

THE Umayyad DYNASTY

THE EVENTS THAT PRECEDED THE RISE OF THE Umayyads TO POWER

Question Explain the events that preceded the rise of the Umayyads to power in the Islamic Empire.

With the death of Caliph Ali in 660AD, what had been termed as the glorious Caliphate which had began with the leadership of Caliph Abubakr came to an end. A new form of caliphate, hereditary in nature, came into existence established by Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan. This caliphate came to be known as the Umayyad Dynasty.

The Umayyad Dynasty was the first dynasty to be established in the history of Islam. The Umayyads established their capital at Damascus in Syria.

The emergency of the Umayyads as a power and influential clan started during caliph Uthman's Caliphate where they were made governors of different provinces of the Muslim Empire and their presence was felt from all corners of the Muslim state.

When the Caliph Uthman was assassinated, many companions of the prophet Muhammad like Aisha, Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan and many others refused to acknowledge the caliphate of Ali before he brought the assassins of Uthman to justice

This condition was very difficult to Ali because at the time when Uthman was murdered, Ali wasn't in Medina and he received the news of Uthman's death with shock. So, he could not easily identify the murderers, yet he could not punish anyone whose identity had not been lawfully proved.

Ali sent letters to all governors requesting them to pledge loyalty to him. Muawiyah, who was by then the governor of Syria, implicitly made it clear to the Caliph that he was not to accept Ali as caliph if he didn't bring the murderers of Uthman to justice.

Muawiyah had threatened to take revenge himself if Ali failed to live to his demands. He even began an open rebellion against Ali, to which Ali responded by resolving to fighting him, in what came to be known as the Battle of Siffin

However, before the real battle, Ali first offered for peace talks in order to avoid bloodshed. The peace negotiations wouldn't solve the conflict since Muawiyah had developed the ambition of ruling the Muslim Empire and was only using the cover of avenging Uthman's murder to achieve his hidden agenda.

When the peace talks failed, war became inevitable. However, after sometime, Ali's army gained an upper hand and it became clear that Ali's forces were destined to defeat Muawiyah.

Muawiyah had retreated from the battle field when his commander Amir bin Al-As changed the course of the battle. He suggested to Muawiyah that their fighters should hang copies of the Qur'an on their swords and lances and advanced towards Ali's army shouting:

"Let Allah's word decide between us"

The words as shouted by Muawiyah's men had a magic effect on Ali's forces who began to shout in the same manner.

Ali and a few of his fighters were doubtful of Muawiyah's intention and wanted to continue with the war. But the majority of Ali's fighter refused to continue fighting and threatened to desert Ali if he pressed on fighting.

Ali then decided to go with the majority decision, and so he called back his forces for cease fire. An agreement was reached to settle the conflict by compromise and Muawiyah, canning as he was, suggested that each side chose an arbiter to negotiate for them.

Muawiyah's side chose a quick-witted Amir bin Al-As while Ali's side was represented by a weak-minded Abu Musa who was fooled by Amir Bin Al-As into disowning Ali as being fit to be a caliph. Thus confirming Muawiyah as the caliph contrary to what had been agreed upon in the peace talks.

This declaration annoyed many of Ali's supporters who broke into a rebellion. These partisans came to be known as the Kharijites or the deserters.

The Kharijites came to believe that both Ali and Muawiyah were the problem to the Islamic Empire, and so were not fit to lead the Muslims. So, they embarked on a plan to kill both Ali and Muawiyah.

The plan was made to the effect that the two persons were to be killed on Friday during the morning prayers since they were both Imaams their respective mosques. The Kharijites, however, succeeded in killing Ali but Muawiyah survived with minor wounds.

After the death of Ali bin Abu Talib, his son Hassan was elected as the legitimate successor of his farther through the popular Shura System. This move over looked Muawiyah, who had over whelming ambition of gaining power and taking over the top most office of the caliph.

Muawiyah, thus, rejected the election of Hassan; and he immediately started planning an attack on Kufah, where Hassan had his capital. At this time, a number of Muslims formerly supporting Ali mobilized a very big force to fight Muawiyah.

However Hassan refused to renew the wars against the Umayyads despite the advice given to him by his followers. Consequently, many of his men deserted him yet Muawiyah's army was becoming stronger and looked more organized and determined.

Hassan stared realizing that his position was under threat when he decided to mobilize his force for the war; but he only managed to raise a force of 40,000 men instead of 120,000 he had inherited. Hassan's army was no match to Muawiyah's forces which had now become more powerful.

Hassan's force advanced towards Syria, but got a serious set back on arrival in Syria when their commander Qais bin Ubaidah was killed by Muawiyah's forces. This created panic in Hassan's army that left them demoralized. They thus, resorted to plunder and looting.

After this incidence, Hassan lost control of the army and was left with no alternatives to safeguard his empire but to seek for peaceful solution to resolve the crisis. He wrote a letter to Muawiyah proposing a peaceful settlement.

An agreement was made between Hassan and Muawiyah where Hassan agreed to abdicate and surrender the throne to Muawiyah but on condition that Muawiyah left the issue of his successor to the Muslims to decide; that he guaranteed freedom of speech to everybody and that he promised Hassan whole revenue from the province of Persia throughout his life time.

Muawiyah accepted all the conditions set by Hassan; and Hassan together with his twin brother Hussein retired to Medinah. They both pledged full support to Muawiyah in 41AH (661AH) and they temporarily gave up politics.

Muawiyah, therefore, became the undisputed new caliph of the Muslim Empire; and thus founded the Umayyad Dynasty, that lasted between 661AD and 750 AD when it finally collapsed.

FACTORS THAT FAVOURED THE RISE OF Umayyad DYNASTY

Question: Explain the factors that led to the rise of the Umayyad Dynasty.

With the death of Caliph Ali Abu Talib in 660AD, what had been termed as the glorious caliphate, which had begun with the leadership of Caliph Abubakr came to an end. A new form of rule, monarchical and hereditary in nature, was established in form of dynasties, beginning with the Umayyad Dynasty.

The Umayyad Dynasty was the first dynasty to be established in the history of Islam. This Dynasty was founded by Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan in 661AD after the assassination of Caliph Ali.

There are a number of factors that contributed to the rise of the Umayyad Dynasty to power, among which include the following:

1. The death of Caliph Uthman in 656AD was an important factor that contributed to rise of the Umayyads to power. After the assassination of Uthman, Muawiyah refused to accept Ali as new caliph before he brought the murderers to justice. Ali's failure to meet Muawiyah's demands resulted into wide spread rebellions in which Ali was assassinated. The event that followed, favoured the raise of the Umayyads to power.
2. The weak character of Hassan also facilitated the rise of the Umayyads. Hassan was a weak man, young in age and inexperienced in leadership. He lacked capacity to mobilize support against his enemies like what his father Ali had done. This made the Umayyads to manipulated this weakness to rise to power
3. Hassan's move to step down as caliph in favour of Muawiyah was yet another factor that contributed to the rise of the Umayyads to power. Hassan had set a condition to leave the throne after Muawiyah had put a lot of pressure to him. Muawiyah accepted all conditions and therefore became the undisputed new caliph of the Muslim community and the founder of the Umayyad dynasty.
4. The move by Hassan's followers to desert the battle field claiming that they were war fatigued; that they were tired of fighting gave chance to the Umayyad to defeat them and thus achieve their mission of establishing the Umayyad dynasty.
5. The division within Hassan's army also led to the rise of the Umayyad dynasty to power. At one time during Hassan's reign, Muawiyah planned to attack Hassan's capital. Hassan had inherited a force of one hundred thousand (120,000) men but only managed to raise a force of only 40,000 men. These men were a no match to Muawiyah's army which was strong and looked more organized. Hassan's men, therefore lost the Umayyads
6. Hassan's army men diverted from there duty of defending the Muslim empire and resorted to plunder and looting. Hassan lost control of this army and was left with no alternative to safe guard his empire but to seek for peaceful solution. This he did by abducting and surrendering the throne to Muawiyah, who established the Umayyad Dynasty.
7. The Umayyads were also united for a common cause; they strongly believed that they had been cheated for so long by the Hashmites. This determination helped the Umayyads to defeat the Hashimites and rise to power.
8. Muawiyah's overambitiousness to gain power was yet another significant factor for the rise of the Umayyad Dynasty. For quite a long time; Muawiyah had ambitions of taking the top most office of caliph. It is no wonder that at one time he became the ruler of Islamic empire, thus, the establishment of the Umayyad Dynasty.
9. Muawiyah's canning character forced Hassan, the successor of Ali, to step down in favour of Muawiyah despite the difficult conditions set by Hassan. With Hassan

stepping down as a leader of the Muslim empire, Muawiyah became new caliph, and with him, he established the Umayyad dynasty.

10. Muawiyah is said to have declare himself as a caliph even before the death caliph Ali Bin Abu Talib, who had been elected to rule the Muslim empire by the majority Shura System. Muawiyah's action led to the formation of the Kharijites movement that led to the death of Ali .Muawiyah exploited this power vacuum to rise to power, thereby establishing the Umayyad Dynasty.
11. The death of Ali bin Abu Talib also led to the rise of the Umayyad Dynasty and the rise of the Umayyads to power. Ali had done quite a lot to check on the Umayyads' influence during his reign. Ali had enjoyed a considerable support of many people and as long as Ali lived, perhaps the Umayyad influenced would have been postponed. However, after Ali's death, the Umayyads exploited the power vacuum created to rise to power.
12. The Umayyads were elevated to places of high responsibility during Uthman's reign. These officers did a lot of ground propaganda that discredited the Hashimites before their people. The result of this was that the Hashimites lost support in favour of the Umayyads.
13. Ali's supporters lacked strong will and determination; for instance, during the struggle between Ali and Muawiyah, Ali's supporters were fooled to agree to the arbitration proposed by Muawiyah's camp. This arbitration led to Ali's arbiter disowning him. The confusion that followed led to the death of Ali. Muawiyah then exploited the ensuring power vacuum to rise to power; and thus, establishing the Umayyad Dynasty.
14. The divisions within Ali's camp also led to the rise of the Umayyad Dynasty. When the Umayyads fooled Ali's camp into disowning Ali as the leader of the Muslim Empire, some of Ali's supporters wanted to renew the fighting against Muawiyah though Ali refused. This created divisions within Ali's camp. Ali lost some of his supporters which weakened Ali's group, much to the advantage of the Umayyads to rise to power.
15. The revolts that were staged upon by the Kharijites terribly weakened the Hashimites power. For instance, at one time, the Kharijites resolved to kill both Ali and Muawiyah, however, they succeeded in killing Ali only and Muawiyah survived. The death of Ali created a power vacuum that the Umayyads exploited to rise to power.
16. Another factor that led to the rise of the Umayyad Dynasty was the economic strength of Umayyads. The Umayyads had people who were financially able and could finance and sponsor their cause.

DISTINGUISHED Umayyad Caliphs

1. Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan (661 – 681 AD)

THE ROLE PLAYED BY MUAWIYAH BIN ABU SUFYAN TO THE CAUSE OF ISLAM

Question: Asses the role played by Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan to the cause of Islam.

Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan was the first Umayyad Caliph and the founder of the Umayyad Dynasty in 661 AD after the death of Caliph Ali bin Abu Talib. His father was Abu Sufyan and his mother was Hindu bint Utbah. He belonged to the Banu Umayyah clan of the Quraish Tribe.

Muawiyah was born a few years before the Prophet's migration to Medinah; and he was, therefore, not among the early converts to Islam. He only converted after the conquest of Mecca in 630 AD, together with his father, mother and some other Umayyads.

Muawiyah learnt to read and write at a tender age and although he was not among the early converts of Islam, he contributed greatly to the cause of Islam.

1. Because Muawiyah had learned to read and write at a tender age, he was one of the Prophet's scribes. He therefore used to write down verses of the Holy Qur'an as they were received by the Prophet.
2. During the Caliphate of Abubakr, Muawiyah participated in a number of battles especially those that aimed at fighting false prophets and suppressing rebellions against Apostates in what were called the Riddah Wars.
3. Muawiyah was on the committee that was instituted by Caliph Abubakr to have the Qur'an compiled into a book form. This committee was headed by Zaid bin Thabit and had members like Abubakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Ubayy bin Ka'ab, Muadh bin Jabal, Aisha, Hafswa and Abdallah bin Mas'ud among others.
4. During the compilation of the Qur'an, Zaid bin Thabit called upon all those people who had written down the verses of the Qur'an. Muawiyah was one of those companions who brought verses of the Qur'an for compilation.
5. During the caliphate period, Muawiyah helped to promote Islam as he would give important advice to the caliphs; that is, he was an advisor to caliphs Abubakr, Umar and Uthman.
6. During the reign of Caliph Umar bin Khattab, Muawiyah was made the governor of part of Syria, which was then called Shami. He, therefore, participated in the administrative activities of the Islamic Empire.

7. Because of his contribution towards the development of the Islamic Empire, when Caliph Uthman came into power, as the caliph after the death of Umar bin Khattab, Muawiyah was made the governor of the whole province of Syria (Shami).
8. During Caliph Uthman's reign, Muawiyah fought and defeated the Romans who had staged their army in Asia Minor and had conquered Cyprus.
9. Muawiyah also established another Muslim headquarters at Damascus during the days of Ali and he was at this place until when he became the caliph of the Umayyad Dynasty in 661 AD.
10. During Caliph Uthman's reign, Muawiyah also participated in suppressing and crushing the rebels, who had staged a rebellion in Medinah and had developed a negative attitude towards Caliph Uthman.
11. Muawiyah led a number of campaigns and conquests in different areas that annexed many areas to the Muslim Empire especially around Syria.
12. At one time, because of his brave and courageous attitudes, he led an expedition that attempted to capture the Christian capital of Constantinople in the Byzantine Empire.
13. Muawiyah is credited for having established the first Muslim Dynasty in 661 AD when he forced Hassan to abdicate the throne and surrendered it to Muawiyah. The Dynasty that Muawiyah founded came to be known as the Umayyad Dynasty.

MUAWIYAH'S STRUGGLE FOR POWER.

Question: Account for Muawiyah bin Abu sufyan's struggle for power after the assassination of Caliph Uthman bin Affan.

Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan was the first Umayyad king and founder of the Umayyad Dynasty. His father was Abu Sufyan and his mother was Hindu bint Utbah, both of whom were reknown enemies of Islam before their conversation to Islam.

Muawiyah belonged to the Banu Umayyad clan of the Quraish tribe. This clan was one of the prominent clans in Mecca, even before the advent of Islam; only comparable to the Banu Hashim in status. The two clans were very powerful and distinguished clans in Arabia; and therefore became political rivals.

With the advent of Islam, the conflict between the two clans turned into open hostility; where the majority of the Hashimites became supporters of Islam, whereas the majority of the Umayyads opposed Muhammad's mission.

However, with time, especially after the Conquest of Mecca, some very prominent members of and many Umayyads converted to Islam. This, to a smaller extent, eased the

tension that had existed before between the two clans, after the concept of brotherhood had been preached to them.

For instance, during the reign of Umar bin al-Khattab, Muawiyah bin Sufyan, an Umayyad, was appointed the governor of part of Syria (Shami).

When Uthman bin Affan became a caliph, he elevated Muawiyah to full governorship of Syria and in charge of Palestine and Jordan.

The emergence of the Umayyads as a powerful and influential clan started during caliph Uthman's Caliphate when many Umayyads were made governors of different provinces; and their presence was felt from all corners of the Muslim state. In fact they overshadowed the Hashimites.

When Caliph Uthman was murdered, the conflict between the Umayyads and Hashimites escalated the more. This was simply because the murderers of Uthman belonged to the Banu Hashim clan; so the Umayyads wanted to avenge the murder of their clansman.

With the murder of Uthman, Ali bin Abu Talib was elected the Caliph. Ali wrote letters to all governors requesting them to pledge loyalty to him. Muawiyah, the governor of Syria, implicitly made it clear to the Caliph that he would not support Ali before the murderers of Uthman were brought to justice.

Muawiyah did this not because he was after justice, rather he wanted to gain power. Muawiyah stated to Caliph Ali that he was to take revenge himself if Ali didn't punish the murderers of Uthman. He began an open rebellion against Caliph Ali, which led to the Battle of Siffin.

Before the battle, Ali first offered for peace talks to avoid bloodshed, but the peace negotiations failed since Muawiyah had ambitions for power and was only using the cover of avenging Uthman's death to achieve his hidden agenda.

During the battle, Ali's army gained an upper hand and was destined to defeat Muawiyah. Muawiyah had even withdrawn from the battle field when one of his cunning commanders called Amir Bin al-As changed the course of the battle.

Amir made his fighters to hang copies of the Qur'an on their swords and shout that the word of Allah should decide between the warring groups.

The words as shouted by Muawiyah's men had a magic effect on Ali's camp to the effect that Ali's fighters started to shout in the same manner.

Ali and some of his fighters were doubtful of Muawiyah's intentions and wanted to continue with the war. However, the majority of Ali's fighters were in favour of peace talks; in fact they threatened to desert Ali if he pressed on with fighting.

Ali, then, decided to go with the majority will; and so, he called back his forces for a cease fire. An agreement was reached to settle the conflict by compromise and it was Muawiyah's side, canning as it was, that suggested that either side chose an arbiter to negotiate for them.

Abu Musa Al-Ashari, who was chosen to negotiate for Ali, was fooled by Muawiyah's camp in to disowning Ali as being fit to be the Caliph. This declaration annoyed many of Ali's supporters who vowed to fight Muawiyah.

Ali, however, refused to renew the war. As a result, a group of Ali's men violated the caliph's order and broke into a rebellion. This rebel group came to be known as the Kharijites or deserters

Fooling Abu Musa was intended to bring in Muawiyah as the new caliph. Through his arbiter Amir bin Al-AS, Muawiyah was mentioned and confirmed in that office.

The Kharijites came to believe that both Ali and Muawiyah were the problem to the Muslim Empire, and so were not fit to lead the Muslims. They embarked on activities intended to kill anybody they thought was supporting either Ali or Muawiyah.

The Kharijite activities continued and became more pronounced when they planned to kill both Ali and Muawiyah. The plan was made to the effect that the two people were to be killed on Friday during the morning prayers since they were both Imams in their respective mosques. The Kharijites succeeded in killing Ali but Muawiyah survived, with minor wounds.

After the death of Ali, his son Hassan was elected as the legitimated successor of his farther through the popular Shura System. This move over looked Muawiyah , who had overwhelming ambition of gaining power and taking over the top most office of the caliph.

Muawiyah, therefore, rejected the election of Hassan and he immediately started planning an attack on Kufah where Hassan had his capital.

At this time, a number of Muslims formerly supporting Ali mobilized a very big force to fight Muawiyah. However, Hassan refused to renew the wars in spite of the advice from his followers. Consequently, many of his men deserted him, yet Muawiyah's army was becoming stronger and looked more organized and determined.

Hassan lost control of the army and was left in a very difficult situation. He was left with no alternative to safeguard his empire but to seek for peaceful solution to resolve the crisis. He wrote a letter to Muawiyah proposing a peace full settlement.

An agreement was made between Hassan and Muawiyah, where Hassan agreed to abdicate and surrender the throne to Muawiyah accepted. As a result, Hassan retired to Medina together with his twin brother Hussein.

Muawiyah therefore became the undisputed new caliph of the Muslim community; and thus, the founder of the Umayyad Dynasty.

CONSEQUENCES OF MUAWIYAH'S STRUGGLE FOR POWER

Examine the consequences of Muawiyah's struggle for power to control the Islamic Empire.

Muawiyah bin Sufyan's overwhelming ambition and determination to take over the top most office of the caliph paid off when Hassan surrendered the throne to him.

Muawiyah, thus, not only became the undisputed new caliph of the Muslim community but also the founder of the Umayyad Dynasty.

However, Muawiyah's struggle for power could not pass but with some noticeable consequences, both negative and positive, to the Islamic state;-

1. Muawiyah's struggle for power ushered in a new era in the history of Islam, where a new form of rule, monarchical in nature, was established in form of dynasties, beginning with the Umayyad Dynasty established by Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan himself
2. Muawiyah's struggle for power also destroyed the idea of respecting the person of a caliph's calibre. Following the death of the Prophet, the caliph personality and office were considered holy and highly respected by the Muslims as successor of the Prophet. Muawiyah's struggle brought in a new chapter where sections of people could come out to oppose the caliph.
3. Muawiyah's struggle for power also led to the beginning of the great Fitnah period, where Muslims started fighting fellow Muslims. This was evidenced when Muawiyah under the pretext of fighting and avenge for Uthman's murder, began an open rebellion against Caliph Ali; which rebellion resulted in to the battle of Siffin.
4. The struggle for power by Muawiyah also marked the beginning of hereditary rule in Islam. Before this struggle, leaders of the Muslim community were elected democratically into their respective offices through the Shura System. However, with the struggle, the system of nominating one's son or brother was introduced. Muawiyah, himself, declared his son Yazid to be his successor.
5. With the struggle, the expansion of the Islamic Empire got a setback as Muslims were divided and spent more time fighting among themselves. Such conflicts had begun with battle of Siffin, where Ali was fighting with the Kharijites.
6. Muawiyah's struggle for power also brought about divisionism among the Islamic state. Sects emerged where many people formed their own doctrines; which led to the emergence of so many splinter groups like the Kharijites, Shiite and many others.

7. With the struggle, also people started to subject Qur'anic laws to human manipulation. For instance, in the battle of Siffin, when Muawiyah sensed defeat in the hands of Ali's fighters, he made his fighters to hang copies of the Qur'an on their swords and lances; shouting that the word of Allah should decide between the warring groups.
8. During Muawiyah's struggle for power, the Islamic state was at one time divided in two different parts; where one part was controlled by caliph Ali and another by Muawiyah; thus breaking the unity that had been enjoyed in the Islamic Empire since the period of Prophet Muhammad.
9. Prophet Muhammad had preached against and discouraged unjust and untruthful attitudes. However, during the period when Muawiyah was struggling for power, unjust and untrustworthy mood emerged when Muawiyah's camp fooled Abu Musa into disowning Ali such that Muawiyah could be declared the new caliph.
10. The capital of the Islamic Empire was transferred from Medinah; first to Kufah and later to Damascus in Syria. As a result of this, Medina, the city of the prophet, lost its holiness and popularity. It is no wonder that it was one time attacked and plundered for several days on order of Yazid, Muawiyah's successor.
11. Muawiyah's struggle for power also led to the collapse of the Shura System and its ideal teaching which was used by Prophet Muhammad and throughout the caliphate period and was replaced with dictatorial tendencies that led to hereditary rule among the Muslim community
12. The struggle for power also brought to end the period of Orthodox Caliphs when Ali Bin Abu Talib, who was the last representative of the ultra democratic spirit of Islam, was murdered. His death resulted into the emergence and rise of the undemocratic Umayyad Dynasty
13. With the struggle, the simplicity and purity of Orthodox Caliphs came to an end; and this was replaced by the luxurious Umayyad caliphs, who turned the state treasury into their personal property; always drawing a lot of money for their personal use.
14. The struggle also led to bitter conflict between companions that resulted into civil wars. These civil wars were bloody and led to the death of many Muslims, including some prominent companions like Ali bin Abu Talib, Zubair bin Awwam and many others.
15. The struggle for power by Muawiyah led to the spread of Islam to other parts of the world beyond Arabia. This was as a result of the people who were running away from the wars moving to far areas like the coast of East Africa where they spread Islam.

MUAWIYAH'S ADMINISTRATION AND REFORMS

Question: *Assess the role played by Muawiyah Abu Sufyan in the development of the Umayyad Dynasty.*

OR

Examine the changes initiated by Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan as the leader of the Umayyad dynasty.

Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan was the founder of the Umayyad Dynasty; the first Dynasty in the Islamic history. The Umayyad Dynasty was founded in 661AD after the assassination of Caliph Ali.

During his reign as the leader of the Umayyad dynasty, Muawiyah Bin Abu Sufyan made a number of changes which were both positive and negative to the Islamic empire:-

1. Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan transferred the Muslim capital from Kufah to Damascus. The capital had been originally transferred from Medina to Kufah by Caliph Ali to protect Medina's sacredness.
2. Muawiyah succeeded in establishing the first ever Muslim dynasty in the name of Umayyad Dynasty. This Muslim Dynasty lasted between 661AD and 750AD; when it finally collapsed.
3. Muawiyah also introduced the idea of the royal bodyguards for the security of the Caliph in order to safeguard himself and other Caliphs from being assassinated; as it had happened to Caliphs Umar, Uthman and Ali.
4. Muawiyah introduced the idea of official seal dispatch of mail for messages or official information from the headquarters to other provinces. This was intended to keep official communication and information confidential.
5. He also improved on the postal services for the transportation of mail which made communication quicker and simple to transmit. Horses and Horsemen were trained and the horses stationed at particular centres and stations. The horsemen would ride from one station to another as they changed horses.
6. Muawiyah established a special police force to ensure internal security and state stability by fighting crime which had more than doubled following the breakdown of law during the civil wars of the Fitnah Period.
7. Muawiyah is said to have expanded the Islamic Empire far and wide in all directions. Indeed, it was during Muawiyah's reign that Tunisia, Libya, Algeria and Morocco were put under the influence of the Muslims. During his reign, also, the Mediterranean Islands of Cyprus and Malta were brought under the rule of Muslims.
8. Muawiyah also organized a very big Muslim army, which became one of the best organized in the history of Islamic Empires. This army was also to ensure security of the dynasty and it comprises of both Muslims and non Muslims.

9. For the first time, also the Muslims acquired a naval force, which was equipped with many canoes. Another fleet was also constructed on the Eastern coast of Syria, the coast of Tunisia and Egypt. Using the navy, the Islands of Cyprus and Rhodes were successfully captured.
10. Muawiyah built a line of fortresses along the Mediterranean coast and other strategic points throughout the Dynasty. These fortresses were used to stop attacks and incursions from the Romans.
11. Muawiyah is said to have appointed provincial administrators, governors and revenue collectors to manage both the administrative and financial affairs of the Muslim state.
12. He also used to appoint both major and minor leaders of the empire based on merit. In this way, the Hashimites, Umayyads, non-Muslims and non Arabs were all well incorporated into the empire. This limited divisionism in the Empire.
13. Muawiyah is credited for having tried to stop the internal weaknesses by stopping a number of disputes especially succession disputes which had weakened the Islamic state because of the Fitnah Period.
14. He also managed to put an end to the Roman expansion to West Africa. During Muawiyah's twenty years of Caliphate, the whole of North Africa was annexed by the Muslims.
15. Muawiyah also utilized the best brains among the non-Muslims for the cause of sound administration .indeed; it is no wonder that one of his chief councilor was a Christian.
16. Muawiyah also utilized postmasters to carry out postal duties, and besides that, they were used to serve as spies. This helped him to get important information from all directions of the Empire.
17. Muawiyah carried out occasional annual raids to the Byzantine lands that drove the Romans away from Asia Minor and resulted in definition of the boundaries of the Umayyad Empire. Muawiyah then divided the Empire into many provinces under governors (Amirs).

MWAWIYAH'S WEAKNESSES

1. On the negative side, Muawiyah introduced monarchical rule in the Islamic State. Before the Umayyad Dynasty, Muslim leaders were elected through majority consensus using the popular Shura System; but this ended when Muawiyah came to power and a system of nominating a successor by the reigning king was introduced.

2. Muawiyah initiated as a number of innovations in Islam; like, he used to preach during the Friday sermon while seated on the pulpit contrary to what the Prophet and the Orthodox Caliphs did, for they used to preach while standing before the pulpit.
3. Muawiyah diverted from the strong Shura System principles by abolishing the idea of consultation and free criticism of the government was no longer tolerated in his rule. This made Muawiyah some how a dictator.
4. He declared his mediocre son Yazid as his successor. Yazid messed up everything in the Islamic state in addition to making the Umayyad Dynasty unpopular among the populace.
5. Muawiyah was a big spending ruler, who extravagantly misused the government funds on his personal effects and gains; in fact he made the state treasury a personal property.
6. Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan created racial tension between the Umayyads and other tribes. This came about following the elevation of the Umayyads to absolute position. The rivalry that was created between the Umayyads and other people left the populace of the dynasty divided.
7. With Muawiyah's principle and policy of freedom of worship, he maintained Christianity and rivaled with Islam.
8. Muawiyah abandoned the system of electing leaders of the Muslim Empire and introduced a hereditary system by appointing his son Yazid as his successor. This system sparked off succession disputes that weakened the Umayyad Dynasty.
9. Tribalism and clan differences were reintroduced during the rein of Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan; especially rivalry between Hashimites and Umayyads and the earlier unity which had been cultivated by the prophet was shattered.
10. Though Muawiyah maintained a consultative council, its composition was changed and only decisions taken by close relatives or the royals were to be adopted.
11. Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan ordered that all governors of the Muslim Empire should have consultative councils similar to his. However these councils were full of Umayyads; that is, Muawiyah's provincial consultative councils were discriminative.
12. Muawiyah introduced the system of occasional annual raids to the Byzantine lands in the Asia Minor until when the Romans were driven away. This meant that Muawiyah did not maintain good relationship with foreigners.

MUAWIYAH ABU SUFYAN AND THE DECLINE OF THE UMAYYAD DYNASTY

Question: To what extent were the changes initiated by Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan responsible for the decline of the Umayyad Dynasty?

With the changes initiated in the Islamic Empire in general and the Umayyad Dynasty in particular, after some time, a number of both internal and external factors began to operate that eventually drove the Umayyad Dynasty to a decline.

1. Muawiyah had initiated the system of the Caliphs nominating their sons or relatives as successors to the throne; but this system proved disastrous to the Dynasty as some of the nominated Caliphs proved to be too weak to govern the expansive empire.
2. Muawiyah expanded the Islamic Empire far and wide; but the vast empire coupled with weak caliphs led to disintegration of the Umayyad Dynasty. These weak Caliphs were so unbothered to manage the state affairs and hence the continuity of the Caliphate became impossible.
3. Muawiyah proved to be a big spending ruler, who was extravagant in his dealings. This extravagancy was copied by the subsequent Caliphs. Soldiers were not paid in time and the dissatisfied soldiers did not hesitate to side with the enemies of the Umayyads at the most critical time when they were very much needed.
4. The extravagancy of the Umayyad kings greatly led to the financial problems within the dynasty which contributed to its down fall. State funds were misused to cater for the caliph's personal luxuries. This led to a deficit in the government budget; which meant the government could not finance its programmes, leading to its collapse
5. With a deficit caused in the government budget, the Umayyad rulers were forced to impose heavy taxes on the masses. The result of this was widespread discontent and consequently rebellions spread all-over the state; weakening it.
6. The system of nominating one's son to succeed the Umayyad throne brought in caliphs who were unpopular among their followers. This was because of their evil characters of extravagancy and brutality. As a result, people became highly irritated and therefore were always looking at a time when these caliphs could be removed from power (their downfall).
7. Muawiyah's over ambitiousness to gain power led to Ali's supports, who later came to be known as the Shiites, to declare war against Muawiyah and the Umayyad Dynasty in particular. The Shiites opened up an underground campaign which undermined the authority and power of the Umayyads which eventually brought about its collapse
8. Muawiyah introduced monarchical rule in the Islamic state, which brought about a problem of succession disputes especially among different princes. This was mainly caused by lack of defined and fixed ruler on how leaders could be put into the

caliphate office through the hereditary system .This in turn brought in misunderstandings between different members of the Umayyad clan that weakened it.

9. With succession disputes, the crown prince once he got onto the throne would first ensure that all his rivals were eliminated. This very often resulted into members of the royal family allying with the nobles to fight the incumbent. The struggle for power weakened the Umayyads and it gave their enemies an opportunity to attack them; which finally contributed to their downfall.
10. Muawiyah had tried to control and limit Muslim divisions, especially between the Hashimites and the Umayyads. However, he did not put lasting measures to effect this change. These longstanding Arab tribal conflicts resurfaced in the later years of the Umayyad rule. The unity of the Umayyad was, thus, undermined and without such unity, the state became weak, and hence its disintegration.
11. Muawiyah had also organized a very big Muslim army, which became one of the best in the history of Islam. However, this army was later not well motivated and at times would spend years without salaries. Therefore, this dissatisfied army could not fight against the Umayyad enemies.
12. The extravagancy of some Umayyad Caliphs created a leadership vacuum within the dynasty. The Caliphs abandoned their noble work of protecting Islam and turned to worldly affairs. This made the concerned Muslims to start working for the downfall of the Umayyads such that leadership could be extended to people who could work for the cause of Islam.
13. Muawiyah is said to have expanded the Islamic Empire far and wide in all directions. However, the extensive Umayyad Dynasty fell in the hands of weak leaders who could not control the dynasty. As a result, the dynasty collapsed



Umayyad Mosque, established during Muawiyah's era

YAZID BIN MUAWIYAH (681-AH - 684 AH)

Question: Examine the major events that took place in the Umayyad dynasty during the reign of Yazid bin Muawiyah.

Yazid bin Muawiyah was the second Caliph of the Umayyad Dynasty. His father was Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan and his mother was a Bedouin woman called Maysum.

Yazid became a Caliph in 681AD after the death of his father Muawiyah bin Abu Syfyan. After Muawiyah's death, a lot of events took place that made Yazid's reign unpopular.

First Yazid's nomination to the post of Caliph was contravening the agreement made between Muawiyah and Hassan. It had been agreed upon that the issue of the successor of Muawiyah was to be left to the entire Muslim community to decide through the Shura System.

Muawiyah never honoured this agreement because for long, he had wanted to create a dynasty for himself in the name of Umayyad Dynasty. His declaration of his son as successor was not liked by most of the Muslims not of the Umayyad origin; and it led to further instability, divisions and civil wars in the Muslim Empire.

Another grave incident that took place during the reign of Yazid was the murder of Hussein in what came to be known as the Karbala Tragedy. When Yazid was declared Caliph, he was opposed by the former supporters of Ali especially the Hashimites, led by Ali's son Hussein.

Caliph Yazid had written a letter to his governor in Medinah to urge people there to pledge allegiance to the Caliph. However, Hussein refused to recognize the caliph; instead Hussein mobilized some of the nobles of Medinah to rebel against the new Caliph and never to recognize him.

Hussein also left for Mecca to convince the people there to rise against Yazid. While in Mecca, Hussein received a message from the people of Kufah inviting him and promising to assist him against Caliph Yazid.

With this invitation, Hussein planned to travel to Kufah to meet the people who had invited him. However before Hussein left for Kufah his would be hosts changed their attitudes and took to the side of Yazid.

On the way of Kufah, Hussein came up against Yazid's army at a place called Karbala. Yazid's army gave Hussein three conditions to avert the war – to return to Mecca, to pledge loyalty to Yazid or to accept to be taken to camps where people caught causing trouble were kept.

Hussein refused all conditions and in the fight that ensued, most of Hussein's men were killed; and the five who survived were taken as captives. Hussein, himself, was killed, beheaded and his head was sent to Caliph Yazid.

The murder of Hussein was a bad omen to Yazid's rule as it increased enthusiasm among the followers of Ali, and it gave birth to the Shiite Movement. The Shiite vowed to fight the Umayyads; and in fact, they caused havoc throughout the Umayyad rule.

Another incident that took place in Yazid's Caliphate that made it unpopular was the attack and plunder of the city of Medina. This attack was due to the hostile attitude the people of Medinah had for Yazid as the Caliph.

The people of Medinah had refused to recognize Yazid's leadership right from the beginning and even wished to break away from his caliphate.

When the Medinites received the news of Hussein's death, they rose in a rebellion against Yazid. They also expelled Yazid's governor in Medinah in addition to making a lot of discrimination against members of the Umayyad family in Medinah, distrubing and terrorizing them.

Caliph Yazid had sent messages warning and asking the Medinites to recognize him but they refused. Yazid reacted by sending a force led by Musa bin Utbah comprising of Christians who never had any regard for the holiness of Medinah city, which plundered the city for several days. Many inhabitants of Medinah were also killed during this incident.

During an attack on Medinah, the Medinite rebels escaped to Mecca where they started causing trouble especially to the Banu Umayyah clan, supported by Abdallah bin Zubair, who had declared himself the Caliph based in Mecca and had got support from other parts of Arabia.

Caliph Yazid sent there a force led by Hussein bin Umayyah to fight the rebels. They surrounded Mecca and burned part of the Ka'abah as they pursued the enemy.

However, during this attack, news that Caliph Yazid had died spread in Mecca. This news forced Ibn Umayyah to stop the attack on Mecca; and (Ibn Umayyah) together with the Umayyad force, returned to Damascus.

Yazid died in 64AH (685 AH) after ruling the Umayyad Dynasty for only three years.

THE KARBALA TRAGEDY - THE MURDER OF HUSSEIN

QUESTION: Give an account of the Karbala Tragedy

The Karbala Tragedy was an event during Yazid bin Muawiyah's reign in which Hussein, son of Caliph Ali bin Abu Talib was murdered by Yazid's forces at a place called Karbala, near Kufah, thus the name the Karbala Tragedy.

Yazid bin Muawiyah was the second Caliph of the Umayyad Dynasty; who succeeded his father Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan. He came to power after the death of his father, Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan, in 682 Ad.

Before his death, Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan had made an agreement with Hassan to the effect that the issue of Muawiyah's successor was to be left to the entire Muslim community to decide through the Shura System. Therefore, Muawiyah's declaration of his son, Yazid, as his successor was contravening that agreement.

Thus, when Yazid was declared Caliph, he was bitterly opposed by a cross-section of people who formerly supported Ali's House, the Hashmites and Hussein (son of former Caliph Ali and brother of Hassan) in particular.

Hussein, who by then was living in Medinah and acting as a ring-leader, mobilized some of the nobles of Medinah to rebel against the new Caliph and never to recognize him.

Caliph Yazid responded to this rebellion by writing a letter to go to the people of Medinah through his governor there, Walid bin Utbah to urge them to pledge allegiance and support to the Umayyad rule, but they refused to recognize him.

Hussein also left for Mecca in order to convince the people there also to rise against Yazid. The arrival of Hussein in Mecca gave an opportunity to Abdallah bin Zubair to declare himself the Caliph and to avenge Hussein's death.

While in Mecca, Hussein received a message from the people of Kufah, where Ali and Hassan had their capital, inviting him and promising to assist him against Caliph Yazid.

Hussein first sent his cousin and one of supporter Muslim bin Aqil to go and investigate the condition in Kufah, but was killed soon after his arrival by the governor of Kufah Abdullah bin Yazid. Muslim bin Aqil had not sent a message to Hussein informing him that the Kufans had changed their mind and took to the side of Yazid.

Hussein was preparing to leave for Kufah when he received a warning from Abdallah bin Abbas of the dangers ahead of him if he ever went to Kufah. Ibn Abbas had got wind of what had happened to Muslim bin Aqil. He did not have confidence in the people of Kufah but Hussein didn't pay attention to Ibn Abbas advice. In his words, Ibn Abbas said:

Although the hearts of the people of Kufah might be with you, their swords are with the Umayyads."

On the tenth day of Muharram 682AH, Hussein left for Kufah with a group of 200 devoted followers. When they reached a place called Karbala, they met Yazid's army led by Umar bin Sad which numbered to over 4000 men.

Umar bin Sad set the following conditions to Hussein so as to avert the war; that is, Hussein to return to Mecca, or to pledge loyalty to Yazid or to accept to be taken to one of the camps where Muslims caught causing trouble were kept.

Hussein refused all the three conditions; and in the fight that followed, most of Hussein's men were killed and only five remained, who were taken as captives. Hussein was also killed and his head cut off. The beheaded head was sent to Caliph Yazid, who shed tears on seeing Hussein's head.

Caliph Yazid was not happy with what his followers had done. He, therefore, responded by returning all the property, which had been taken away from Hussein, to the five survivors and released them. He even gave them people to escort them back to Medina.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KARBALA INCIDENT

b) Of what significance was the Karbala Tragedy to the Muslim Community?

The Karbala Tragedy which led to the murder of Hussein was significant to the Muslim community because of the following;

1. The murder of Hussein was a bad incidence and a bad omen to Yazid's caliphate as it increased enthusiasm among the followers and supporters of Ali who then became determined to fight throughout the Umayyad period.
2. The murder of Hussein led to the destruction of Ali's family. This is because at Karbala, most of the members of the family of Ali were present and mercilessly killed.
3. The murder of Hussein also marked the end of Banu Hashim as the leaders of the Muslim community.
4. The murder of Hussein was also of great significance in the history of Islam as it gave birth to the Shiite movement. The Shiite had special sympathy for Ali, therefore, when his son was murdered, their grief knew no boundary and determined to avenge for the death of Hussein.
5. The active measures of Muawiyah had suppressed the Shiites; but after the tragedy of Karbala, the Shiites got new life which created trouble for the whole Umayyad Dynasty and became an important factor to the downfall of the Umayyad Dynasty.
6. The day on which Hussein was murdered became significant among the Shiites sect of the Muslim Community as they celebrate it annually.

7. Before the Karbala Incidence in which Hussein was murdered, rivalry among the Muslims was between the Umayyads and the Hashmites. However, after the tragedy, the rivalry turned to between the Umayyads and the Shiites, supported by Hashimites and other Muslims.
8. The Karbala Tragedy intensified divisionism in the Muslim community and therefore slowed the spread of Islam for some years.

CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP FROM SONS OF SUFYAN TO SONS OF MAR'WAN

Question: Explain the events that preceded the change of leadership within the Umayyad Dynasty from the sons of Sufyan to the sons of Mar' wan.

The Umayyad Dynasty was the first dynasty to be established in the history of Islam. It was founded by Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan in 661 AD, who belonged to the Banu Umayyah clan of the Quash Tribe.

The Umayyad clan was one of the prominent clans in Mecca, only comparable to the Banu Hashim. The Umayyad clan was divided into two families; that is, the Banu Harb and Abu Al-As families. Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan belonged to the Banu Harb family; therefore, all Caliphs who succeeded Muawiyah belonged to the Banu Harb family- that is, Yazid and Muawiyah II.

With the death of Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan in 681 AD, he was succeeded by his son Yazid bin Muawiyah. Yazid's reign lasted for three years. Yazid died in 684 AD and was succeeded by his son Muawiyah bin Yazid, popularly known as Muawiyah II.

However, Muawiyah II was weak and feeble; and his reign lasted for only three months. He always confined himself in his palace and was rarely seen in public. He left the state affairs to take their own course. He even left the issue of his successor to the Muslim community to decide.

Because of his character, there developed division and misunderstandings among the Umayyad clan. In this case, the two branches of the Umayyads; that is the Banu Harb (son of Sufyan) and Abu Al-As (sons of Mar'wan) branches started conflicting for leadership, which conflict gave an opportunity for the enemies to increase their influence in the Dynasty.

To end this problem, the Banu Umayyah held a conference at a place called Jabiyah in Syria in which they decided to choose Mar'wan I as a new Caliph to replace Muawiyah II, who had proved to be weak.

With this agreement, the Caliphate was transferred from the sons of Sufyan to the sons of Mar' wan. This election of Mar'wan I to power meant the transfer of power from the house of Banu Harb to that of Abu-al-As.

However, by the time Mar'wan I came to power, the Islamic Empire, had two rulers (caliphs); that is, Mar'wan I, who was based in Damascus and Abdallah bin Zubair based in the Hijaz region. In fact many people from areas like the Hijaz, Iraq and Egypt had submitted to Abdallah bin Zubair of the Hijaz as the Caliph.

Therefore, when Mar'wan was made the Caliph, the first thing he had to do was to fight and force all those people who have submitted to Ibn Zubair to abandon it. He responded by sending there troops that suppressed the rebellion though very many people died.

Mar'wan continued to fight against the rebels in a series of battles in Egypt, Iraq and Hijaz in which Abdullah bin Zubair was defeated. His reign lasted for about one year, and on his death bed, he declared his son Abdul Malik as his successor. Mar'wan died in 685AD.

ABDUL MALIK BIN MAR'WAN (685 -705 AD)

Question; Abdul Malik bin Mar'wan is considered the second founder of the Umayyad Dynasty.

Analyze this statement in view of the problems he faced as a leader and how he solved them.

Abdul Malik bin Mar'wan was the fifth Caliph of the Umayyad Dynasty. He came to power after the death of his father Mar'wan I in 685AD.

At the time Abdul Marik ascended to power as the Caliph of the Umayyad Dynasty, the Dynasty was on verge of disintegration caused by insurgencies and power struggle within the Umayyad House.

On assuming office of the Caliph, Abdul Malik faced a number of problems which were both internal and external. However, as a man of distinguished qualities, he did all he could to solve almost all problems that came his way that in turn saved the Umayyad Dynasty from premature collapse.

The most burning problem was that Abdul malik came to power when the Dynasty was on verge of disintegration because of the power struggle with in the Umayyad House caused by insurgencies .The power struggle had been instigated by the change of leadership from the Banu Harb to Abu Al-As families.

About this problem, Abdul Malik did all he could to restore unity and solving of various problems that prevented chaos and destruction. He held meetings and talked to leaders of different branches.

Abdul Malik also faced a problem of the divergence and opposition from Abdallah bin Zubair who had waged a war against the Umayyads and was supported by many people of mecca and Medinah.

To solve this problem, Abdul Malik first re organized the army, which was in a very sorry condition, after very many years of miss management to fight all the rebels and those who were causing problems to the Umayyad state. He also strengthened his army in Hijaz so as to stop the problems caused by Ibn Zubair

Abdul Malik also had a problem when one of his commanders who was fighting Abdallah bin Zubair was killed in the battle, yet, at the same time Ibn Zubair was gaining more strength and was planning to attack Syria where the Umayyads had their base.

Abdul Malik reacted with a lot of courage and determination by re organizing his army and putting a lot of emphasis on his commander's .In 692AD, the army surrounded Mecca and forced Ibn Zubair's army men to surrender. Ibn Zubair and some of his remnants escaped to Taif, but were pursued. Ibn Zubair was captured and killed.

Abdul Malik also faced a problem of Al-Mukhtar bin Abdul Ubaid Al-Thakaf. Al-Mukhtar had embarked on indiscriminate plunder of towns to disrupt the peace of the Umayyad Dynasty.

Using his force that had become strong enough, in 689 AD, Abdul Malik advanced towards Kufah and managed to suppress the rebellion that had been staged by Al-Mukhtar. Al-Mukhtar himself was also captured and killed. Abdul Malik then established his full power in Iraq.

Following the murder of Hussein by Yazid's forces, there had emerged the Shiite group that had started instigating violence to avenge Hussein's death and were more than determined to fight the Umayyad rule.

The Kharijites were also a security threat to the dynasty. These had been a problem since the reign of Caliph Ali, and although their threat had always been contained by the successive Caliphs, some elements still remained and terrorised the Umayyads.

To solve these two problems, Abdul Malik managed to organize another strong army under the command of Hajaj to fight the Shiites and Kharijites. Abdul Malik's forces engaged them on several fronts and battles in different corners and defeated them.

Because of the internal disorder with in the dynasty, the Romans took advantage of that and began conquering their lost territories. At the same time, with the help of the Berbers, the Romans attacked North Africa and killed the Umayyads governor in that area.

Abdul Malik sent his general Hossan Numan to North Africa, who successfully captured the areas occupied by the Romans and their allies the Berbers. That marked the end of the Berbers and Roman threat to the Caliph.

There was also a problem of the rebellion which had been started from Kufah under the leadership of Amir Bin Said. Amir had rebelled against Abdul Malik in 689 AD.

Abdul Malik solved this problem by inviting Amir Bin Said to his palace in presence of peace talks. Abdul Malik, him self, then stabbed Amir Bin Said to death.

There was a problem of discontent among the non Arab Muslims, who were considering the Umayyads as people who had got involved in Arabisation of the state; which policy was seen as discriminative.

Abdul Malik solved this problem by convincing the non-Arabs that the move of policy of Arabisation was intended to create a uniform culture throughout the dynasty; and who ever spoke Arabic would be incorporated into the system without discrimination.

Indeed, by the year 690AD, Abdul Malik had restored peace and security in almost all parts of the Islamic Empire. He then embarked on a number of reforms that made his reign to be considered Dynasty. As such, Abdul Malik came to be referred to as the second founder of the Umayyad Dynasty after Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan.

ABDUL MALIK'S REFORMS

Question: **Assess the contribution of Abdul Malik bin Mar'wan to the development of the Umayyad Dynasty.**

Abdul Malik bin Mar'wan came to power as Caliph of the Umayyad Dynasty in 685AD after the death of his father Mar'wan I. He was the fifth Caliph and he came to power at the time when the Umayyad Dynasty was on verge of collapse caused by insurgencies and power struggle with in the Umayyad House.

Abdul Malik did all that he could to restore the lost glory of the empire. This he did by solving the various problems that saved the Dynasty from collapsing, and as such, he came to be referred to as the second founder of the Umayyad Dynasty after Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan.

Abdul Malik's reign was also referred to as the Golden Age or Zenith of the Umayyad Dynasty because of the very many positive changes that took place and a number of reforms which were instituted during his reign that prevented chaos and destruction at a time when the Dynasty was in danger. His contribution to the Dynasty includes the following:-

1. On assuming power and office of the caliph, Abdul Malik faced a number of opposition both with in and outside the Dynasty like opposition of the Romans, Shiites and the Kharijites, and personalities like AI-Mukhtar, Amir bin Said and from the non-Arab Muslims.
2. Abdul Malik succeeded in solving such problems by re- organizing the army which was by them in a very sorry state after years of mismanagement. With his strong army, Abdul Malik managed to defeat and suppress all the rebellions, attacks and uprisings.

3. Abdul Malik succeeded in establishing efficient administration in the Muslim Empire that was aimed at addressing common problems that his people faced. In this case, he managed to make his people live in peace, prosperity and harmony with others.
4. Abdul Malik introduced a systematic control of the state through dividing the government machinery under four departments (Diwan) like the Department of land and Tax which was entrusted with the duty of controlling the finance of the state.
5. He also established the Department of Justice which was given the task of drafting, regulating and implementing state laws. In this department, also judges were appointed, who were entrusted with the responsible for trying cases in courts of law.
6. He also set up the Department of correspondence; the department was charged with the duty of controlling provincial affairs and communicating to all governors.
7. There was also the Department of Miscellaneous correspondence which was supposed to control all revenues of the government that were not considered under the land Tax. This included revenue from agriculture and trade
8. Abdul Malik introduced Arabisation policy in which he attempted to Arabise [to change to Arabic] the government records which were initially in Greek and Roman languages.
9. Under the Arabisation policy, also Arabic was introduced as the only official language of the Dynasty. All government registers and documents were changed to Arabic. However, this policy resulted into dismissal of many officials who never knew Arabic and were replaced with those who could speak and write the language.
10. The Arabisation policy as introduced by Abdul Malik, also gave Arabs a better position in the Dynasty over other races, since the policy provided an opportunity for the development of Arabic Language and Literature.
11. Under the fiscal reforms Abdul Malik established the printing of caliphate money and minting of coins, the first of its nature worldwide. Originally, the Dynasty was using gold pieces and Dinar from Romans and Dirham from Persian as a medium of exchange.
12. In this new fiscal reform, the currencies were made of gold and coins which bore Abdul Malik's effigy or picture and verses of the Qur'an. These were used throughout the whole of the Islamic state.
13. Abdul Malik also set up a rule to the effect that no Muslim was under obligation to pay any other tax other than Zakat. However, although this development won Abdul Malik support of the Muslims, it had a negative effect on the revenue and income of the dynasty because of the very little tax collected.

14. It was during the reign of Abdul Malik that dialectical marks were introduced in the Holy Qur'an by a linguist called Al- Hajjaj bin Yusuf to differentiate between similar Arabic letters so as to help the non-Arabic speaking people to read the Qur'an easily.
15. Abdul Malik improved the agricultural sector in the empire; this he did by reclaiming a number of uncultivated lands in some areas of the empire so that people could carry out agriculture.
16. During Abdul Malik's reign, a number of architectural monuments were built. The most reknown of these monuments was the famous Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. These monuments have survived up to the present day and they now serve as tourism sites.
17. Abdul Malik also made reforms in industry and infrastructure. Under this reform, industries making various items, like clothes, were setup. This helped to boost trade; and the empire procured a reasonable amount of revenue.
18. Abdul Malik also constructed canals especially between Rivers Tigris and Euphrates. He also renovated the old ones, which reform helped to boost agriculture. With agriculture boosted various crops like dates, palms and others were grown which facilitated export trade.
19. Abdul Malik developed Muawiyah's postal system and made it more systematic. In this development, horses and pigeons were trained to act as carriers of mail. This helped to save some money that would have gone in payment of horsemen and post masters.
20. Postmasters were also trained to carry out postal duties; and besides that, they had to serve as Caliph's spies. This helped Abdul Malik to get news from all directions of the empire.
21. Abdul Malik also developed the system of judiciary that had been established by Umar bin Khattab. He instituted a number of judges, that he took special care with this reform in that he acted as the Chief Kadhi or Supreme Judge. He selected a day for hearing and trying cases personally.
22. Abdul Malik enforced education, and because of this reform, he was nicknamed [the tutor]. He was one time quoted to have said "Teach them how to swim and give them no time to sleep"
23. During Abdul Malik's reign, Arabic language orthography was improved through introduction of dialectical marks on similar Arabic letters that could not easily be distinguished especially by non-Arabic speaking people.

24. Abdul Malik founded many cities in many strategic areas of the Dynasty such cities included Al-Wast in the present day Iraq; in them trade and commerce were carried out that boosted the economic position of the Empire.
25. There was also improvement of agriculture especially in the lands between Rivers Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia. With promotion of agriculture, food security was maintained.
26. Abdul Malik also changed the land policy to the effect that all people in the Empire benefited. All people were given the right to use land they found idle. With this reform, all uncultivated land was put to use, and thus people's standard of living improved.

DOME OF THE ROCK



WALID BIN ABDUL MALIK [705-715AD]

Question: Explain the role-played by Walid bin Abdul Malik in the development of Umayyad Dynasty.

Walid bin Abdul Malik was the son of Abdul Malik bin Mar'wan; He was also his successor as the leader of the Umayyad Dynasty.

Walid became the ruler of the Umayyad Dynasty after the death of his father in 705AD; and he was in this post for a period of ten years; that's from 705AD – 715AD. During this period, Al-Walid registered the following successes in his reforms:

1. Al-Walid's period was considered to be a period of conquests and expansion of the Islamic state; in other words, he continued from where his father had stopped restoring peace and security in almost all parts of the Dynasty.
2. Al-Walid managed to construct new mosques and schools; he also renovated and improved on already existing public buildings and great mosques like that of Damascus, Medina and Jerusalem.
3. Al-Walid also made a lot of reforms in the army and the navy. As a result, he managed to conquer several areas and added them to the Islamic state. For instance, it was during Walid's reign that the whole province of Transoxiana was captured from the Romans and added it to the Muslim Empire.
4. Al-Walid's reign also witnessed an increase in the number of Muslim converts to Islam and several attempts were made to make people observe Islamic religious practices.
5. During Al-Walid's reign, also the whole of Europe trembled with fear of the Muslim army and as a result, Constantinople and the Islands of Mediterranean Sea collapsed in the hands of the Muslims. Though Constantinople was not taken over by the Muslims, it was made to pay tributes.
6. During Al-Walid's reign, an attempt was made to capture China in the Far East, but the plans were failed by news of Walid's death in 715 AD (96 AH).
7. During this reign, also, a number of expeditions and conquests were carried out that expanded the Islamic Empire in all directions; for instance in 710 AD, the Muslim army under the command of Muhammad bin Khasim managed to capture several parts of India.
8. Al- Walid also sent an expedition to North Africa against the Berbers; and as a result, some parts of the region like Tunisia, Egypt Algeria and Sudan were added to the Islamic Empire.
9. It was during Al-Walid's reign that Islamic influence was felt in Western Sudan commonly known as West Africa. This was as a result of Al-Walid sending an expedition to North Africa against the Berbers. The defeated Berbers, who had converted to Islam, left North Africa and went to occupy areas of West Africa like Nigeria, Sudan and Ghana where they started to teach Islam.
10. In 92 AH (713AD), Al-Walid sent an expedition to Spain under the command of Talig with a big Muslim army of about 12,000 fighters. This army met that of Roderick, king of Spain, at the straits of cape of Trafalgar in the fight in which Roderick was killed. From there on Islam entered Spain.

11. Al-Walid succeeded in putting in place an institution intended to cater for the old and the disabled. He did this out of his reknown helpful and kind attitude. In fact Al-Walid was known for helping the poor and the needy.
12. Al-Walid also improved on the communication network by constructing new roads and improving as well as renovating the already existing ones.
13. It was during Walid bin Abdul Malik's reign that Umar bin Abdul Aziz was appointed the governor of the Hijaz region. Umar later became a caliph, who did a commendable job of consolidating the Umayyad Dynasty.
14. Al-Walid also enlarged the Mosques of Medina and Jerusalem so as to accommodate the number of the Muslims that had increased tremendously.
15. Al-Walid minded so much about the health of his subjects to the extent that he set up special hospitals for the treatment of the disabled and those with chronicle diseases. This reform helped to improve the welfare of the marginalized groups like the disabled.
16. Al-Walid tried to bring all areas of his Empire together by extending a network of roads to isolated areas. This he did through constructing bridges; besides, wells were also dug along pilgrimage and trade routes to cater for travelers and wayfarers.
17. Al-Walid greatly boosted the agricultural sector by developing the canal system in addition to constructing a number of dams. This helped to check on seasonal floods of river Euphrates; besides water reached people's fields.
18. Al-Walid is credited for strictly maintaining law and order in the Muslim Empire. He did this through setting up an effective police force and putting in place law mechanisms and agencies like spy and patrol units.
19. Al-Walid abolished class groupings like nobles, royals and slaves and the discrimination of non-Muslims. He did this as he sought to create a free society where people enjoyed equal rights and accessibility to state resources.
20. Al-Walid greatly boosted commerce and trade activities. This was realized through abolition of heavy taxes on business merchandise and providing security on trade routes through out his empire.

UMAR BIN ABDUL AZIZ

Question: Umar bin Abdul Aziz was considered one of the greatest Umayyad kings, but his reign was not considered the Golden Age of the Umayyad Dynasty. Discuss.

OR

Assess the achievements and weaknesses of Umar bin Abdul Aziz as the leader of the Umayyad Dynasty.

Umar bin Abdul Aziz was born at Huawain in 62AH (683AD). His father was called Abdul Aziz and his mother was Asim, the daughter of Hussein, son of Umar bin Khattab.

Because of his contribution to the Islamic state and his relationship with Umar bin Khattab, Umar bin Abdul Aziz was always referred to as Umar II

Umar II ruled the Umayyad Dynasty for two years; that is, from 99AH to 101AH, during which he made a number of contributions that put him to be ranked among the greatest Umayyad caliphs ever.

1. Umar II put an end to the luxurious life led by the past Umayyad kings and other government officers. He himself set an example as he led a very simple life. He used to spend two Dirhams a day.
2. Umar II sold off all the royal horses by public auction and deposited the proceedings to the public treasury. He also ordered his wife to return the jewelry and other valuable presents she had been given to the state treasury.
3. Umar also went ahead to return the property that had been wrongly acquired by the Umayyad princes and officials to their owners.
4. Umar's foreign policy was characterized by good relationship with foreigners and non-Muslims. For instance, at the time when he assumed the Caliph office, the Umayyad army was besieging the fortress of Constantinople, but Umar ordered for the withdrawal and thereafter, friendly relationship was maintained with the Greeks of Constantinople.
5. Among the most important characteristics of Umar's reign was the maintenance of law and order. Umar was a just man who believed in equality of all people but he did not hesitate to seriously punish the criminals.
6. He mainly concentrated on the internal organization of the empire rather than expanding it. He consolidated his empire by dismissing all unjust and bad governors he found in power and he replaced them with those officers who were known to have a good and clean track.

7. Umar II governed the Umayyad Dynasty in accordance with the Islamic principles and he also showed respect for the Prophet's house to which he restored the portion of Zakat that had been abolished by Muawiyah.
8. During Umar's reign, there was the construction of the Zaragoza Mosque in Spain as a good gesture and practice of religious tolerance with Christians. He returned the church of St. John to Christians, which Al-Walid had turned into a mosque.
9. Umar II also restored the stability of the empire by improving the conditions of the army. He made arrangements to pay the soldiers their allowances regularly in addition to ensuring equality of all military men regardless of their race, tribe or creed. He also restored the pensions of the retired soldiers.
10. Umar II also contributed significantly to the Hadith literature in that he was the first Muslim leader to issue definite orders to the effect that the traditions of the Prophet should be collected together into a book form.
11. He stopped the oppression of the non-Muslims a culture that had been started by his predecessors. This was because of his policy of religious tolerance.
12. He also exempted the new converts from paying taxes with the exception of Zakat, as a way of reconciling between Muslims and non-Muslims. This he did with an argument that the Prophet was never a tax-collector but a missionary.
13. Umar II abolished a system where the new converts to Islam were required to first circumcise so as to test their genuineness.
14. He ended the discrimination of the non-Arab Muslims and were put on the same level with the rest of Arab Muslims.
15. He also exempted them from paying Jizyah or the Defence Tax and land Tax. The non-Arab Muslims were also made to receive pension just like other Muslims.
16. Umar II had a high respect for the judges and he paid them highly so as to ensure fair justice and avoid acts of bribery and corruption.
17. During his caliphate, also, Umar II did a lot to spread Islam to many parts of the state and because of his piety and justice; he was compared to his grandfather Umar bin al-Khattab.
18. Umar II succeeded in suppressing rebellions through peaceful means. For instance, at one time he wrote to Bistwan, who had headed the Iraq rebels, seeking to know the reason for the rebellion. Bistwan sent two envoys to argue their case. However Umar II persuaded them convincingly to abandon the rebellion.
19. Umar II stopped the habit of cursing Ali bin Abu Talib at the pulpit. This was a popular practice among the Umayyads.

20. Umar II stopped military campaigns aimed at conquering new territories. He instead embarked on educating people of the territories. In fact, Umar dispatched scholars for this task.
21. There were no ugly incidents throughout Umar's rule. He abolished death penalty not sanctioned by Shariah. He handled every body with fairness and justice. That's why his tomb was spared by the Abbasids when they exhumed tombs of the former Umayyad rulers.

However, though Umar bin Abdul Aziz was considered one of the greatest and outstanding Umayyad Caliph, his reign cannot be considered the Golden Age of the Umayyad Dynasty because of some weaknesses that were found therein.

1. The expansion of the Islamic Empire came to a stand still during Umar II's reign because he was concerned more with the consolidation of the empire than expanding it.
2. The state treasury was seriously depleted because of the tax exemptions; like he exempted the new converts from paying taxes; yet he had spent a lot on them as a way of reconciliation for the past misdeeds committed against them by the past Umayyad kings.
3. This reconciliation policy with the Umayyads' enemies; especially the Shiites and non-Muslims was partly responsible for the downfall of the Umayyad Dynasty. This was because those groups of enemies were given breathing space to plot and campaign against the Umayyads.
4. Umar II failed to put up lasting measures in administration that would be copied by the subsequent caliphs and his personality was not emulated by the next caliphs who failed to earn popularity for the Dynasty. In fact, Umar's death in 101AD (722AD) was considered to be one of the factors for the decline of the Umayyad Dynasty.

In conclusion, much as Umar II had some weakness, he stood as one of the greatest Umayyad caliphs, whose reign was glorious as he consolidated the empire, he was friendly to foreigners, tolerant to non-Muslims, systematic in administration and firm in judgment.

GENERAL LIFE UNDER THE Umayyad RULE.

POLITICAL LIFE

Qn: Discuss the political organization of the Umayyad Caliphate 661-750AD.

With the death of Caliph Ali bin Talib in 660AD, what had been termed as the glorious Caliphate which had begun with the leadership of Caliph Abubakr and went to Umar bin Khattab, then to Uthman bin Affan and Ali bin Abu Talib came to an end.

A new form of Caliphate, dynastic and hereditary in nature, founded by Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan was established with its capital at Damascus. This Caliphate came to be known as the Umayyad Dynasty. It started in 661AD and lasted until 750AD when it finally collapsed.

The Umayyads are said to have run their Caliphate by contributing greatly towards the development of culture, science, economy, education and politics.

1. Politically, the most important characteristic of the Umayyad system of administration was the hereditary rule, where the ruling Caliph would nominate his successor.
2. The successor to the reigning Caliph would in most cases be the son of the Caliph. For instance, before his death, Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan had nominated his son Yazid as his successor.
3. The nomination system of the successor also extended up to the provincial level. For example, Walid bin Abdul Malik nominated Abdul Aziz as the leader of the Hijaz region until when he rose to become the Caliph of the Umayyad Dynasty in 720AD.
4. During the Umayyad Caliphate, the system of consultation that the Orthodox Caliphs had cherished was abandoned. The Caliph was the controller of all the state affairs. It was, however, under exceptional circumstances that the Caliph would consult his royals and faithful persons.
5. The Umayyad Dynasty was run on a three-fold government function of the political administration. The three major functions were tax collection, religious affairs and administration of justice.
6. In the center of the Caliphate were five departments, which dealt with various administrative matters. These departments included; military finance, correspondence, signate, and postal departments.
7. During Muawiyah's time, there was establishment of a bureau of registry; and a census was also held such that the population of the people living in the Islamic state was always established.
8. The Umayyad Dynasty was divided into a number of provinces; and a governor headed each. The governor was in charge of the political affairs and military administration and organization in the empire.

9. The Caliph also appointed a judge who was at times entrusted with the responsibility of trying cases in courts of law. The judges were highly respected and were highly paid so as to ensure justice and to avoid acts of bribery and corruption.
10. Administration of justice among non-Muslims was left to their religious heads. This was done to curb what would have looked like oppression of the non-Muslims.
11. Judges in the Umayyad Dynasty were recruited from the learned men who were supposed to be well conversant with the Arabic language.
12. Administration of justice in the Umayyad Dynasty had to do with Muslims only. Justice among non-Muslims was left to their religious heads. This meant that all non-Muslims were supposed to administer justice according to their religious jurisdiction.
13. The Umayyad caliphate had a standing army. This army was charged with a task of ensuring state security and to fight crime, which had more than doubled because of the breakdown of law during the civil wars especially during the Fitnah period.
14. The Umayyad Dynasty had two kinds of forces; that's, the navy and the regular army .the navy was equipped with many canoes and it was mainly used on the Syrian, Egyptian and Tunisian coastal lines of the Mediterranean sea; and the regular army was used with in the Caliphate.
15. The Umayyads established a navy base and a ship building yard. Using this navy, they managed to capture Mediterranean Islands of Minorca, Crete, Cyprus and Rhodes.
16. The Umayyad built a line of fortresses along the Mediterranean coast and other strategic points throughout the dynasty. These fortresses were used to stop the attacks or incursions from the Romans.
17. The Umayyad also established special police forces especially during the reign of Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan, whose main task was to ensure state and internal security. It was comprised of both Muslims and non-Muslims.
18. It was during the Umayyad Caliphate that the idea of the royal bodyguards was introduced for the security of the Caliph. This was intended to safeguard the Caliphs from being assassinated; as it had happened to the three orthodox caliphs Umar, Uthman and Ali.
19. The Umayyad Caliphs used to appoint both major and minor leaders of the Empire based on merit. In this way, the Hashmites, Umayyads, non-Muslims and non-Arabs were all incorporated into the Empire. This limited divisionism in the empire.
20. Postmasters were also trained to carryout postal duties and besides that, they were used to serve as spies. This helped the Caliphs to get news from all directions of the empire.

21. With the rise of the Umayyads to power of the Islamic Empire, the system of consultation (Shura) disappeared and free criticism of the government was no longer tolerated in the caliphate. This meant, therefore, that most Umayyad Caliphs were dictators.

THE ECONOMIC SET UP

Question: Examine the economic organization of the Umayyad Caliphate between 661-750 AD.

The Umayyad Caliphate was founded by Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan in 661 AD after the death of Ali bin Abu Talib, the last of the four Orthodox Caliphs. The dynasty operated from its capital in Damascus and lasted between 661- 750 AD when it finally collapsed.

During their reign in power, the Umayyads did a lot towards the development of culture, science politics, education and economy of the empire. Under economic circles:

1. The Umayyads introduced the idea of the official seal dispatch of mail for messages from the headquarters to other provinces of the state.
2. The Umayyads practiced agriculture, this they did especially during Abdul Malik's reign when he reclaimed a number of uncultivated lands in some areas of the empire so that people would carry out agriculture.
3. The revenue of the empire was derived mainly from Jizyah, or the defence tax, which was mainly paid by the non-Muslims and Zakat which was paid by Muslims. Besides, all people were supposed to pay land tax.
4. The Umayyad Caliphs appointed provincial revenue collectors who were charged with collection of revenue and taxes; and these were directly answerable to the Caliph.
5. The Umayyads introduced a systematic control of the state through dividing the government machinery into various departments; one of which was the department of miscellaneous revenue which was supposed to control all revenues of the government.
6. The printing of the Caliphate money was also established during the Umayyad rule. This fiscal policy of printing money was the first of its kind world wide.
7. During the Umayyad rule, a factory for minting Arabised coins was introduced especially during the reign of Abdul Malik. With the minting of coins, all previous coins and gold pieces as used by the Romans were replaced.
8. During the reign of Abdul Malik bin Mar'wan gold and silver coins were made and were made used of by the whole of the Islamic state.

9. The Umayyad Caliphs, especially Abdul Malik and Umar II also set up a ruling to the effect that no Muslim was under obligation to pay any other tax other than Zakat. This has a negative effect on the Muslim revenue because of the little tax collected.
10. Reforms in industry and infrastructure were also realized during the Umayyad rule. For instance, Caliph Abdul Malik set up factories making clothes. With this reform, trade was boosted and the Empire procured a reasonable amount of revenue which made the Umayyads very rich.
11. Canals were also constructed between Rivers Tigris and Euphrates. This helped to boost agriculture. With agriculture boosted, various crops were grown which facilitated export trade.
12. Most Umayyads, especially the caliphs, lived a luxurious life, full of extravagancy and pomp. They put up lofty palaces, employed bodyguards and many of them stayed in palaces which could not easily be reached.
13. Most Umayyads, especially the Caliphs, lived a luxurious life, full of extravagancy and pomp. During the Umayyad rule, the state treasury (Bait ul-mal) became a personal property and such a feature left the economic stand of the empire in jeopardy.
14. Soldiers of the Muslim army were exempted from taxes though they got spoils of the war. With this policy, the soldiers defended the state with a lot of zeal.
15. The most unfortunate aspect about the state revenue was that it was swindled by most of the Umayyad caliphs; that is, it was used to build central caliphate and provincial palaces and the balance was extravagantly used by the caliphs to enjoy leisure.
16. War booty was another form of state revenue acquired through military conquests, raids of confrontations. This, therefore, meant that the more success the Umayyad achieved the more the booty they enjoyed.

THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION.

Question: Assess the social life of the Umayyads between 661 and 750 AD.

The Umayyads were one of the leading clans in Arabia, only comparable to the Banu Hashim or Hashimites in prominence before the advent of Islam. Their influence had been overshadowed by the Hashmites following the introduction of Islam. This was because the prophet and the first two of his successors were all from the Banu Hashim Clan.

The emergency of the Umayyads as a powerful and influential clan, started during caliph Uthman's reign where many Umayyads were made governors in various provinces.

However, after the death of Caliph Ali, the Umayyads, led by Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan, took over power of the Islamic Caliphate with a new name of the Umayyad Dynasty. During their reign in power that lasted between 661 and 750 AD, the Umayyads had their own social life:-

1. The Umayyads observed a social stratification; in that, people were divided into social classes. The highest social class among the Umayyads was comprised of ruling Muslims headed by the caliph household and the Arab conquerors, who mainly included governors and heads of departments.
2. The second class was occupied by the neo-Muslims who, by force or persuasion, had professed Islam. These were referred to as Al-Mawali. Though this class was ranked next to the caliph household and Arab aristocrats, they formed the lowest class among the Muslims.
3. The third class was made up of members of other faith and other religious sects. These included the Jews, Christians, Serbians and the like. They always enjoyed the status living in the Islamic state as long as they paid a defence tax called Jizyah as tribute.
4. The Umayyads tried as much as possible to foster unity among the people living in the Dynasty. This they did by controlling and limiting division especially between the Hashimites and Umayyads on one side and Muslims and non-Muslims on another.
5. During the early years of the Umayyad rule, the Umayyads had bitter relationship with foreigners always carrying out occasional annual raids to neighbors especially in the Asia Minor.
6. In the later years of the Umayyad rule, the Umayyads introduced a foreign policy, which characterized with good relationship with foreigners. For instance, during the time when Umar bin Abdul Aziz came to power, the Muslims were besieging the fortress of Constantinople, but Umar ordered for the withdrawal and thereafter, friendly relationship was maintained with the Greeks of Constantinople.
7. Most Umayyad caliphs lived luxurious lives. They were big spending rulers, who extravagantly misused the government funds on their personal effects and gains.
8. The Umayyads also introduced a policy of Arabisation where every thing was changed or had to look Arabic. With the introduction of this policy, the Arabs were indirectly given a high status over the non-Arabs and also a better position over other races.
9. During the Umayyad rule, women enjoyed a relatively equal degree of social freedom as men did. This was so because the principles of Shariah concerning women were largely ignored due to irreligiousness of many Umayyad caliphs.

10. Because of the love for luxury and the luxurious life led by the Umayyads, great immorality characterized the Umayyad society right from the caliphs down to the subject. They were known for womanizing, excessive wine drinking, corrupt tendencies and the like.

INTELLECTUAL LIFE.

Discuss the intellectual life of the Umayyads during their reign in leadership between 661 and 750 AD

During their reign in power as leaders of the Muslim Empire, the Umayyads had an intellectual life seen in the following ways:-

1. The Umayyads introduced a policy of Arabisation where everything was changed or had to look Arabic. Many writings that has originally been in Greek, Roman and Persian languages were all changed into Arabic.
2. The Umayyads started up Arabic Grammar in the cities of Basra and Kufah, which included critical and scientific study of Arabic grammar.
3. It was during the Umayyad caliphate, especially during the reign of Abdul Malik, that dialectical marks were introduced in the Qur'an to differentiate between similar Arabic letters so as to help the non-Arabic speaking people to read the Qur'an easily.
4. The Umayyads also contributed significantly to the Hadith literature. This was so because Umar II issued a definite order to the effect that the traditions of the Prophet should be collected into a book form.
5. The study of the Qur'an and science of Hadith were also highly cherished and these provided a format upon which theology and Fiqh (law) were raised.
6. Arabic histology was also begun during the time of the Umayyad caliphate. The study of Arabic histology and histograph became one of the earliest disciplines cultivated by the Arab Muslims.
7. It was also during the Umayyad caliphate that religious philosophical movements were developed. For instance, Wasil bin Atah emerged with a famous school rational thinking and reasoning called Mutazirites. It was also during this period that the Kharijites movement was abandoned.
8. During the Umayyad caliphate, public speaking or oratory of several forms developed. The most prominent were the military, patriotic and religious poetry that was developed by Ziyad bin Habib and Al-Hajjaj.
9. Scientific Arab medicine sprang up from Greeks and partly from Persians, though the Persian medicine itself was influenced by Greek thinking.

10. During the Umayyad rule, the field of art and architecture also developed. The Umayyads developed artistic expressions and impressions seen in religious architecture which involved a scheme of building.
11. A number of architectural monuments and buildings made in different designs were set up during the Umayyad rule – the most known of these was the Dome of the rock built during the reign of Abdul Malik and the famous mosque of Zaragoza in Spain built in the reign of Umar II.
12. During the time when the Umayyads controlled the Muslim empire, new mosques and schools were constructed and many old ones were renovated and improved on. These mosques and schools became centers of learning and imparting of knowledge.
13. Although there was no formal education during the Umayyad rule, some knowledge was acquired on the basics of like teaching of Islam, Arabic language, writing skills and pottery. Such knowledge was obtained in mosques which acted as classrooms.
14. During the reign of Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan the Umayyads developed physics and chemistry, and a physician called Ibn Arthar was prominent.
15. The Umayyads undertook the translation of science and technological works from the Greek books for each understanding. Khalid bin Yazid was well known in this area of translation.
16. It was also during the Umayyad rule that stone minarets commonly seen on mosques were introduced by Muawiyah's governor Ziyad. They were later developed by A-Walid to create a difference between the mosque and other buildings.
17. In order to boost development of science, the Umayyads gave a number of scholarships to students to study science and technology.
18. The Umayyads established a full department of astrology in 700AD by Jaffar Al – Sadiq.
19. As part of science and technology, the Umayyad especially during the reign of Umar bin Abdul Aziz and Abdul Malik bin Mar'wan developed many infrastructures like mosques, hospitals, banks, roads, postal services, dams and canals.

THE DECLINE AND COLLAPSE OF THE UMAYYAD DYNASTY

Explain the causes of the decline and eventual collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty.

The Umayyad Dynasty that was founded by Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan in 661 AD started on its serious road of decline after the death of Caliph Umar II in 722AD, and by 750 AD, the great dynasty had collapsed.

The decline and final collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty were influenced by a number of factors both internal and external, which included the following:-

1. With the death of Umar II in 101AH (around 722 AD), the dynasty fell in the hands of weak leaders who failed to put up a good administration and also failed to earn popularity for the dynasty. These weak rulers sacrificed the well being of the empire by leaving the state affairs to take their own course. This gave the enemies of the empire an opportunity to fight and defeat the Umayyad rulers
2. There was a problem of succession disputes especially among the different princes. This was mainly caused by lack of defined and fixed rules on how leaders should be elected through the hereditary system. These disputes brought about misunderstandings between the different members of the Umayyad clan which terribly weakened the empire.
3. Under succession disputes, also, the crown prince once he got on to the throne would first ensure that all his rivals were eliminated. This often resulted into other princes allying with the enemies of the Empire to fight the incumbent. The struggle for power weakened the Umayyads and it gave an opportunity to their enemies to attack them which finally contributed to their downfall.
4. The problem of succession disputes was made worse with the transfer of the Umayyad leadership from the sons of Sufyan to the sons of Mar'wan. The change of the Umayyad house that left the dynasty divided. The divided Umayyads would not fight to defeat their enemies; hence their decline.
5. The disputes and conflicts that resulted from succession disputes for power affected economic performance of the state as resources were misappropriated. The Umayyads could therefore not mobilize resources that would help them defeat their enemies; hence their decline.
6. The vast empire coupled with weak caliphs also led to the disintegration of the Umayyad Dynasty. The caliphs that came after Umar II were so weak and unbothered that they failed to rule over such a large empire.
7. The long standing Arab tribal conflicts which were a typical weakness of the Arab social life also contributed to the decline of the Umayyad Dynasty. These tribal feuds undermined the unity of the Umayyads; and without such unity, the empire became weak; hence its disintegration.

8. The financial problems of the Dynasty that resulted from the extravagancy of the Umayyad kings greatly contributed to the downfall of the empire. Many caliphs misused state funds on their personal pleasures, creating a deficit in the government budget. The empire, therefore, had to collapse because it could not finance its projects, security inclusive.
9. The deficit in the budget forced the Umayyad leaders to impose heavy taxes on the masses. These taxes were brutally collected from the masses especially the non-Arabs. This caused widespread discontent; and consequently rebellions spread over the state that weakened it.
10. Some of the Umayyad Caliphs were unpopular among their followers. This was because of the caliphs' evil characters of extravagancy and started working for the removal from power of these caliphs; and with it, the dynasty collapsed.
11. Discontent of the non-Arabs also caused problems to the Umayyad Dynasty that contributed to its decline. The non-Arabs were very much discriminated in all affairs of the state. They were reduced to second-class citizens. These caused insecurity that weakened the empire and led to its decline.
12. The Arabisation policy introduced by Caliph Abdul Malik was also a cause of discontent of the non-Arabs. This policy led to dismissal of non-Arabs from high government offices. Therefore, the non-Arabs joined hands with other Umayyad enemies to fight and defeat the Umayyads.
13. The increased Shiite opposition was also another major factor for the downfall of the Umayyad Dynasty. The Shiite was a discontented group which was never satisfied with the Umayyad rule due to the assassination of Ali bin Abu Talib and his son Hussein. The Shiites, therefore, laid both open and underground campaigns that undermined the authority and power of the Umayyad Dynasty, lead to its collapse.
14. The activities of the Kharijites and their movement also contributed to the collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty. This group had emerged during the Battle of Siffin between Ali and Muawiyah to oppose the two warring groups and they continued with their terrorist activities that weakened the Umayyad Dynasty.
15. There was also the factor of discontent of the Christians and non-Muslims tribes that had permanently inhabited some provinces of the Islamic Empire. Most of the Umayyad Caliphs took oppressive measures against the Christians. Thus giving the Christians opportunity to join other dissatisfied groups in their struggle against the Umayyads.
16. Due to the extravagancy of some Umayyad Caliphs, soldiers weren't paid in time and the dissatisfied soldiers had very little, if not, no sympathy to the Caliphs

when they fell into trouble. The soldiers lost morale to defend the empire when it was attacked by enemies.

17. Neglect of the army especially by the later Caliphs also contributed to the decline and eventual collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty. When the army was neglected, the soldiers became dissatisfied. The dissatisfied soldiers did not hesitate to side with the enemies of the empire at the most critical time when they were very much needed.
18. The rise of the Abbasids as an independent force and dynasty dealt the final blow to the existence of the Umayyad rule. The Abbasids had all along wanted to rule the Islamic state; therefore, taking advantage of the wide spread discontent against the Umayyads, they became champions of the Anti-Umayyad movement.
19. The Abbasids also embarked on a vigorous campaign in form of propaganda against the Umayyad rule, yet at the same time praising their clan and their relationship with the Prophet. Such propaganda greatly weakened the Umayyad Dynasty as it lost support of the masses.
20. The Abbasids also carried out secret campaigns against the Umayyads and won support of many people formerly under the Umayyad influence. For instance, the Abbasids forged a Hadith that Prophet Muhammad told his uncle Abbas that the year 750AD (135A) was for him (Abbas) and his descendants. This eventually demoralized and weakened the Umayyad supporters.
21. The Abbas also made coalitions with different hostile groups that were also in the struggle to oust the Umayyad rulers. The Umayyads could not sustain the pressure of the coalition of the Abbasids, Shiites and the non-Muslims. Consequently, the Umayyads collapsed under the weight of the coalition.
22. There was also a problem of uncontrolled revolts which had started breaking out in different parts of the Empire. For instance, there was a revolt that broke out in Khurasan under the leadership of Abu Muslim. Efforts to stop this revolt failed and led to several others throughout the Empire such revolts undermined the existence of the Umayyad Empire.
23. The Umayyads lacked strong generals and other military personnel, who could match the strength and bravery of their enemies like Abu Muslim of the Abbasids. Coupled with the already weakened and dissatisfied soldiers, the continuity of the Umayyad Dynasty was undermined.
24. The Umayyad Caliphs had outlived their usefulness, abandoning the noble work of protecting Islam and turned to worldly affairs hence concerned Muslims hated them and longed for a change. Therefore, the majority of the concerned Muslims joined the Abbasids to fight and defeat the Umayyad rulers.

25. The Romans from the Byzantine Empire were also a factor for the collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty. The Romans took advantages of the existing political anarchy in the Umayyad Dynasty to try to regain their lost territory. The Romans constantly attacked the Umayyads causing the latter economic and human resource losses that led to their collapse.
26. The Abbasids also capitalized on the luxurious living and immorality of the Umayyads royals that had led to economic constraints to discredit the Umayyads. The Abbasids promised to come up with a fundamental change that won them support of the masses, much to the disadvantage to the Umayyads. This led to the decline of the Umayyad Dynasty.

EFFECTS OF THE DECLINE OF THE UMAYYAD DYNASTY.

Qn. Examine the effects of the decline and eventual collapse of Umayyad Dynasty.

The Umayyad Dynasty that was established in 661AD started on its journeys of decline and eventual collapse after the death of Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz in 722AD and by 750AD, the Dynasty had already collapsed.

The collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty had a number of implications that affected both the Dynasty itself and the Muslim world in general.

1. With the fall of the Umayyad Dynasty, the glory and prosperity of the Umayyad clan faded and also the truly Umayyad period in the history of Islam came to pass and the first Arab phase of the Islamic Empire began to move rapidly towards its close.
2. With the collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty, the non-Arabs became emancipated from the yoke of torture and marginalization, in that many non-Arabs, especially the Persians, occupied many posts in the next administrations.
3. Another effect of the downfall of the Umayyad Dynasty was that the original Arab aristocracy was dissolved and replaced with a hierarchy of officers drawn from all nationalities all around the Islamic Empire.
4. The collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty also meant that the Shiites, who had all along wanted to avenge the death of Ali and Hussein, claimed to have been murdered by the Umayyads, felt contented.
5. There was renewed conflicts between the Shiites and the leaders of the Islamic Empire. The Abbasids had blackmailed the Shiites into supporting them after forging a Hadith in favour of the house of the Prophet. But when the Abbasids took

over power, the Shiites felt betrayed and thus started a campaign to fight the Abbasids.

6. The Arabisation policy which was a brainchild of Caliph Abdul Malik and which had given the Arabs a high status over the rest of the populace was abandoned and replaced with the ideal of international Islam.
7. For the first time, after the collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty, the Khurasanians formed the Caliphs' body guard and the Persians occupied the chief posts in the government. These replaced the Arabs who had occupied key posts following the introduction of the Arabisation policy.
8. Following the decline of the Umayyads, their successors, as leaders of the Muslim Empire, the Abbasids, dropped the name of Dynasty which they never wanted to be called as it would bring them near to the Umayyads. They preferred to call themselves Dawlan (Caliphate), which therefore, ushered in a new phase of history the Islamic Empire.
9. The downfall of the Umayyad Dynasty also resulted in the old Arab Muslims and the new foreign converts called the Mawalis to begin mixing and sharing posts with others, especially the ruling class under social stratification.
10. The collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty which had its base in Damascus, led to the formation of a new Umayyad Dynasty that had its base in Spain. The Umayyad Dynasty in Spain was established by Abdul Rahman Al-Dakhir.
11. With the collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty, Islam started to enter the continent of Europe. This happened after Abdul Rahman Al-Dakhir escaped the Abbasid execution; he went and established an Umayyad Dynasty in Europe, the first of its nature in the History of Islam.
12. The collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty resulted into the death of many people originally belonging to the Umayyad family. This was because when the last caliph of the Umayyads (Mar'wan II) was killed, the Abbasids embarked upon a policy of exterminating the Umayyad princes.
13. The Abbasids sent agents and spies all over the Islamic state to hunt down the fugitives of the Umayyads family and their supporters. However, some of them led by Abdul Rahman Al-Dakhir managed to escape to Spain where they established the new and second Umayyad Dynasty.
14. After the collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty, a new dynasty called the Abbasid Dynasty was established. This dynasty traced its origin from Abbas, uncle of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H)

15. The collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty also meant that Damascus, and for that matter, Syria lost its glory as the seat and headquarters of the Islamic Empire. This was because the Abbasids had their capital and headquarters at Baghdad in Iraq.
16. With the decline and eventual collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty, the Banu Umayyad family lost their glory and prosperity, and shifted back to the Banu Hashin clan, but this time under the name of the Abbasid Dynasty.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE Umayyad AS COMPARED TO ORTHODOX CALIPHS.

Compare and contrast the way of life during the Umayyad Caliphate with that of the Orthodox Caliphs

1. During the Orthodox Caliphate, leaders of the Muslims community were elected democratically into their respective offices. However, with the rise of the Umayyads, this system was abandoned and a system of nominating one's son or brother was introduced; for instance, Muawiyah I nominated his son Yazid as his successor.
2. During the period of the Orthodox Caliphs there was a Consultative Council (called the Shura Council) of elders and the general council of all Muslims. It composed of the Ansars, Muhajroons and other Muslims. This council advised the Caliph on the performance of his duties and enabled the ordinary people to have a voice to the government.
3. With the rise of the Umayyads, this system of consultation disappeared and free criticism of the government was not tolerated; in short, most Umayyad Caliphs were dictators.
4. During the Orthodox Caliphate, generally only men of ability and piety were elected in offices of responsibility. However, with the Umayyads, weak leaders emerged as long as they were nominated and belonged to the Banu Umayyah family.
5. Whereas the Orthodox Caliphs lived simple lives, the Umayyads Caliphs lived luxurious lives, punctuated with a lot of pomp and luxury. They put up lofty palaces, employed bodyguards and many of them stayed in places which could not easily be reached.
6. During the early Orthodox Caliphate, tribal and clan jealousies were at least lowered. These tribal and clan prejudices were, however, revived and reached their climax during the Umayyad Caliphate. In fact one such conflict was between the Ibn Harb and Abu Al-As families of the Umayyad clan.
7. The orthodox caliphs always presided over Friday and other daily prayers plus giving the sermons. With the rise of the Umayyad Caliphate, the practice was only observed by Muawiyah I, Abdul Malik was and Umar II; other caliphs did not effect it. However, those caliphs who dared carry out the practice, used to deliver their sermons while seated.
8. The private life of the Orthodox Caliphs had been clear, free and pure from any kind of spots. They led strictly pious life. Most Umayyad Caliphs, with the exception of Umar II lived a secular life full of immoral acts and extravagancy.

9. During the Umayyad time, the Baitul-Mal or the state treasury became a personal or private property and such a feature contrasts sharply with that of the Orthodox caliphs who handled the treasury carefully and channeled the funds in proper directions.
10. The Orthodox caliphs practiced law in courts to a larger extent as practiced by the Prophet such that Muslims and non-Muslims were equal before the law depending on their rights. On contrary, the Umayyads were far from this and most cases laws did not concern them and were above the law.
11. The Orthodox Caliphs respected all the rights of non-Muslims as long as they did not offend Islam. However during the Umayyad period this changed especially with the Christians, for example Umar II issued a law prohibiting non-Muslims from wearing turbans.
12. During the Orthodox Caliphate, there was no discrimination, and if there, it was not deliberate. But with the Umayyads, the whole population was divided into social classes; the highest consisted of the ruling family under the Caliph Household; Neo-Muslims, the class of tolerated sects and that of the Slaves and servants.

REVISION QUESTIONS

1. To what extent was Uthman Bin Affan's election as the Caliph responsible for the rise of the Umayyads?
2.
 - a) Account for Muawiyah Bin Abu Sufyan's struggle for power after the assassination of Caliph Uthman Bin Affan.
 - b) What were the consequences of this struggle?
3. Account for the rise of the Umayyad Dynasty.
4.
 - a) Examine Muawiyah Bin Abu Sufyan's contribution to Islam before he became Caliph.
 - b) How did he assume his leadership roles as a leader of the Muslim Empire?
5.
 - a) Examine the administrative changes in the Umayyad Caliphate introduced by Muawiyah Bin Abu Sufyan.
 - b) How were the changes introduced by Muawiyah Bin Abu Sufyan responsible for the collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty?
6. A mediocre caliph who did more damage than good to the Umayyad institution. How befitting is this description to Yazid Bin Muawiyah?
7. Examine the political situation in the Umayyad Dynasty during the reign of Yazid Bin Muawiyah.

8. Assess the contribution of Abdul Malik Bin Mar'wan to the development of the Umayyad Caliphate.
9. What role did Walid Bin Abdul Malik play in the development of the Umayyad Dynasty?
10. Abdul Malik was nicknamed "The father of all kings".
11. Abdul Malik was nicknamed "The father of the kings." Justify this nickname with reference to his achievements during his reign.
12. "Umar Bin Abdul Aziz was a revivalist of the Umayyad institution which had been weakened by the previous Umayyad caliphs." Assess the the validity of the statement.
13. Examine the strategies used by the Umayyads to retain power from 660 to 750 AD.
14. Assess the achievements of Umar Bin Abdul Aziz as the leader of the Umayyad Dynasty.
15. Although Umar Bin Abdul Aziz is still considered as one of the prominent Caliphs of the Umayyad Dynasty, his reign could not be taken as the golden age of the Umayyads. Discuss.
16. Examine the social and cultural life of the Umayyads.
17. Examine the political organization in the Muslim Empire between Ad 661 and 750.
18. Assess the contribution of the Umayyads to the advancement of science.
19. Examine the level of intellectualism and technological advancement during the Umayyad rule.
20. Examine the causes and effects of the decline of the Umayyad Dynasty.
21. "The continuous succession disputes were exclusively responsible for the collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty." To what extent is the above statement valid?

THE ABBASID DYNASTY

ABBASID PROPAGANDA AGAINST THE Umayyad RULE

Qn. Give an account of Abbasid propaganda against the Umayyad rule.

The Abbasids were the descendants of Abbas, uncle of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). The Abbasids being related to the Prophet claimed rightful succession to the Caliphate.

The Abbasids claim relationship with Prophet Muhammad because Abbas, son of Abdul Muttalib, and uncle to Prophet Muhammad, gave birth to Abdallah bin Abbas, who gave birth to Ali bin Abdallah. Ali bin Abdallah gave birth to Muhammad bin Ali, who initially headed the Abbasid movement.

Muhammad bin Ali gave birth to the first and second caliphs of the Abbasid Dynasty; that is, Abu Abbas Al-Saffah and Abu Jaffer Al-Mansoor respectively.

The Abbasids set up their stronghold in the present day Iraq, where they based to claim the caliphate after the collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty. The Abbasid Dynasty started in 750AD and lasted for 509 years; that is, it collapsed in 1258 AD.

The Abbasids, through Imam Muhammad bin Ali, saw that the transfer of authority from one house to another must be preceded by preparing the minds of people. He was so far-sighted enough to know that great precautions were needed if they were to succeed in their mission.

In preparing the minds of the people, the Abbasids embarked on spreading propaganda among the Muslims praising their clan and their relationship with Prophet Muhammad. They went farther and forged a tradition that Prophet Muhammad once told his Uncle Abbas that they year 135AH was for Abbas and his descendants.

Muhammad bin Ali called upon the people, especially those belonging to the Abbasid lineage to promote the propaganda in the name of the house of the Prophet without specifying any particular person, by using an ambiguous expression which might be equally applied to the descendants of Ali Abbas.

It was only in the strict secrecy that the propaganda was made in the name of the house of Abbas, since the designation of the name of Abbas might expose the Imam to oppression from the Umayyads. Consequently, this confusing expression and propaganda, won the Abbasids the support of the Shiites, the Mawalis and the Yemenites.

The Abbasid propaganda began in Kufah and Khurasan, the two prominent centres of Shiaism as good centres for spreading their cause. Muhammad bin Ali understood the task of speaking for the cause that he appointed twelve secret chiefs assisted by fifty-eight (58) missionaries who won him more support.

Basing in Iraq, the Abbasids started their secret movements by sending the appointed missionaries to different areas which has started fierce rebellions against the Umayyads.

The Abbasid missionaries went ahead to exploit clan and tribal conflicts during the Umayyad reign to promote their propaganda. For instance, in the conflict between the Mudarites and Hymarites, when the Umayyads would support one group against the other, the Abbasids pulled the hated side to promote their propaganda.

However, before the Abbasids could bring the Umayyads to their total downfall, Muhammad bin Ali, who had headed the Abbasid propaganda, died. He was succeeded by his son Ibrahim bin Muhammad Ibrahim bin Muhammad named his cousin Abu Abbas al-Saffah as his successor.

Abu Abbas al-Saffah, after his installation as the Caliph of the Abbasids, fought and defeated the last Umayyad Caliph called Mar'wan II. Most of Mar'wan's fighters were killed before Mar'wan himself was also killed. This closed the Umayyad chapter; and thus Abu Abbas became the new leader of the Muslim Empire and the founder of the Abbasid Dynasty.

FACTORS FOR THE RISE OF THE ABBASID DYNASTY.

Question: Examine the factors that favoured the rise of the Abbasids to power in the Islamic Empire.

The Abbasid Dynasty started in 750AD with the fall of the Umayyad Dynasty. The Abbasids claimed descent from Abbas – uncle of Prophet Muhammad. The Abbasid Dynasty survived for 508 years, only to collapse in 1258AD.

There were a number of factors that led to the rise of the Abbasids to power; among them included the following:-

1. The Abbasids took advantage of the inherent weakness within the Umayyad Dynasty to spring to power. For example, they took over as leaders of the long list of discontented groups such as the Hashmites, Shiites, Kharijites, Christians and non-Arabs. The Abbasids championed the anti-Umayyad campaign that helped them rise to power.
2. The Abbasids portrayed themselves as an international force in the way that they welcomed almost everyone; especially the Persians and Turkish. The united force that was established thereafter was strong enough to overthrow the inefficient Umayyad leadership; and thus the rise of the Abbasids to power.
3. The Abbasids had an overwhelming ambition, vigour and determination to rule the Muslim World to an extent that they forged a Hadith to justify their cause. This won them support of many people and acted as an accelerating factor and a driving force which helped them rise to power.

4. The Abbasids had very strong generals, like Abu Muslim, and other military personnel who were unmatched and would not be compared to the already weakened soldiers in the Umayyad ranks. These army personnel did a lot to bring the Abbasids into power.
5. The Abbasids carried out both secret and open campaigns against the Umayyads that won them support of many people. The Abbasids warned people that they were the only the best and blessed group to rule and bring order in the Muslim society. This eventually weakened the Umayyad supporters and gave chance to the Abbasids to rise to power.
6. The Abbasids were well organized as opposed to the people they were fighting – their enemies – the Umayyads. Such brilliant element of organization among other factors helped the Abbasids to rise to power.
7. The Abbasids also got help from the Yemenites, Shiites and Khurasanians to fight and get rid of the Umayyads. The Abbasid allies helped by fuelling rivalry between the Umayyads and the Arabs of Hijaz. The Umayyads were thus defeated and the Abbasids exploited this power vacuum to rise to power.
8. The wide spread propaganda carried out by the Abbasids helped them to take over the throne from the Umayyads and to establish the Abbasid Dynasty. Basing in Iraq, the Abbasids sent missionaries to spread propaganda of a chosen man from the house of the Prophet with close connection to Ali. This won the Abbasids support of the Shiites and Khurasanians, giving way for the rise of the Abbasids to power.
9. The accommodative nature of the Abbasids was also an important factor that helped them rise to power. The Abbasids attracted and accommodated many people from different walks of life that helped them build a formidable force. This force fought and defeated the Umayyads; and with the fall of Umayyads, the Abbasids rose to power.
10. The Abbasids also capitalized on the luxurious living and immorality of the Umayyads to rise to power. The Abbasids promised to come up with a fundamental change that won them support of the masses; much to the disadvantage of the Umayyads.
11. The Abbasids, in their campaigns, proved to be tolerant to other people; like they never mistreated the Christians – granting them freedom of worship and allowing them to co-exist with them. The Christians, in turn, gave Abbasids full support that helped them defeat the Umayyads.
12. The presence of the Shiite or the pro-Ali feelings throughout the Umayyad Dynasty also helped the Abbasids to rise to power. The death of Ali and his son Hussein increased enthusiasm in the Shiites that when the Abbasids movements started, the Shiites [Alids] quickly supported them to fail the Umayyads; hence the rise of the Abbasid Dynasty.

13. The oppression of the Shiites by the Umayyads leaders also led the rise of the Abbasid Dynasty. With the oppression, the Shiites started looking for an opportune moment to get rid of the Umayyads. They, therefore, supported the Abbasids in their campaign to unseat the Umayyads.
14. The succession disputes which brought about divisionism among the Umayyad clan also favoured the rise of the Abbasid Dynasty. The succession disputes brought about bitter conflicts between Banu Harb and Abu Al-As families, both belonging to the Umayyad clan. With such conflicts, the Umayyad Dynasty could not live longer; since they were quickly weakened by their enemies – the Abbasids.
15. The weakness among the later Umayyad leaders also contributed to the rise of the Abbasids Dynasty. Though the first Umayyads caliphs were powerful; they were betrayed by the last caliphs who could not control the Dynasty effectively, leading to creation of power vacuum. The Abbasids then exploited this power vacuum to rise to power.
16. The expansiveness of the Umayyad Dynasty under weak caliphs was yet another factor for the decline of the Abbasid Dynasty. The caliphs who came after Umar II were so weak and unbothered that they failed to rule over such a vast Empire. The Abbasids exploited this to rise to power.
17. The Umayyads lacked a strong army to fight against the Abbasid Movement. The army that existed at the time of the Abbasid attack was not well motivated and would at times spend years without salaries. It was not surprising that when the Abbasids declared the revolt, there wasn't strong army to defend the Umayyads. Thus, the Abbasids exploited this to rise to power.
18. Neglect of the army by some Umayyad Caliphs also led to the collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty. The army lost morale to fight for the Umayyads. They also had very little sympathy to the dynasty in that the soldiers never hesitated to side with the Abbasids to fight the Umayyads, who gave up in favour of the Abbasids.
19. The Umayyad Caliphs had outlived their usefulness creating a leadership vacuum. The Umayyad Caliphs had abandoned their noble work of protecting and promoting Islam; rather they had turned to worldly affairs. The concerned Muslims felt that leadership should be extended to people of lineage of the Prophet (Ahal ul-Bait). This gave a chance to the Abbasids, who were related to the Prophet to rise to power.
20. The existence of clan and tribal conflicts during the Umayyad period also accounts for the rise of the Abbasids to power. For instance, the struggle for supremacy between the Mudarites and Hymarites surfaced during the Umayyad rule. These conflicts were instigated by the Umayyads supporting one group against the other. In turn, the hated group sided with the Abbasids to fight the Umayyads as a way of liberation and retaliation.

21. Mismanagement of the state treasury led to bankruptcy of the Umayyad Dynasty. This was attributed to the poor administration of the last Umayyad Caliphs who were extravagant and corrupt. This rendered the Caliphs unpopular and their decline was fully exploited by the Abbasids to rise to power.

DISTINGUISHED ABBASID CALIPHS

In all, the Abbasid Dynasty had over thirty-seven (37) Caliphs though very few played a significant role in the history of the Abbasids as well as contributing to the development of Islam.

ABU ABBAS AL-SAFFAH (750 -753 AD)

Question: In their campaign to consolidate power, the Abbasids used all the available tactics and strategies both sound and unsound. Discuss the tactics and strategies used by Abu Abbas Al-Saffah to consolidate his position

Abu Abbas al-Saffah was the son of Muhammad bin Ali, son of Ali bin Abdullah, son of Abdallah bin Abbas, son of Abbas, uncle of Prophet Muhammad.

Abu Abbas was installed as Caliph in Kufah in 750AD after the death of his cousin Ibrahim bin Muhammad. After his installation to the caliphate, he fought and defeated the last Umayyad Caliph Mar'wan II; thus closing the Umayyad Chapter and, therefore, becoming the first Abbasid Caliph and founder of the Abbasid Dynasty that lasted from 750 to 1258 AD.

Abu Abbas' reign lasted for a period of four year; that is, between 750AD to 753

AD, during which he used a number of tactics and strategies to consolidate himself in power; these included the following:-

1. On assuming power and office, Abu Abbas openly declared himself as one belonging to the house of the Prophet; claiming that his great grandfather, Abbas; was an uncle to Prophet Muhammad. He further claimed that he was Al-Mahd (The Divine Saviour). This earned him support of the Abbasids and other Muslims.
2. In the drive to consolidate his position, also Abu Abbas embarked on the policy of eliminating Umayyads up to the last man. He sent out agents and spies to carry out a hunt of the Umayyads in his state.
3. In another move, under the pretext of making friendship with the Umayyads, one of Abu Abbas governors in Syria, Abdallah bin Ali invited over eighty Umayyad Princes for a dinner. Amidst their dinner, Abu Abbas ordered his generals to kill the Umayyad princes. The commanders beheaded the guests save Abdul Rahman who managed to escape through the window and ran to Spain where he established a new Umayyad Dynasty.
4. After this brutal and mass assassination of the Umayyad Princes, the Caliph turned his anger and hatred to anything to do with the Umayyads and every element opposed to the caliph and the Abbasid Dynasty. This helped to reduce on the number of Abbasid enemies.

5. Abu Abbas created fear in his subject so that he could reduce on opposition. He used merciless and brutal measures to the extent of not even sparing the tombs of the dead Umayyads Caliphs. He exhumed the remains and punished them. Such hostility on his opponents earned him the title Al-Saffah (the blood shedder).
6. Pushed by hatred, Abu Abbas created the post of the executioner. This was to implement the policy of eliminating opponents and suppressing revolts by killing those people suspected to be against him.
7. Abu Abbas used to portray himself with a picture of a holy man. He used to put on a very large cloth similar to that of the Prophet on Fridays and he would keep several learned men around his court. This he did in order to impress those people who were trying to revolt in Kufah, a place where he was installed as Caliph.
8. Abu Abbas also put in place several measures to persuade people that the Abbasids were the true representatives of the Prophet's house. For example he warned the people that in case leadership slipped off their hands, the world would go disorderly.
9. Abu Abbas also introduced laws or dogmas in Islam announcing the Abbasids as divine and people who derived their authority from God; hence no one was supposed to oppose or challenge them.
10. Abu Abbas carried out reconstruction as he improved on the roads, which linked Mecca and Iraq. This reform helped him to consolidate his position as he was able to effectively monitor his state.

ABU JAFFAR AL-MANSOOR (754-775) AD)

Question: Although Abu Jaffar Al-Mansoor did a lot for the development of the Abbasid Dynasty, his reign was not a bed of roses. Discuss.

Abu Jaffar Al-Mansoor was a son of Muhammad bin Ali, son of Ali bin Abdallah, son of Abdallah bin Abbas, son of Abbas, uncle of the Prophet. He became a caliph of the Abbasid Dynasty after the death of his nephew Abu Abbas Al-Saffah in 132AH (753AD).

Abu Jaffar had participated in and played a big role in overthrowing the Umayyads. He was also very active in administration throughout Al-Saffah's reign; that why he was nominated to succeed him.

Abu Jaffar was called the real founder of the Abbasid Dynasty because he laid a foundation stone for the Dynasty and all the succeeding Caliphs followed his line of Governance and victories that earned him the nickname Al-Mansoor.

However, no sooner had he assumed office as the Caliph of the Abbasid Caliphate than he was confronted with a number of problems that made his reign not easy going (not a bed of

roses). He tried his level best to solve the problems which again made him the real founder of the Abbasid Caliphate.

1. Abu Jaffar faced a problem of his uncle Abdallah bin Ali, who during the struggle against the Umayyads had played vital role in their defeat. He had also worked hard in the establishment of the Abbasid rule; for instance, it was Abdallah bin Ali that commanded the Abbasid forces that defeated the last Umayyad caliph Mar'wan II.

Abdallah bin Ali had thought that he would be the next Caliph when Al-Saffah died. He was disappointed when instead Abu Jaffar was nominated for the caliph office, hence Ibn Ali's opposition. Al-Mansoor opted to fight him in a number of battles. Abdallah bin Ali was captured after being defeated. He was imprisoned where he died after seven years in prison.

2. There was a problem of Abu Muslim, who had also wanted to be a Caliph. Abu Muslim was gathering supporting from the Persians and was planning to overthrow the caliphate of Abu Jaffar. Abu Jaffar sent him a force that surrounded and killed him. The death of Abu Muslim marked the end of this opposition.
3. Abu Jaffar also faced a problem of the revolts of the Alids (Shiites). The Abbasids had hid under the banner of fighting for the Shiites in their struggle against the Umayyads. It appeared that with the fall of the Umayyads, power would be passed over to the Shiites. To their dismay, the Abbasids took over power. This annoyed the Shiites (Alids) who openly opposed Abu Jaffar's reign in a campaign led by Muhammad Al-Nafsi Al-Zakiyyah (Muhammad - The pure Soul).

The Shiite revolt and threat was suppressed and came to an end when Muhammad was captured and killed in the year 762AD.

4. There was also a problem of the Iranians, who had revolted against Abu Jaffar's reign following the death of Abu Muslim. The Iranians were demanding for the punishment to those who had killed Abu Muslim. Abu Jaffar reacted by fighting; in fact he defeated in addition to killing those who were leading the revolt. This brought the revolt to an end.
5. There was the emergence of a Persian extremist sect called Rawandiyah. This sect claimed that the Abbasid Caliphs were not divine as they had claimed and therefore disassociated them from God's guidance. This annoyed Abu Jaffar, who reacted by killing them discriminately.
6. There was a revolt led by Ibrahim bin Ali of Basra. Ibrahim had revolted in revenge of Muhammad Al-Nafsi Al-Zakiyyah's death. Ibrahim had taken control of Basrah but he proved to be very slow in his actions that he was ambushed and killed by Al-Mansoor's fighters in 763AD.

Despite the problems he faced, Abu Jaffar, after solving the problems, embarked on laying a foundation for his government and making many reforms, which were adopted by other Abbasid caliphs. For instance:

1. He put up an efficient administrative structure with proper division of labour, like he instituted a post and offices of the prime ministers, ministers, governors and the like. This greatly helped him and the Abbasid caliphate in general to consolidate themselves.
2. He developed a well organised political system in which he tried to improve relationship with foreigners. He saw it necessary since it was one of the reasons which led to weakness that led to the collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty.
3. Abu Jaffar tried very much to create good relationship with his subjects. This won him support and praise of his subject and was better than the Umayyads time, which had a belief that they derived authority from God and not people.
4. Abu Jaffar also brought the Abbasids to exercise supreme power and control of the Islamic state taking a lot of pride that they were members of the Prophet Muhammad's' house (Ahal-ul Bait).
5. Abu Jaffar also tried to maintain the Caliphate as a theocratic Dynasty in which supreme power was in hands of the theologians; and he also made people to believe in the Abbasid political and religious leadership.
6. As a way of safeguarding his dynasty, Abu Jaffar paid too much attention to the army which consisted of many Persian soldiers. The army was nicely paid compared to other workers in order to ensure state security.
7. Al-Mansoor founded the city of Baghdad which he also made the capital of the Abbasids. The capital was later transferred to Mecca, then turning Baghdad into a cultural and commercial centre.
8. Abu Jaffar also expanded the Muslim Empire by conquering some parts of the Roman Byzantine Empire. He captured some important fortresses of Malt'ya, Massish and Tabaristan and added them to the Muslim Empire.
9. Abu Jaffar made the position of Caliph in the Abbasid Dynasty look absolute and supreme; in that they were never questioned by their subjects. This he did by claiming that the Abbasid leaders derive authority from God.
10. Al-Mansoor tried to borrow the idea of council of theocratic state where authority was laid in the hands of the learned men in Islamic law. However this idea was at times abandoned by the subsequent caliphs due to their dictatorial tendencies.
11. Al-Mansoor made himself a religious leader (Imam) at the same time he had absolute political power. He was therefore both a political and religious leader.

12. Abu Jaffar Al-Mansoor adopted a policy of employing people on merit, thus, so many non-Muslims found their way to important positions in the caliphate.
13. Al-Mansoor was tolerant and this was seen when he allowed freedom worship to the Christians; in the same way, Arabs were no longer the absolute owners of the key positions. Therefore, this period witnessed a number of Persians replacing Arabs.
14. He ordered for the translation of many works from Greek and Hindu – like books of Astronomy and mathematics into Arabic. Therefore his period was called the period of intellectual awakening.
15. In the bid to consolidate his position, Al-Mansoor followed Abdul Rahman who had escaped to Spain and had started the Umayyad Caliphate there. Al-Mansoor sent troops under the command of Ibn Mugith.

Unfortunately, Abdul Rahman defeated Al-Mansoor's army, killed Ibn Mugith and cut off his head, which was wrapped in a cloth, attached a letter to it and sent to Al-Mansoor as a present. When Al-Mansoor opened the letter, he was so astonished to see his commander's head that he collapsed and died there and then.

MUHAMMAD (AL-MAHD) BIN AL- MANSOOR (775- 785AD)

Question: Assess the aspects that made Muhammad Al-Muhammad to be an outstanding ruler of the Abbasid Dynasty.

Muhammad Al-Mohammad was a son of Abu Jaffar Al-Mansoor, who succeeded his father after double crossing Isa bin Musa whom Abbas Al-Saffah has chosen as the successor of Al-Mansoor. His real name was Muhammad bin Al-Mansoor.

He ruled the Abbasid Dynasty for ten years; that is, between 775- 785 AD. After assuming office as caliph, he adopted a more peaceful and liberal policy unlike his predecessors who handled their subjects with an iron hand. He therefore came to be known as Al-Mahd or the Divine Saviour.

Al-Mahd did a lot to the development of the Abbasid Dynasty, whereby, a soon as he took over the throne he introduced a number of reforms that made him outstanding:-

1. Muhammad Al-Mahd's reign was considered to be a period of transition from violence, harshness and oppression which characterized the leadership of the Abbasid Caliphs to the reign of moderate leadership, lenience and accommodative as Al-Mahd's reign was.
2. Al-Mahdi was kind, generous helpful and a reknown friend of the poor and the needy. He, therefore, used the riches left by his father as charity to the poor and the needy. It was also said that on one of his pilgrimage, he gave out three million dinars to the poor of Hijaz as charity.
3. He set free all prisoners except those who had committed grave and dangerous sins. For instance, he released some members of Ali's family who had been imprisoned for supporting the Shiites, and those that were released were given substantial pay.
4. Al-Mahd restored the lost glory of the Holy cities Mecca and Medinah and the ancient privileges that had been taken away by his father Abu Jaffar. He also allowed those cities to receive supplies from other places of the Empire.
5. He gave back to the descendants of the Prophet their property which was given to them by the four Orthodox caliphs, unfortunately, the property had been withdrawn and taken away by Al-Mansoor.
6. Al- Mahd built spacious houses with water reservoirs and wells along the routes to Mecca throughout the Islamic Empire. This was intended to ensure tight security as well as encouraging people to perform pilgrimage. These routes to Mecca were given guards to protect pilgrims and travelers.

7. Al-Mahd also established a postal system covering a wider area between Mecca and Medinah and then a Yemen. This improved the flow of important information from different Muslim cities.
8. Al-Mahd created a big spying network and office of intelligence. This helped him govern the state because his men kept him and the governors with all the happenings in the state. It also enabled him to get information about the security in the Empire.
9. To administer justice, Al-Mahd started and established courts of law to try criminals; and the caliph himself was the chief judge using the Qur'an and Hadith as the sources of law.
10. Muhammad Al-Mahd extended good treatment to the family of Mar'wan II though they had tried to stage a rebellion in Syria. After defeating them, the widow of Mar'wan II was given a house where she was treated with kindness and honour.
11. He was also mindful about the welfare of the relatives of his predecessors and the past kings not only in the Abbasid Dynasty but also in the Umayyad Dynasty. This was evidenced when he provided a house and other necessities of life to the widow and orphans of Caliph Mar'wan II, the last king of the Umayyad Dynasty.
12. Al-Mahd made Baghdad an international trade, poetry, music philosophy and literature centre. He also improved on the social and economic infrastructure of the city the status Baghdad has managed to keep to date.
13. Al-Mahd also succeeded in fighting against false prophets. During his reign, Hisham bin Haqam of Khurasan had declared himself a valid prophet. He had, in fact, misled many people and Al-Mahd responded by poisoning all Hisham's followers. Hisham himself committed suicide.
14. During Al-Mahd's reign, also a new sect led by Ibn Quddus cropped up with mis-teachings of Islam and Zoroastrian. This sect was called Zindiqs. Al- Mahd hunted and killed the followers this sect so thoroughly that the sect itself was destroyed.
15. Al- Mahd's gave a lot of money as charity, especially to the people of Hijaz who had been sidelined for so long because of their rebellious attitude and the support they gave to the enemies of the Umayyads which had made the people of Hijaz to live in abject poverty
16. Al-Mahd established a very strong army which was nicely paid than other state workers', highly organized and well motivated. This army was instituted to help in defense and to ensure security of the Muslim Empire
17. Al-Mahd ordered for the re-construction and beautification of the Prophet's Mosque at Medina. This mosque had been neglected and also left in a sorry state by the

Umayyad Caliphate. This had followed the rebellions the people of Medina staged against the Umayyad rule.

18. Al-Mahd attracted professionals, scholars, commercialists, researchers, thinkers and many other personnel to the city of Baghdad. All these helped to build Baghdad city as a center of world culture and commerce.
19. He compensated the discharged officers by paying them their pensions or by repaying them in money terms the property that had been confiscated from them. This he did not only to officers in his reign but also to those who had served in the reigns of his predecessors.
20. Al-Mahd fought and defeated the Roman soldiers under Empress Irene, an ambitious lady, who ordered over 90,000 soldiers to attack Muslims in Asia Minor. After the defeat, Empress Irene was sued for peace violation and was made to pay 90,000 Dinars annually as tribute

However, after consolidating his position, Muhammad Al-Mahd never lived to enjoy his sweat as his caliphate ended prematurely when he died after a heavy fall from his camel in 785AD. However, his ten years of administration were very vital to the Abbasid rule.

HAROUN AL-RASHID [787-809 AD]

Question: Discuss the view that the reign of Haroun Al-Rashid marked the climax [Golden Age] of the Abbasid Dynasty.

Haroun Al-Rashid became the caliph of the Abbasid Dynasty after the death of his brother Musa Al-Hadi. Muhammad Al-Mahd had made a will to the effect that Musa Al-Hadi and Haroun Al-Rashid succeed him one after the other respectively. Therefore, with the death of Musa Al-Hadi in 787AD, Haroun Al-Rashid became the caliph. His reign lasted for twenty-two [22] years.

Haroun Al-Rashid's reign was considered the Golden Age of the Abbasid Dynasty not only because Al-Rashid was very tolerant and a talented commander of all the Abbasid Caliphs but also because of the very many positive changes that took place and also because of a number of reforms which were instituted during his reign:

1. During Al-Rashid's reign, the city of Baghdad developed into an important city of trade and learning. Under this reform, business centers came up; schools and universities were set up as well as libraries of great books.
2. For effective administration, Caliph Al-Rashid and his ministers used to move around the Empire to assess the conditions of their subjects, and those who were found to have problems were helped. This enabled his subjects to live in peace.

3. Al-Rashid made the Abbasid Dynasty famous and popular because of his political programmes and good relationship with other people especially the Europeans; for example, he used to exchange gifts with the king of France.
4. Because of his sound and efficient administration, Al-Rashid was regarded by the Europeans to have been the best Abbasid Caliph because of his eloquence, generosity and diplomacy in his dealings and activities.
5. Al-Rashid was also a pious man, who always tried his level best to encourage morals among his people. It is said that Al-Rashid used to perform pilgrimage every year.
6. He helped a lot in the development of the science of Islam. For instance, he helped financially those who participated in the development of Hadith Literature and the Tafsir of the Qur'an.
7. He introduced the system of studying and discussing Islamic principles and laws especially as taught by the Qur'an and Hadith. For instance, the different scholars in Islamic law were given the opportunity to discuss law.
8. Al-Rashid built great palaces in important cities of the Abbasid state. During his reign, therefore, many cities reached a high state of development and prosperity.
9. During Al-Rashid's reign, also many buildings, roads and bridges connecting different towns were constructed. With this kind of reform, sources of revenue for the state also increased.
10. Al-Rashid also chose a number of upright and powerful judges or Kadhis to administer justice. This development helped a lot in curbing criminal activities in the state.
11. Like Al-Mahdi, Al-Rashid fully supported the department of translation which was introduced by Abu Jaffar Al-Mansoor. A lot of works from Persia, Greek and French were translated into Arabic by his translators; among whom included Yahyah bin Muawiyah who was prominent.
12. Al-Rashid was also known for his character of tolerance. He proved to be the most peaceful and tolerant of all Abbasid Caliphs. For instance, he allowed his subjects freedom of speech. This enabled him to know what people thought of his rule so as for him to act accordingly.
13. Under his measure of tolerance, all people from different walks of life related well with others irrespective of their religion, colour or origin for instance, Christians, Jews and other people related well with Muslims.
14. During his reign, also Al-Rashid created a peaceful environment that was enjoyed by everybody except his enemies.

15. Al-Rashid set up a very big, well-equipped and highly paid army consisting of Muslims, non-Muslims, Arabs and Persians. With this army, the Empire was kept secure.
16. He tried to create unity by trying to develop a uniform culture for different people that occupied his Empire. However, he did this with a lot of care not to have one group of people look to be above the others.
17. Al-Rashid encouraged Ulamas or learned members of the Muslim community to operate freely in his empire. The Ulamas then organized themselves in loose fraternities which later became the nuclei for the legal schools of thought.
18. Al- Rashid also established a very strong police force and army sectors which were charged with keeping and maintaining law and peace, and security respectively.

PROBLEMS HAROUN AL-RASHID FACED.

Question: Explain the problems Haroun Al-Rashid faced during his reign.

Although Haroun Al-Rashid's reign was considered the Golden Age of the Abbasids, it was on the other hand not easy going for him; for he faced a number of problems:

During the reign of Muhammad Al-Mahd, the Romans under Empress Irene attacked the Abbasid Empire from Asia Minor; but they were defeated and Irene was sued for peace violation. She was made to pay 90,000 Dinars annually as tribute.

Following the death of Al-Mahd and Irene, the Romans, led by Irene's successor Nicephorus, refused to honour the treaty Irene had signed with Al-Mahd. Nicephorus went ahead to write a letter to Caliph Al-Rashid demanding for a refund of the money the Romans had paid to the Abbasids.

Caliph Haroun Al-Rashid responded by replying to Nicephorous through a strong worded letter, of which part read as:-

"In the Name of Allah; the Compassionate; the merciful.

From Haroun, the commander of the Believers to Nicephorus, the dog of the Romans. Surely I have read your letter, O son of the infidel... .. it shall be your eyes to see and your ears to hear as for the answer

Assalam."

In reaction, Haroun sent an army that launched a series of expeditions against the Romans. Many major towns of the Romans were captured until the Roman Emperor Nicephorous called for peace.

An agreement was signed in which Emperor Nicephorus accepted to pay much more than the earlier tribute. The Caliph also imposed a tax on the Emperor and on each member of his family.

Another problem was the revolt staged by the Shiites in 786 AD against Caliph Al-Rashid. This revolt was led by Yahya bin Abdallah. This was in reaction to the earlier betrayal by the Abbasids for fooling the Shiites in to supporting them.

In reaction, Al-Rashid sent an army led by General Jaffar Al-Bamaki. Yahya was captured and killed. However, the death of Yahya did not end the revolt as his son Idris escaped to North Africa in the Maghrib region, where he established a dynasty called Idrisid Dynasty.

However, the Dynasty did not last for more than two years as Idris, its founder, was pursued and poisoned to death on orders of Caliph Al-Rashid.

The Kharijites of Mongul and Jazir led by Al-Walid bin Sharif Al-Ashari also rebelled against Al-Rashid in 175AH. They were joined by the people of Armenia and Azhabeyjan.

Haroun Al Rashid responded to this rebellion by sending an army led by Yazid bin Majid, who fought and crushed the rebellion. Al-Walid himself was captured and killed during the fight.

There was also another revolt in Khurasan, where people were discontented with the poor administration of the Governor Ali bin Isah. Haroun Al-Rashid sent Musa bin Hayahay who fought and suppressed this revolt.

There was also a problem of the Mudarities and Hymarites who were struggling for supremacy in Syria and wanted to separate from the caliphate. Haroun Al-Rashid fought them in a number of battles; and by his death in 809 AH, he had suppressed them.

AL- MA'AMUM BIN AL- RASHID

Question: Assess the contribution of Al-Ma'amum bin Al-Rashid to the development of the Abbasid Dynasty and the progress of Islam.

Before the death of Haroun Al-Rashid, he had nominated his two sons Al-Amin and Al-Ma'amum to succeed him; one after the other respectively. Al- Rashid even wrote a document of will to this effect.

However, this move by Al-Rashid brought about problems and misunderstandings among the two cousin-brothers; in that, as soon as Al-Amin took over power, he was seriously opposed by his cousin Al-Ma'amum.

Al-Amin, then, developed a negative attitude towards Al-Ma'amun; which attitude brought about conflicts among the people of Khurasan and other Muslim provinces. This was because Al-Amin's mother was an Arab and Al-Ma'amun's mother was a Persian.

In the conflicts that ensued, Al-Amin got support from the Arabs while Al-Ma'amun was backed by the Persians. People, especially the non-Arabs, started revolting against Al-Amin, who reacted by fighting them.

Al-Ma'amun's forces were, however, stronger and in the fighting, Al-Amin was defeated. During these fights, also, Al-Amin was killed in 198AH (819AD). Following the death of Al-Amin, his cousin brother Al-Ma'amun automatically became the caliph.

Al-Ma'amun ruled the Abbasid Dynasty for a period of 20 years; though he spends his first six years studying philosophy and cultural studies; during which he left Fazl Al-Shah to administer the Empire.

Al-Ma'amun took over full administration of the Dynasty for fourteen years, during which he made the following contribution to the Abbasid Dynasty in general and Islam in particular.

1. Al-Ma'amun used his strong generals to suppress all the revolts that would have weakened the Muslim Abbasid Dynasty. He then built strong military barracks in different areas in order to suppress any further uprisings.
2. Al-Ma'amun formed several education institutions and he filled them with learned men and a variety of books.
3. Al-Ma'amun also encouraged intellectuals to carry out research in various fields of Arts and sciences.
4. He went further to build a house of knowledge (Dar Al-Hikmah) in Baghdad in which scholars worked in various fields.
5. He made reforms on taxation policy on the land of Iraq whereby a fifth (1/5) of the crops harvested was taken in kind by the Caliph. This helped to widen the tax base of the Empire.
6. Al-Ma'amun also made reforms in the judicial system of the Empire, where he set up a new system in courts of law in which investigations on cases were first properly carried out before cases were tried.
7. Al-Ma'amun greatly promoted the Mutazilite teachings because he was very much impressed by their approach on issues and he respected them for reasoning. He also influenced his subjects to love them.

8. Al- Ma'amum also made the Mutazilites to preach in mosques and to lecture in colleges where they changed the characters of many youths. He also made the Mutazilites his chief consultants.
9. However, Al-Ma'amum persecuted those who opposed the Mutazilite teachings. For instance, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal was persecuted when he opposed the Mutazilites on the issue of the createdness of the Qur'an.
10. Al-Ma'amum devoted himself to better administration of the Islamic Empire by exercising fair justice, tolerance and freedom of speech.
11. Ma'amum encouraged and invited many Muslim scholars, writers, philosophers and many other elites to the dynasty. These were used to translate many works from other languages to Arabic.
12. Al-Ma'amum contributed a lot to cultural progress of the Empire. Under this reform, Muslim culture, Arabic culture and language and art and design were all developed.
13. Great discoveries were also made during Al-Ma'amum's reign in different fields of study. Works in Geography, Astronomy, Medicine and many other were compiled.
14. Al-Ma'amum made a great contribution and achievements in the interpretation and study of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith. This contribution provided a format upon which the schools of law based their doctrines.
15. It was during Al-Ma'amun's reign, also that the Sunni Schools of Law gained momentum. The most notable of the Schools of law that came to lime-light during this reign were four and included the Hanafi, Malik, Shafii and Hanbal schools of Law.
16. Al-Ma'amum sent Muslim scholars to others areas in the east and was of the Empire to acquire more knowledge. At the same time, he attracted other scholars from Greek and Roman Empires to the Arab World.
17. Al-Ma'amum contributed to the cause of Islam by constructing several mosques, schools, libraries and translation centres within the Islamic Empire. This reform helped to foster intellectual and spiritual awareness.
18. Al-Ma'amum helped to restore order in Egypt and Syria in that he put off the Kharijite rebellions, crashed the Byzantine attacks and suppressed the Roman incursions into the Empire. All these had been a threat to Islam.
19. Al-Ma'amum also fostered unity among the Abbasids, Arabs and non-Arabs. He managed to achieve this unity by emphasizing equality of the Arabs and non- Arabs and at the same time with the Abbasids.

20. Al-Ma'amun's was a pious Muslim, who helped in the spread of Islam to far and wide; he encouraged very many people to convert to Islam. This expanded the Islamic Empire.
21. Al-Ma'amun promoted appointment of leaders on merit. To him, all people in the empire qualified for public offices. He emphasized merit and ability as qualification for getting recognition for state services.
22. Al-Ma'amun established a fair justice system in which both Muslims and non-Muslims were treated fairly without discrimination.
23. Under a measure of tolerance, Al-Ma'amun did not tolerate any distinction based on sex, belief, race or creed. To him, there was no difference between a Muslim and a non-Muslim.

GENERAL LIFE DURING THE ABBASID RULE

THE POLITICAL ORGANISATION

Question: Examine the political organization of the Abbasids between 750- 1258AD.

The Abbasid Dynasty started in 750AD after the collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty and lasted up to 1258AD when it also finally collapsed after 508 years in existence.

During the 500 years of their existence, the Abbasids invested very much in various fields and a close look and analysis of their social, economic, political and spiritual organization tell more about their lives. Politically:-

1. On assuming power after the collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty, the Abbasids transferred the Muslim capital from Damascus to Baghdad, where it was until the reign of Al-Muttasim when it was transferred to Samara.
2. The Abbasids maintained a hereditary form of governance, which was started by the Umayyads, in which the Caliph nominated a brother or a son to the throne.
3. The Abbasids used absolute monarchism, where the Caliph was the head of the state, religious head, commander of the army and the chief judge.
4. Below the caliph stood a number of ministers and they were of two categories; those chosen with limited powers and those with too much power. In this respect, the provincial leaders became so much important that, in the last stages of the Abbasid rule, the provincial posts became hereditary.
5. The Abbasids created a ministry of executioner and the person in charge of this ministry was to carry out death penalty imposed by the court. This was done to liquidate the threat of the Umayyads.

6. The Abbasids tried to put up a consultative council but it never operated as consultation was made to people who were royal to them and they never entertained any criticism.
7. The Empire was divided into several provinces, each governed by an Amir or governor appointed by the caliph. In the first years, the Amir's office was not hereditary and was liable to transfer or dismissal.
8. The Abbasid Empire had judges posted to all cities and had deputies who were appointed, at first by the Amir and later by the chief judge. The judges were supposed to be fair in their judgment.
9. The Abbasids put a yardstick for one to qualify as a judge; that is; judges were drawn from the Muslim community; and if one had to be appointed, he had to be a male adult, in full possession of his mental faculties as well as being versed with the Qur'an and Hadith.
10. The Abbasids judicial system had to do with Muslims only. All non- Muslims were supposed to be judged by laws drawn from their religious jurisdiction and were supposed to be tried by their religious heads. This was done to harmonize the state.
11. There existed various departments in the administration of the state; like the Executive Board, Department of Administrative matters, finance, that in charge of crown property, Department of Judiciary and many others.
12. The Abbasids had a wonderful standing army in their initial stages of their governance, but lost its prominence caused by a number of factors; one of which was that it was neglected to a stage of not being regularly paid.
13. The Abbasid army was divided into two sections; that is, regular army and the volunteer force. The regular army consisted of the Caliph's bodyguards and was highly paid. Another organ was that of the volunteers recruited from the common men and were paid only when they were in the battlefield.
14. The Army was armed with bows, arrows, swords and machetes; and was always escorted to the battle fields by engineers, cart-ambulances and a number of reserve horses.
15. The army was divided into battalions or divisions as according to where they were stationed and nationality. For instance, there was the Northern Arabia division of the Mudarites, the Khurasan division, African division and the Turkish division.
16. Administratively, the Abbasids used two titles; that is, Caliph and Amir. The office of the Caliph was hereditary where the Caliph nominated either his son or brother or both to succeed him. The Amir was the governors, who at first were appointed on merit but later became hereditary.

17. The Abbasid Caliphs allowed their governors so much influence and this brought in corruption and other forms of injustices that characterized the Abbasid governance.
18. The Abbasid rule was so much dominated by influence of foreign rulers in the affairs of the Islamic State. For instance, the Caliph bodyguard comprised mainly of the Persians and the army was dominated by the Turkish who were originally slaves.
19. The Abbasids put up an efficient administrative structure with proper division of labour, for instance posts like that of the Prime Minister, Ministers, governors, revenue collectors and many others were instituted. This greatly helped the Abbasids to consolidate themselves in power.
20. The Abbasids had an administrative hierarchy in which the top most position was occupied by the Caliph. The caliph had absolute powers and the rest of the subjects were all answerable to him.

ECONOMIC ORGANISATION

1. The Abbasid society was divided into two socio-economic status; the highest comprised of the high income earners like the aristocrats, learned men, merchants and professionals. Then, the low income earners like the farmers and herdsman occupied the low socio-economic class.
2. The revenue of the state came mainly from taxes; namely Jizyah which was mainly paid by non-Muslims living in the Muslim state, and tributes from Muslim enemies. However, the most important of all taxes was the collection of Zakat from Muslims, besides, all people had to pay land tax and income Tax.
3. The revenue collected partly went to the state treasury which became a private property of the caliphs and part of it was given to provincial governors.
4. The Abbasids carried out reconstruction and improvement of the roads which linked Mecca and Iraq; then Iraq and other areas of the Empire. This helped in the monitoring of the Islamic state.
5. During the Abbasid rule, spacious houses with wells and water reservoirs were built along roads throughout the Islamic Empire. This encouraged people to move with ease throughout the Empire.
6. During the Abbasid rule, also, Baghdad city developed into an important city of trade and learning. Business centres, therefore, came up which, made many people to pour into Baghdad with a lot of money. This improved people's standards of living.
7. There was development of the manufacturing industry. Under this reform, industries for making cushion covers, furniture, kitchen utensils and papers were set up.

8. Taxation also formed another source of revenue. This was done by the Empire taxing those merchants who passed with their goods through the Muslim Empire.
9. Each province within the Abbasid Empire catered for its own expenditure and in case of any surplus, it could be sent to the central treasury controlled by the Caliph himself.
10. During the Abbasid rule, there was a national economic decay due to the luxurious living of some Caliphs, over taxation of the subjects, non-payment of the army and poverty of the many subjects.
11. Trade was the major economic activity. At the onset of the empire, the Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians were the early merchants; though later the Arabs joined in. The major items of Trade included silk, sugar, cotton, dates, among others.
12. Revenue collection was assigned to a special officer who was directly answerable to the caliph for easy monitoring of state treasury.
13. The Abbasids had a department of finance auditing to ensure proper income and expenditure and to avoid unnecessary losses. However, this reform worked during the Golden period.

SOCIAL LIFE

1. During the early days of their rule, the Abbasids emphasized equality of the Arab and non-Arab Muslims though the system failed with time. The Arabs then became socially superior; as it was during the time of the Umayyads.
2. The Empire experienced social stratification where the royal family occupied the top most class, followed by the high court officers; then came the Arab Muslims, the non-Arab Muslims. The members of other faiths; slaves and people from other territories occupied the lowest social class.
3. Although slaves and members of others faiths occupied the lowest social class, they had formidable impact on the caliph and other masters who used them as singers, dancers, soldiers and concubines.
4. At first, women enjoyed too much freedom until later when strict seclusion and separation of women from males started especially towards the end of the Abbasid rule.
5. During the Abbasid rule, their social system was characterized by too much concubinage, especially by caliphs, Governors and merchants. Concubinage made the position of women in the Empire to sink to the lowest of the levels.

6. The Abbasid social life was also characterized with a lot of luxury and extravagancy stretching right from the caliphs to provincial governors. They entertained many concubines in their palaces and were treated to various forms of entertainment.
7. Most Abbasid Caliphs were known of their level of tolerance; in that they adopted the policy of employing people of merit. Thus, so many non Muslims found their way to important positions and their relationship with Muslims was good.
8. Some Abbasid Caliphs, like Muhammad Al-Mahd, were known for their kindness and generosity. For instance, Al-Mahd used the riches left by his father Al-Mansoor as charity to the poor and the needy.
9. During the Abbasid rule, there was no discrimination amongst the people of the Empire despite the social classes that existed in the Empire; unlike the case in the Umayyad rule. Muslims related well with non-Muslims on one side; Arabs and non-Arabs while the Abbasids also related well with foreigners.
10. Men enjoyed putting on high peaked hats and outer mantles (Jubbab) with wide trousers, a shirt and a jacket. Women on the other hand, preferred to put on dome-shaped caps, a Hijab dress and a lot of makeup and ornaments.
11. During the Abbasid rule, women enjoyed the same social status as men; in fact, women could influence state affairs. For example, Al-Mahd's wife - Khaizunam - influenced many administrative decisions during Muhammad Al-Mahd's reign.
12. Wine drinking was also a common pastime activity of the Abbasid society. The Abbasids took wine in privacy and sometime in company of others. This made many people forget their religious obligations like prayers and fasting among others.

INTELLECTUAL ORGANISATION

1. During the Abbasid rule, buildings meant for scientific research emerged. For instance, Caliph Al-Ma'amun established Bait Ul-Hikma or House of Wisdom, a library with many books and a translation bureau.
2. Historical studies were undertaken; like people invested their time tracing the biography of the Prophet. For instance, Muhammad bin Ishaq published a book on Prophet's life in Medinah.
3. Tafsir, Hadith, Arabic grammar, poetry and other arts especially from outside the Arab world were worked upon.
4. The Abbasid rule was referred to as a period of intellectual awakening where many books and works in mathematics, medicine and astronomy were translated from Greek and Hindu into Arabic.

5. Baghdad city became a centre for world culture where music; poetry, philosophy and literature were developed. This, therefore, filled Baghdad with intellectuals like scholars, thinkers, researchers and many others.
6. A system of studying and discussing Islamic laws and Principles especially as taught by the Qur'an and Hadith was introduced during the Abbasid rule. Under this, the different scholars of law were given opportunity to discuss law.
7. The department of translation was introduced by Caliph Al- Mansoor and was fully supported by Caliph Haroun Al-Rashid; and among the prominent translators was Yahya bin Muawiyah.
8. The Abbasids encouraged learning by granting scholarships to students. For example, Al-Ma'amun sent Muslim scholars to the east and west outside the Empire to acquire knowledge.
9. During the Abbasid rule, several mosques, schools, libraries stocked with a variety of books and translation centres were set up within the Islamic Empire. These became centres for imparting knowledge.
10. Education in the Abbasid Dynasty was organized in a way that elementary (primary) school was an adjunct of the mosque, and children were taught how to write and reading from the Qur'an. Later children were taught Arabic Grammar and stories about the Prophet.
11. Pupils who excelled in the elementary schools were often rewarded by being paraded through the streets on camels while almonds were thrown at them.
12. The first institute for higher learning was the Nizamiyyah founded by Nizam Al-Mulk. It was the first real academy in Islam which made provisions for the physical needs of its students and became a model for later institutions of higher learning.
13. Adult education in the Abbasid Dynasty was not anywhere carried on in a systematic way although mosques in almost all Muslim townships and settlements served as important educational centres.
14. The Abbasids established a curriculum that centered upon the Qur'an as a reading text book. This reading from the Qur'an together with penmanship, the students were also taught Arabic grammar and stories about the Prophet.
15. During the Abbasid rule, young girls were welcome to all religious institutions for instructions in spiritual matters in the lower grades. However there was no special desire to guide girls farther along the path of knowledge when they grew up.
16. The Nizamiyyah was consecrated as a theological seminary. It was for the study of the Shafite and orthodox Ashari system. In it the Qur'an and old poetry formed the backbone of the study of humanities.

DOWN FALL OF THE ABBASID DYNASTY

Qn. Examine the factors that led to the collapse of the Abbasid Dynasty.

The Abbasid Dynasty was established in 750AD after the collapsed of the Umayyad. It lasted for 508 years until 1258AD when it finally collapsed. A combination of factors contributed to the downfall of this great empire among which many can be attributed to the Abbasids themselves and others were from other aspects:

1. The inability of the Abbasids to complete as well consolidating their initial conquests led to the collapse of the Abbasid Dynasty. Most of the conquered areas remained rebellious and would not be controlled by the Baghdad government. As a result territories continued to break away. The size and strength of the Dynasty were reduced; hence its collapse.
2. Another cause for the collapse of the Abbasid Dynasty was moral degeneration of some of the Abbasid Caliphs. Most Abbasid Caliphs were morally corrupt, who spent their time enjoying music and relating with concubines, all of which were against the moral teachings of Islam. This inspired opposition from the concerned masses that weakened the Empire.
3. The poor administration of the Abbasids also led the collapse of the Abbasid Dynasty. The Abbasids were exploitative and self aggrandizers, who instead of making attempts to improve people's lives, were concerned about their own welfare. Other similar cases took place at provincial levels. This also inspired opposition throughout the dynasty; thereby weakening it.
4. The poor administration of the Abbasids, also, did not ensure continuity of their dynasty. The rulers naturally alienated their subjects from their rule. As a result, the masses hated them and worked for their down fall.
5. The neglect of the military sector especially by the last caliphs also contributed to the collapse of the Abbasid Dynasty. The success and stability of the Abbasids had partly depended on their strong army; therefore, neglecting the army led to it losing morale to fight. When the enemies attacked the Empire, the army were in no mood to defend the Abbasids.
6. The Abbasids employed a poor economic policy where they imposed heavy taxes on the masses. This was especially done by provincial governors. Such heavy taxes discouraged people from working which affected the economic progress of the state.
7. The elevation of the Turkish by the Abbasids caliphs to higher positions in the dynasty administration also contributed to the downfall of the dynasty. The rise of

the Turkish influence angered the Arabs and the Persians who became disgusted with the Turkish command. The Arabs and Persians started opposing the Turkish which weakened the political set up of the Abbasid Dynasty

8. The Abbasid Dynasty had become too large to be manned by the last caliphs. The Dynasty stretched from Spain to the Far East in China. Therefore the last caliphs lacked the qualities of leadership to manage state affairs; hence the continuity of the caliphate became impossible.
9. The later caliphs of the Dynasty were either too weak or young to shoulder the burden of the Empire. The weak or young caliphs would not take firm stand in decision making. Thus, their authority was undermined, resulting in weakness of the Empire; and hence its collapse.
10. The Abbasid Dynasty also collapsed because of the succession disputes especially among the different princes for leadership. Such disputes brought about misunderstandings between the different members of the Empire; which weakened it.
11. Most Abbasid caliphs lived luxurious life and did not care much for the state. Such caliphs neglected stated duties and spent most of their time in personal luxuries and leisure. These leaders left the state affairs to take their course which gave chance to the Abbasid enemies to take advantages to fight the Empire.
12. There was existence of religious conflicts within the Muslim state. These conflicting forces like the Shiite and Sunni Muslims, presented themselves as religious sects but disturbed peace in the Empire. There, the Abbasids were not able to unite their people under one house; hence the dynasty could not survive longer.
13. The collapse of the Abbasid Dynasty was also caused by the rise of independent quasi states; like Fatimids in Egypt, Al-Moravids in North Africa, Safavids in Khurasan and Iran, Zaidiyyah Dynasty in Yemen and the Moghuls in Asia. With such breaking a way of certain territories, the size of the Abbasid Dynasty became smaller and at the same time, the Dynasty grew weaker; hence its decline.
14. Racial enmity and jealousy within the empire; for instance, the struggle between Arabs and non-Arabs especially the Persians, reached its climax during this period. This was complicated by failure of the Abbasids to unite their people under one house. Consequently, there remained warring groups and disintegration became inevitable. Therefore, this lack of unity partly led to the collapse of the Empire.
15. The poor economic policies led to the reduction of manpower that left many cultivatable farms wasted. This affected the economy of the state. There was, thus, a national economic decay that affected the continuity of the dynasty.

16. Natural calamities that hit the Muslim state during the times of the Abbasid rule also contributed to the collapse of the Abbasid Dynasty. Calamities like floods and famine left many people homeless and hopeless. Epidemics like malaria and small pox set in which weakened the population further. The weak population could not, therefore, stand to defend the Empire when they were attacked by their enemies.
17. There was also the invasion and effect of the Christian Crusades. These were military movements by the Christians from Europe meant to destroy the Muslim World. The Crusaders constantly attacked the Abbasids and engaged them in several encounters which eventually led to the downfall of the Abbasids.
18. The role of the Romans as a factor that contributed to the collapse of the Abbasid Dynasty cannot be overlooked. During the reign of Al-Muttasim, the Romans attacked and seized a number of cities belonging to the Abbasids and set them ablaze. This weakened the Abbasids; thus their downfall became inevitable.
19. The Abbasids rulers made their position absolute and supreme; in that they were never questioned by the subjects. This complicated the issue and idea of decentralization and direct control of the provinces under the Abbasid rule. Thus, there was discontent and many provinces started breaking away, which reduced the size and strength of the Empire.
20. The long standing Arab and non-Arab conflict also led to the collapse of Abbasid Dynasty. Following the Arabisation policy, the Arabs had grown arrogant and hostile over the non-Arabs. This brought about disunity within the people of the dynasty; thus weakening it.
21. The hereditary system of leadership as adopted by the Abbasids together with the unfairness associated in it also led to the collapse of the Abbasid Dynasty. The hereditary system meant that other people would not get chance to leadership; thus breaking away from the main Abbasid stream and weakening it.

ABBASIDS' WEAKNESSES THAT PAVED WAY FOR THE EMERGENCE OF INDEPENDENT MUSLIM DYNASTIES

Question: To what extent did the Abbasids' weakness pave way for the emergence of independent Muslim Dynasties?

The Abbasid Dynasty which was established in 750 AD after the final collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty, embarked on its journey of collapse after the death of Caliph Haroun Al-Rashid in 809AD; and by 1258AD, the Empire had already collapsed.

The downfall of the Abbasid Caliphate was instigated by a number of factors; one of which was weakness and failures within the Abbasid ranks that paved way for the emergence of independent Muslim Dynasties like the Umayyad Dynasty in Spain, Safavid in Khurasan and Iran, Fatimids in Egypt, Al-Moravids Dynasty in North Africa, the Zaidiyyah in Oman and Yemen and the Moghuls Dynasty in Asia. Such weaknesses include:-

1. The inability of the Abbasids to complete as well as consolidating their initial conquests was a weakness that paved way for the emergence of independent Muslim Dynasties. Most of the conquered areas remained rebellious and would not be controlled by the Baghdad government. As a result, many states broke away from the main Abbasid stream.
2. The poor administration of the Abbasids was not in conformity with the stability and continuity of the Empire. The Abbasid rulers were exploitative, harsh and selfish. They naturally alienated their subjects from their rule. Hence, the alienated people broke away to form their own dynasties.
3. The hereditary system of leadership as adopted by the Abbasids together with a lot of unfairness in the system meant that other people not of the Abbasid origin could not get a chance of ruling the Empire. They, thus, broke away from the main Abbasid stream to establish their own caliphates.
4. Most Abbasid caliphs were morally corrupt and spent most of their time enjoying pomp, music and relating with concubines. All these behaviours were against the moral teaching of Islam. This inspired opposition from the morally upright and concerned masses to break away to form their own dynasties.
5. The Abbasid rulers had made their position absolute and supreme; in that they were never questioned by their subjects. This complicated the issue and idea of decentralization and direct control of the province under the Abbasid rule. Thus, there was wide spread discontent among the people and many provinces started breaking away.
6. The failures of the Abbasid to unite their people under one house also led to the emergence of independent Muslim Dynasties. This failure led to racial enmity and jealousy which resulted into warring groups. So many people among those warring groups started breaking away.
7. The national economic decay due to the luxurious living of some caliphs, over taxation of the subjects, non-payment of the army and poverty of the subjects also resulted in breaking aways.
8. The over enlargement of the Abbasid Empire also paved way for the emergence of independent Muslim Dynasties. The Abbasid Dynasty had become too large to be manned by the weak caliphs. The Dynasty stretched from Spain to as far as China and

the weak caliphs lacked the qualities to keep the Dynasty together when states from far away opted to break away.

9. The role of the Turkish and Persian soldiers cannot be undermined. The Turkish and Persians were elevated by the Abbasid Caliphs to higher positions in the dynasty; thus, becoming more powerful. After becoming extremely powerful, the Turkish and Persian soldiers defied the authority of the Abbasids to establish the Ottoman Empire by the Turkish and the Safavid Empire by the Persians.
10. The extermination policy employed by the Abbasids also paved way for the emergence of independent Muslims dynasties. When the Abbasids rose to power, they embarked on a policy of killing the Umayyad Princes. Those who survived ran to Spain where they established another Umayyad Dynasty.
11. Neglect of the army was also another factor that paved way for the emergence of independent Muslim dynasties. When the army was neglected, the states that had been conquered by the Abbasids got a chance to reorganize to regain their independence since the Abbasid army was not in the mood of defending the empire or suppressing the rebellions because they were not paid.
12. The Abbasids blackmailed the Shiites into supporting them after forging a Hadith that seemed to be in favour of the Shiites, who had taken themselves to be the legitimate leaders of the Muslim Empire. When the Abbasids, instead took over power, the Shiites started to challenge the Abbasids until when they established the Fatimid Dynasty in Egypt.
13. The Abbasid policy of internationalism also led to emergence of independent Dynasties. Under this policy, the Abbasids accommodated people from all walks of life and gave them equal chances and status. However, since the accommodated people had different cultures and skills, they started conflicting between themselves and in the end; they separated giving way to independent states.
14. During the Abbasid rule, two waves of calamities struck the Dynasty. Famine and plague hit the Empire, devastating both the economy and lives of people. The Abbasid rulers, however, completely failed to wipe out such unstable conditions. The distant states exploited this weakness to break away from the Abbasids rule.
15. The recruitment of foreigners in the Muslim army also paved way for emergence of independent states. For instance, the Abbasids recruited many Turkish in the Muslim army and with the passage of time, the Turkish influence increased especially during the caliphateship of weak caliphs. Thus, the involvement of the Turkish in leadership of the Muslims' territories helped the emergence of the Ottoman Empire.

REVISION QUESTIONS

1. Examine the Abbasid propaganda that led to the emergence of the Abbasid Caliphate
2. Examine the factors that helped the Abbasids to rise to power and consolidate their rule.
3.
 - a) Explain the factors that led to the rise of the Abbasid Dynasty.
 - b) Why was the Abbasid era characterized by political irregularities and general dissatisfaction among Muslims?
4. In their campaign to consolidate power, the Abbasids used all the available tactics and strategies both sound and unsound. Discuss the tactics and strategies used by Abu Abbas Al-Saffah to consolidate his position as the ruler of the Abbasid Dynasty.
5. Evaluate the achievements of Abu Jafar Al-Mansur as one of the prominent Abbasid Caliphs.
6. Although Abu Jaffar Al-Mansoor did a lot for the development of the Abbasid Dynasty, his reign was not a bed of roses. Discuss.
7. Examine the role played by Muahammad Al-Mahad to the development of the Abbasid Dynasty.
8. Muhammad al-Mahad is remembered have been one of the outstanding performers among the Abbasid Caliphs. Comment.
9. In their campaign to consolidate power, the Abbasids used all the available tactics and strategies both sound and unsound. Examine their exploitation of the Ulema and the masses and the people with genuine cause to achieve their objectives.
10. Discuss the view that the reign of Haroun Al-Rashid marked the climax [Golden Age] of the Abbasid Dynasty.
11. How true is the claim that the reign of Harun Al-Rashid marked the Golden Age of the Abbasid era?
12. Assess the contribution of Al-Ma'amun bin Al-Rashid to the development of the Abbasid Dynasty and the progress of Islam.
13. Account for the development of Islamic civilization under the Abbasids.
14. Examine the political challenges faced by the Abbasid regime.
15. Examine the political situation of the Islamic state under the Abbasid rule.

16. Examine the Mihna (inquisition) period that prevailed during the Abbasid rule,
17. Examine the impact of the Abbasid rule on Muslim education.
18. To what extent were the Abbasids responsible for the collapse of their caliphate?
19. To what extent did the Abbasids' weakness pave way for the emergence of independent Muslim Dynasties?
20. Assess the role of external factors in the downfall of the Abbasids.
21. To what extent did the personal conduct of the Abbasid Caliphs contribute to the collapse of the Abbasid Dynasty?

