That was a month after the defeat of Merwan
18. Al-Milal wa al-Nihal, vol. 1, p. 241.
19. Tarikh Baghdad, vol. 10, p. 208.
20. Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya, vol. 10, p. 64.

- [21.](#) Al-Kuna wa al-Alqab, vol. 2, p. 151.
- [22.](#) Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh, vol. 3, p.348.
- [23.](#) Al-Mas'udi, Murujj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 181.
- [24.](#) Al-Mas'udi, Murujj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 181.

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