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# Chapter 9: During the Time of al-Mansur

Al-Mansur had no previous convictions, nor had he any achievement, that he might deserve the caliphate that was the greatest office in Islam. He had neither humanitarian tendency nor honest quality that would qualify him to undertake the affairs of the Muslims.

The historians have unanimously agreed that he was ignoble, miserly, mean, low, treacherous, and murderous. They have said that he ruled the Muslims with the policy of him who did not believe in Allah and the hereafter, that he spread among them fear and exhaustion and deprived them of their economic requirements.

To the extent that they wished the return and the days of the Umayyad government though they were full of severity and torture. One of those who lived through the two states has said:

Would that the tyranny of the Banu Merwan lasted for us; and would that the justice of the Banu 'Abbas be in the fire!

The great revolutionary, Muhammad Dhu al-Nafs al-Zakiya, has said in his talk he stated concerning the tyranny and oppression of the 'Abbasids: "We had took vengeance on the Umayyads, but the 'Abbasids are less in fear of Allah than them. The argument against the 'Abbasids is more obligatory than it is against them; the people (the Umayyads) had noble deeds and favors Abu Ja'far (al-Mansur) did not have."1

Abu Ja'far al-Mansur went too far in shedding blood, to the extent that none can describe it. He killed (people) for suspicion and accusation, turned away from all the people even his family when he annihilated its members and cut off their heads; that is ascribed to his malice and recklessness.

He has been described by professor al-Sayyid Meer, who has said: "Al-Mansur was deceptive; he did not hesitate at all in shedding blood; his severity is ascribed to his excessive malice, whereas his successor did not kill anybody except after much reflection and scrutiny.

Generally speaking, Abu Ja'far was careless of his violence and reckless of his assassination; his

treatment towards 'Ali's children is regarded as the worst page in the history of the 'Abbasids." Al-Seyuti has said: "Al-Mansur was the first to find the gap of the difference between the 'Abbasids and the 'Alawids, while they had been as one bloc."2

Ibn Hubayra, 3 one of al-Mansur's contemporaries, has described him, saying: "I have never seen a man in war or in peace more cunning, difficult, and watchful than al-Mansur, to the extent that he besieged me along with a group of Arab horsemen. We spared no effort to attain something of his troops but we were unable because he firmly controlled his fighters and was very alert." 4

Through his violence and scheme he could established the 'Abbasid state and controlled fully all the organs of government. The severest kind of oppression he practiced was that toward the 'Alawids. He treated them with violence and persecution none can describe; he wreaked his wrath upon them and punished them severely; he paid no attention to his womb relations with them and their kinship to the Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family.

As for Imam Musa, peace be on him, he witnessed all kinds of ordeals and exhaustion that befell his family; these practices had great effect on his soul, which became a place of pain and sadness.

Imam Musa, peace be on him, spent twenty years of his lifetime during the time of al-Mansur. He witnessed that abominable policy that carried the signs of death and annihilation to all the subjects. It is necessary for us to talk about the aspects of his personality, his policy, and his practices.

That is because the research on such topics has a close relationship with the life of Imam Musa, for it describes to us the time when he lived, the fatigue and tiredness from which the Muslims suffered, and for that had an effect on his impressions. The following is a brief account of al-Mansur's personality:

# The Aspects of al-Mansur's Personality

As for the aspects for which al-Mansur has been known and were among his elements and selfness, they are as follows:

#### **Miserliness**

Without doubt, miserliness is the only source of all psychological vices; therefore, the one who has it is void of all kinds of generosity and nobility; this quality urges him to go too far in committing sins and throws him in ruinous evil. This evil tendency was among the most prominent aspects of al-Mansur, for he was a proverbial for his miserliness.

He subjected the Islamic state to inclusive famine, misery, and deprivation. Because of his intense miserliness he was given the nickname of al-Dewaniqi.

Ibn al-Athir has said: "Al-Mansur was named al-Dewaniqi because of his miserliness. That was when

he ordered a trench to be dug in Kufa (and ordered) a danaq to be given (to the workers) and to be spent on the digging. The danag is one sixth a dirham."

Then he has said: "In the year 155 A. H. al-Mansur ordered a wall and a trench to be built and dug around Basrah and Kufa. He ordered those workers who built the wall and dug the trench to be given five Dirhams. After they had finished that, he ordered them to be brought together and forty dirhams to be taken from each of them.

Concerning that the poet has said: O My people, what have we met from the Commander of the faithful? He gave five (dirhams) to each of us and took forty (dirhams) from each of us!5

Having finished building Baghdad, al-Mansur settled an account with the commanders of his army and forced them to return that which was with them, to the extent that he took fifteen dirhams from some of them.6 He would settle an account with the workers even it was an amount of danag or habba.7

As for the aspects of his miserliness, they are as follows:

### A. He deprived himself of pleasures

His miserliness urged him to deprive himself of enjoying the pleasures in life. He avoided luxury; he wore coarse garments; perhaps, he patched his own shirt with his hand. Concerning him, Imam al-Sadiq has said: "Praise belongs to Allah Who tried him with his own poverty in his kingdom!"8

One of his female slaves saw him wearing a patched shirt, and she sneeringly asked him: "Does a caliph wear a patched garment?" He smiled and answered her: "Woe unto you! Have you not hear the words of the poet, Bin Harama: "Man may attain honor though his shirt is old and the pocket of his shirt is patched!"9

Certainly al-Mansur did not attain honor; rather he reached the deep bottom of meanness and lowliness!

#### **B.** His showing Miserliness toward his friends

Al-Mansur was miserly to himself and his friends. He gave them nothing generously, nor did he think of helping them. He had a friend called al-Wadin b. 'Atta' during his poverty and neediness. He sent for the friend when he undertook the office of the caliphate. When he stood before him, he asked him about his conditions and his affairs:

- -O Abu 'Abd Allah, what do you have?
- -The good the Commander of the faithful know!
- -What about your family?
- -Three daughters, a wife, and their servant.

-Do you have four (persons) in your house?

-Yes.

He asked him about that several times, to the extent that al–Wadin thought that he would give him something as a gift, but he, after long thinking, raised his head and said to him: "You are the richest of all the Arabs, for there are four spindles turning in your house!" Such was his personality full of meanness; it had no ray of pity and mercy.

#### C. His Depriving the Writers of Giving

The Umayyad government spent lavishly upon the poets and the writers, so literature flourished and its market became active; the social circles looked at this class with great importance, for the state took care of it and honored it. When al-Mansur became a caliph, he went too far in abasing them, destroying them, depriving them of giving, and preventing them from coming in to him.

He did not permit them to visit him except after many efforts. For example, Abu Nuhayla went to him and stopped at the door of his palace and asked for permission to visit him; yet he did not give him permission, whereas the Khuresanis and other than them went in and came out without paying attention to him.

Moreover they laughed and sneered at him. One of his friend saw him in that state of abasement and disgrace and asked him: "How do you see the state in which your are?"

He answered him through these following poetry lines he improvised and in which he described the state in which he was:

Most Allah's creatures do not know which of Allah's creatures (I am) when they meet (me).

Many a garment is spread and folded; and many a pallium is bought and boiled for a retainer or for the master of a retainer. Woe unto the public treasury! What has it met?11

Certainly the thing that urged al-Mansur to make little of this educated class was miserliness.

The historians have narrated an example of his stinginess and his turning away from poets as follows: "Al-Mu'ammal b. Umayl visited al-Mehdi, al-Mansur's hire apparent, and praised him with a wonderful poem that moved his feelings, and he gave him twenty thousand dirhams. His secretary sent al-Mansur a letter in which he informed of the affair.

When the letter came to him, and he came to know of the affair, he boiled with anger and immediately sent his son a letter in which he criticized his deed, saying: "You had to give four thousand dirhams to the poet after his standing at your door for one year!" Then he sent the secretary of al-Mehdi a letter in which he commanded him to send him the poet immediately.

The secretary send for the poet, but he did not find him. He was told that he headed for Medinat al—Selam. So he sent some of his police men and ordered them to arrest him. They stood by the bridge of al–Nehrwan. They asked those who passed by them about al–Mu'ammal. Al–Mu'ammal passed by them, and they asked him about his name, and he told them about it.

They arrested him, and he was about to die out of fear and panic. They brought him to al-Rabi', al-Mansur's chamberlain. They told him that they had found him, and he commanded them to bring him in. When he stood before him, he turned to him angrily and asked him:

- -Are you al-Mu'ammal b. Umayl?
- -Yes, may Allah set right the Commander of the faithful!
- -Did you go to an inexperienced boy and cheated him?
- -Yes, may Allah set right the Commander of the faithful! I went to a generous boy. I deceived him and he was deceived. So al-Mansur became calm. Then he commanded him to recite the poem to him, and he recited it, saying:

He is the Mehdi but he looks like the bright moon.

This and this resemble each other; therefore they make clear the vague to him who is endowed with eyesight.

So this is a night lamp in the dark; and this is the lamp of light by daylight.

But the Merciful (Allah) has preferred this to that through the pulpits and the thrones and through the strong kingdom.

So this is an emir and that is neither emir nor a minister.

The decrease of the month makes this die away; and this is brilliant during the decrease of the month.

So he is different from the pure vicegerent of Allah through him the pride of the proud becomes high.

The kings become weak when they come to you from easy and difficult places.

Your father preceded the kings to the extent that they became sumbling and tired.

You have come after him running guickly; and you have no flagging when you run.

So the people have said: They are in same position of the meriting and the deserving.

If the old one precedes, then he is qualified for precedence; he has the merit of the old over the young.

If the young reaches the range of the old, then the young has been created from the old. Al-Mansur admired this wonderful, short poem that has contained the most beautiful signs of lauding and praising him.

He said to him: "By Allah, you have done well! But this (poem) is not equal to twenty thousand dirhams. Where is the money?" He answered him that it was present and he was shaking with fear and panic. He commanded his chamberlain to take the money, and to give him four thousand dirhams. The chamberlain responded to that.

The historians have narrated another example of his miserliness: "On his way to Mecca, al-Mansur ordered a singer to be brought to sing him. Selem, the singer, was brought to him. He sang him songs, and he became delighted to the extent that he was about to fall off his horse. He gave him a half dirham, and he criticized him for that, saying to him:

-O Commander of the faithful, I sang Hisham b. 'Abd al-Malik and he gave me ten thousand dirhams.

Al-Mansur furiously looked at him and said to him:

-He had no right to give you (money) from the public treasury. Then he ordered his chamberlain al-Rabi' to take the money from him, so he begged him and sword (by Allah) that he had nothing of that money. He went on begging al-Mansur, and he left him provided that he should sing him songs back and forth without money. 12

Bishr, the astrologer, has said: "Abu Ja'far (al-Mansur) sent for me in the evening. He sent me to (carry out) a certain affair. When I came back, he raised a side of his prayer rug, and there was a dinar. He said to me: 'Take this (dinar) and keep it. I took it and I still have it lest he should demand it, for he had not told me to take possession of it."

When he decreed that the subjects should wear tall hats, Abu Dulama, a humorous poet, criticized him for his miserliness, saying: We had expected that the Imam would increase (our wages), but the chosen Imam has increased the hats in length! We see them on the heads on men; they look like those hats clothed in burnooses worn by the Jews! 13

Al-Mansur did his best to monopolize and to hoard the wealth of the community; he spent nothing of it on public interests, so he spread poverty and misery all over the Islamic countries.

#### D. With al-Mehdi

Al-Mehdi was the most preferable of the people and the nearest of them to al-Mansur, to the extent that he appointed him as his crown prince; nevertheless, he turned away from him for a simple material affair. Al-Mansur's servant, Wadih, has related, saying: "One day, while I was standing beside Abu Ja'far (al-Mansur), al-Mehdi came in to him. He was wearing a new, black, outer garment.

He greeted (us) and sat down. Then he rose and went away. Abu Ja'far looked at him, for he loved and

admired him. When he (al-Mehdi) was in the middle of the corridor, he tripped over his own sword, and his black (garment) was torn. He rose and went away paying no attention to it.

When al-Mansur saw that, he lost his mind. Then he ordered him to be brought back, and he angrily attacked him, saying: 'O Abu 'Abd Allah, (do you) regard (my) talents as little? Or are you ungrateful (to Allah) for the boon? Or do you have little knowledge of the misfortune? It seems that you are ignorant of that which for you and that which against you!"14

He bitterly admonished his son for an insignificant thing to which most people do not pay attention. Wadih reported that he came in to al-Mansur, and he said to him: "Look for torn clothes and collect them. When you come to know that al-Mehdi will come, bring them before he comes in. There should be patches along with them.' I did that. Al-Mehdi came in and found his father trying patches on the torn clothes.

He smiled and said to him: 'O Commander of the faithful, for this reason the people say: 'They crave after the dinar and the dirham!' He did not mention the danaq lest he should move his feelings. So al–Mansur said to him: 'Whoever does not repair his torn clothes has no new (ones). The winter has come. We are in need of clothes for the family and the children.' Thus, al–Mehdi said to him: 'At my expense are the clothes of the Commander of the faithful, of his family, and of his children!' He said to him: 'Do that!" 15

Al-Mansur's female slave, Khalisa, has related, saying: "I came in to al-Mansur and found him complaining of toothache. When he heard my voice he said: 'Come in!' I came in and saw him putting his hand on his temple. He kept silent for an hour, and then he asked me: 'How much money do you have?' 'One thousand dirhams,' I replied. 'Put your hand on my head and take an oath,' he commanded me.

I was afraid of him, so I said to him: 'I have ten thousand dinars.' 'Bring them to me,' he retorted. I came in to al-Mehdi and al-Khayzaran. I told them about what had happened, so al-Mehdi kicked me with his foot, and asked me: 'What made you go to him? He has no pain. Yesterday he asked me for money, so he feigned illness. Carry to him that about which you have told him.' When al-Mehdi came to him, he asked him: 'O Abu 'Abd Allah, why do you complain of poverty while Khalisa has such amount of money?" 16

He turned away from his son al-Mehdi while he was the most preferable of all the people to him. The reason for that is his miserliness and meanness.

#### E. With the Jurist Ibn al-Samman

The jurist Azhar al-Samman was al-Mansur's friend before his undertaking the caliphate. He went to him when he became a caliph, and he asked him:

-What is your need?

- -I am in debt (to someone) for four thousand dirhams; my house is demolished; and my son wants to consummate the marriage with his wife. He ordered an amount of money to be given to him and prevented him from coming to him, saying to him:
- -After this do not come to me and ask me to grant your needs!
- -I will do. After several days, Ibn al-Samman came to him, and he angrily looked at him and asked him:
- -What has made you come to me?
- -I have come to you not ask you to grant my need, but I am a Muslim!
- -I think that you have come to us for that for which you had come to us for the first time! Do not come to us and ask us to grant your need and do not come to us as a Muslim! Then he ordered a gift to be given to him. Ibn al-Samman went out and, shortly after that, he returned, so al-Mansur asked him:
- -What has made you come back?
- -I have come to you not to ask you to grant my need and not as a Muslim. However, I have come for a supplication I had heard from you. I would like to learn it from you.
- -Do not learn it, for it is not granted. That is because I have supplicated Allah with it to rid me of you, and He has not done it! He dismissed him and gave him nothing. 17

#### F. With his Governors

Al-Mansur deprived his governors of money and straitened them. The historians have mentioned many examples of his oppression toward them. They mentioned that he entrusted a man with a certain work, and he completed it. The man came in to him and settled an account. He rose and intended to go away, but al-Mansur said to him:

- -I made you a partner in my trust and appointed you over one of the Muslims' taxes, but you misappropriated it!
- -I seek refuge for you with Allah, Commander of the faithful! I have taken nothing of that except a dirham that is in my sleeve. I have taken it to hire a mule to carry me to my family, that I may enter my house and have nothing of the wealth of Allah and of your wealth.

So al-Mansur said to him: "You are truthful! Give us our dirham!" He took the dirham and put it under his woolen mat."18

His governor, Ziyad b. 'Abd Allah al-Harithi, sent him a letter in which he asked him to increase his salary. The letter was so eloquent that al-Mansur admired it and wrote an answer to it, saying: "When riches and eloquence come together in man, they make him ungrateful. The Commander of the faithful

feels pity for you for that; therefore, be satisfied with eloquence!"19

Al-Mansur was so miserly and ignoble that the evil deeds of the world and those of the kings came together in him.

#### The Reasons for his Miserliness

Al-Mansur was excessively miserly because he was wicked and mean and had no faith in Allah. Before his attendants and his special group, al-Mansur talked about the reasons that urged him to go too far in making the subjects poor and straitening them, saying: "Ibn al-A'rabi was truthful when he said: 'Starve your own dog, and it will follow you!""

So Abu al-'Abbas al-Tusi opposed him, saying: "O Commander of the faithful, I am afraid that someone may give it a loaf of bread, and it will follow him and leave you!"20

May a handful of dust be on al-Mansur and on all those rulers who make light of their subjects! This tyrannical ruler tried to subjugate the people through starving them, and not through spreading justice and welfare among them. Al-Mansur also talked about the reasons that urged him to monopolize huge amount of money in his own treasuries and to spend nothing of it on public interests, saying:

"He whose wealth is little, his men are few. He whose men are few, his enemy has power over him; he whose enemy has power over him, his kingdom becomes weak; and he whose kingdom becomes weak, his protected things are violated!"21

He based his opinion on monopolizing money and refraining from spending it on the Muslims. Without doubt, he is the most prominent of those whom Allah, the Most High, has meant in these words of Him:

And as for those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's way, announce to them a painful chastisement. On the day when it shall be heated in the fire of hell, then their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded with it; this is what you hoard up for yourselves, therefore taste what you hoard." (Qur'an, Surat al-Tawba, verses 34-35).

### **His Despotism**

Al-Mansur was despotic in all the affairs that concerned his kingdom; he did not consult anyone in respect with his measures. He opposed all those who advised him. The historians narrated that he sent for his nephew, 'Ali b. 'Isa, and commanded him to fight against Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah, and he said to him:

"O Commander of the faithful, consult your uncles." He rebuked him, saying to him: "Where is Ibrahim b. Harama's speech:

You visit the one whose secrets the people do not shake violently, nor does he exchanges secrets with

the ears in respect with that which he tries.

When he does something, he concludes it; and when he says that he is going to do (it), he carries it out."

Then he said to him: "Go away, O man! By Allah, other than me and other than you is not wanted. And it is that either you leave or I leave!"

With such pride he governed over the people and over all their abilities. He always recited the following poetry lines of al-Haythem b. 'Adi to show his arrogance and despotism:

Surely my spear, which is like a spring, is not driven to despair by neither the touch of the spears nor by oil nor by fire.

When I reward a traitor, I will be safe of his ways. When I frighten a safe person, I will make the land upset through him.

Come to me and lower some of your eyes; I am nearer to all persons than their neighbors.22

This indicates that he was reckless, vainglorious, and despotic in the affairs of the Muslims. This crooked policy led to spreading terror and fear among all the people.

## **His Assassinations**

Al-Mansur enjoyed severe punishments, shedding blood, and assassinations. He intensely and rudely went too far in practicing such things. History has never known massacres similar to those committed by him. There was no ray of pity and mercy in his inner self.

He was delighted with the wailing of the orphans, the lamentation of the female slaves, and the moaning of the wounded. This tyrannical, bloodthirsty person assassinated a group of the heads of his state and of those who established his supreme government. For he was beware of them and afraid of their power.

We will mention some of them as follows:

#### 1. Abu Muslim

It was Abu Muslim who established the 'Abbasid state. Were it not for him its flag would not have been hoisted, nor its name would have been mentioned; nevertheless al-Mansur turned away from him and rewarded him with the reward of Sinmmar23. Al-Mansur summoned the head of his bodyguards, 'Uthman b. Nuhayk, along with Shabib b. Wajj, and Abu Hanifa Harb b. Qays. He said to them:

"When Abu Muslim come in to me, stop behind the door. When I clap my hands, come in and kill him."

He summoned Abu Muslim, gave him security, and received him with too much welcome and honoring. Then he lodged him in one of his palaces. Abu Muslim came and sat in the room next to that of al-Mansur. He was told that al-Mansur was busy. He sat for a long time. He was given permission, and he entered. He greeted him, but he furiously looked at him and asked him:

- -Tell me why did you precede me on the way to Mecca?
- -I hated our gathering around the water lest it should harm the people.

Then he began counting his detested deeds and blaming him, and he apologized to him for that. When his censure was too long, he said to him:

-This should not be said to me after my showing extreme courage and that which (issued) from me. So al-Mansur shouted at him: "O Son of the wicked woman! By Allah, if there was a female slave in your place, she would take your place!

You destroyed our state and our power! If that was up to you, you would not cut the husk of a date stone!" Abu Muslim apologized to him for that, but his apology was useless. Al-Mansur loudly clapped his hands, and the people came in to him drawing their swords. Abu Muslim felt that death was close at hand, so he begged al-Mansur, saying to him:

- -Let me stay (alive) for your enemy!
- -Which enemy is more hostile than you?

The swords took Abu Muslim while he was saying: "Pardon me! Pardon me! Pardon me!"

The people finished him off, so al-Mansur improvised:

You claimed that the debt would not be repaid!

So take your share in full through the measure, O Abu Muslim!

You were watered out of a glass out of which you watered (the people), and that was in the mouth bitterer than colocynth!24

Then he ordered his corpse to be thrown into the Tigris, and it was thrown into it.25

Through that Abu Muslim's lifetime was treacherously folded at the hand of al-Mansur; and through that Abu Muslim lost the affair of his life in this world and the next; and that is the very clear loss!

### 2. 'Abd Allah b. 'Ali

Al-Mansur gave security to his uncle 'Abd Allah b. 'Ali and decided not to assassinate him due to the fact that he revolted against him. However, he broke his promise. He summoned his crown prince 'Isa b. 'Ali

and said to him: "Keep 'Abd Allah b. 'Ali until I return from the hajj. Do not oppress him. That is because he is my uncle and brother of the present from among the Shaykhs of your household."

Then he secretly summoned him and said to him: "O 'Isa, surly this (i.e., 'Abd Allah b. 'Ali) intended to remove the caliphate from you and me. You are my crown prince; you will undertake the caliphate, so take him and cut off his head. Beware of that you be calm and weak lest you should oppose the affair I have schemed." Then he went to Mecca.26

Is a consulted his secretary, Yunus b. Abi Farwa, and informed him of the affair, and he said to him: "Surely this man has openly handed over his uncle to you before his relatives, while he has secretly commanded you to kill him. He intends to kill him at your hand, and then he will condemned you for killing him and kill you.

I think that you have to hide him in your house and tell none about his affair, that you have to send someone to al-Mansur to tell him that you have killed him. If he demand you him openly, then you hand him over to him openly. Beware of that you bring him secretly."27

'Isa did that and made public among the 'Abbasids that he had killed him. When al-Mansur came back from Mecca, the 'Abbasids went to him. They talked with him about the affair of his uncle, and he said to them: "In your presence I handed him over to my hire apparent and commanded him (to treat him kindly).

I asked him about him, and he said that he had died." Then he summoned 'Isa.

When he stood before him, he shouted at him:

- -Why have you killed my uncle?
- -You had commanded me to kill him.
- -I had not commanded you to do that.
- -This is your letter you had written to me concerning him.
- -I had not written it.

When 'Isa understood that al-Mansur was earnest in his attitude, he had fear for himself and said to him:

- -He is with me.
- -Hand him over to Abi al-Azhar al-Muhalab b. Abi 'Isa. So he was still imprisoned with him until al-Mansur ordered him to kill him. So he along with a female slave came in to him. He started with 'Abd Allah. He strangled him until he died. Then he put him on the bed. Then he turned to the female slave to kill her, and she said to him: "O Servant of Allah, I want you to kill me in a way other than this!"

He turned his face away from her. Then he ordered her to be strangled. He put her on bed and put her had under his ('Abd Allah's) side, and his hand under her side. They seemed that they had embraced each other. Then he ordered the house to be demolished on them. He summoned the judge, Ibn 'Allam, along with group of people to inform them of the affair. The two corpses were brought out and were buried in their final resting-place.28

### 3. Muhammad Bin Abi al-'Abbas

Al-Mansur employed a Christian doctor to kill those he did not want to kill openly. The doctor was rude and merciless. He assassinated a group of innocent people through his medical prescriptions according to al-Mansur's orders. Among those he killed was Muhammad b. Abi al-'Abbas.

Al-Mansur ordered him to do that, and he made a deadly poison to him. He waited for an illness to happen to him. He suffered from a fever in his body, so he consulted him. He gave him that poison to drink. He drank it, and it cut off his intestines. Immediately he died. His mother brought suit to al-Mansur against him, and he ordered him to be flogged thirty times and to be imprisoned for several days.

Then he ordered him to be released and to be given three hundred dinars. These are some of al-Mansur's assassinations that indicate that he had a wicked soul void of pardon and mercy. He was able to treat them kindly and to keep an eye on them if he was afraid that they would revolt against him. However, that was far away from his tendencies full of spite and severity.

# **His Ruinous Offences**

The history of this tyrannical, bloodthirsty person (al-Mansur) is full of crimes and ruinous offences, for he followed a policy contrary to Allah's Book and the Sunna of His Prophet. He terrified the Muslims; he spread terror, panic, and fear all over the Islamic countries; and he put an end to the cultural and social life in Islam.

We will deal with some of his offences as follows:

### 1. His Frightening the Civilians

Al-Mansur treated the people of Yethrib (Medina) with persecutions, violence, and tyranny. He deprived them of all their economic elements such as the supplies sent by sea and land.29

Through this economic war he wanted to subject them to misery and famine, that he might distract them from revolting against him and from criticizing his policy. He appointed Rabah b. 'Uthman al-Murri as a governor over them. Rabah was rude and merciless; souls turned away from him because he was ill-tempered.

When al-Mansur appointed him as a governor, he gathered the people and ascended the pulpit. He

announced to them his terrorist policy having the signs of death and torture, saying:

"O People of Medina, I am the snake son of snake, cousin of Muslim b. 'Aqaba; I will destroy your green lands and annihilate your men! By Allah I will turn it into a desert where no dog will bark!"

This statement shows that he was tyrannical, dissolute, paying no attention to the men's lives and dignity. He decided to rule the country through committing inclusive annihilation and rendering the people homeless. May Allah help the Muslims with those ordeals and misfortunes that melted their hearts and filled their souls with sorrows and regrets.

After this wild, predatory person had finished his severe speech, some of those present rose and answered him with most violent words, saying with one tongue: "By Allah, son of the one who was flogged twice, you must refrain from (doing this) or we will prevent you from (annihilating) us."

Immediately this sinful rouge sent a letter to the 'Abbasid king telling him about the disobedience of the people of Medina to him and their insisting on mutiny against him. When the letter reached him, he wrote to the people of Medina a letter full of warning and threading. He ordered his governor to recite it to them. When the letter came to him, he gathered them and recited it to them.

#### In it he mentioned:

O People of Medina, surely your governor wrote to me and mentioned your cheating, your disobedience, your evil viewpoints, and your turning away from pledging allegiance to the Commander of the faithful. The Commander of the faithful has sworn by Allah that if you do not refrain from (disobedience), he will turn your security into fear, prevent you from the sea and the land, send to you thick-hearted and farwombed men (who will attack you) in the middle of your houses, do what they are ordered. Greetings!

Some enthusiastic and free people opposed him, saying: "You are a liar, son of the one who was flogged twice!" Then they threw stones at him from all directions. He escaped in fear to his fortified, wide house. He closed it and sought protection in it. Ayyub b. Salam al-Makhzumi, a follower of the authority, came in to him and provoked him to punish the revolutionaries severely, saying:

"May Allah set right the Emir, the rabble have done that; therefore cut off their hands and flog them on the backs!" Some Hashimites advised him not to pay attention to the statement of this slave who turned away from his country and his countrymen. They advised him to send for the notables and the nobility and to recite to them al-Mansur's letter to see their viewpoints concerning it.

He responded to that and sent for them. He recited to them al-Mansur's letter. Hafs b. 'Amr b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Awf al-Zuhri and Abu 'Ubayda b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Azhar said to him: "By Allah, you are a liar! You did not command us and we did not disobey you! You did not summon us, and we did not oppose you!"

Then they turned to the messenger and representative of al-Mansur and asked him:

- -Will you inform the Commander of the faithful of us?
- -I have come for nothing except for that!
- -Say to him: "As for your statement that you will turn the security of Medina and of its inhabitants into fear, it is that Allah, the Great and Almighty, has promised us other than that. Allah, the Great and Almighty, has said: *And that He will most certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange; they shall serve Me, not associating aught with me.*

So we will serve Him and associate aught with Him."30 Al-Mansur treated the people of Medina with severity and alienation. He did not respect their being neighbors to Allah's Apostle, May Allah bless him and his family, nor did he pay attention to their forefathers who established this religion and consolidated its foundations.

### 2. His Making little of the Kaaba

Al-Mansur disbelieved in Islam and turned away from all its principles and objectives. He tried to move the Kaaba from its place to Dar al-Salam. Meanwhile he built a huge building in his capital Baghdad and called it al-Qubba al-Khaddra' (the Green Dome) as a sign of making little of the Holy Kaaba. 31 Through this he showed his disbelieve (in Islam) and his apostasy from the religion.

### 3. His Embezzling Properties

Al-Mansur spared no effort to exhaust and persecute the subjects, so he plundered and embezzled their properties. The historians narrated that he took the properties of the people, to the extent that they had nothing. The amount he took from them was eight hundred million dirhams;32 on this day of ours it is equal to four thousand million dinars according to the value of the currency.33

In his last will to his son al-Mehdi, he mentioned: "I have collected properties to you, to the extent that no caliph before me had collected them."34

His fiscal policy was based on plundering, embezzling, choosing, and unjustly taking properties. As a result he made misery and poverty prevail all over the Islamic regions.

# 4. His Punishing the 'Alawids severely

The ordeal of the 'Alawids during the time of al-Mansur, the tyrannical, was the severest and most tragic of all ordeals, for he poured upon them all kinds of torture, met them with increasingly violence and tyranny. He annihilated their old and young; he had no mercy on any of them.

The severe punishment that befell them was many times as much as what they met during the Umayyad government, so concerning that it has been said: By Allah, the Umayyads had not done to them one tenth of what the 'Abbasids did! Di'bil al-Khaza'i, the poet of the thought, has described the disasters and

the misfortunes that befell them, saying:

All the districts which we have come to know from among Dhi Yemen, Bakr, and Muder took part in (shedding) their blood just as the butchers take part in slaughtering a camel.

They killed them, took them as prisoners of war, burnt them, and plundered them just as the invaders did in the land of the Romans and the Khazars. I think that the Umayyads were excused when they killed them; and I think that the 'Abbasids have no excuse. They have meant the most violent problems, the severest disasters and misfortunes in ordered that they might liberate the Islamic society and save it from tyranny and despotism.

They proudly went to the fields of jihad and struggle. They died honorable and free. So they illuminated the way to the free and the combatants. They have opened to them the doors to struggle and jihad, and planned to them the way to getting rid of the government that practiced abasement and enslavement.

Before we talk about what had happened to them during the time of al-Mansur, we must present the reasons for their revolt and struggle:

# The Reasons for the Revolt

As for the reasons that urged them to declare their violent revolt against the Umayyad and the 'Abbasid governments, they are as follows:

## 1. The Sense of Responsibility

According to their clear lineage, the 'Alawids thought that they were responsible for protecting the society, driving away disasters and misfortunes from it. In some of his words, Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, has shown the reasons for his refraining from pledging allegiance to Abu Bakr, saying:

O Allah, You know that that which (issued) from us was not for competing for the supreme authority (sultan), nor was it for beseeching a thing of the over left of the vanities, but that we may return the principle features of Your religion and show the reform in Your country.

Therefore the oppressed from among Your servants is safe, and the suspended from among the punishments prescribed by You is put into practice.35

Imam 'Ali refrained from pledging allegiance to Abu Bakr for these noble objectives, for he thought that he was responsible for taking care of the community and establishing inclusive reform in its land. So he expressed his displeasure toward those caliphs who preceded him.

The 'Alawids thought that the Islamic communities in those dark times sank under heavy oppression, tyranny, and poverty. So they went to the fields of jihad and struggles to liberate them. For example,

Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-'Alawi went to Kufa to ask about the conditions of the people, to feel them, and to get ready (for the revolt).

While he was walking in a street in Kufa, he saw an old woman following loads of dates, collecting them, and putting them in an old bag she carried. So he could not walk. He went to ask her about her deed, and she answered him, saying: "Surely I am a woman and has no husband to provide for me; I have daughters having no work; therefore I follow this way to feed myself and my children."

He became motionless, burst into tears, and said to her: "By Allah, you and the like of you will make me revolt against (the 'Abbasids), and they will shed my blood!"36 This feeling full of mercy and sympathy toward the poor and the deprived urged them to battle against the oppressive and to oppose the tyrannical rulers who possessed alone the properties and food of the community. As a result they went to the fields of iihad to struggle against tyranny and despotism.

#### 2. Self-esteem and Refusal

The 'Alawids were disposed by nature for glory, dignity, nobility, and generosity. Thus, the tyrannical authorities of their times spared no effort to abase them; and they could not bear with abasement, so they competed with each other for martyrdom, that they might enjoy dignity.

When Yazid b. Mu'awiya tried to force Imam Husayn, the grandson and plant of sweet basil of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, to pledge allegiance to him and to obey him, he went to the fields of jihad and declared on the Day of al-Taff his immortal words in which he described refusal in the brilliant full sense of the word.

He, peace be on him, has said: "Most surely, the bastard son of the bastard (Yazid) has focused on two (choices) between death and abasement; and abasement is far away from us! Allah, His Apostle, the believers, the good lap, the pure wombs, the proud noses, and the refusing souls refuse on our behalf to prefer obeying the ignoble to the death of the noble!"37

These luminous words rotated along with the orbit and embraced it, so they have become a wonderful lesson for the mujahideen from among his children. When the tyrannical one, Hisham, tried to abase Zayd b. 'Ali, he said: "When people dislike the heat of the swords, they become low."

When some people blamed him for revolting (against the 'Abbasids) and frightened him with death, he said to them:

She came early to frighten me with death as if that I was apart from life.

So I answered her: Surely death is a water-place, and I will be watered out of the water-place!38

When the Umayyads went too far in forcing Yehya b. Zayd to accept humiliation and abasement, he revolted against them and addressed his own great soul, saying:

"O Zayd's son, has Zayd not said: Whoever loves life lives low? Be like Zayd, for you are Zayd's soul and take a thick shade in the Gardens!"39 O Yehya, by Allah, you are Zayd's soul; you are a piece of the liver of your grandfather, the Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family.

You carried in your great inner self self-esteem and refusal, so you refused to lead a life full of abasement and wrong, you walked to the field of battle with desire and yearning, that you might die free and noble!

Through their sacred revolts, the 'Alawids have filled the history of Islam with pride, honor, and glory. They have described to Muslim peoples throughout their life stages the way to struggle for freedom and dignity.

### 3. Deprivation of their Rights

The ruling authorities went too far in wronging the 'Alawids and depriving them of all their natural rights. They spread among them poverty and neediness, met them with persecution and deprivation after the death of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family.

They deprived them of the one-fifth (khums) which was made obligatory by Allah to them. They confiscated Fadak from them lest they should be strong. They possessed alone the affairs of the caliphate and government. They turned away from the family of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, and went too far in degrading their social rank.

In his sermon "al-Shaqshaqiya", Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, has shown his deep sadness for losing his right. He has many statements in his Nahjual Balagha in which he has shown his displeasure with plundering his legacy and authority. The souls of his children were filled with this opinion, and they struggled for a long time to regain their rights.

When Di'bil al-Khaza'i recited his poem to Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, and reached this poetry line: "I can see that their fayya' is divided among other than them while their hands are void of it," he became sad, turned his holy hand, and said with sorrow and sadness:

"Yes, by Allah, they are void!"

The Imams of Ahl al-Bayt and their followers had such feelings, so they struggled for them. They made many sacrifices, to the extent that the prisons and the grave yards were full of them; and they faced the most violent and severest problems.

These are some factors that urged the 'Alawids to revolt against the tyrannical governments of the Umayyad and the 'Abbasids.

#### Imam Bin al-Sa'i's Statement

Imam al-Siba'i, a jurist, has talked about the reasons for the revolt of the 'Alawids. His statement is full of reliable proofs of his beliefs as follows: "Surely whoever carefully considers Islamic history certainly comes to know that all those from among the family of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, came out in revolt because they were liable to disasters, straits, poverty, and abasement.

The Umayyads gave to non-Arabs and Arab paupers hundred thousands of dinars. They gave to them estates, appointed them as governors over the countries, and employed them as ministers while they were stingy toward the 'Alawids, that they might subject them to straits and severe ordeals.

So the Fatimid ('Alawid) was unable to find the cost of a Negro female slave to marry her in order to protect his chastity, nor was he able to find the value of a cloth to cover his own body.

He saw those disgraceful (persons) who went too far in (serving) the Umayyads, helping them in their gatherings, took part in their drinks, their debauchery, and their dissoluteness (lead a life of) boons and exaltedness and roll in all kinds of welfare. For this reason the Fatimid groups were moved by their honor and manhood, and they went out in revolt, not in disobedience nor in breaking the pledge of allegiance, but they said that the earth of Allah was wide.

So one of them emigrated to one of the earth's sides in which was a people from among the community of his grandfather, may Allah bless him and his family. When he reached them, the enthusiasm of the religion moved them, and they respected and honored him; their hearts became familiar with him, and they joined him.

So when his news reached the Umayyads, they said: 'He has come out in revolt, by the Lord of the Kaaba!" They sent to him commanders and soldiers and they continued (to do so) until they left him a martyr. Such were the 'Abbasids. That happened because Allah had chosen to try the family of His Prophet in this perishing world (to make them live) in Paradise in the everlasting hereafter.

Throughout all times Allah has made them the mirror of the conditions of the people in that time toward Allah, the Most Exalted. The time when Ahl al-Bayt, peace be on them, were honored, protected, given security, and their needs were granted was good in Allah's sight, and vice versa.

Moreover, they (Ahl al-Bayt), may Allah be pleased with them, has a high position and great rank with Allah, the Most High. Through them Allah has guided the community and removed darkness from it; and their grandfather, may Allah bless him and his family, is mercy for all people.

Love for them is a religion, affection for them is guidance! Hating them is unbelief, and helping them is piety! 40 I mam b. al-Siba'i's viewpoint is very trustworthy. In other word, the 'Alawids came out in revolt and died free and honorable under the shade of spears because the Umayyads and the 'Abbasids went too far in depriving them of their natural rights and materially straitened them.

So they could not keep barely alive and cover their own bodies. After this brief presentation on the reasons that urged the 'Alawids to come out in revolt, we have to return to the tyranny and exhaustion they met from al-Mansur as follows:

## His Spying on the 'Alawids

Al-Mansur came to know that all the Muslims loved the 'Alawids, for they were distinguished by good manners, good lineage, generosity, abundant knowledge, and other qualities that enabled them to undertake the office of Islamic Caliphate and to lead the community.

He also came to know that some people hated him because he was marked by stinginess, miserliness, severity, alienation, tricks, and other vices and evil deeds, in addition to the evil deeds of his family who was famous for their treason toward the community.

Al-Mansur wakefully spent his nights reflecting on oppressing the 'Alawids and scheming against them. At last he decided to send someone to spy on their affairs and to come to know of Muhammad and his brother Ibrahim. So he chose a man and sent with him a letter to Muhammad on behalf of the Shi'ites who mentioned their obedience (to him), their hurrying (to him), their sending money and gifts.

The man went to Medina. He came in to 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan and asked him about his son Muhammad, and he concealed his news. He frequently went to him and insisted on asking him about him. So 'Abd Allah was deceived by him and said to him: "He (Muhammad) is in Mount Juhayna." He ordered him to pass by 'Ali called al-Aghar to guide him to his place. Al-Mansur had a Shi'ite secretary.

The secretary wrote a letter to 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan and informed him of the spy. When his letter came, they were afraid, so they sent Abu Habbar to Muhammad and 'Ali, al-Hasan's sons, to warn them against the man. Abu Habbar went out and reached Muhammad in his place. He found him along with a group of his companions sitting in a cave.

That spy was with them. He was the loudest of them in voice and the greatest of them in humbleness. When he saw Abu Habbar, he feared him and came to know that he would disclose his affair to the people. Abu Habbar said to Muhammad: "I have a need with you."

He rose and went with him, and he told him about the affair of the man and advised him to kill him. However, Muhammad did not respond to him. Then he advised him to shackle him and to deposit him with his womb relatives, and he responded to that. When the man felt that which was schemed against him, he escaped and hid himself from them. They looked for him but did not find him. He went in disguise to al-Mansur and told him about the affair.

Al-Mansur summoned 'Aqaba b. Salam al-Azdi and said to him: "I want you (to go) for an affair in which I am concerned. I am still looking for a man for it; perhaps you are he. If you are sufficient to it on my behalf, I will promote you." So 'Aqaba said: "I hope that I will accept the reflection of the Commander of

the faithful on me."

As a result al-Mansur commanded him to hide his personality, to conceal his affair, and to meet him at a time he appointed to him. Al-Mansur said to: "These cousins of us have refused all things except scheming against our kingdom and assassinating us. They have followers in Khuresan in a village called so-and-so. They wrote (letters) to them and send them the alms due on their properties, and some gifts from their country.

Therefore, take clothes, gifts, and other materials and go to them in disguise along with a letter we will write on behalf of the villagers. Then head for them. If they change their mind, then show love toward them and bring them near. If they insist on their own viewpoint, you must know that and beware (of them).

So head for 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan and meet him with humbleness and asceticism. If he opposes you, then be patient and go to him again until he becomes intimate with you and makes mild with you his temper. If he shows you his agreement, then quickly come to me."

'Aqaba went to Yethrib (Medina). He came in to 'Abd Allah and gave him the letter. However, 'Abd Allah denied and rebuked him; yet he continued going to him until he accepted his letter and his gifts and became intimate with him. 'Aqaba asked him about the answer, and he said:

"As for the letter, I will write to none, but you write to them on my behalf. Send to them my greetings and inform them that I will go out in revolt." 'Abd Allah appointed to 'Aqaba the time of going out in revolt. 'Aqaba returned to al-Mansur and told him about the affair.41

He became extremely disordered and carefully considered it. He did not find any way more successful than his traveling to Yethrib, that he himself might undertake suppressing the movement and put an end to his 'Alawid opponents.42

# His Arresting the 'Alawids

Al-Mansur waited for the season of the hajj. When it came, he and his attendants traveled to the Sacred House of Allah. After he had finished its ceremonies, he returned to Yethrib. He was accompanied by 'Aqaba b. Salam, who was a spy on the 'Alawids. Before his travel, he instructed him, saying: "When al-Hasan's son along with 'Abd Allah meet me, I will honor him, raise his position, and invite him to lunch.

When we finish having our food and look at you, stand before him, and he will turn away his eyes from you. Then turn and poke his back with your great toe until he fill his eye with you. Beware of that he sees you while eating." When al-Mansur reached Yethrib, he was received by the Hasanid. Among them was 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan.

Al-Mansur received him with care and honoring, seated him beside him, ordered food to be put before them. They are some of the food, and he looked at 'Aqaba. He rose and carried out that which al-

Mansur entrusted to him. Then he jumped and sat before al-Mansur. So 'Abd Allah became afraid of him and said to al-Mansur: "Release me (from my stumble)!" The wicked, dirty one (al-Mansur) shouted at him: "May Allah not release me if I release you!"43

Then he ordered him to be shackled and thrown into prison. So he along with a group of the 'Alawids were shackled and imprisoned in Merwan's house. Three saddle-bags filled with hay were put under him. The governor of Medina sent him some men, and they warned him against the violence and vengeance of al-Mansur.

They asked him to tell them about the place of his two sons, that he might leave prison. Thus, 'Abd Allah turned to al–Hasan b. Zayd44 and said to him: "O My nephew, by Allah, my tribulation is greater than that of Ibrahim, peace be on him. Surely Allah, the Great and al–Mighty, ordered Ibrahim to slay his own son; and that was an act of obedience to Allah; nevertheless Ibrahim said: *Most surely this is a manifest trial.* Qur'an, Surat al–Saffaat, verse 106.

And you have come to me (to ask me) to bring my sons to this man (al-Mansur) to kill them; and that is an act of disobedience to Allah, the Great and Almighty. Therefore, O My nephew, I am on bed and do not sleep; and I am, as you see, in need of sleep!"45

'Abd Allah's ordeal in respect with his two sons was the hardest and severest of all ordeals, for he had fallen into two misfortunes. He had no escape from them; either he had to stay in a dark prison suffering from pain or he had to inform (the authorities) of his two sons and expose them to death. However he chose to sacrifice his own soul that they might carry out their task and save the community from the government and tyranny of al-Mansur.

### His transferring them to Iraq

The 'Alawids stayed in the prison of the tyrannical, bloodthirsty one (al-Mansur) in Yethrib for three years. They suffered from the most frightful and greatest one of all misfortunes in ordeal and severity. The good and those sticking to their religion were displeased with their being prisoners.

The gatherings talked about their ordeal and about what would happen to them in the time of this tyrannical one (al-Mansur). The spies informed al-Mansur of the grumbles of the general populace and their criticizing him, and he decided to perform the hajj and investigate the affair of the 'Alawids, that he might took required measures

In the year 142 A. H. he traveled to Mecca. After he had finished the rites of the hajj, he returned and headed for al-Rabadha. He stayed there and was received by Rabah his governor over Yethrib. He commanded Rabah to go to Yethrib and fetch the 'Alawids.

Rabah went to it, ordered the 'Alawids to be brought out of prison, shackled, and brought to the Masjid of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family. The people had already overcrowded to see them.

Some of them were crying and others were silent; they were astonished at that misfortune. Rabah cursed and insulted the 'Alawids. Then he ordered the people to curse them, but they curse him and al-Mansur instead.

## Imam al-Sadiq's anguish

Imam al-Sadiq was distressed by the destructive misfortune that happened to his household. He became very sad. He saw them when they were about to be transferred, so he wept bitter tears. Then he turned to al-Hasan b. Zayd and said to him:

"O Abu 'Abd Allah, by Allah, after (this attitude), none of the things made forbidden by Allah will be kept. By Allah, neither the Ansar nor their children were loyal to Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, when they pledged allegiance to him at al-'Aqaba."

Then he, peace be on him, mentioned to him the story of al-'Aqaba, saying to him: "Surely, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, said to 'Ali: 'O Allah, exert pressure on the Ansar!" 46

'Abd Allah b. Ibrahim al-Ja'fari narrated on the authority of Khadija, daughter of 'Umar b. 'Ali, who said: "When they (the 'Alawids) were stopped at the door of the Masjid called the Door of Gabriel, Imam Abu 'Abd Allah (al-Sadig) looked at them while the whole of his cloak was thrown on the ground.

Then he looked at them through the door of the Masjid and said three times: 'May Allah curse you, O People of the Ansar! You had not promised Allah's Apostle nor had you pledged allegiance to him in order (to do) this! By Allah, I am adhering (to you) but I have been overcome!' And none can drive away the decree!'

Then he rose, took one of his sandals, and put it on. The other was in his hand. He was drawing the whole of his cloak along the ground. Then he entered his own house and stayed in it for twenty nights weeping by day and night."47

The Imam's heart melted in sadness; and his soul roamed in a current of suspicions and pain. He inclined to weeping in order that he might lighten the anguish of the misfortune and the sadness.

### His Letter to 'Abd Allah

Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, sent a letter to 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan to console him on the painful misfortune that befell him.

The following is the text of the letter.

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

To the righteous descendants and good progeny from among the children of his brother and his cousin

Now then, if you and those from among your household who were transferred with you have possessed alone the misfortune that has befallen you, you have not possessed alone sadness, fury, depression, and the painful heartache as I have done. Because of that (misfortune) impatience, worry, and anguish have affected me just as they have affected you.

However, I have resorted to that which Allah, the Great and Almighty, has ordered the Allah-fearing(to do) – such as patience and good consolation – when He said to His Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family: *And wait patiently for the judgment of your Lord, for surely you are before our eyes.* (Qur'an, Surat al-Toor, 52: 48).

And when He says to His Prophet: So wait patiently for the judgment of your Lord, and be not like the companion of the fish. (Surat al-Qalam,68: 48).

And when He says to His Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family when (the polytheists) maimed Hamza: *And if you take your turn, then retaliate with the like of that with which you were afflicted; but if you are patient, it will certainly be best for those who are patient.* (Quran, Surat al-Nahl, 16:126). So Allah's Apostle became patient and did not punish (them).

And when He says: And enjoy prayer on your followers, and steadily adhere to it; We do not ask you for subsistence; We give you subsistence, and the (good) end is for guarding (against evil). (Quran, Surat Taha, 20: 132).

And when He says: Who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: Surely we are Allah's and to Him we shall surely return. Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course. (Surat al-Bagara, 2:156-157).

And when He says: *Only the patient will be paid back their reward in full without measure.* (Surat al-Zumer, 39: 10).

And when Luqman says to his son: *And bear patiently that which befalls you; surely these acts require courage.* (Surat Luqman, 31: 17).

And when He says on behalf of Musa: Musa said to his people: Ask help from Allah and be patient; surely the land is Allah's; He causes such of His servants to inherit it as He pleases, and the end is for those who guard (against evil). (Surat al-A'raaf, 7:128).

And when He says: *Except those who believe and do good, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience*. (Surat al-'Asr, 103: 3).

And when He says: *Then he is of those who believe and charge one another to show patience, and charge one another to show compassion.* (Surat al-Balad, 90:17).

And when He says: And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss

of property and lives and fruits; and give good news to the patient. (Surat al-Baqara, 2: 155).

And when He says: And how many a prophet has fought with whom were many worshippers of the Lord; so they did not become weak-hearted on account of what befell them in Allah's way, nor did they weaken, nor did they abase themselves; and Allah loves the patient. (Surat Aal 'Umran, 3:146).

And when He says: *The patient men and the patient women*. (Surat al-Ahzab, 33: 35).

And when He says: *And be patient till Allah should give judgment, and He is the best of the judges.* (Surat Yunus, 10: 109). Verses similar to these are many in the Qur'an.

O My uncle and cousin, know that Allah, the Great and Almighty, never pays attention to the distress of the world toward his friend for an hour; and that there is nothing more beloved to him than distress, toil, and tribulation along with patience, and that He, the Blessed and Exalted, never pays attention to the ease of the world toward his enemy for an hour.

Were it not for that, His enemies would not kill his friends, frighten them, and prevent them; and His enemies were safe, tranquil, high, and manifest. And if it were not for that, Zakariya and Yehya b. Zakariya were not unjustly and aggressively killed through the oppression of an oppressor.

And if it were not for that, your grandfather, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, was not unjustly killed when he undertook the affair of Allah, the Great and Almighty, likewise your uncle al-Husayn b. Fatim, may Allah bless them, (was killed) out of persecution and aggression.

And if it were not for that, Allah, the Great and Almighty, would not say in His Book: *And were it not that all people had been a single nation, We would certainly have assigned to those who disbelieve in the Beneficent Allah (to make) of silver the roofs of their houses and the stairs by which they ascend.* (Surat al-Zukhruf, 43: 33).

And if it were not for that, He would not say in His Book: *Do they think that by what We aid them with of wealth and children, We are hastening to them of good things? Nay, they do not perceive.* (Surat al-Mu'minun,23: 55-56).

And were it not for that, it would not have been mentioned in the hadith: "Were it not for that the believer became sad, I would make for the unbeliever an iron head cloth, so his head would never have ache."

And were it not for that, it would not have been mentioned in the hadith: "Surely, the world is not equal to a mosquito's wing in Allah's sight." And were it not for that, the unbeliever would not be given a drink of water of it (the world). And if it were not for that, it would not have been mentioned in the hadith:

"If the believer was on the top of a mountain, Allah would send to him an unbeliever or a hypocrite to harm him." And if it were not for that, it would not have been mentioned in the hadith: "When Allah loves

people or loves a servant, he pours upon him tribulation with pouring; therefore, when he gets out of a grief, he falls into (another) grief."

And if it were not for that, it would not have been mentioned in the hadith: "No two qualities are more lovable to Allah, the Great and Almighty, with which His believing servant can bear in the world, than restraining anger and keeping patient toward a misfortune through a good consolation and expecting a reward (from Allah)."

And if it were not for that, the companions of Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, would not have supplicate (Allah) to prolong the lifetimes of those who wronged them, to make their bodies healthy, to give them abundant wealth and many children.

And if it were not for that, it would not have reached us that when Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, singled out a man with through asking Allah to have mercy on him and to forgive him, he would die a martyr.

Therefore, O My uncle, cousin, my cousins, and my brothers, stick to patience, consent, submission, and entrusting (your affairs) to Allah, the Great and Almighty, and consent with patience to His decree, clinging to obedience to Him, and submitting to His orders. May Allah pour down upon us and you patience, end our lifetime and yours with reward and happiness, save us and you from all misfortunes through His force and strength.

Surely He is Hearing, Nigh; and may Allah bless His Choice from among His creatures, Muhammad the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family."48

This letter was as consolation to them for what they suffered such as hard ordeals and misfortunes, likewise it has laudation and praise to them. If they had unlawfully gone out in revolt against al-Mansur, Imam al-Sadiq would not have felt pain for them and praised them, for the office of the Imamate is just like that of the Prophethood far away from prejudice and rushing through any of the sentiments of love.

The thing that indicates that they were on the right course is that he, peace be on him, yearningly looked forward to know their news. Khallad b. 'Umayr al-Kindi, the retainer of the family of Hajr b. 'Adi, reported: "I came in to Abu 'Abd Allah (al-Sadiq), peace be on him, and he asked: 'Have you any knowledge of the family of al-Hasan?"

Khallad said: "News from them came to us, and we did not want to start with it. So we said to him: 'We hope that Allah will make them well.' And he, peace be on him, said: 'How far they still are from well-being?' Then he loudly cried, and we cried with him." 49 In addition to that is the praise has been mentioned in respect with them.

Khallad narrated on the authority of his father on the authority of Fatima daughter of al-Husayn, peace be on him, who said: [I have heard my father say:] "Some people who belong to you will be killed or

suffer a misfortune on the bank of the Euphrates (Iraq). The first did not precede them, nor will the last catch up with them; none of your children will remain (alive) except them."50

Any way, the 'Alawids went out in revolt against al-Mansur through awareness of the essence and guidance of Islam that made it incumbent (on Muslims) to oppose oppression and to resist tyranny and wrong.

## At al-Rabadha

The caravan of the 'Alawids left Yethrib. When it was three miles far from it, they were made to dismount their camels. Blacksmiths were brought to them, and they put their legs into shackles. The shackles of 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan were so tight that he moaned out of pained; so his loyal brother asked the blacksmiths to put them around his legs, and they put them around them.

In this manner he has become the ideal for truthful brotherhood. When the caravan reached al-Rabadha, the 'Alawids were ordered to dismount their camels while they were shackled and burnt by the sun. Then al-Mansur ordered Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah to be entered to him. 51 When he stood before him, he received him with cursing, insulting, and defaming; he accused him of things we do not want to mention because they were ugly.

This wicked, dirty person (al-Mansur), whose history is full of shame and disgrace, did not refrain from accusing (the 'Alawids of ugly things) and fabricating lies against them.

The sinful oppressor (al-Mansur) ordered his policemen to take off 'Abd Allah's clothes. They did and left him naked. Then he ordered them to flog him, and they flogged him one hundred and fifty times. 'Abd Allah felt pain, while al-Mansur was delighted and happy.

A policeman flogged 'Abd Allah on the face, and he said to him: "Refrain from flogging me on the face, for it has sacredness like that of Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family."

However, al-Mansur commanded the policeman, saying: "Flog him on the head! Flog him on the head!" So he flogged him thirty times on the head. Then he ordered his neck and hands to be tied to a piece of wood. Then he was taken out naked and was entered into a room where his companions were sitting.

He looked like a black man, for the flogging changed his color and made his blood flow; he received a whip stroke on the eye, and it made it bleed. A retainer of Abu Ja'far's asked him: "Shall I cover you with my cloak?" "Yes, may Allah reward you good," he replied, "By Allah, that I am naked is more intense to me than the flogging I have received." The retainer covered him with his cloak.52

In that state Muhammad asked for water, but none gave him water to drink except a man from Khuresan. The man went to him and gave him water to drink. Shortly after that, al-Mansur passed by them, so 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan reminded him of the favors and kindness of his grandfather the Prophet,

may Allah bless him and his family, toward al-'Abbas, al-Mansur's grandfather, when he was brought as a captive, saying to him: "We have not treated your captives on the Battle of Badr in such a way!"

However, al-Mansur turned his face away from him, for he hurts him with his words. Then he ordered the 'Alawids to be taken to Iraq.

# At al-Hashimiya

The caravan of the 'Alawids covered the desert and quickly took them to graves and prisons. When it reached al-Hashimiya, al-Mansur ordered the 'Alawids to be thrown into dark prisons, to the extent that they were unable to know the times of the prayers, so the divided the Qur'an into five parts. They performed the prayers according to the end of each part.53

Al-Mansur ordered Muhammad b. Ibrahim to be brought before him. Muhammad was so handsome that the people went to look at him. When he stood before al-Mansur, he turned to him, and sneeringly asked him:

- -Are you the one who called the yellow silk?
- -Yes.
- -By Allah, I will kill you in a way with which I have never killed any of your household.

Then he ordered a built column to be emptied, and it was emptied. Muhammad was entered into the column, and he was bricked up in it alive. 54 The policy of this sinful oppressor (al-Mansur) toward the 'Alawids was distinguished by all kinds of bad deeds and offenses, for he did not pay attention to the sacredness of Allah's Apostle in respect with his grandsons, and intentionally annihilated them in a way matchless in the history of mankind.

The police of al-Mansur was so rude. An example of their rudeness is that 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan, the head of the 'Alawids, asked for water. Some of them asked permission from al-Mansur to give him water, and he permitted that. He brought him cold water. While 'Abd Allah was drinking water, Abu al-Azhar went to him and violently kicked the glass with his foot, so 'Abd Allah's front teeth fell into the glass.55

The 'Alawids stayed in the prison of al-Mansur; they suffered from severe misfortunes. They performed the ritual ablution in their places, to the extent that they became bad-smelling. Some of their retainers brought them perfume of musk and ambergris that they might through it remove the abominable smell, but it was useless.

Their feet became swollen, then the swelling crept into their hearts, and most of them died. The tyrannical one (al-Mansur) ordered the prison to be demolished on the rest of them, and it was

demolished. Most of them died; among them was 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan.56

This tragedy, immortal in the world of sorrows, was full of different kinds of disasters and misfortunes, for through it the sacredness of the great Prophet was violated in respect with his progeny. That is because al-Mansur paid no attention to their sacredness, nor did he fear Allah in respect with them.

Those pure persons sacrificed their own souls for Allah to save His servants from the wickedness of that ruling group who disbelieved in all the values of mankind.

This great tragedy moved waves of displeasure with the 'Abbasids. After long times Abu Firas al–Hamadani satirized the 'Abbasids for this abominable crime their grandfather al–Mansur committed. He has said:

You badly reward the Hasanid, whose father and mother were guiding eminent men.

Neither pledge of allegiance nor oath nor kinship nor covenants prevented you from (shedding) their blood.

Why did you not pardon those taken prisoners without any reason for those who had pardoned your prisoners (at the Battle of) Badr?

Why did you not stop your whip from striking the one called the Yellow Silk? And (why did you not) refrain from cursing the grand daughters of Allah's Apostle?

None of those souls belong to Allah's Apostle was far from whips; therefore was Mecca far (from them?) The Banu Harb harmed them in away less than yours, though their crimes were great.

How many a clear perfidy you have toward the religion; and how many a blood for Allah's Apostle is with you. You think that you are his followers while the blood of his pure grandsons is on your finger-nails.

How far! Neither kinship nor womb (relationship) is close (to him) one day as long as morals and self-esteem have been send far. The love of Selman for him was a womb (relationship), while there was no womb (relationship) between Noah and his son.57

This poetry contains deep sadness for the misfortunes and the disasters that befell the 'Alawids during the time of al-Mansur and all the 'Abbasid kings, who severed the bonds of the womb relationships and kinship, and denied the kindness the great Apostle did to their grandfather al-'Abbas when they returned that through severely punishing his family and descendants.

# His confiscating the 'Alawids' properties

When al-Mansur ordered the 'Alawids to be arrested and to be thrown into dark prisons, he ordered his governor to confiscate all their properties and to sell their slaves.58 Besides he ordered the properties of

Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, to be confiscated. When al-Mansur perished, al-Mehdi returned them to Imam Musa, peace be on him.

## The Revolt of Muhammad al-Zaki

Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan was among the leading 'Alawids in his knowledge, his jurisprudence, his bravery, and his generosity. He had all kinds of hereditary and acquisitive merits. He was called Dhu al-Nafs al-Zakiya and Sarih Quraysh, for neither his mother nor his grandmothers were slave wives; rather his forefathers and grandmothers belonged to Quraysh. The people called him al-Mehdi of whom the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, gave good news.59

In this respect the poet says:

We hope that Muhammad will be an Imam through whom the revealed Book lives.

Through whom Islam is good as it became corrupt, and (through whom) a miserable, dependent orphan lives.

He will fill our land with justice as is filled with misguidance, and will bring that which I expect.60

He was similar to his grandfather the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, in his behavior and morals. The people of Medina thought that if it was possible for Allah to send a prophet after Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, he would be he.61

All the Hashimites nominated him for the caliphate. Al-Mansur al-Dewaniqi served him, ordered the clothes he worn, and held his mount, that he might seek nearness to him. He and his brother al-Saffah pledged allegiance to him twice. When the 'Abbasids usurped the government, Muhammad severely felt pain and summoned the people to pledge allegiance to him, and they responded to him.

Muhammad and his brother Ibrahim hid themselves, while the summoners to them traveled through the cities summoning the people to them. Their father 'Abd Allah urged them to revolt (against the 'Abbasids) and moved them to struggle against them. He said to them: "Surely, If Abu Ja'far (al-Mansur) has prevented you from living as honorable, he cannot prevent you from dying as honorable."62

When Muhammad heard of the death of his father along with his 'Alawid cousins in the prison of al-Mansur, and of different kinds of punishment and torture which happened to them, he and his brother Ibrahim decided to declare the revolt on a certain day. Muhammad declared it in Yethrib on the due day, as it was said.

The people pledged allegiance to him; they were delighted with their pledging allegiance to him. His army occupied the official offices and controlled the public treasury. The people of the Yemen and Mecca hurried to pledge allegiance to him. Many people gathered to show obedience and submission to

him, and he rose among them and delivered a sermon.

He praised and lauded Allah, and then he said: "Now then, O people, it is clear to you that this tyrannical, the enemy of Allah, Abu Ja'far (al-Mansur) has built a green dome as a sign of opposing Allah in His kingdom and of belittling the Holy Kaaba, while Allah punished Pharaoh when he said: "I am your most high lord!

The most appropriate of people in undertaking this religion are the children of the Emigrants and the Ansar, who helped them. O Allah, surely they have made lawful the things you made unlawful and made unlawful the things you made lawful. So they have given security to him whom You frightened and frightened him to whom You gave security.

Therefore, count them in number, and kill them separately, and leave none of them!

"O people, surely, by Allah, I have come out in revolt among you while I think that your not men of strength and intense. However I have chosen you for myself; I have come to this (city) while the pledge of allegiance has been taken to me in all those cities where Allah is served."63

This oration indicates that the pledge of allegiance was taken to him from all the Islamic regions. However, some of those who commented on his speech thought that al-Mansur schemed against him. It was he who ordered his governors to write letters to Muhammad and to respond to his summons, that he might hurry to declare the revolt before he ended his plans, and that al-Mansur might put an end to it in the bud.

Any way, when al-Mansur hear of the revolt, he sent an army of about four thousand horsemen and appointed over it his crown prince, 'Isa b. Musa, as commander in chief. The army covered the desert and reached Yethrib (Medina). When Muhammad came to know of the arrival of the army, he spread his fighters all over the streets and the lanes. Before the outbreak of the battle, he addressed his army, saying:

"O People, we have gathered you to fight (them); we will entrust the mountain passes to you. The enemy is close to you and is many in number. Victory is from Allah, and the affair is in His hand. It seems to me that I have to give you permission (to leave) and to make easy the ways to you; therefore, whoever wishes to stay, he can stay; and whoever wishes to leave, he can leave."

This oration belongs to someone who was deserted, had no trust in victory and no hope in overcoming the events due to the fact that his army was few in number while that of the enemy was great in number. He did not force his companions to battle against the enemy, nor did he depend on the means of deception and misguidance. So manhood and nobility were clear in this attitude of his.

When the opportunists and those ambitious heard his speech, they deserted him. Accordingly, none remained with him except his very loyal companions,64 who had no ability to defend him. So 'Abd Allah

b. Ja'far65 hurried to him and said to him:

"My father and mother be ransom for you; surely you have no ability (to defeat) what I have seen, and with you there is none honest to fight (them). Therefore, go now and join al-Hasan b. Mu'awiya in Mecca, for most your companions are with him."

Muhammad answered him according to the honor and nobility his great soul had, saying: "O Abu Ja'far, by Allah, if I went out, the people of Medina would be killed. By Allah, I will not return until I kill or be killed. You are free in respect with me. So go wherever you wish."66

If Muhammad had left Yethrib (Medina), al-Mansur's Army would have occupied it, treated the people with an extreme severity, and violated all the sacred things. Thus, Muhammad thought that he had to stay therein and to sacrifice himself for security and safety of the people.

The battle broke out between the two sides. After a terrible conflict between the forces of the truth and those of falsehood, the great leader, Muhammad Dhu al-Nafs al-Zakiya, was badly wounded and fell on the ground and knelt down. The sinful one, Hemid b. Qahtaba, shouted at his fighters, saying: "Do not kill him!" Then the rogue (Hemid b. Qahtaba) himself went and cut off his holy head, 67 that he alone might commit the sin and enter the Hell-fire!

With this one of the most wonderful page of the pages of the holy jihad ended, and the greatest reformative movement in the Islamic world was folded, while it aimed at spreading justice, prevailing of security and ease among the people. The good forces collapsed; the hopes of the free were destroyed, for they lost their high leader, who was for them as a light stand in the way of struggle and jihad.

# The Revolt of Ibrahim al-Zaki

Ibrahim b. 'Abd Allah was among the leading thinkers and one of the eminent men of his time in his knowledge, his courtesy, his good manners, and his good management. His pure soul was full of faith in the right of the community. So he went to the fields of jihad to save it from the government of enslavement and abasement. He intended to establish among its lands the Islamic justice and the Qur'anic laws.

The thing for which Ibrahim was famous was that he had an iron will; he was alert and sensitive. Al–Mansur increasingly wanted him to be arrested, so he spread spies on him. Ibrahim could sit on the dining tables of al–Mansur, and he did not recognize him. He mentioned that, saying: "The looking (for me) in al–Mousil forced me to sit on the dining tables of al–Mansur.

He came to it (al-Mousil) to look for me. The (people of) the land expelled me, and I found no allowable place. He imposed searching (for me), spread spies (on me), and invited the people to his lunch. However, I came in among those who came in, and ate among those who ate, and then I went out. As a result he refrained from looking (for me)."

This boldness is a proof of his unique abilities that placed him on the level of the great, who do not think of defeat, and whose determination is not changed by difficult events. The sad news of the murder of his brother came to him while he was on the pulpit and delivering a speech, so he recited the following poetry lines:

O Abu al-Manazil, O best of knights, whoever is bereaved of you in the world is indeed bereaved!

Allah knows that if I fear them and the heart is fearful of them, they will not kill him, and I will not hand over my brother to them until we all die or we all live!

Then his tears flowed on his holy face, and he praised his brother, and composed some words out of his sadness, saying: "O Allah, You know that Muhammad went out in revolt to show anger for You, to remove these heavy (days), and to prefer Your right; therefore have mercy on him, forgive him; make the hereafter the best resort and return for him in the world."

He elegized his brother with these poetry lines:

I will lament for you through the thin, white (swords) and the spear, for surely through them the seeker attain his revenge.

We are the people who do not weep for their perishing one, even if he breaks their backs.

I am not like the one who mourns for his brother with tears he makes through pressing the water of his eyeball with pressing.

But I relieve my heart through an attack with which I inflame firebrands among their phalanxes.68

The heroism in the brilliant sense of the word was present in this wonderful attitude Ibrahim adopted, for the murder of his brother did not weaken his determination; rather it increased him in faith and determination, and he continued his struggle.

Ibrahim declared his great revolt against al-Mansur in Basrah, so the Muslims responded to him and joined his summons. Sufyan b. Mu'awiya, the governor of Basrah, was among those who supported him. He always contacted with him and informed him of al-Mansur's new decisions concerning Basrah. He helped him very much with the affairs of the revolt.

Ibrahim occupied Basrah and sent the summoners to him to al-Ahwaz, Persia, Wasit, and al-Meda'in. These countries responded to him and pledged allegiance to him. The flag of the 'Alawid state waved over them. The news of the violent revolt successively came to al-Mansur, and he became afraid, frightened, and impatient. Al-Hajjajj b. Qutayba came in to him and saw him hitting the ground with his scepter and reciting:

I have installed myself as a target for spears; surely the head does the like of that!

So al-Hajjajj said to him: "May Allah make your glory last and grant you a victory over your enemy, you say just as al-A'sha has said:

"And if their war is kindled among them and is heated for them after its being cold, it will find someone who is patient toward its heat, the attacks of wars, and their repetition."

Al-Mansur said to him: "O Hajjajj, surely Ibrahim has come to know my rough side, my difficult direction, and my coarse horn. He has been encouraged to walk towards me from Basrah by these countries neighboring the troops of the Commander of the faithful; the people of Iraq have agreed with him on opposition and disobedience to me.

I have shot each country with its own stone and every district with its own arrow. I have sent to them a noble, blessed, victorious one, 'Isa b. Musa along with many troops and equipment. I have sought help from Allah against him (Ibrahim) and regarded Him as sufficient to him, for surely the Commander of the faithful has neither strength nor force except through Him."

When Ibrahim had troops supplied with numbers and equipment, he decided to go to war against al–Mansur. However, his companions from Basrah advised him to stay in Basrah and to send the troops; if they had escaped, he would have reinforced them with other than them. Some people from Kufa said: "Surely there are many groups of people in Kufa.

If they saw you, they would die before you; and if they did not see you, many reasons would hold them back (from fighting)." As for Ibrahim, he responded to the viewpoint of the Kufans. As a result he himself headed for al-Mansur to war against him. If he had stayed in Basrah, he would have overcome those events and won a victory.

Al-Mansur sent an army of fifty thousand fighters to battle against Ibrahim. He appointed 'Isa b. Musa, his crown prince, as a command-in-chief over the army and appointed Hemid b. Qahtaba as commander over its vanguard. He said to him when he saw him off:

"Surely these wicked people (the astrologers) claim that when you meet Ibrahim, your companions will wander about one time in order to find him, then they will come to, and the final result will be yours."

Ibrahim along with his troops covered the desert; he was heard reciting al-Qatami's poetry lines:

If a wise man manage the affairs, then what will end what he can do.

The disobedience to the one who is compassionate to you is of that which increases you in strength when you hear from him.

The best of things is that which you receive from him, and not that you follow him with following.

But when the leather is cut, is won-out and defective, so artisans are overcome.69

This indicates that he repented of his walking (towards al–Mansur), for he came to know that if he had stayed in Basrah, it would have been better for him. Then he along with his troops headed for Bakhimra, and not for Kufa lest the honors should be violated and the children should be killed.

Some people advised him to walk towards Kufa, for it would be more guaranteed, but he did not respond to them out of fear of what we have mentioned.

The fire of the war broke out between the two sides, and al-Mansur's army was defeated and its vanguards reached Kufa. So al-Mansur was afraid, intended to escape, and mentioned the words of Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, concerning that the 'Abbasids would win the government.

That was when he said to al-Rabi: "Where is the statement of their (Imam called) al-Sadiq? How have our children not attained it (the government)? So where is the emirate of the boys?"

When he was besieged and straitened, he ordered the camels and other animals to be put at all the gates of Kufa that he might escape from it. Al-Mansur's troops returned after their defeat because of a river they found and were not able to pass it. So they all came back. Ibrahim's companions had moved through water that they might fight on one front.

Thus, when they tried to escape, the water prevented them from escaping. Ibrahim along with some of his companions resisted. Hemid b. Qahtaba fought against them and sent their heads to 'Isa. A treacherous arrow came and fell into Ibrahim's mount, and he changed his place and said to his companions: "Bring me down!" They brought him down off his mount, and he said: "Allah's command is a sealed determination! We wanted an affair, and Allah wanted other than it."

His companions and his special group gathered around him to defend him and to fight on his behalf. So Hemid b. Qahtaba said (to his troops): "Attack that group (of fighters) to remove them from their places and to know that around which they have gathered." They attacked them and removed them from Ibrahim. They cut off his holy head and brought it to 'Isa. So he prostrated and sent the head to al–Mansur.70

With this one of the most wonderful pages of holy jihad was ended and a great person in the Islamic world was folded, while he intended to put an end to oppression and tyranny, and to return the honorable life in Islam.

When al-Mansur, the wicked and evil one, heard of the murder of the great martyr (Ibrahim), he was about to fly out of happiness, for he achieved all his hopes and expectations. He found delicious the food which was before him, and he said to those around him: "Ibrahim intended to prevent me from (having) such a food!"71

Surely, the revolt of Ibrahim al–Zaki was not for the enjoyments and pleasures of the world; rather it was for destroying evil deeds, annihilating oppression, and saving the people from the terrorist government

that ruled them during the days of al-Mansur.

Surely that immortal revolt was for achieving ideals, putting the Qur'anic laws into practice among the general life of the people. Al-Mansur happily turned to those present in his gathering and said to them: "By Allah, I have never seen one more loyal to Merwan's children than al-Hajjajj!"

So al-Musayyab b. Zahra al-Dabbi opposed him and showed him that they obeyed him more than al-Hajjajj did to his masters, the Umayyads, saying: "O Commander of the faithful, al-Hajjajj did not precede us to an affair, and we remained behind him. By Allah, Allah did not create on earth someone more beloved to us than our Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family. You ordered us to kill his children, and we obeyed you and did (that); therefore, are we loyal to you?"

His words hurt al-Mansur, and he shouted at him: "Sit down! May you not sit down!"72 Al-Mansur possessed alone the kingdom after the revolt of the 'Alawids. After that, the tyrannical and arrogant one, al-Mansur, went too far in oppressing and exhausting the subjects. That was because the good forces of which he was afraid were defeated. As a result he became earnest in punishing the 'Alawids severely and in uprooting them.

In the following pages we will deal with the different kinds of exhaustion they faced and which cannot be described out of its atrocity and severity.

# His putting them in Columns

When the revolt of the 'Alawids was suppressed, al-Mansur looked for the rest of the 'Alawids. He put those he found into empty columns built of plaster and bricks. He found a handsome boy of al-Hasan. He handed over the boy to a builder and ordered him to put him into an empty column and to brick him up.

He entrusted one of his reliable persons with carrying that task. The builder put the boy into the empty column. He felt pity for him, and he left for him an outlet in the column, that some air might enter through it. He said to the boy: "Do not worry! Be patient! For surely, I will take you out of this column when it gets dark!"

When it became dark, the builder came and took the 'Alawid (boy) out of it and said to: "Fear Allah in respect with (shedding) my blood and that of those workers with me. Hide your person; for surely I have taken you out of the column in the dark, for I have fear that your grandfather, Allah's Apostle, May Allah and his family, will be my opponent before Allah on the Day of Judgment."

He asked the boy to hide his person, and he asked him to tell his mother of that, that her soul might be good, and her impatience might be less. The boy escaped, and none came to know where he lived. The builder reached the house appointed by the 'Alawid boy, and he heard sound like that of bees out of crying. He knew that it was the boy's mother. He told her about the story of her son and went away from

# The Case of the 'Alawids' Heads

The story of the case is full of sorrows and anxieties, for al-Mansur filled it with the heads of the 'Alawids, old, young, and children. He ordered Rita, al-Mehdi's wife, not to let al-Mehdi open it and not to come to know about it except after his death.

Al-Teberi has narrated it in his book al-Tarikh. The following is its text: "When al-Mansur decided to perform the hajj, he sent for Rita, al-Mehdi's wife, and ordered her about what he wanted. He entrusted her with and gave her the keys of the cases. He walked towards and made her take an oath. He confirmed the oath lest she should open some of the cases and inform anyone even her and al-Mehdi except that she came to know of his death.

When she came to know of it, only she and al-Mehdi had to sit together to open the case. Al-Mehdi had been in al-Ray when Abu Ja'far (al-Mansur) went to the hajj. When he came from al-Ray and went to Medinat al-Salam (Baghdad), Rita gave him the keys and asked him not to open the cases and not to inform anybody of them until she came to know of al-Mansur's death.

When al-Mehdi heard of the death of al-Mansur and he undertook the caliphate, he along with Rita opened the door. Suddenly he found a big case where was a group of the Talibiyyin dead in whose ears were labels on which were their lineage. Among them were children, young men, and many old men. When al-Mehdi saw that, he became terrified. He ordered a bit to be dug, and they were buried in it. Then he ordered a shop to be built on them."74

Al-Mansur kept and stored that case for the day on which property will not avail, nor sons. He stored it for the Day of Decision, and the day when the unjust one shall bite his hands.

# The 'Alawids ask al-Mansur for Mercy

The 'Alawids asked this tyrannical one (al-Mansur) for mercy. However, neither human feelings nor the close kinship moved him to pardon them. He went to the Sacred House of Allah. While he was walking among his procession, the daughter of 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan walked towards him and recited to him the following, gentle poetry lines:

Have mercy on the young children of Yazid, surely they have become orphans because they have lost you, not because they have lost Yazid! Have mercy on the toothless old people who are in chains and shackles in prison!

If you punish us due to our crime, then we will be killed out of it everywhere!

If you are generous through the womb kinship among us, then your grandfather is not far from our

#### grandfather!75

Yet this gentle entreaty did not move his severe mind, and he said to her: "Have you reminded me of him, 'Abd Allah's daughter?"

Then he ordered him to be killed in the ground prison, and he breathed his last in it.

Through this action al-Mansur reached bottomless meanness and severity!

## Imam al-Sadiq passes away

Imam al-Sadiq suffered all kinds of misfortunes and pain during the time of al-Mansur. He saw the exhaustion and the ordeals from which the Muslims suffered and saw the different kinds of punishments and torture the 'Alawids met. His being safe from al-Mansur was a miracle in spite of his guarding against taking part in any of the political fields.

This can be established through his famous tradition: "Safety has become rear, to the extent that requesting it has become hidden, for surely if it is (attained) through a thing, then it is about to (be attained) through inactivity. If it is sought through inactivity and is not found, then it is about (to be attained) through silence; and the happy is he who is busy with his own soul."

Al-Mansur tried to kill him several times, but Allah turned away his plot from him. He summoned him several times while he was bursting with anger. He tried to kill him, but Allah drove away his evil from him. One day he commanded al-Rabi' to go to him. However, al-Rabi' sent his son Muhammad to him.

He ordered him to bring him in the state in which he was, saying to him: "Go to Ja'far b. Muhammad. Climb the wall. Do not open any door to him lest he should change his condition. However, come down (the wall) and go to him." Muhammad carried out the orders. He found the Imam standing and praying. After the Imam had finished his prayer, Muhammad said to him:

- -Respond to the Commander of the faithful.
- -Let me put on my clothes.
- -We have no way to do that.

He brought the Imam as he was and made him come in to al-Mansur, and he angrily said to him: "Why do you not give up your envy, your oppression, and your plotting against this 'Abbasid house. Allah will increase you nothing through that but intense envy and unhappiness through which you cannot attain what you have.

So the Imam said to him: "By Allah, O Commander of the faithful, I have done nothing of this. I lived during the reign of the Umayyads. You have come to know that they were the most hostile of creation to

us and you, and that they had no right (to assume) this authority; nevertheless, by Allah, I did not wrong them, nor did they hear any evil from me, though I turned away from them. O Commander of the faithful, how do I do that while you are my cousin, the nearest of the creation to me in womb kinship, the greatest of them in giving and kindness to me? So how do I do that?" Al-Mansur bowed his head for an hour. Then he raised his head and said: "You are false and sinful!"

He brought out a file of letters. He threw the file to him and said to him: "These are your letters to the people of Khuresan. In them you have summoned them to break their pledge of allegiance to me and to pledge allegiance to you instead of me."

The Imam said to him: "By Allah, O Commander of the faithful, I have not done that. I do not regard that as lawful, nor is it of my creed. I am among those who believe in obeying you in all circumstances. I have reached an age that has made me too weak to do that. If I intended to do that, then send me to one of your prisons until death comes to me, for it is close to me!"

The wicked, ignoble one (al-Mansur) shouted at him: "No! No dignity!"

He bowed his head. Then he stretched his hand to the sword, drew a span of the hand of it, caught its hilt, and then he sheathed it. After that he said rude words to the Imam: "O Ja'far, do you not feel shame of this white hair and this lineage? Why do say false words and sow dissension among the Muslims?

You want to shed blood and stir up discord between the subjects and the rulers!" The Imam said to him: "No, by Allah, O Commander of the faithful, I have not done that. These are not my letters, nor that is my hand writing, nor is that my seal."

Al-Mansur drew a cubit of the sword, and then he sheathed it. He admonished the Imam, and he apologized to him. He drew the sword except a little bit of it, and then he sheathed it. He bowed his head, and then he raised it and said: "I think that you are truthful!"

He commanded al-Rabi' to bring him a perfume of musk and ambergris (ghaliya). He took some of it and put it on the Imam's beard. The Imam's beard was white, and it turned black due to the perfume. He went too far in honoring and magnifying the Imam. The reason for that is that he saw a proof of his Lord, so he pardoned him.76

Al-Mansur harbored malice against Imam al-Sadiq because the Muslims had unanimously agreed that he was great. Al-Mansur's name went out before the Imam's brilliant name. The Islamic world talked about his reputation and carried his merits and knowledge. The tyrannical, arrogant one (al-Mansur) tried to bring the Imam gradually to his procession when he wrote to him: "Why do you not visit us just as the people do?"

He thought that the Imam, peace be on him, would respond to him like those whom the world deluded. He did not know that the Imam, peace be on him, refrained from contacting with him, for he put before him these words of Him, the Exalted:

#### And do not incline to those who are unjust lest the fire should touch you. (11:113)

When Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, read al-Mansur's letter, he answered him: "We have nothing of the world for which we fear you, nor have you anything of the hereafter for which we hope you, nor are you in a blessing on which we congratulate you, nor do you regard it as a wrath, that we may console you for it. Therefore, why do we visit you?"

However al-Mansur did not understand the Imam's speech, for the world deluded him, and the love for kingdom and authority blinded his heart. When he read the Imam's letters, he answered him: "Surely you make friends with us to advise us."

The Imam, peace be on him, wrote an answer to him, saying: "Whoever likes the world should not advise you; and whoever likes the hereafter should not make friend with you."

Al-Mansur failed in achieving his hopes. Imam Musa, peace be on him, met with him. Some flies sat on al-Mansur's face and he drove them away with his hand, but they came again, to the extent that he became bored with them, so he turned to the Imam and asked him: "O Abu 'Abd Allah, why did Allah create flies?"

The Imam, peace be on him, paid no attention to him and indifferently answered him, saying: "In order to abase tyrants with them!" That answer displeased al-Mansur, and that the Imam paid no attention to him annoyed him. As a result he thought for a long time to assassinate him.

The tyrannical one (al-Mansur) decided to commit the most dangerous atrocity and the greatest crime in Islam, pay no attention to disgrace and the fire. He gave a deadly poison to his governor over Yethrib (Medina) and commanded him to put it into food and give it to the Imam to eat.

When the Imam had the food, the poison cut off his intestines. The Imam felt severe pain and painful aches. When he felt that his decreed death was close at hand, he ordered his family and his relatives to be brought. When they gathered around him, he gave them this valuable teaching: "Surely our intercession do not include him who makes light of prayers."

Then he secretly entrusted his son Imam Musa, peace be on him, with his affairs and gave him his special teachings. He also entrusted the office of the Imamate to five people, who were Abu Ja'far al–Mansur, Muhammad b. Sulayman, 'Abd Allah, Musa, and Hamida. He did that because he had fear for his son of the infidel authority.

That became clear after his death. For al-Mansur wrote to his governor and commanded him to kill the testamentary trustee of the Imam if he had been appointed. So his governor wrote back to him that they were five people, and that he was among them. Al-Mansur said that he had no way to kill those people.

The pain of the Imam became intense, and he suffered from severe aches. When his decreed death was close at hand, the Imam recited some verses of the Holy Qur'an. He secretly addressed his Lord and implored him until his pure soul joined the Garden of the Abode. That great soul the like of which was not created in the past and the future, except his forefathers, in clemency, knowledge, kindness, and showing sympathy to all people rose high to the High Comrade (Allah).

The head of Islam and first guide of the Islamic caravan who spared no effort to enlighten human thought and to spread the essence of knowledge and virtue among people passed away. His death was among the dangerous events with which the Islamic world was afflicted; its gravity shook the world.

The outcry from the houses of the Hashimites became loud. The crying and wailing from the houses of Yethrib (Medina) became loud. Many people hurried toward the Imam. They were either silent or crying or astonished or wailing for the demise of the great Imam, who was for them as shelter and place of flight in all their affairs.

Imam Musa, peace be on him, was broken-hearted; his soul melted in sorrows and regrets. He prepared his father for burial while he was shedding tears. He washed the pure corpse and shrouded it with two Shatawi garments he used during the ritual consecration, with a shirt and a turban belonged to Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him, and with a garment Imam Musa, peace be on him, bought for forty dinars.

After he had prepared him for burial, Imam Musa, peace be on him, prayed over him. Then the holy corpse was carried on fingertips. The crowded masses surrounded it. He was brought to the holy cemetery of al-Baqi' and was buried in his final resting place beside his father al-Baqir and his grandfather Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him.

The famous poet Abu Hurayra stood on the edge of the grave and praised Imam al-Sadiq with these poetry lines:

When they carried him on their shoulders, I said:

Do you know what are carrying to the earth? The one who is like a rock that falls off the top of a lofty height!

In the early morning the people poured dust upon his grave, while he had been on the crossroads!77

Having finished burying and praising Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, the Muslims walked towards Imam Musa to console him on his painful misfortune, and he thanked them for their consolations.

Then he came back home accompanied by his household and his loyal companions. Then he ordered a light to be put in the place where his father died according to the Sunna. The light was kindled every day until Imam Musa, peace be on him, was arrested in Iraq.78

Imam Musa undertook the great office of Imamate after his father's death; his holy age was then twenty years,79 and al-Mansur was in the tenth year of his reign.

# The Shi'ites follow Imam Musa

When the Shi'ites were afflicted with the death of their great spiritual leader, Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, they imitated his son Imam Musa. The people all over the countries that adopted the Imamate sent delegations to appoint the Imam after Abi 'Abd Allah (al-Sadiq), peace be on him.

Those delegations went to Yethrib (Medina). They met with Imam Musa, adopted his Imamate and pledged allegiance to him. That is because he had all the qualities his father had such as knowledge, piety, righteousness and other high moral qualities that were not available except with those Allah protected from slips, purified from defilement, and chose to guide His servants to the straight path.

Hisham b. Salim, a Shi'ite master and notable, related about how he and his companions resorted to Imam Musa after the death of his father, saying: I (i.e. Hisham b. Salim) and Muhammad b. Nu'man (known as) Sahib al-Taq were in Medina after the death of Imam Abu 'Abd Allah (al-Sadiq).

The people had agreed that 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far was the leader of the affair (sahib al-amr) and the one who would undertake the office of the Imamate after his father. I and my companions came in to him. When we sat down, we asked him the following questions:

- -How much poor-tax (zakat) should be paid on two hundred dirhams?
- -Five dirhams.
- -How much on a hundred dirhams?
- -Two and a half dirhams.

They were astonished at this religious decision that has no relationship with the Islamic Law. That is because the minimum amount of dirhams is two hundred dirhams; and there is nothing on that which is less than it. Hisham sneered at this religious verdict that has no concept:

- -By Allah, you are declaring the doctrine of the Murji'a.
- -By Allah, I do not know the doctrine of the Murji'a.

Hisham and Muhammad left him while they could not see the way out of pain and sadness, for they did not come to know the Imam who would undertake the office of the Imamate after Abu 'Abd Allah (al-Sadiq). Then Hisham said: "(Shall I go) to the Murji'ites, the Qadarities, the Mu'tazilites, to the Zaydites, to the Kharijites?"

While Hisham and Muhammad were roaming in a current of suspicions and thoughts and were reflecting on a doctrine to follow, they saw an old man indicating with his hand to Hisham to follow him. Hisham thought that the old man was among the spies of al-Mansur and could understand their speech.

He fearfully turned to his companion and ordered him to go away from him, that only he might be punished. He followed the old man, and he took him to Imam Musa b. Ja'far, peace be on him. When he came in to him, he became tranquil. When he sat down, the Imam turned to him and said to him with kindness and affection:

"To me, not to the Murji'ites, nor to the Qadarities, nor to the Mu'tazilites, nor to the Zaydites...." Hisham became happy, for he found his objective when the Imam told him about what he had in his inner self. This is one of the marks and signs of the Imamate. Then Hisham asked him the following question:

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  -May I be your ransom, has your father gone?

  -Yes.

  -Whom shall we follow after him?

  -If Allah wills, He will guide you to that man.

  -May I be your ransom, your brother 'Abd Allah claims that he is the Imam after his father.

  -'Abd Allah intends that Allah should not be worshipped (properly).

  -Who is in charge of us after him.

  He answered him with an answer similar to his first one, and Hisham asked him:

  -Are you him?

  -I am not saying that.

Hisham made a mistake in his speech, and he corrected his mistake, saying:

-Do you have an Imam over you?

-No.

He admired and magnified the Imam, to the extent that none knew except Allah. Then he said to him:

-May I be your ransom, may I question you like I used to question your father.

-Question.

You will be informed but do not spread (the answer) around. For if you do spread it around, then slaughter will take place. Then he asked him many questions, to the extent that he came to know that the Imam was a sea (of knowledge) which could not be exhausted out of his abundant knowledge and merit.

After he had come to know him and been sure of his Imamate, he asked him:

- -May I be your ransom, the Shi'a of your father is lost (without a leader). May I put this matter to them and summon them (to follow) you? For you have taken (a promise of secrecy from me).
- -Tell those of them whose righteousness you are familiar with, but take (a promise of) secrecy from them. For if it gets spread around, there will be slaughter. And he pointed to his neck with his hand.

Then he went out while he was tranquil and happy-hearted due to what he had found. So his friend hurried to him and asked him:

- -What happened to you?
- -Guidance.

Then he told him the story, and they both went to Zarara and Abu Basir. After they had met with them, they told them about the Imam's tradition. Thus, Zarara and Abu Basir hurried to the Imam and asked him some questions. He answered them, and they were sure of his Imamate.

Then the Shi'ite masses went to the Imam in groups and pledged allegiance to him and acknowledged his Imamate. The overwhelming majority of the Shi'ites adopted his Imamate except the companions of Ammar al–Sabati, for they insisted on their own thoughts.80

After his father, the Imam, peace be on him, took care of the affairs of the Shi'ites, spreading the Islamic principles, supplying the religious scholars and the students with different kinds of knowledge. Due to these deeds the government kept an eye on him. Accordingly he was unable to communicate with the Shi'a openly; likewise the Shi'a were unable to declare their beliefs and principles.

# Al-Mansur's Policy is criticized

Al-Mansur followed a policy through which he opposed Allah's Book and the Sunna of His Prophet. For he killed the innocent, violated honors, plundered properties, threw the free into prisons, pursued the thinkers, and uprooted the progeny of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family. These actions excited waves of displeasure against him.

For example some great Muslim figures criticized him. The following are brief lines on each of them:

### 1. 'Abd Allah b. Tawus

'Abd Allah b. Tawus al-Yemeni 81 along with Malik b. Anas visited al-Mansur. Al-Mansur turned to him and said:

- -Tell me about your father.
- -My father related to me: "The greatest of people in torture on the Day of Resurrection is the one whom Allah makes a partner in His supreme authority, and he makes oppression enter it through his governing."

Al-Mansur became displeased, and great anger appeared on his face. Malik was sure that his companion would be killed. He brought together his clothes lest they should be stained by 'Abd Allah's blood. Then al-Mansur turned to 'Abd Allah and commanded him:

-Give me the inkwell!

He did not give it to him, so al-Mansur shouted at him:

- -Why do you not give me the inkwell?
- -I fear that you may write an act of disobedience with it!

Al-Mansur found no answer. He ordered 'Abd Allah to be brought out. 'Abd Allah went away and left al-Mansur burst with anger and rage.82

## 2. Sufyan al-Thawri

Sufyan al-Thawri 83 came in to al-Mansur. When he sat down, he turned to al-Mansur and bravely said to him:

-Fear Allah! You have occupied this position and reached this place through the swords of the Emigrants and the Ansar, while their children die of hanger! 'Umar b. al-Khattab performed the hajj and spent nothing except fifteen dinars; he used to stop under the trees!

Al-Mansur sneeringly said to him:

- -You want me to be like you!
- -Do not be like me, but be less than that in which you are and higher than that in which I am!

So al-Mansur shouted at him:

-Go out!

Al-Thawri opposed him and threw at him an arrow of his flowing knowledge, saying:

- -Surely I know the position of one man! If he becomes righteous, all the community will be righteous!
- -Who is it?
- -You, Commander of the faithful! He burnt his heart with his words.84 Then he left him and went away.

### 3. Ibn Abi Dhi'b

### 3. Ibn Abi Dhi'b 85

Some great Muslim jurists visited al-Mansur when he assumed the caliphate. His gathering was fearful. For he sat on furniture brocaded with pearls and precious stones. Many guards drawing their swords surrounded him. They were waiting for issuing his orders to execute any person whatever he was. When the jurists sat down, al-Mansur angrily looked at them and said:

-Now then, people of jurists! Something from you reached the Commander of the faithful, and it has displeased him, and he has no patience with it! You are the most appropriate of the people in showing obedience and advise secretly and openly to him whom Allah has appointed as caliph over you!

The religious leader Malik b. Anas showed obedience to him and refuted those who informed him of them, saying:

-O Commander of the faithful, Allah, the Most high, has said: "O you who believe! If an evil-doer comes to you with a report, look carefully into it, lest you should harm a people in ignorance, then be sorry for what you have done."

So al-Mansur's excitement and anger abated, and he turned to them and asked:

- -What a kind of man am I in your viewpoints?
- -Am I among the just Imams or among the unjust ones?

Malik begged him through Allah and the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, to exempt him from the answer, and he exempted him. However, Ibn Sam'an, a pseudo clergyman, explained to him that he was the shadow of Allah in His earth, symbol of justice, and the one who made peace among the people, saying:

"You, by Allah, the best of men, O Commander of the faithful. You make the pilgrimage to the Sacred House of Allah, struggle against the enemy, make the roads safe, the weak feel safe through you from the strong; the religion is established through you; therefore you are the best man and the most just Imam."

Ibn Sam'an flattered al-Mansur through these cheap words that are of those hirelings and slaves, and that issued from a soul disposed by nature for abasement and hypocrisy. Then al-Mansur turned to Ibn Abi Dhi'b and asked him: "I adjure you before Allah, what a kind of man am I in your sight?"

And he stood before him like a roaring lion; he was not afraid of that terrible view; he did not fear the severity of the tyrannical authority; he was good-hearted and had strong faith. He said to him: "By Allah, I think that you are the worst man; you have possessed alone the wealth of Allah and of His Apostle, the portion of the near of kin, of orphans, and of the needy. You have ruined the weak, exhausted the strong, and confiscated their properties; therefore, what is your answer before Allah tomorrow?"

Ibn Abi Dhi'b hurt al-Mansur with his words, and he became angry and shouted at him: "Woe unto you! What are you saying? Do you understand? Look! What is in front of you?" He indicated with his hands to the swordsmen.

Ibn Abi Dhi'b paid no attention to him and said to him: "Yes. I have seen some swords. It is death; there is no escape from it. Soon death is better than late one."

He destroyed his entity through this frankness that issued from a good heart. Then he left him and went away.86

### 4. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Ziyad

'Abd al-Rahman b. Ziyad al-Afriqi went to visit al-Mansur. However he waited at the gate of his palace for a month. He was unable to come in to him. Then he was given permission to see him. When he sat down, al-Mansur asked him:

- -What made you come?
- -Tyranny has appeared in our country, so I have come to inform you (of it), but suddenly I have come to know that tyranny has begun to come out of your own house. I have seen evil deeds and prevailing oppression; I thought that was because of that the country was far away from you.

However, whenever I come nearer to you, (I feel that) the affair is worse." Al-Mansur became displeased with his words, and ordered him to be brought out.87 'Abd al-Rahman visited al-Mansur another time, and he asked him: -What is the difference between my authority and that of the Umayyads?

- -In your authority I have seen all kinds of tyranny I saw in theirs!
- -We have no helper.
- -'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz said: "A supreme ruler (sultan) is like a market to which is brought that which is sold in it. If he is pious, they will bring him their piety; and if he is sinful, they will bring him their sins." Al-Mansur kept silent and said nothing.88

### 5. A great Reformer

A great reformer criticized al-Mansur for his policy that opposed the truth and justice. History has not mentioned the name of this great reformer. Any way, this reformer told al-Mansur about his crimes and censured him for his acts. He said to al-Mansur during his circumambulating the Kaaba:

"O Allah, surely I complain to you of the appearance of error and corruption on earth, and of greed that comes between the truth and its men."

These words stunned al-Mansur, the tyrannical and arrogant one. So after he had finished circumambulating the Kaaba, he ordered the man to be brought. When the man stood before al-Mansur, he asked him about his words. The man asked al-Mansur for security and not to punish him if he had showed the truth, and al-Mansur gave him security.

#### He said to him:

- -Surely the one who has greed to the extent that he has come between the truth and its people is you, O Commander of the faithful.
- -How have I greed while I have gold and silver, the sweet and the sour are under my grasp?
- -Surely, Allah has appointed you as a ruler over the Muslims and their properties. But you have placed between you and them a veil of plaster and bricks, and chamberlains with weapons. You have ordered them not to let anyone come in to you except so-and-so; you have not ordered them to let those oppressed, sorrowful, weak, poor, hungry, and naked come in to you, while they all have rights against these properties.

When those people you have chosen as your special group and preferred to your subjects have seen that properties are collected to you while you do not give them (to people), and you gather them and do not divide them among (the people), they said: "This (al-Mansur) has disobeyed Allah and His Apostle. Therefore, why do we not betray him while he has employed himself for us?"

Accordingly, they have agreed on that they have not inform you of the stories of the people accept that which they want. When a governor opposed them, they send him far and expelled him, that they may degrade his position and importance. When you and they have become famous for that, the people have magnified and respected you and them.

Your governors are the first to flatter them through gifts, that they may gain power to oppress your subjects. Then this has been done by those powerful and rich from among your subjects, that they may wrong those inferior to them; therefore, the land has become full of greed out of oppression and corruption. These (people) have become your partners in your supreme authority while you are heedless (of them).

When someone comes to complain (to you of them), he is prevented from coming in to you. When he wants to bring his story before you, he is prevented from doing that. You have appointed someone to solve complaints. The oppressed one frequently comes to him, and he dismisses him out of fear of your entourage. When he cries out before you, he is hit, that he may be an example to those other than him. You see (these deeds) but do not reflect (on them)!

So Islam does not last on account of these (deeds). You, Commander of the faithful, collect properties for your children while Allah wills a woman to miscarry her baby, and it will have no wealth, and while there is a miserly hand that takes all properties. Allah will show kindness to that baby until it becomes a grown-up, and the desire of the people toward him becomes great.

It is not you who give, but it is Allah Who give without measure. You collect properties to establish and strengthen your kingdom while Allah has shown you what He had done to the Umayyads in spite of the gold and the silver they had collected, and in spite of the men, the weapons, and the horses they had prepared.

You collect properties to seek an objective more important than that in which you are whereas, by Allah, there is no position higher than that in which you are except that which cannot be obtained except through an act of disobedience (to Allah).89

Through these statements, this great critic has shown all kinds of oppression and tyranny the Muslims met from al-Mansur and his treacherous hirelings who plundered the wealth of the community and veiled from al-Mansur the stories of the subjects and what they suffered such as pressure and tyranny.

For if an oppressed one went to him, they prevented him from coming in to him. When he raised his voice through complaining and seeking help, they severely punished him, that he might be an example to those other than him. Meanwhile, al-Mansur veiled himself from the subjects; he did not take care of their interests and did not reflect on raising their standard of living. He devoted himself to hoarding up and storing properties and spending nothing of them on the Muslims.

## 6. 'Amru Bin 'Ubayd

'Amru b. 'Ubayd90 met with al-Mansur and bravely said to him:

- -Nothing has been done behind your door according to Allah's Book and the Sunna of His Prophet.
- -What shall I do? I said to you: "My ring is in your hand, so you and your companions come and help me."
- -Summon us through your justice, and we will generously help you; surely there are a thousand complaints behind your door. Solve some of them, and we will come to know that you are truthful.91

All these pieces of advice to al-Mansur went in vain. For he went too far in practicing tyranny and

oppression. He was not cautious of the punishment of Allah, nor was he afraid of the Day of Resurrection.

## **Imam Musa with al-Mansur**

Imam Musa, peace be on him, witnessed all the misfortunes and disasters that befell his household and his family, so his soul had deep sadness and bitter sorrow; nevertheless he was patient, regarded Allah as sufficient to him, and restrained his anger.

The Imam did not take any part in any of the political affairs, nor did he join the 'Alawid revolutionaries, for he came to know that their movement would not succeed. For this reason al-Mansur refrained from harming him and from subjecting him to detested things. He asked him to represent him on the Day of al-Nouruz and to receive the gifts were given by the notables, the nobility, military commanders to the Caliph.

That was legislated by Mu'awiya b. Abi Sufyan and was followed by the kings after him. Accordingly, the Imam, peace be on him, refrained from responding to al-Mansur, saying: "I have investigated the traditions narrated from my grandfather, Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, and found no tradition on this 'Id, which is a tradition (Sunna) of the Persians and which Islam has erased. I seek refuge in Allah from that I give life to that which Islam has erased."

However, al-Mansur paid no attention to that such a tradition was islamically unlawful, and insisted on that the Imam had to represent him on that day to comply with his Persian fighters who used to celebrate it. The Imam had no escape from responding to him. So he sat in his place, and the notables and the leaders came in to him in order to congratulate him and to give him gifts.

There was with him a person appointed by al-Mansur to write to him the gifts. Meantime a shabby, old man came in to the Imam carrying a gift most precious of jewels and most expensive of all the things given to him. The old man stood in front of the Imam and said to him: "O My master, I am a poor man and have no money to give to you. Anyway, I will gift you with three poetry lines my grandfather said in praising your grandfather al-Husayn."

"Welcome to you and to your gift! Recite what he said." retorted the Imam.

The old man began saying:

I wondered at the sword that rose over (you), and its equal escaped on the Day of the Battle when dust rose over you.

(And I wondered at) the arrows that penetrated you in defense for the free ladies who called out your grandfather while their tears were copious.

Why did those arrows not become weak? And why did that esteem and admiration not prevent them from (penetrating) your body?92

Accordingly the delights on that day turned into a funeral ceremony full of sorrow and sadness for the Master of martyrs (Imam al-Husayn), peace be on him.

The Imam, who was full of grief and sadness, turned to the old man said to him: "I have accepted your gift! Sit down! May Allah bless you!" Then he raised his head and said to the servant: "Go to al-Mansur and tell him about these gifts and (ask him about what) he will do with them."

The retainer went to al-Mansur and told him about the Imam's speech, and he told him that all the gifts were a gift to the Imam. He returned to the Imam and told him about al-Mansur's answer. As a result the Imam, peace be on him, gave all those gifts to the old man as a sign of honoring his grandfather, who praised the Master of martyrs (Imam al-Husayn), peace be on him, through these nice poetry lines.

The narration has not mentioned in which country the Imam, peace be on him, represented al-Mansur. Did he represent him in Yethrib (Medina) or in Baghdad? It has neglected that; besides al-Mansur was famous for miserliness and stinginess. This brings about a doubt about the narration.

## The Death of al-Mansur

Al-Mansur decided to go to Mecca. He thought that he would die during his travel. He roamed in a current of suspicions and thoughts, so he said: "Surely I was born in the month of Dhi al-Hijja, undertook the caliphate in Dhi al-Hijja, and I think that I will die in Dhi al-Hijja, this year."93

Thus, he entrusted his affairs to his son al-Mehdi and appointed him as a king after him. He gave him the following teachings that show his terrorist policy: "Surely I have left three kinds of bad people: The poor who hope nothing except your riches; the fearful who hope nothing except your security; and the prisoners who hope none for release except from you.

So when you become a ruler over them, make them taste welfare; do not lavishly extend aid to them. I have collected to you properties no caliph before me had collected. I have collected to you retainers no caliph before me had collected. And I have built to you a city the like of which is not available in Islam."94

Certainly al-Mansur not only left three kinds of bad people, but also he left all the people in such conditions. He terrified them, deprived them of security and ease, spread poverty and famine among them, and filled the prisons with the free and the reformers.

Any way al-Mansur's procession left Baghdad and covered the desert. When he was far away from Kufa, he felt a severe pain. Thoughts came to his mind, and he said to al-Rabi': "Quickly take me to the Sacred House and Security of my Lord, for I want to escape from my sins!"

He reached the last station of his road, so al-Rabi' said to him: "We have reached the Well of Maymoon." And al-Mansur said to him: "Praise belongs to Allah! Can you take me to the Kaaba?" He was critically ill, so al-Rabi' was unable to continue walking.

He stopped there and prevented the people from coming in to al-Mansur. The tyrannical, arrogant one (al-Mansur) perished on Saturday morning, Dhi al-Hijja 6, in the year 158. He made the people taste all kinds of oppression and fear.

This page full of tyranny, sins, and offences was folded. The Muslims did not come to know a ruler more tyrannical, more violent, and severer than al-Mansur.

Imam Musa, peace be on him, was then thirty years old. He spent his youth during the reign of this tyrannical one (al-Mansur). He was broken-hearted and sad. He felt pain out of sadness for the Muslims and out of patience for what the 'Alawids met such as severe punishments and painful torture. We will see him off here, that we may meet him at the time of al-Mehdi.

- 1. Abu al-Farajj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol. 10, p. 106.
- 2. Mukhtasar Tarikh al-'Arab, p. 184.
- <u>3.</u> Ibn Hubayra's name is 'Amr b. Sa'd b. 'Adi al-Fazari. He was the governor over the Iraqis for six years during the time of Yazid b. 'Abd al-Malik. He was given the kunya of Abu al-Muthanna.
- 4. Al-'Asr al-'Abbasi, p. 68.
- 5. Al-Kamil.
- 6. Al-Fekhri, p. 118.
- 7. 'Inwan al-Majjd, p. 161.
- 8. Al-Fekhri, p. 115.
- 9. Tarikh Baghdad, vol. 1, p. 57.
- 10. 'Asr al-Ma'mun, vol. 1, p. 294.
- 11. Abu al-Farajj al-Asfahani, al-Aghani, vol. 18, p. 148.
- 12. Ibid., vol. 13, p. 110. Tarikh al-Kulafa', p. 267.
- 13. Tarikh al-Kulafa', p. 262.
- 14. 'Asr al-Ma'mun, p. 93.
- 15. Al-Tabari, Tarikh.
- 16. Ibid., the Events of the Year 158 A. H.
- 17. Ibid.
- 18. Ibid.
- 19. Tarikh al-Khulafa', p. 267.
- 20. 'Asr al-Ma'mun, vol. 1, p. 93.
- 21. Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 121.
- 22. Al-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 9, p. 316.
- 23. Sinmmar was a Roman. He built king al-Nu'man, son of Imru' al-Qays, his palace called al-Khuwarniq in the outskirts of al-Kufa. After he had finished building the palace, al-Nu'man ordered him to be taken up to the top of the palace and to be thrown down.
- 24. Ibn al-Athir, Tarikh, vol. 4, p. 355.
- 25. Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh, vol. 2, p. 399.
- 26. Al-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 6, p. 266.
- 27. Ibid.

- 28. Al-Mas'udi, Murujj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 230.
- 29. Ibn al-Athir, Tarikh, vol. 5, p.261.
- 30. Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh, vol. 3, pp. 110-111.
- 31. Al-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 197.
- 32. Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh, vol. 2, p. 121.
- 33. Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, p. 416.
- 34. Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh, vol.23, p. 349.
- 35. Nahij al-Balagha, vol. 2, p. 18, explained by Muhammad 'Abda.
- 36. Maqatil al-Talibiyyin, p. 521.
- 37. A narration similar to this has been mentioned in Ibn 'Asakir's Tarikh, vol. 4, p. 333.
- 38. Al-Roud al-Nadeer, vol. 1, p. 75.
- 39. 'Aqa'id al-Zaydiya.
- 40. Mukhtasar Akhbar al-Khulafa', p. 26.
- 41. Al-Kamil, vol. 4, pp. 370-371.
- 42. Al-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 9, p. 181.
- 43. Al-Kamil, vol. 4, p. 371.
- 44. Al-Hasan b. Zayd b. al-Hasan b. Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. He narrated traditions on the authority of his father and his cousin 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan. A group of traditionists narrated traditions on his authority. Ibn Hayyan has mentioned him among the trustworthy narrators. Al-Mansur appointed him as a governor over Medina for five years. Then he was angry with him and imprisoned him. Then al-Mehdi released him.

Al-Zubayr has said: "Al-Hasan was virtuous and noble." 'Ali b. Harama has praised him with some poems. Al-Hasan b. Zayd was the father of the great lady, Nafeesa. He died on his way to Mecca in the year 168. A. H. He was then eighty-five years. 'Ali b. al-Mehdi performed the prayer over him. This has been mentioned in Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 2, p. 279.

- 45. Maqatil al-Talibiyyin, p. 216.
- 46. Ibid, p 219-220.
- 47. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 47, p. 283.
- 48. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 47, pp. 299-301. Al-Iqbaal, pp. 49-51.
- 49. Ibid., p. 302.
- 50. Ibid.
- 51. Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya, vol. 10, p. 81.
- 52. Al-Tabari, vol. 6, p. 179.
- 53. Al-Mas'udi, Murujj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 225.
- 54. Al-Tabari, vol. 9, p. 398.
- 55. Magatil al-Talibiyyin, p. 243.
- 56. Al-Mas'udi, Murujj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 225.
- 57. Al-Ghadir, vol. 3, p. 238.
- 58. Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya, vol. 10, p. 81.
- 59. Ghayat al-Ikhtisar, p. 12.
- 60. Maqatil al-Talibiyyin, p. 243.
- 61. Shadharat al-Dhahab, vol. 1, p. 213.
- 62. Magatil al-Talibiyyin, p. 243.
- 63. Al-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 9, p. 219.
- 64. Ibid.
- 65. Abd Allah b. Ja'far was the eldest of his brothers after Isma'il but he did not have a position of honor with his father similar to the rest of his father's sons. He was suspected of opposing his father's teaching; and it is said that he used to mix with the Hashwiyya and was inclined towards the beliefs of the Murji'a. He claimed the Imamate after his father and argued that he was the eldest of the surviving brothers. A group of the followers of Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be on him, followed him

in his declaration. Later must of them went back to the doctrine of the Imamate of his brother Musa, peace be on him. We will explain that. This has been mentioned in Tanqeeh al-Maqaal, vol. 2, p. 174.

- 66. Al-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 9, p. 224.
- 67. Maqatil al-Talibiyyin.
- 68. Ibid., 342.
- 69. Al-Kamil, vol. 5, p. 18.
- 70. Ibid., p. 224.
- 71. Al-Mas'udi, Murujj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 224.
- 72. Ibid.
- 73. Bihar al-Anwar, vol.47, pp. 306-307. 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha', vol. 1, p. 111.
- 74. Al-Tabari, vol. 6, p. 320, first edition.
- 75. It has been mentioned in the book Tadhkirat al-Khawas, p. 230: "The statement of Fatima, daughter of 'Abd Allah, 'Have mercy on the young of Yazid,' was a slip of tongue. That is because 'Abd Allah b. al-Husayn had no son called Yazid, nor there was among the family of Abu Talib a person called Yazid except Yazid b. Mu'awiya b. 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far. expected."
- 76. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 47, pp. 195-199. Muhaji al-Da'awat, p. 192.
- 77. Usool al-Kafi.
- 78. Al-Jawahir, Kitab al-Tahara.
- 79. Saffwat al-Saffwa.
- 80. Al-Mejalis, vol. 5, p. 328.
- <u>81.</u> 'Abd Allah b. Tawus b. Kaysan al-Yemeni was a jurist and knowledgeable of Arabic sciences. He harbored malice against Ahl al-Bayt, peace be on them. He died at the time of al-Mansur. This has been mentioned in Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 5, pp. 267-268.
- 82. Shadharat al-Dhahab, vol. 2, p. 188.
- 83. He is the Shaykh of Islam and master of those whom memorized the Qur'an by heart. Abu Usama has said: "Do not believe him who tells you that he has seen the like of Sufyan." Ibn Dhi'b has said: "I have not seen anyone like al-Thawri in Iraq." He was born in the year 97. He sought knowledge while he was still young. His father was among the religious scholars in Kufa. He hid himself at the time of al-Mehdi because he said the truth. He died in Basrah in the month of Sha'ban, in the year 161 A. H. This has been mentioned in Tadhkirat al-Hafiz, vol. 1, pp. 190–192. He took his knowledge from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, for he was among his students.
- 84. Al-Musamarat, vol. 1, p. 98.
- 85. Ibn Abi Dhi'b is Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Qarashi al-'Amiri, al-Medani. He was a jurist. Ahmed b. Hanbel has said: "Ibn Abi Dhi'b was better than Malik, but Malik was greater than him in purifying the traditionists." Al-Waqidi has said: "He (Ibn Abi Dhi'b) was the most wonderful and best of all the people." Ibn Abi Dhi'b was born in the year 80 A. H. He said the truth and did not fear the authority. When al-Mehdi came into the Mosque of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, all the people rose for him except Ibn Abi Dhi'b. So it was said to him: "Rise! This is the Commander of the faithful!" He said: "Men should rise for the Lord of the world!" He died in the year 159. This has been mentioned in Tadhkirat al-Hafiz, vol. 1, pp. 179–181.
- 86. Al-Imama wa al-Siyasa, vol. 2, pp. 185-187.
- 87. Tarikh Baghdad, vol. 10, p. 215.
- 88. Tarikh al-Khulafa', p. 268.
- 89. Mukhtasar Akhbar al-Khulafa', pp. 17-18.
- 90. 'Amru Bin 'Ubayd al-Basri was the Shaykh of the Mu'tazilites and among their famous ascetics. His grandfather was taken as a prisoner of war in Persia. His father was a weaver, and then he became a policeman in Basrah during the time of al-Hajjajj. 'Amru was famous for his knowledge and his renouncing the world. Concerning him al-Mansur has said: All of you seek hunting except 'Amru b. 'Ubayd.

'Amru has treaties and books of which are al-Tafseer, and al-Radd 'alaa al-Qadariya. He died near Mecca. Al-Mansur lamented for him. We have not heard that a caliph lamented for a person except him. This has been mentioned in the book al-A'lam, vol. 2, p. 736.

- 91. 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha', vol. 2, p. 337.
- 92. Al-Manaqib, vol. 2, p. 380. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 11, p.264.
- 93. Ibn al-Athir, Tarikh, vol. 5, p. 43.
- 94. Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 349.

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