

**KYOTERA CENTRAL SECONDARY SCHOOL**

**P.O BOX 101**

IRE DEPARTMENT 2022

IRE PAPER THREE

0774271629/0702388328/0759720148

[muzahuraabdul@gmail.com](mailto:muzahuraabdul@gmail.com)

[abduulrahmaanmuzahura9@gmail.com](mailto:abduulrahmaanmuzahura9@gmail.com)

**S.6 IRE PAPER 3 NOTES**

# ISLAMIC EMPIRES & DYNASTIES

## Back ground

After the death of Ali bin Abu Talib, the orthodox caliphate and the Surah system came to an end .it was replaced with another type of leader ship in which the reigning caliph would nominate a son or a brother or any relative to be the head of state without the consent of the citizens in the Islamic state. In this a hereditary kind of leadership had been introduced which lasted for a number of centuries.

This system was started by Muawiyah bin Abu Sufiyan who formed the Umayyad dynasty with its capital at Damascus in Syria, followed by Abbasid in Baghdad, the samaras in Persia, the moguls in India, Fatimids in Egypt and the Ottomans at Constantinople in present day Turkey.

## The Umayyad caliphate

### Back ground

In the year 660 Muawiyah bin Abu Sufiyan introduced the Umayyad caliphate when he proclaimed himself the fast of all Umayyad caliphs and later his son Yazid as his successor there by introducing hereditary leadership in Islam.

Muawiyah traces his origin from Ummayyah father of Abu Sufiyan a grandson of Abdul Shamsi a son of Abdul Manafi son of Quraish

Before the advent of Muhammad (p.b.u.h) the Umayyad clan rivaled with Banu Hashim clan from which the prophet belonged for the control of wealth and power in Mecca

When Muhammad (p.b.u.h) became a prophet, the Umayyads were in control of Mecca. Well as the Bunu Hasim supported him, the Umayyad rejected hi prophet hood and tortured him together with his followers since they were not ready follow a prophet from a rival clan. This negativity went on up to 630CE when Mecca was conquered by the Muslim state at medina. After the conquest of Mecca all the Umayyad converted to Islam and served it whole heartedly for example Muawiyah bin Abu Sufiyan was the chief usher of the prophet's visitors.

There influence however, resurfaced when Uthman bin Afan become caliph in 654CE. He appointed many of them to positions of responsibilities for example Maruwan as his chief secretary and Muawiyah bin Abu Sufiyan as the governor of Syria.

When Uthman bin Afan died, Muawiyah bin Abu Sufiyan led a rebellion against Ali bin Abu Talib and later against Hassan Ali's successor, how was forced to abdicate in favor of him in 660CE.

Besides Muawiyah bin Abu Sufiyan other prominent Umayyad caliphs included Yazid bin Muawiyah, Muawiyah II, Abdul Malik bin Maruwan, Walid, Umar bin Abdul Azizi, Yazid II etc.

## FACTORS FOR THE RISE OF THE RISE OF THE Umayyad DYNASTY

- ♣ ***The reign of Uthman bin Afan had a hand in the rise of Umayyad.*** it elevated them to positions of responsibility in government. For example Maruwan as his chief secretary and Muawiyah bin Abu Sufiyan as the governor of Syria. Therefore hen Uthman died, they used every available opportunity to retain the control of the Islamic state.
- ♣ ***The death of Uthman bin Afan in 656CE also accounts for the rise of the Umayyads in Damascus;***Being an Umayyad, his death was un acceptable to the Umayyads as

such they refused to accept the new leadership under Ali bin Abu talib not until when he had put the murders of Uthman to justice. Failure to meet their demands resulted into constant conflict and in the due course Ali lost his life at the hands of the Kharijites, thereby giving way to the rise of the Umayyads.

- ♣ ***Muawiyah's over whelming ambition and greed for power also account for the Umayyad rise to power;*** His ambitiousness is seen when choose himself as the sole avenger of the Uthman's death. It's also seen when he fought Ali on several occasions even when Ali was willing to settle the conflicts peacefully. With all this in place it would have been very difficult to block the Umayyads rise to power.
- ♣ ***The Umayyads as a group were far united as compared to their rivals the Hashimites;*** it should be noted that after the murder of Uthman the old rivalry between the Umayyads and the Hashimites resurfaced .there for with the Umayyads firmly behind Muawiyah, he declared war on Ali who later died giving way for the rise of the Umayyads.
- ♣ ***Luck of strong will and determination from the supporters of Ali also accounts for the rise of the Umayyads;*** when the peace talks at Siffin failed ,many of Ali's supporters were demoralized in their efforts to fight Muawiyah and as if that was not enough some even deserted him failing him in his efforts to fight Muawiyah .
- ♣ ***Closely connected to the above was the rise of the Kharijites*** .this was a group of Muslims that broke away from Ali when he decided to hold peace talks with Muawiyah at Siffin. They declared war on both Ali and Muawiyah whom they considered to be cause of the problems in the Islamic state at time. This failed Ali's attempts to defeat Muawiyah leading to the rise of the Umayyads in Syria.
- ♣ ***The Umayyads led by Muawiyah were far stronger in terms of wealth and other resources.*** This worked to the disadvantage of Ali's group whose financial muscle was declining day by day.
- ♣ Beside the above the Umayyads had *great strength in as far as their military was concerned* .for example talented commander like Amir Bin Al Aas were Umayyads. This as factor gave them an edge over the Hasimites.
- ♣ ***The death of Ali bin Abu Talib also explains why the Umayyads rose to power.*** It robbed the Hashimites a great and determined leader leaving behind a vacuum that could not be filled by his son Hassan. With his departure there was no one left to block the Umayyads assess ion to power.
- ♣ ***Besides his death, Ali himself had a hand in the rise of the Umayyads;*** for instance he failed to solve the murder of Uthman. The Umayyads used this as a scapegoat to lunch wars on him which later resulted in them capturing state power.
- ♣ ***The personality of Hassan the successor of Ali also accounts for the rise the Umayyads;*** He cowardised in the face of a more determined man Muawiyah. He there for abdicated in his favor. May be if he had stood firm and mobilized his father's supporters to continue the struggle against Muawiyah, may be the Umayyads couldn't have gained power.

- ♣ ***The peace agreement signed by Hassan and Muawiyah also led to their rise to power.***  
Hassan decided to accept composition in form of wealth and security from Muawiyah at the expense of national interests. This gave Muawiyah chance to declare himself caliph.
- ♣ ***The fact that the Umayyads had held influential positions in the Muslim state also accounts of their rise to power;*** from the time of the prophet and during the reigns of the first three caliphs, the Umayyads held important positions which they desired to continue having. This forced them to use every available opportunity to see to it that they are in charge of the Islamic state.
- ♣ ***The Sabaites also undermined Ali's efforts to handle Muawiyah leading to the rise of Umayyads.*** This was a group of hypocrites led by Abdullah bin Saba who after killing Uthman failed every attempt by Ali to create peace for fear of being punished for Uthman's murder. Their activities weakened Ali at the expense of Muawiyah

### ***Reference Questions***

1. *Account for the rise of the Umayyads in Damascus in 660CE.*
2. *How true is it to say that of all factors that led to the rise of the Umayyads Muawiyah's ambitiousness and desire for state power was the most significant.*
3. *The rise of the Umayyads in Damascus in 660CE was inevitable. Justify the statement.*

### **THE REIGN OF MUAWIYAH BIN ABU SUFIYAN (660-680 CE) BACK GROUND & RISE TO POWER:**

He was a son of Abu Sufiyan and his mother was Hindu bint Utbah born some years before the prophet's migration to Medina.

He joined Islam in 630CE after the conquest of Mecca, served Islam whole heartedly and even vowed to compensate for the time he had missed when the Quraish were fighting with the prophet.

During the prophet's time he served as the chief usher of the prophet's foreign dignitaries. During Abu Baker's time he played a leading role in ending the Ridda wars, he even appointed him an officer in Syria. Caliph Umar made him assistant governor of Syria and when Uthman became caliph he appointed him full governor of Syria.

During the reign of Ali he proclaimed himself governor of Syria despite the fact that Ali had asked him to resign. He insisted that he was to resign if Ali had put the murderer of Uthman to justice. When he failed, the two engaged in a bitter conflict that went on up to the time when Ali was killed by the Kharijites.

After his death Ali was succeeded by Hassan who decided to resign in favor of Muawiyah who confirmed himself as the first Umayyad caliph.

### ***Muawiyah's changes and contributions to the Islamic state***

Muawiyah ruled the Islamic state for almost twenty years with his capital at Damascus. He was tactical, diplomatic and had a cunning character in which he manipulated the events of the day to fulfill his own selfish interests.

**Below are some of the changes, reforms and contributions to the Islamic state.**

- He founded and established a new capital for the Muslim state at Damascus. Initially the capital was at Medina and was transferred to Kufa by Ali
- He helped in uniting the Muslim state that had been disintegrated by the civil wars. He ended the chaos, revolts and rebellion within the Islamic state.
- He greatly expanded the Islamic empire far and wide to as far as Kharushan in east, Egypt in the west and Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea.
- Muawiyah also promoted offices in merit though most of them came from the Umayyad clan
- He fully defined the boundaries of the Islamic state and divided it into a number of provinces.
- He founded and perfected the king's guards, the second professional army after the one created by Umar bin al-Khattab. It kept his security and that of the state.
- Muawiyah established a consultative council whose purpose was to consult people on matters of general concern. He even ordered his provincial governors to create such councils.
- Muawiyah also established the postal service system. In this he introduced the use of mails and trained horse men who were always stationed in major cities to take information to different parts of the empire.
- He also introduced the official seal on important documents. The intention was to promote government secrecy, as such all documents from the office of the caliph had to have this seal.
- Muawiyah also established a spy network and surrounded himself with collaborators like Amir bin al-Aas, al-Mugirah bin Shuabah who helped him gather information.
- Being a powerful, capable and knowledgeable administrator, Muawiyah devoted much of his time to the state in which he tried to establish it on sound lines by making Arabs the dominant people in the Muslim state.
- He built a barricade within the mosque to protect himself as the imam from
- An attack so as to avoid the fate that had befallen Umar bin al-Khattab and Ali bin Abu Talib.
- He was very tolerant to non Muslims. For instance he recruited many of them in the civil service; he allowed them carry out their religious rites and even assisted them to build their prayer places.
- He introduced in the Muslim world the title Al-Malik (the king) thus he changed Islamic mode of leadership from caliphate to dynastic rule.
- Muawiyah also used to conduct the Friday sermons while seated an act that contrasted sharply with what had been done by the prophet or the four rightly guided caliphs.

- Closely connected to the above was the introduction of the cursing of Ali during every Friday sermons for failing to book the murderers of Uthman.
- He also introduced the royal throne on which he would sit while addressing Moslems. This was taken on by the subsequent rulers of the Umayyads.
- Muawiyah died in 680CE and was succeeded by his son Yazid hence starting the hereditary system of administration in the Islamic state.

### Reference questions

1. *Discuss the changes introduced by Muawiyah as the first caliph of the Umayyads*
2. *"He was not only the first but also the best Arab king" Is this fair description of Muawiyah bin Abu Sufiyan*

### **The Reign of Yazid bin Muawiyah (680-683) Back ground & rise to power:**

He was son of Muawiyah bin Abu Sufiyan and his mother was Maysul.

In the last six months of his life, Muawiyah broke the agreement he made with Hassan and nominated Yazid his successor yet the two had agreed that at death Muawiyah, he was supposed to leave the issue of succession to be decided by the general Muslim community

Muawiyah there for asked the nobles at his court to pledge their oath of allegiance to Yazid and consequently when he died, Yazid was proclaimed the second caliph of the Umayyads

Before coming to power, Yazid had been a promising young man who won a lot of reputation during the siege of Constantinople .however by the time he become caliph, he had begun enjoying a life of pleasure as loved drinking, mixed company, kept dogs as pets and above all a great womanizer .

since his leadership had not been endorsed by a majority vote, his was faced with a lot of civil wars, little progress and three major incidents that created a set back to the progress of the Islamic state. They included the murder of Imam Hussein, the plunder of Medina and the raid on the Kaabah.

### **The activities of Yazid bin Muawiyah as caliph**

- He was excessively luxurious, fancy and had great love for pomp. In his daily life activities for example he deeply loved wine drink, enjoyed music, parting and women.
- He had too much consideration and tolerance for non Muslims. For instance many of them were granted positions of responsibilities that were originally reserved for Muslims.
- He was excessively corrupt and these tendencies were extended to his governors an act that affected greatly the welfare of the Muslims.
- Yazid was also charged with high levels of extravagance which greatly affected the financial muscle of the empire. For instance he picked resources from the state treasury to spend it on his concubines.
- Yazid never upheld religious piety as was the case with his father. He hardly respected pious and learned men and never followed their advice. He did not even preside over the Juma prayers as he was supposed to do as caliph.

- He was a dictator who did not want consultation about decision making concerning affairs of the Muslim state.
- He forced all Muslims to pay taxes towards war expenses even when they were forced to provide military service.
- He is remembered to have continued with the system of cursing Ali bin Abu Talib
- Yazid had some good qualities for example, he was the first Arab king to conquer an area from the Byzantine Empire and as such he got the title “fata al Arab” (the hero of the Arabs)
- He also dug a channel and named it Nabir al Yazid and widened four other channels around Damascus to boost irrigation.
- Beside the above, the following are the three major incidents that created a set back to the progress of the Islamic state.

### The murder of Imam Hussein

When Hassan the elder son of Ali bin Abu Talib died, the leadership of the Banu Hashim clan was taken on by Hussein, Hassan’s younger brother. Hussein stayed in Medina throughout reign of Muawiyah to the time of Muawiyah’s death in 680CE

When Yazid become caliph after the death of the father, Hussein, Abdullah bin Zubair and the whole of Medina, Mecca and Kufah refused to accept his leadership. Yazid therefore instructed Walid bin Uqabah his governor of Hijaz to conduct an oath of allegiance in Medina.

Hussein refused to give his oath and decided to flee to Mecca where he received support from its people in a rebellion against Yazid. He even received support from the people of Kufah in a letter written to him showing their readiness to be behind him in his fight against Yazid.

Therefore with a small group of relatives and escorts Hussein moved to Kufah. When Yazid learnt of these developments he instructed his governor Abdullah bin Yazid in Kufah to arrest Hussein and his group.

The governor sent a contingent of soldier led by Umar bin Saad that intercepted Hussein and his group at **Kabala** and it gave him these conditions

- Hussein and his group should go back to Median
- Hussein offers his allegiance to Yazid
- Hussein be taken to one of the camps where some Moslems had been kept and that he was to stay there with his two hundred followers

To these conditions Hussein replied that “this is a personal matter between me and Yazid allow me to go to Yazid and discuss the matter with him. If your orders do not permit it, then allow me to go back to Medina and if the authorities do not permit that too, I will go to the end of the Muslim world even if it as far as Kharushan”

As Umar bin Saad was still considering his proposal, Shamir bin Ziljoshan mobilized his own regiment, attacked Hussein and his few followers. Hussein too was killed and his head chopped off and sent to Yazid in Damascus. It was later returned and his body buried at Kabala as the few survivors were escorted back to Medina.

It should be noted that the murder of Hussein increased the tension that existed between the Banu Hasim and Umayyads and further widened the gap between the two. Up today the Shia Moslems commemorate day of Hussein's murder on the day of Ashurah which is the tenth day of the month of Muharram

### **The plunder of Medina**

When Yazid become caliph Medina under the leadership of Abdullah bin Zubair refused to offer their oath of allegiance to Yazid and vowed to fight him.

Yazid there for wrote a letter to Walid bin Uqubah his governor in Hijaz to urge his people to pledge their loyalty him. It was around this time that Hussein was murdered by Shamir bin Ziljoshan's regiment. They revolted, expelled the Umayyad governor and choose Abdullah bin Zubair as their caliph.

Yazid sent a messenger to Abdullah requesting him and the people of Medina to return to his leadership without any violence but they remained adamant.

This forced Yazid to send a disciplinary army to Medina led by Muslim bin Utbah to besiege the city for three days inquest for its citizens to accept Yazid's leadership.

When they refused Muslim bin Utbah had a confrontation with Abdullah forcing him to retreat to Mecca. Back in Medina the disciplinary army desecrated dead Muslim's tombs and plundered the city destroying several properties plus killing many people irrespective of their age or sex. There after it proceeded to Mecca where Abdullah bin Zubair was now operating from.

### **The raid on the Kaabah**

After looting Medina, Muslim bin Utbah's army proceeded to Mecca to put to an end Abdullah's defiance.

He was a nephew to Aisha and a grandson of Abu baker who had proclaimed himself caliph of Hijaz.

On his way to Mecca, Muslim bin Utbah died and was succeeded by Hussein bin Numayrah who when he reached city, he besieged it and begun hunting for Abdullah bin Zubair.

It was rumored that bin Zubair was hiding in the Kaabah as such Hussein bin Numayrah commanded that the Kaabah be set on fire. It was however reconstructed by Abdullah bin Zubair.

During this encounter the news of the death of Yazid bin Muawiyah reached Medina forcing Hussein bin Numayrah to suspend all operations which marked the end of the second civil war in the history of Islam.

The death of Yazid ended what a number of historians have described as an inglorious reign of the Umayyad dynasty.

### **REFERENCE QUESTIONS**

1. *"An inglorious reign of the Umayyad dynasty" Is this a fair description of the reign of Yazid bin Muawiyah?*
2. *Describe the three major events that took place during the reign of Yazid bin Muawiyah.*

**The REIGN OF ABDUL MALIK BIN MARUWAN (685-703CE) BACK GROUND & RISE TO POWER:**  
He was a son of Maruwan 1 and took over the leadership of the dynasty after the murder



of his father. He becomes caliph at the time when the Umayyad caliphate is engulfed in a period of civil war, rebellion, tribal differences religious disunity and external attacks. It was Abdul Malik who came up to rescue the situation and for that reason he has been referred to as **“the second founder of the Umayyad dynasty”** because he saved it from destruction. Due to his conquest, reform, and activities in nation building, Abdul Malik become one of the greatest Umayyad caliphs and because of this he has been referred to as the **“father of kings”**. Besides, it was during his reign and **those** that came after his that the Umayyad dynasty reached its zenith.

### ***Abdul Malik bin Maruwan's reforms and contributions***

As it is often said that greatness is always created out of chaos, when Abdul Malik assumed power he was faced with a lot of challenges and it was after solving these challenges that went ahead to carry out a number of reforms.

#### **Among the challenges that he happened to handle include.**

- He ably handled Abdullah bin Zubair who had proclaimed himself caliph of Hijaz. He sent to him Hudjaj Bin Yusuf who took over Taif, Medina and besieged Mecca for six and half months. He overpowered Abdullah bin Zubair, killed him and chopped off his head which he sent to Abdul Malik in Damascus.
- He also defeated Al Muktar who had resorted to indiscriminate killing and looting in Iraq as revenge for the martyrdom of Hussein. He sent to him his general Ubaidullah who was defeated and later Abdul Malik sent to him Musab who ably defeated Al Muktar.
- Abdul Malik also solved the challenge of the Shias and Kharijites of Iraq who had continuously created problems for the Umayyads in Iraq. He sent to them Hudjaj bin Yusuf who arrived in Kufah in December.
- 694CE and while in the Unity Mosque he declared himself new governor, proclaimed his policies, rounded up and killed all those who suspected to be against the Umayyads.
- In North Africa the Berbers with the help of the Romans had killed the Umayyad governor and declared their independence from the Umayyads. He sent to them Ubaidullah who was defeated and he then sent to them Hassan who was also defeated in his first attempt. However when he received reinforcement from Abdul Malik he was able to pacify the area and therefor reestablished Umayyad authority over the Berbers in North Africa.
- Amir bin Saad was another challenge to Abdul Malik. He was his cousin who expected to be the next caliph after the death of Maruwan I and when Abdul Malik was nominated caliph, he rebelled against him. Abdul Malik invited him to his palace under the guise of solving the conflict peacefully; however he killed him at the dinner table.

**Besides solving the above challenges Abdul Malik under took the following reforms.**

- He improved on the efficiency and the effectiveness of government service delivery by dividing the government machinery into four departments .i.e. the ministry of correspondence entrusted with the control of provincial administration, ministry of land, ministry of signets whose role was to design government ordinances, and be in charge of investigation and the ministry of miscellaneous revenue whose role was to collect revenue.
- Abdul Malik also introduced the policy of Arabization in which the language of public registry was changed from Greek to Arabic in Damascus and from Pahlavi to Arabic in Iraq there by making Arabic the official language of the state.
- Closely connected to the above was the introduction of the Arabic coinage. In this he ordered for the printing of Arabised money in place of Persian Dirham and the Roman Dinar. This money had the image of Abdul Malik and inscriptions of Quranic verses .it maintained the name of the Dirham borrowed from the Persian money.
- Abdul Malik founded new cities that were of strategic value to Islam. For example, Al Wasit in Iraq.
- He boosted agriculture by building new channels and widened the old ones to help in the irrigation of crops and he also reclaimed swamps to provide more cultivatable land.
- He also paid attention to the industrial sector. He established the textile industry which produced linen to boost trade and commerce.
- He improved on the art of Arabic writing by introducing vowels and marks to help in distinguishing letters of the same shape. This helped in creating a uniform reading of Arabic for both Arabs and non Arabs.
- Abdul Malik also made reforms in the judicial system that was first developed Umar bin al-Khattab. He acted as the supreme judge, selected days for hearing trying cases and also appointed a committee to keep an account of necessary records of the judiciary.
- He greatly encourage the growth and development of Arabic architecture and indeed he established architectural monuments .e.g. the mosque of Jerusalem known as the **dome of the rock**
- He expanded the Islamic empire and spread Islam far and wide. For example he fought and defeated the
- Romans and captured the fort race of Cappadocia. He also captured parts of north of Africa.
- Abdul Malik made improvements in the communication sector. For example just like Muawiyah he continued to train horse men as message carriers from one destination to another.
- He is also credited for motivating his soldiers for instance he allowed them to purchase items at a subsidized cost and made sure that families of deceased soldiers are taken care of.
- He also re introduced Kharaja (land tax) and Jizya (poll tax) on non Moslems and the non Arab Moslems with the intention of forcing them to go back to villages so as to take

part in agriculture.

- He was also a good patron of art and literature. This can be seen in the great honor and recognition he gave to Arab poets like Al- Farazdak that occupied an honorable position at the caliph's court.

***However despite Abdul Malik being one of the greatest Umayyad caliphs, his administration had some negative criticism.***

- When he introduced the policy of Arabization, he marginalized the non Arab Moslems who couldn't serve in the civil offices since they couldn't speak Arabic.
- When he reintroduced new taxes in order to improve on sources of state revenue, the reform ended up affecting not only the non Moslems but also the non Arab Moslems.
- In a bid to consolidate his rule, Abdul Malik killed a number of innocent people who among others included his cousin Amir bin Saad, the Shias and Kharijits of Kufah .e.t.c Who were suspected of being against his administration.
- Abdul Malik was also was very extravagant and wasted a lot of stat resources in building magnificent palaces
- Abdul Malik died 705CE at the age of sixty and was succeeded by his son Walid and another son of his Suleiman. However during this time very little successes was registered until when Umar bin Abdul Azizi become caliph.

### **REFERENCE QUESTIONS**

1. *To what extent can the title of the second founder of the Umayyad caliphate fit Abdul Malik?*
2. *"Greatness is always created out of chaos" justify the statement relating to the caliphate of Abdul Malik bin Maruwan.*

### **THE REIGN OF UMAR BIN ABDUL AZIZI (720-722CE)**

#### **Back ground & rise to power:**

He was popularly known as Umar II. He was born in 62AH to Abdul Azizi bin Maruwan and Um salaam a granddaughter of Umar bin Khattab through his daughter Asma. There for was a great grandson of Umar bin khattab.

He was born at place known as Halwan near Cairo at a time was his father Abdul Azizi bin Maruwan was the governor of Egypt. He sent him to Medina to study and remained there up to the time when the father died.

When his uncle Abdul Malik became caliph, Umar was sent to medina as the governor of Hijaz a position in which he served very well. It's reported that when Walid become caliph, the two conflicted because Umar preferred Sulaiman to be the next caliph and not Walid's son who was being fronted by father.

When caliph Sulaiman died, Umar become caliph. He was one of the few Umayyad caliphs that ascended to the throne without campaigning or being campaigned for. He was pious, learned, honest and exhibited qualities that earlier Umayyad caliphs did not possess. For example he wore clothes with many patches and mixed freely with his subjects to the extent that a stranger would find it difficult to recognize the caliph.

Even outstanding critics of the Umayyads made an exception of Umar bin Abdul Azizi. Moslem scholars compare him with his great grandfather Umar bin Khattab because of his justices and piety and it's for this reason that Sunni Moslems regard him to be the fifth orthodox caliph.

He spent a very short time in power but within that short time, he had written a glorious page in the history of Islam.

### ***Umar bin Abdul Azizi's reforms and contributions:***

- Religiously Muawiyah bin Abu Sufiyan had introduced the practice of cursing Ali bin Talib during every Friday sermon for failing to punish the murderers of Uthman. This practice was taken on by other Umayyad caliphs however when Umar became caliph he abolished it.
- Umar gave respect to the prophet's family. It should be recalled that family members of the prophet had greatly been mistreated by Yazid bin Muawiyah and Marwan 1 who even seized the prophet's garden of Fidak. Umar however treated them with compassion and ever restored the garden to them.
- He was tolerant to non Moslems. For example Al-Walid had turned the church of St John in Damascus into a mosque but when Umar bin Abdul Azizi became caliph; the church was given back to the Christians.
- In a bid to spread Islam, he stopped all wars on non Moslems and used persuasion whereby whoever converted to Islam was exempted from the poll tax and was placed on the same footing with other Moslems in the empire.
- He is also credited for promoting dialog in matters of faith. This arrangement enabled non Moslems understand Islamic principles and as such many were convinced to join Islam. For example many people in Syria, Persia and North Africa embraced Islam through such measures.
- Umar bin Abdul Azizi made number of fiscal changes. For example he banned the compulsory land tax that was being paid by farmers and poll tax which was being paid by non Moslems under the protection of Moslems was reduced.
- It's on record that he did not tolerate corrupt tendencies. In fact he dismissed incompetent governors who failed to produce satisfactory accountability of state funds. For example he dismissed Usman bin Zaid as governor of Egypt.
- Umar bin Abdul Azizi also elevated the status of the non Arab Moslems by placing them on the equal footing with the fellow Arab Moslem. With this the earlier mistreatment of the non Arab Moslem ended.
- He was also the first ruler to order for the collection and compilation of the prophet's traditions. He therefore dispatched letters to his governors commanding them to collect Hadith.
- His reign marked the departure of all luxurious tendencies among the Umayyad caliphs. For example he sold off all the royal horses and deposited the money in state treasury and asked the wife to take all her jewelry that she had received from her relatives to state treasury.
- He also returned the property and money that previous Umayyad caliphs and governors

had snatched to the respective owners.

- Poets and musicians found no favors at his court and their places were occupied by pious men reading the Quran and living a simple life.
- He was not in favor of employing Jews and christens in the civil service. He made sure they were only allowed to save their own people.
- Umar bin Abdul Azizi tried to make his soldiers live a comfortable life. For instance he made sure that the soldiers were paid even when they were not fighting.
- Umar bin Abdul Azizi also paid attention to the standards of weights and measurements in the empire. For instance together with his officials Umar supervised and monitored the weights and measurements.
- He took great care of vulnerable groups in dynasty. E.g. the poor, needy, and the oppressed groups for instance pension was put in place for the elderly and orphanages for the orphans.
- Umar bin Abdul Azizi appointed his officers on merit a factor that promoted efficiency and hard work in the civil service.
- Umar bin Abdul Azizi was a kind and just man. He therefore made sure that all these virtues are spread throughout the empire. He there for increased on the number of judges and the un just governors were discharged.
- In his foreign policy, Umar bin Abdul Azizi had good relations with foreigners. For instance when he become caliph the Moslem army had besieged the city of Constantinople he however ordered the army to withdraw such that the Moslems can have friendly relations with Turks.

***However despite Umar bin Abdul Azizi being one of the greatest Umayyad caliphs; his administration had some negative criticism.***

- When he reduced taxes on the non Moslems and exempted the non Arab Moslems from the poll tax, it reduced the tax base there for making it difficult to run the day to day activities of the empire.
- When he stopped war on foreign nations, it gave time to the old enemies of Islam like the Romans to launch attacks on the Umayyads which in the long run led to decline of the Umayyads
- He compromised with the non Arab Moslem when he placed them on the same level with the Arabs. This did not work for the Umayyads especially
- After his departure when they joined the enemies of the Umayyads to fight them.

#### **REFERENCE QUESTIONS**

1. Discuss the view that Umar bin Abdul Azizi was the fifth orthodox caliph.
2. Discuss the contributions of Umar 11 towards the Umayyad dynasty between 98AH and 100AH.

### **FACTORS FOR DECLINE OF THE Umayyad DYNASTY**

- ♣ ***The death of Umar bin Abdul Azizi marked the end of the glorious period of the Umayyads and the beginning of the decline of the Umayyads.*** The dynasty that had been in existence for 90 years started collapsing especially during the reigns of Yazid bin Marwan, Hashim, Walid 11, Yazid 111, Ibrahim bin Walid, etc. the following factors account for their decline and final collapse of the Umayyads.
- ♣ ***Succession despites within the dynasty;*** it should be noted that there was no definite regulation on succession to the caliphate this caused rivalry among the would be successors especially when the reigning caliph would nominate more than one successor to the throne. These conflicts little by little weakened the dynasty leading to its collapse.
- ♣ ***The weakness of the Umayyad caliphs was another factor.*** With the exception of Muawiyah bin Abu Sufiyan, Abdul Malik, Walid and Umar 11, the history of the Umayyads presents few capable caliphs. Most of them were a dictated to women, luxury and music and paid little attention to the wellbeing of the state a factor that led to the collapse of the dynasty.
- ♣ ***Discontents among the Christian also led to the downfall of the empire*** especially when some caliphs took oppressive measures against the Christians. For example Abdul Malik charged Christians high taxes and Walid changed the church of St. John in Syria to a mosque. Such oppressive measures made the Christians to join other dissatisfied groups in the struggle against the Umayyads.
- ♣ ***The activities of Umayyad Ministers also accounts for the decline.*** They greatly mismanaged state affairs causing conflict and confusion in the empire hence making the collapse of the Umayyads inevitable.
- ♣ ***Tribal conflicts especially between Mudirites and Hamirites also brought the dynasty to its knees.*** These conflicts divided the dynasty into hostile camps that fought against each other a factor that accelerated the decline of the empire.
- ♣ ***The un fair treatment of the non Arab Moslems in general and the Persians in particular also accelerated the downfall of the Umayyads.*** The mawali as they came to be known were highly discriminated by the Umayyads. For example, those that served in the army could not receive pension upon retirement like their Arab counter parts, they were supposed to pay poll tax on top of paying Zakat, and could not access top management positions in the civil or military service. All this forced many of them to join the Abbasids in order to end the discrimination.
- ♣ ***Financial mismanagement of the empire especially by the later caliphs also explains its collapse.*** Most of state resources were wasted on maintaining the luxurious and extravagance tendencies of the caliphs. This drained the state treasury forcing the caliphs to charge the citizens high taxes that caused chaos, rebellion and final collapse of the Umayyads.
- ♣ ***Discontents with in the army especially during the time of weak caliphs also account for the fall of the Umayyads.*** As time went on due to the economic problems, salaries of the army would be paid in arrears and their well fare was completely ignored. There for when they were attacked by the Abbasid many of the soldiers joined the enemy instead of protecting the state.

- ♣ ***The vastness of the empire especially during the reigns of weak caliphs also led to its collapse.*** Strong caliphs like Muawiyah and Abdul Malik had expanded the empire far and wide to as far as southern Spain in the west, China in the east and Yemen in the south. Such a vast empire could not survive in the hands of weak caliphs
- ♣ ***The activities of the Shias also accounts for decline Umayyads.*** From the time when the Umayyads took over the leadership of the Islamic state, the Shias rejected them and never forgave them for the wrongs they had done to Ali, Hassan and Hussein. There for in the later years of Umayyad rule they joined hands with the Abbasid to over throw the Umayyads.
- ♣ ***The activities of the Kharijites also had a hand in the collapse of the Umayyads.*** It was a group that emerged during the reign of the Ali. It rejected both Ali and Muawiyah as legitimate Moslem leaders and as such after killing Ali, they continued with their fight against the Umayyads. Though Abdul Malik tried to control their activities, when the Abbasid rose up they supported them in their bid to overthrow the Umayyads.
- ♣ ***The rise of the Abbasids also explains the collapse of the Umayyads.*** They were descendants of Abbas an uncle to the prophet who came up with propaganda of returning the leadership of the Islamic state to members of the prophet's family. This campaign accorded them the support that was needed to over throw the Umayyads
- ♣ ***Constant attacks from the Romans also led to the collapse of the empire .it should be not that a big part of the Umayyad Empire had been carved out the Roman Empire. Therefore in time of weak caliphs the Romans tried to repose their lost territory. The continuous conflict between the two empires weakened the Umayyads leading to their collapse.***

### **Reference Questions**

1. *"It was the weakness of the Umayyad caliphs that led to the collapse of the dynasty"* discuss.
2. *Account for the collapse of the Umayyad dynasty.*
3. *To what extent were the internal inconsistencies within the Umayyad caliphate responsible for its collapse?*

### **Special features of the Umayyads as compared to the orthodox caliph**

- The Umayyad caliphs were many and ruled from 660CE to 750CE with Muawiyah bin Abu Sufiyan being the first and Marwan 11 as the last. On the other hand the orthodox caliphs were only four in number who included Abu baker, Umar, Uthman and Ali. They were regarded orthodox on grounds that they were pious and devoted to the teachings of the prophet during their time in office. Below is the comparison of the two groups of leaders;
- During the reign orthodox caliphs, leaders of the Moslems state were elected democratically however with the rise of the Umayyads, the system was abandoned and the reigning caliph was the one to determine his successor.
- The orthodox caliphs used the consultative council (Shurah) that would advise the caliph in running of the state. This kind of arrangement enabled even ordinary people

to have a say in the running of the state. However when the Umayyads took over power, the Shurah council was disbanded and free criticism of government was not tolerated with exception of Umar bin Abdul Azizi who tried to change the state of affairs.

- During the reign of the rightly guided caliphs, pious and men of ability were elected into offices of responsibility. However during the period of the Umayyads, weak, corrupt and irresponsible people occupied such offices.
- Orthodox caliphs lived a simple life as opposed to Umayyads who were kings, employed body guards, stayed in palaces and couldn't easily be reached by a common man with the exception of Umar bin Abdul Azizi.
- During the reign of the Orthodox caliphs tribal and clan struggle were controlled however among the Umayyads they were un controlled to the extent the caliphs even took sides in the conflicts.
- The private life of the Orthodox caliphs was very clean and free from any black spot. The Umayyads however with the exception of Umar Bin Abdul Azizi, the rest were worldly kings who were very extravagant and enjoyed women music and alcohol with the exception of Umar bin Abdul Azizi
- During the reign of the Orthodox caliphs, the state treasury was respected however in the hands of the Umayyads; the state treasury was grossly abused as it become a private property of the reigning caliph.
- The Orthodox caliphs were pious and even preside over Juma prayers and the five daily prayers. But during the time of the Umayyads, besides Muawiyah, Abdul Malik and Umar<sup>11</sup>, the rest ignored the practice.
- As regards the judicial system, the Orthodox caliphs practiced the law to the extent to which it had been practiced by the prophet. The Umayyads how ever greatly derailed from the practice. The execution of the law did not concern them. They even allowed non Moslems to fill positions that initially had been reserved for Moslems.
- During the time of the orthodox caliphs, all Muslims were equal whether Arab or non Arab. However during the time of the Umayyads, the non Arab Moslems were discriminated and openly referred to as “**Mawali**” a degrading description.
- Most Umayyad caliphs extended un necessary favors to non Moslems a practice that contrasted shapely with the practice of the orthodox caliphs. Hashim for example granted permission.

***Despite the differences stated above, the 2 groups of leaders had similarities.***



- They both had simplified form of governments which helped them ensure effective governance especially during the time of strong caliphs
- The Islamic empire witness continuous expansion in both periods and when it expanded attempts were made to spread Islam.
- Both system of administration tried to improve on the social conditions of the subjects e.g. basic infrastructure like schools, hospitals etc were put in place.
- The system of revenue was similar in both cases. It included Zakat, tribute and taxes from non Moslems and such revenue was largely channeled towards development.

### **REFERENCE QUESTIONS:**

1. *Compare the Islamic state during the time of the orthodox caliphs and Umayyads "The replacement of the orthodox caliphs with the Umayyads was a mere change of guards" discuss.*

## **LIFE UNDER THE Umayyad DYNASTY**

### ***Political life;***

- The Umayyad administration was based on hereditary rule in which the reigning caliph would nominate his successor.
- Consultation on crucial matters of the state had no place in the Umayyad caliphate. With the exception of Muawiyah bin Abu Sufiyan and Umar bin Abdul Azizi. The majority of the caliphs were dictators who did not entertain even the slightest criticism.
- The Umayyad caliphate was divided into provinces and districts. Each province was led by a governor who had full control of the political and military administration of his province though answerable to the caliph. The government was divided into five departments .i.e. the ministry of correspondence entrusted with communication, department of finance whose role was to collect revenue, department of signets whose role was to design government ordinances and investigation, postal department and military department.
- The empire boasted of a strong standing army in which all Moslems were eligible for military service. At the climax of the caliphate, the army had around 12 million soldiers armed with launchers, bows, arrows, javelin, swords and shields.
- Regarding the judiciary, the caliph would appoint judges who were entrusted with the responsibility of administering justice and among the non Moslems, the administration of justice was dispensed by their religious leaders. These judges were found in large cities and were always chosen from among the learned men who were well versed with the Quran and Hadith of the prophet.
- Election of top leaders and governors was at first on merit but later on it depended on who the caliph of the time preferred to be in such positions.

- A special police force was established to handle criminals and forces were put in different provinces. Prison was also put in place to accommodate criminals.

### ***Economic life:***

- The revenue of the state was derived from tribute paid by non Moslems under Moslem state.
- There was also the land tax which was levied on all productive lands and mainly paid by the non Arab Moslems.
- Zakat was also paid by all able Moslems in the empire. Those that couldn't were not forced to pay.
- War booty was another source through which state revenue was acquired especially through military conquest.
- Some revenue was received through taxes imposed on traders and trade items passing through the dynasty.
- It should be noted that the collection of revenue in the empire was put under a special officer directly answerable to the caliph. However at times provinces would collect their own revenue to cater for the military and administrative expenditure and the surplus was remitted to the central treasury.
- It's also worth noting that most of the Umayyad caliphs were also extravagant with state resources something depleted the state treasury.

### ***Social life:***

- The Umayyad state was dividing into 3 major class divisions .i.e. First class that comprised of ruling family, the Arabs, the 2<sup>nd</sup> that comprised of the non Arab Moslems especially the Persians, Syrians and Berbers and the 3<sup>rd</sup> was made up of non Moslems especially the Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Serbians.
- Story tellers and poets were very important figures in the dynasty. Kings like Muawiyah bin Abu Sufiyan surrounded himself with poets.
- Most of the Umayyad caliphs would drink alcohol. Yazid bin Muawiyah was the best example. He even trained monkeys to participate in drinking competitions; Walid bin Abdul Malik would drink at least once a day.
- Hunting was also a popular sporting practice among the Umayyads. Yazid bin Marwan was a renowned hunter.
- Similarly they also enjoyed horse racing most especially the caliphs and people of the top class.
- Islamic art also flourished during the time of the Umayyads, most of the art work was

used in the beatification of mosques and guest houses.

- Regarding the status of women, they enjoyed a high degree of social freedom .for example some especially from the top class ignored most principles of the sharia and they took interest in Islamic knowledge. In fact some of them become outstanding scholars.

### ***Cultural and intellectual life (science education and technology)***

- Although there was formal education during the Umayyad regime, some knowledge was acquired especially on Islam, Arabic language, writing skills and poetry.
- Teaching of Arabic started in the cities like Kufah, Basra, Iraq where ideal education was portrayed to be a type of education that created in an individual courage, endurance, observation of rights, generosity, manliness and hospitality.
- They also encouraged girl education especially during the reign of Umar bin Abdul Azizi.
- They strengthened the Arab culture through the policy of Arabization thereby alienating other cultures. Public speaking was greatly improved. It was mainly done during Friday sermons and in arousing military enthusiasm especially when soldiers were preparing for war.
- In the field of architecture various structures were put in place. For example, they set up beautiful mosques in place like Iraq, Basra, and Syria
- Another example was the mosque of Jerusalem known as the **dome of the rock** built by Abdul Malik bin Marwan.
- They also introduced minarets which were used in local mosques.
- Started kingship in Islamic politics where leaders were highly praised by poets
- Yazid introduced the policy of hosting grand festivals in the palace which involved a lot of music and wine drinking.
- Hunting was a popular social and sporting activity among the Umayyads.
- In the field of science human medicine was encouraged and supported by Umar 11 who order for the translation of medicinal into Arabic and also built medical schools.
- Philosophy also developed during this time and as a result some theological groups like Hashrids came up. Physics and chemistry were also promoted. For example physicians like Abu Jafar and bin Arthur made enormous contributions to the field of physics during the reign of Muawiyah.
- Many translation of were made from Greek to Arabic to facilitate learning of science. For example Khalid bin Yazid was a well known translator.
- Astrology also developed during this time. A full department was put in place with Jafar al Sidiq a renowned astrologist.

- The Umayyads also gave a number of scholarships to students to study science. For example Jafar al Sidiq received such scholarships. They also set up hospitals for chronic disease.

#### **REFERENCE QUESTIONS:**

1. *Discuss the contributions of the Umayyads towards the development of science and technology*
2. *Discuss the political social and economic organization of the Umayyads between 660 to 743 CE.*

## **THE ABBASID DYNASTY (750-1258 CE) BACK GROUND AND RISE TO POWER**

The Abbasids trace their origin from Abbas the uncle of the prophet and son of Abdul Mutalib who was the grandfather of the prophet. Abbas didn't convert to Islam at its inception however he embraced it after the conquest of Mecca in 630CE. He left behind several off springs among whom was Abdullah bin Abbas arenowned scholar of the Quran. Abbas also gave birth to first two caliphs of the Abbasids who included Abu Abbas al Safah and Abu Jafar al Mansoor

The dynasty lasted for 500 years and it was largest political system that was created by Moslems since the inception of Islam in 610CE. In all the dynasty had 70 caliphs and it reached its peak during the reign of Abu Jafar al Mansoor, Muhammad bin al Mohad and Al Mamun. It however collapsed at the hands of the moguls who came in from the east.

On coming to power, the Abbasids used too much forces compared to their counterparts the Umayyads. Despite this, they were massively welcomed because people thought that the Abbasids would revive the true concept of the Islamic caliphate.

At the beginning it appeared as though they would do what people expected of them when they presented themselves in a religious character. For example they would conduct celebrations like Isra wal Miraj. They even put on clothes similar to those put on by the prophet and also surrounded themselves with men well versed with the Quran and Hadith.

They even warned people that if power spilled out of the their hands, the world would go into disorder something that gave people the impression that they were true religious men however like their predecessors, the Abbasid caliphs were worldly caliphs who were taken up by worldly desires.

Originally the leaders of the Abbasid movement was Mohammed bin Ali assisted by Abu Muslim as his military officer. The two started to prepare people to realize the need to change the leadership of Islam to go back into the hands of people from the prophet's family. In their propaganda, they did not specify whether the new leaders would come from the house of Abbas or Ali, the two major hoses that opposed the Umayyads.

This smilingly confusing propaganda won support of the non Arab Moslems who thought that they had come to save them from the torture of the Umayyads. The Kharijiats on the

other hand that had also for a long time been mistreated by the Umayyads supported the Abbasid with the hope that they would be liberated. The Shias also supported the propaganda because for a long time they yearned to see the leadership of the Islamic state be in the hands of people from the prophet's house. The people of Yemen also supported the Abbasid hoping to get rid of the Umayyads who had caused rivalry between them and the people of Hijaz.

The Abbasid's propaganda begun in Kufah and Kharushan the two strong holds of shaism in the empire at time. Secretly using chiefs of in the area, the Abbasids managed to win support of masses in the area and when the Umayyads tried to end this rebellion, what followed were several encounters between them and the Abbasids.

In the due course Muhammad bin Ali was killed and he was succeeded by Abu Abbas al Safah. Being helped by chiefs from the house of Abbas, Abu Abbas set off from Kufah and spread the propaganda to different parts of the caliphate. With time the Abbasids were able to fight and defeat Maruwan 11 the last Umayyad caliph

## FACTORS FOR THE RISE OF THE RISE OF THE ABBASID DYNASTY

1. ***The presence of pro- Ali feelings thought the Umayyad caliphate had a hand in the rise of the Abbasids.*** The death of Ali left a mark in the members of the prophet's house and supporters which was worsened by the death of Hassan and later Hussein. The Shias there for always looked for a time when they could avenge the murder of the 3 personalities. Therefore when the Abbasids presented an opportunity of toppling the Umayyads, they easily supported them in their bid to capture power.
2. ***The weakness of the Umayyad caliphs that was exhibited in their immoral character and oppressive policies led to the rise of the Abbasids.*** For it alienated the masses from the central government, this as a factor was exploited greatly by the Abbasids to rise to power.
3. ***The absence of a strong army to crush the Abbasids also led to the rise of the Abbasids.*** The Umayyad army had been demoralized by many caliphs who even failed to pay their salaries. The army there for lost trust in the Umayyad administration and when the Abbasids declared their revolt openly, there was no force to defend thee the Umayyads.
4. ***The clan struggle and tribal difference in the Umayyad dynasty at the time also accounts for the rise of the Abbasids.*** It should be noted that most tribes started fighting for supremacy within the Umayyad caliphate and un fortunately the Umayyad caliphs played one tribe against the other. This caused hatred for the Umayyads by such tribes and when the Abbasids rose up, such disgruntled tribes supported them in their quest to seize power from the Umayyads.
5. ***Divisions within the Umayyad establishment its self also made the rise of the Abbasids inevitable.*** The division stemmed from the succession deputes which divided the royal family into a number of camps. There for with a divided establishment little could be done in blocking the rise of the Abbasids.

6. ***The Abbasids propaganda also led to the rise of the Abbasids.*** In the later days of the Umayyad dynasty, the Abbasids started an underground movement in which they preached that the leadership of the Moslem state should come from the house of the prophet. This earned them a lot of support leading to their rise to power. In their propaganda however, they did not specify whether the new leaders would come from the house of Abbas or Ali, the two major houses that opposed the Umayyads. This smilingly confusing propaganda won support of the non Arab Moslems who thought that they had come to save them from the torture of the Umayyads, that of The Kharijites who for a long time been mistreated by the Umayyads, that of The Shias also supported the propaganda because for a long time they yearned to see the leadership of the Islamic state be in the hands of people from the prophet's house plus The people of Yemen who hoped to get rid of the Umayyads who had caused rivalry between them and the people of Hijaz. After realizing the support of these groups, from Kufah and Kharushan, the propaganda spread to the entire state making the rise of the Abbasids rise to power inevitable.
7. ***The strength of the Abbasid generals also left the Umayyad administration in desperate situation.*** Generals like Abu Musilim fought courageously and defeated the already demoralized Umayyad army.
8. ***The existence of a large number of dissatisfied groups of people also accounts for the rise of the Abbasids.*** Groups like the Kharijites, Shias, non Arab Moslems and Christians for a long time yearned for the end of the Umayyad rule but lacked good leadership to fulfill their desires .there for when the Abbasids appeared on the scene they all supported them leading to their rise
9. ***The unfair treatment of the non Arab Moslems in general and the Persians in particular also accelerated the rise of the Abbasids.*** The **mawali** as they came to be known were highly discriminated by the Umayyads. For example, those that served in the army could not receive pension upon retirement like their Arab counter parts, they were supposed to pay poll tax on top of paying Zakat, and could not access top management positions in the civil or military service. All this forced many of them to join the Abbasids in order to end the discrimination the Umayyads. This perhaps explains why the Abbasids received overwhelming support from Kufah and Kharushan areas mainly populated by Persian Moslems.
10. ***The Abbasid's determination to rule the Moslem state also acted as a pushing factor to control power.*** It should be noted that from the earliest time of Umayyad administration, the Abbasids regarded themselves as rightful leaders of the Moslem state. Therefore they had to use every opportunity at their disposal to rise to power.
11. ***The leadership vacuum created by the bad administration of the Umayyads also led to their rise to power.*** The Umayyad caliphs had outlived their usefulness as many of them become worldly caliphs. This caused them hatred from pious Moslems who when the Abbasids appeared on the scene, they greatly supported them especially when they campaigned for the return of the leadership of the Islamic state in the hands of the people from the prophet's house.

12. *The Abbasids were also better organized if compared to the Umayyads.* For example they organized a skillful campaign against the Umayyads who were largely disorganized.
13. The immediate factor that explains the rise of the Abbasids was *the successful physical confrontation* planned by Abbasid generals like Abu Musilim Khalid, Abu Ayyum. E.t.c. it was after such confrontations that Abu Abbas declared himself first caliph of the Abbasids.

**REFERENCE QUESTIONS:**

1. *Account for the rise of the Abbasids to power in 750CE.*
2. *"It was the weakness of the Umayyad caliphs that led to the rise of the Abbasid dynasty". Discuss*

**THE REIGN OF ABU ABBAS AL SAFAH (749-754 CE) BACK GROUND & RISE TO POWER:**

His real names are Abu Abbas bin Muhammad and was related to the prophet through his uncle Abbas bin Abutalib. His early life history is not clear but he is reported to have joined the Abbasid campaign before the death of Muhammad bin Ali the leader of the Abbasid propaganda.

He gained power on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 749CE when he was enthroned as the first caliph of the Abbasids.

***Abu Abbas Al Safah's reforms and contributions:***

1. He built a country residence called Hashimiyah named after Hashim the ancestor of the Banu Hasim in the city of Anbar which he even made the capital of the new Abbasid dynasty.
2. He put in place many buildings and security centers to limit banditry activities within the empire after the decline of the Umayyads.
3. He also improved on the roads which linked Mecca and Iraq. This was intended to keep Iraq in full control for fear of opposition of the Shias in Iraq.
4. He also established a belief among Moslems which made them look at the Abbasids as getting their authority from God. Thus, no one was supposed to challenge authority given them by God.
5. One of his outstanding reforms was the reintroduction of a theocracy which had been last practiced during the time of the orthodox caliphs. In this, he kept around himself learned men whom he consulted on a number of issues and led prayers at the state mosque.
6. He also tried to expand the influence of Islam to areas like Spain.
7. He consolidated himself in power by putting an end to revolts that cropped up after the downfall of the Umayyads in places like Kufah.
8. He also portrayed the Abbasids and himself as religious men who were devoted to Islam. For example he wore clothes similar to those put on by the prophet.
9. He also made sure he ended Umayyad resistance against his rule. This was done under the pretext of reconciliation when he invited the Umayyad princess to dinner and half through the dinner he called his soldiers who killed all of them apart from Abdul Rahuman

who escaped to Syria where he established the second Umayyad dynasty.

10. He also worked with other Abbasid chiefs like Abu Jafar to completely defeat the Umayyads. Unfortunately, al-Safah contracted smallpox which killed him in 754 CE at the age of 33 after saving Islam for only 4 years. But before his death he had nominated Abu Jafar al-Mansoor to be next caliph.

#### THE REIGN OF ABU JAFAR AL MANSOOR (754-775 CE) BACK GROUND & RISE TO POWER:

He was a son of Mohammad bin Ali, who was also son of Abdullah bin Abbas a son to Abbas bin Abu Talib the uncle of the prophet.

He was nominated to the caliphate by Abu Abbas Al-Safah the 1<sup>st</sup> Abbasid caliph. Al-Mansoor had participated in the movement that resulted into the downfall of the Umayyads. It was also Abu Jafar that firmly established the Abbasid dynasty and it's because of this that he is always referred to as the real founder of the Abbasid dynasty and besides, 35 caliphs that succeeded him were from his line of descent.

#### ABU JAFAR AL MANSOOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS AND REFORMS:

On becoming caliph he managed to solve a number of challenges that were in the empire at the time.

- ✓ He managed to end the threat of his uncle Abdullah bin Ali who had played a leading role in the overthrow of the Umayyads and thought that he would take on the caliphate after the death of Al-Safah. However, when Abu Jafar was nominated caliph, Abdullah organized an army with intention of overthrowing him. Abu Jafar responded by sending an army to him which captured him and later imprisoned for 7 years and there after he was killed by the caliph himself.
- ✓ The other challenge was Abu Muslim whom Abu Jafar had used to defeat Abdullah bin Ali. After defeating Abdullah, Abu Muslim was made governor of Kharushan where he became too powerful and arrogant that he started defying the orders of the caliph. Abu Jafar requested him to meet him at his palace where he charged him with treason and ended up killing him.
- ✓ He also liquidated the people of Kharushan who were mainly Shia. Under Sinuad they revolted against the caliph but they were handled and Sinuad was killed.
- ✓ He also fought the Shias led Mohammed Al-Nafsi and Al-Zachariah and killed them. Ibrahim a grandson of Imam Hussein carried Medina which attracted support from the Shias of Hijaz and Iraq. Abu Jafar however, able put it to an end and its leader was executed.
- ✓ He also ended foreign aggression from the Romans when he fought them and recaptured back areas Moslems had lost to the Romans like Armenia.
- ✓ After creating sanity in the state, Abu Jafar soon became the supreme leader of the Moslem world and took the title **Al-Mansoor** which meant **the victorious** and thus a greater part of the empire came under his rule including north Africa where his rule extended to as far as Morocco as opposed to Egypt where it initially stopped, Kashmir and the Himalayan valleys in the east, and also took over present day Pakistan.
- ✓ The caliph maintained the theocracy that had been introduced by Al-Safah in which the



authority in the state laid in the hands of theologians. In this caliph was both the political and religious head who took the title of imam.

- ✓ He also proclaimed that the caliph derived his authority from God and not the people. Therefore his leadership was based on the will of God and not that of the masses.
- ✓ Al Mansoor also adopted the Umayyad system of succession in which the reigning caliph would nominate his successor
- ✓ Al Mansoor also founded the city of Baghdad which became the capital city of the empire. It also became a center of culture, trade and commerce in the empire.
- ✓ Al Mansoor established a strong standing army in which employed a number of Persians who were paid handsomely compared to other jobs the empire.
- ✓ During his reign, the policy of Arabisation lost its strength as the Arabs were replaced by the Persians in key positions of the state.
- ✓ He also adopted the policy of employing people on merit which mad many non Moslems to attain key positions in the state.
- ✓ He introduced a period of intellectual awakening in the dynasty when he ordered for the translation of many medicinal, astronomical and philosophical works from Greek, Hindu, and Aramaic to Arabic.
- ✓ Al mansoor also tried to fight the Umayyads who had established their administration in Spain under AbdulRahuman. But he was not successful.
- ✓ He also extended freedom of worship to all people who were non Moslems in the caliphate.
- ✓ He built strategic palaces on the western bank of the Tigris River which was economically important in easing transport into the capital.
- ✓ He also established Abbasids' right of exercising supreme powers with titles.
- ✓ It was during his reign that the Qibla was fixed using by the use of compass.
- ✓ It was during his reign that the position of Visir (prime minster) was introduced in the Islamic state for the first time.

### ***However he had some short comings as a caliph.***

- ✓ He appointed Christians to top administrative positions something that gave them a lot of influence in Moslem state.
- ✓ Although he was apolitical genius, he failed the regain control of the province of Spain which was now under the control of the Umayyads.
- ✓ When he reduced the strength of the Arabazation policy, he alienated the Arabs from the Abbasid caliphate as it came to b dominated by the Persians.
- ✓ He created a huge army whose officers were paid highly. This caused a huge tax burden on the masses.
- ✓ He died in 775CE while on pilgrimage in Mecca and was succeeded his son Mohammed Al Mahad instead of Isa bin Musa whom Al Safah had nominated to succeed al Mansoor

## REFERENCE QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the view that al Mansoor was the real founder of the Abbasid caliphate.

### **The reign of Mohammed Al Mahad (775-785 CE) Back ground & rise to power:**

He was a son of Abu Jafar al Mansoor and become caliph upon the death of the father. His reign was characterized with moderation and leniency if compared to the reigns first two caliphs.

### **Mohammed al Mahad's reforms and contributions:**

- ✓ He succeeded in reducing the threat of the Romans who had disturbed peace in Asia Minor. He used his son Harun to defeat them and forced them to pay an annual tribute of 8000 Dinars
- ✓ He was kind personate and generous to the distressed and the poor. He there for used all the riches left behind by the father as charity to the poor and the needy.
- ✓ He restored the ancient privileges and sanctity of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina which his father had withdrawn .e.g. The two cities were once again treated as the holiest cities in Islam and no blood would be spilled in these cities or their vicinity
- ✓ A lot of money was given as charity to the people of Hijaz who had been neglected for a long time and alienated by the Umayyads since Hijaz was a home of the Hashimites.
- ✓ On his orders, the mosque of the prophet in medina was re built and beautified. This also happened to other mosques in other cities.
- ✓ He promoted the practice of pilgrimage by building Inns and wells along the pilgrimage rout to Mecca. Armed guards were also placed along the route to protect pilgrims and other travelers.
- ✓ He improved on the postal system between Mecca, medina and Yemen plus other parts of the empire. This improved on communication throughout the Moslem state.
- ✓ He also made improvements in the judiciary by acting as the supreme judge in high court and making of appointment of impartial judges to administer justice.
- ✓ He created the office of intelligence whose duty was to bring news from his governors. This was intended to protect and maintain peace in the caliphate
- ✓ During his reign, false prophets resurfaced but he managed to supers them. For example Hashim bin Hakim who referred to himself as the saint and prophet of Kharushan was defeated by al Mahad.
- ✓ Al Mahad also fortified and strengthened the cities of Kufah and eastern Baghdad. As such Baghdad was turned it into a center of international trade, music, poetry, philosophy and literature.
- ✓ Al Mahad also crushed the Zendix a sect that encouraged immorality, kidnapping of children and also mixed Zoroastrian teachings with the Islamic ones.

- ✓ He also restored to the prophet's family, property that had been confiscated by his father. This property at first had been confiscated by Muawiyah and it was returned to the prophet's family by Umar bin Abdul Aziz but later re-confiscated by al Mansoor. There for it was Al Mahad who returned it again to the prophet's family.
- ✓ He was also generous to his soldiers. For example during his father's reign, a group of soldiers were dismissed and fined heavily on charges of extortion. As such their property was confiscated and put in the state treasury. Al Mahad however forgave them and returned the confiscated property
- ✓ During his reign a son of Marwan II the last Umayyad caliph organized a rebellion against him. His rebellion was however defeated and its leader was thrown to jail, from where he was released and given substantial pension by the caliph.
- ✓ He freed prisoners' except those with dangerous crimes. This promoted reconciliation with his subjects. He also promoted professionalism in the empire by employing skilful personal, scholars, great thinkers and researchers.
- ✓ He helped purify Islam by fighting false beliefs like Zoroastrianism that was being preached and practice by Abdul Qudus and his followers.

### ***However he had some short comings as a caliph.***

- ✓ He misused the Baitul Mali when he forgave re corrupt army officers and returned their property that had been confiscated by the father.
- ✓ By setting free the prisoners at the start of his reign, Al Mahad disappointed those people whom the prisoners had offended.

### **REFERENCE QUESTIONS**

1. *Examine the contributions of Mohammed al Mahad to the Abbasid caliphate between 775 and 785 CE*

## **THE REIGN OF HARUN AL RASHID (787- 809 CE)**

### ***(The golden age of the Abbasid caliphate)***

#### **Back ground & rise to power:**

Harun was a son of al Mahad and his mother was Khayzruna. His early life is not well except that he was a commander of his father's army and led an expedition against the Romans. Before the death of his father he had been nominated as his successor however his brother Al Hadi took over the throne and al Rashid only become a caliph after the death of his brother in 786CE.

Harun ascended to the throne in **787CE** in Baghdad as one of the most enlightened caliph. He was a great leader who was able to register a number of achievements which undoubtedly made his reign one of the greatest and its because of this reason that his reign has been referred to as the golden age of the Abbasid. **Harun Al Rashid's reforms and contributions:**

- ✓ **In the field of war**, Harun suppressed all the internal rebellions that came up after the death of his brother.
- ✓ For instance he suppressed the Kharijites of Monsul. They defeated the Abbasid governor Abu Hurairah and declared their independence. The caliph sent reinforcement which defeated the Kharijites and led to the restoration of peace in Monsul
- ✓ He was also able to suppress Walid bin Thakif who rose up in northern Iraq. His rebellion

had also ignited rebellions in Armenia, Azerbaijani and Mesopotamia. Al Rashid crushed all rebellions and Walid was saline.

- ✓ After the killing of Walid, his sister Lairah started to challenge the authority of the caliph, she was however defeated and peace was restored in Iraq.
- ✓ He also suppressed the Mudirites and Hamirites which were two antagonistic tribes that struggled for supremacy and disturbed peace in Syria. Initially the caliph remained silent since they had been hostile to the Umayyads. However he took measures to suppress these separatist group and restored peace and order.
- ✓ He also pacified the Berber rebellion in North Africa who had also declared their independence. He reached to an understanding with Ibrahim al Aghlab, who then fought and defeated the Idrisid who had established the Idriside empire and then established the Agalabite empire plus paying the caliph an annual tribute of 40,000 Dirhams.
- ✓ After solving the internal rebellions, Harun embarked on the external aggression from the Greeks. He attacked and defeated them under the leadership of queen Irena and forced them to pay an annual tribute of 80,000 diners.
- ✓ **In administration**, Al Rashid established elaborate administration machinery in which he was able established a number of public works like roads, schools, medical halls .e.t.c.
- ✓ During his reign Baghdad become an important center of learning, culture trade and commerce.
- ✓ There was peace and prosperity in the caliphate which helped the travelers and caravans to freely move to various parts of the empire
- ✓ He took great care of the well being of the people in caliphate. For instance in disguise, the caliph would move to different parts of the empire to assess the conditions of the masses.
- ✓ In the field of justice, he chose upright and powerful Khads who were famous for their impartial judgment.
- ✓ The peace he created gave an opportunity to his people to cultivate knowledge in the field of science, medicine, architecture, Arabic grammar and mathematics.
- ✓ Ancient Babylonian, Hindu and Persian culture were taken to the palace of the caliph in Baghdad and gained great reputation among the subjects.
- ✓ Great philosophical work of Aristotle and medical works of the Greeks were adopted by the caliph.
- ✓ And an order to facilitate their translation, a department of translation was established and among the great translators of the time was Abu Yahaya bin Basiq and Yahaya bin Muawiyah.
- ✓ The caliph was a great poet and made considerable effort were made to support poetry.
- ✓ Conversable contributions were also made in the field of Arabic literature and the greatest scholars of the time included Al Khwarzim the founder of modern Algebra.
- ✓ A medical school was also established at Jundespour to teach physicians

- ✓ During this time the Hanafi School of law of Imam Abu Hanifah thrived under chief khad Abu Yusufu.

***However he had some short comings as a caliph.***

- ✓ He was unable to suppress the Umayyads in Spain established by Abdul Rahuman
- ✓ He also maintained a very big army which was very expensive to maintain
- ✓ Shortly before his death Al Rashid nominated his son Al Amin as his successor who was also to be succeeded by his other son Al Mamun.

### **Reference question**

*"The golden age of the Abbasid caliphate" is this affair description of Al Rashid's reign?*

### **The reign of Al Mamun the great (813- 833 CE) Back ground & rise to power:**

His early life is not well known. His father was Harun Al Rashid and he is believed to have spent his early years with scholars.

His leadership was the apex of the golden time of the Abbasids because having spent some time with scholars, Al Mamun's interest was more in study. He also carried out a few conquests in Sicily, cert, Kabul and Kandaq.

Al Mamun reigned for 20 years and in his administration he paid more attention to the consolidation of the empire and cultural up lifting of his subjects. His reign was so glorious that it's often compared to that of Augusts of Rome.

### ***Al Mamun's reforms and contributions:***

- ✓ **In the field of war**, Nasir bin Saba an Arab chief rose up in a rebellion against al Mamun in the memory of the last caliph Al Amin. He was able to defy the authority of the caliph for 5 years but he was later defeated and the whole of Iraq was brought under the control of the caliph.
- ✓ In Iraq still the Bedouins rose up in a rebellion after the caliph had confirmed Hassan as the new governor of
- ✓ Iraq. This rebellion was how ever defeated by the caliph.
- ✓ The Shias also staged a rebellion against the caliph. They still believed in the divine right of the people from the house of Ali to lead the Moslem state. Al Mamun however moved against and defeated them.
- ✓ He also defeated the Romans whose aggressive tendencies had caused the death of a number of Moslems at the northern borders of the state. Himself commanded an army against them and when they sought for peace he refused because he wanted to prevent a repeat of such attacks.

**In administration**, Al Mamun devoted himself towards making the caliphate a constitutional republic. As such he created regular councils that had representatives from the Jews, Serbians, Zoroastrians, Christians and Moslems.

- ✓ On justice, he was a man that loved justice. To him there was no difference between a Moslem and non Moslem in the eyes of law. As such he did not tolerate any form of discrimination based on either creed or sex.

- ✓ During his time all people were legible to public office and on merit and were supposed to receive social service without any discrimination.
- ✓ During his reign, none Moslems enjoyed freedom of worship and all clerics were accorded equal status at the caliph's court.
- ✓ He was a devoted Moslem who performed all his religious duties as required of by Islam. Even the greatest critics of the Abbasid considered him a devoted Moslem.
- ✓ He was a great scholar who had firm knowledge on the traditions of the prophet, Quran and Islamic law.
- ✓ The most prominent development during his reign was the rise of rational thinkers known as the **Mutazirites** (deserters) founded by Yasir bin Atta a former student of Hassan Al Basri. It was a group that had broken away from the Sunni Moslems and had strong belief in reasoning and argument. They also believed in man's free will as regards doing good and evil, creation of the Quran .e.t.c. Al Mamun therefore adopted mutazirites' doctrine and tried to introduce them in the empire.
- ✓ He also made reforms in the taxation policy on land. In Iraq for example, a fifth of the crops grown on this land would be taken in the state treasury at the time of harvest.
- ✓ He was very charitable for instance he is said to have given the people of Mecca and Medinah money which encouraged many people to join Islam.
- ✓ He improved on intelligence in the empire which ensured maximum security, law and order in the empire

**Regarding culture and science**, he brought about an intellectual awakening in the state as subjects like science, math, physics, botany, philosophy, literature and history were developed.

- ✓ He established the hall of science which contained a library and department of translation where foreign scholarly works were translated to Arabic.
- ✓ Works of Plato and Aristotle were translated to Arabic by Abu Ishaq a renowned translator at the time.
- ✓ New developments and discoveries were made in the field of astronomy with Saad bin Ali and Yahya bin Mansoor as the greatest astronomers of the time.
- ✓ Observatories were also established in Baghdad and telescopes were introduced to boost astronomy and astrology.
- ✓ Mathematics also prospered during his reign with **Al Khwarzim** as the principal figure who composed the oldest work in geometry, arithmetic, and algebra.
- ✓ Other subjects that evolved greatly during this time included chemistry, zoology and mineralogy.
- ✓ In geography many advances were made .for example the desire to fix the Qibla at the time of prayer led to the invention of longitudes and latitudes.
- ✓ In history substantial contributions were made, in Kufah, for example Ibn Saad distinguished himself as a pre Islamic writer.

- ✓ It was around the same time that Bukhari immersed as the greatest collector and compiler of the prophet's traditions.
- ✓ In philosophy considerable developments were made to the extent that physicians were required to first learn philosophy so as to earn the title **Al Hakim**. Al Razi and Al Khwarzim were the greatest philosophers of the time.
- ✓ Al Mamun also made sure that a number of schools and colleges were put in place to educate the common man.

In conclusion the glory of al Mamun's reign superseded all the reigns of all the other Moslem rulers to the extent that his reign is often referred to as "**the August age of Islam**"

#### **Reference questions:**

1. *Discuss al Mamun's contributions towards science and culture.*
2. *"The August's age of Islam" is this affair description of Al Mamun's reign?*

### **FACTORS FOR DECLINE OF THE ABBASID DYNASTY**

With the death of Al Mamun, the dynasty started to decline. He was succeeded by Al Mutasim to whom the soldiers refused to pay allegiance and besides, he also faced a number of rebellions from within and outside state especially from the Romans. When he died he was succeeded by Wathiq who was the last Abbasid caliph. a number of factors have been put forward to explain the factors for the down fall of the Abbasids for instance;

1. ***The vastness of the empire also led to its decline.*** It extended from as far as the Indus River in the east, the Atlantic Ocean in the west, the Caspian Sea in the north and the Indian Ocean in the south. Such a vast empire could not survive in the hands of weak leaders especially when some areas started declaring their independence.
2. ***Closely connected to the above was the rise of weak leaders.*** It should be noted that after Abdullah A Mamun there was no any other strong caliph that rose in the ranks of the Abbasids. The later caliphs ignored their state duties which caused a number of revolts that brought the empire to its knees.
3. ***The appointment of Turkish soldiers also accounts for the downfall of the Abbasids.*** In order to create a strong army, Al Mutasim appointed a number of Turks in the army. They later become active and hardworking that they rose to high ranks in the army. They extremely become powerful to the extent of defying the caliph's orders. This could not guarantee the continued existence of the Abbasid.
4. ***The disobedience of provincial governors is a factor to consider.*** It should be noted that due to the weakness of some Abbasid caliphs, it gave the provincial governors an opportunity to defy the authority of the caliphs and declared the independence of their province a factor greatly contributed to the decline of the caliphate.
5. ***The rise of independent sub dynasties within the Abbasid caliph also led to its decline.*** It should be noted that the bad conditions within the caliphate forced a number of people to declare their independence. For example the Fatimids in Egypt, Mongols in central Iraq, Al Moravides in morocco and Samandas in Bukhara. The rise of such sub dynasties couldn't guarantee the continued existence of the empire.

6. ***The rise of the Kharamathians was another factor that led to the decline of the Abbasids.*** It was a religious group led by Kharamathi that rose up in the gloomy days of the Abbasid. It preached and encouraged drinking, fornication, adultery and other immoral activities. This passive outlook and moral laxity preached by Kharamathi enabled him to gather a big number of supporters with whom he engaged the Abbasids in a series of battles which weakened the caliphate leading to its decline.
7. ***Decentralization within the Abbasid dynasty also led to its decline.*** Due to its vastness, the empire was divided into a number of provinces to ease its administration. Though the arrangement was good, in the hands of weak caliphs, the policy led to the down fall of the stated especially when a lot of authority was vested in the hands of the governors. Some become too strong to defy the authority of the caliph. With time such provinces broke away from the state leading to the decline of the state.
8. ***The rise of a number of sects also led to the decline of the Abbasids.*** For example the rise of the Shias, Kharamatians, and Mutazirites did not only undermine the unity of the Muslim subjects but also made these sects to collectively or individually work for the decline of the Abbasids.
9. Opposition of the Shias also led to the decline of the state. They were an independent political group that opposed the Abbasids especially when they failed to hand over power to the relatives of the prophet from the house of Ali as they had promised in their propaganda against the Umayyad state. They fought the Abbasid on several occasions and even caved the Fatimid dynasty for the Abbasid Empire a factor that led to the decline of the Abbasid caliphate.
10. ***Succession disputes also explain why the empire collapsed.*** Like the Umayyad, the Abbasid also lacked a defined system of succession. At one time the reigning caliph would nominate his eldest son as to the throne and at another all his sons as successors. This resulted into conflicts among the successors which killed the solidarity of the Abbasid caliphate and also weakened the state.
11. ***The decay of the national economy also made the decline of the Abbasids inevitable.*** Just like their Umayyad counter parts, the Abbasid caliphs indulged themselves in luxury, spent much of their time with women and spent lavishly on parties' and items in the palaces. This depleted the state treasury and the situation was made worse when the provincial governors misappropriated and embezzled state funds.
12. ***The brutality of some Abbasid caliphs also led to the decline of caliphate.*** They killed and mistreated their subjects. This caused lot of resistance from the subjects who started conspiring to over throw the empire.
13. ***The rebellion of the Zenji slaves also led to the decline of the Abbasid .*** They were black slaves imported from East Africa to work on farms controlled by the Abbasids. They were however mistreated by their Abbasid masters who forced them to resist and engaged the army in a number of battles. Such events resulted into the decline of the state.
14. ***Natural calamities that hit the empire also accounts for the decline of the Abbasids.*** In Iraq for example floods hit the area which resulted into famine, disease and displacement of the people. Besides calamities the caliphs failed to find to solution problems created by the calamities. In the end the problems caused revolts that caused the decline of the state.



15. ***The neglect of the army also explains why the Abbasid collapsed.*** Most of them could not pay salaries of the army in time something that demoralized the soldiers who lost confidence in the government. There for when the Abbasids were attacked by the moguls there was no strong army to defend the empire.
16. ***The hostility of the Mudarites and the Himyarites also led to the down fall of the empire.*** They were two antagonistic groups that fought for supremacy in the state. These fights hampered the progress of the state, created disunity and final decline of the state.
17. ***Hostility from the Arabs also doomed the existence of the Abbasid caliphate.*** It should be remembered that the Arabs were an arrogant group of people who considered themselves superior to other races in the
18. Islamic state at the time yet when the Abbasid took power they adopted policy that encouraged equality of all people there by giving an opportunity to the Persians and Turks to attain high positions of responsibility at the expense of the Arabs. This made them jealous and there for sought for an opportunity to overthrow the Abbasids that came when they joined other discounted groups to fight the Abbasids
19. ***External attacks from the Greeks also led to the decline of the Abbasids.*** Although Haran Al Rashid and Al Mamun had tried to handle the threats from the Greeks during the reign of weak caliphs, they rose up and attacked the Muslim state on several occasions weakening its defenses leading to its decline.
20. ***The invasion of the Christians during the crusade movements the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries also weakened the state leading to its collapse.*** During the reigns of weak caliphs Christian armies from Europe attacked the Muslim state with the aim of taking back Jerusalem to their control. These conflicts weakened the state leading to the decline of the state.
21. ***The invasion of Halqikhan the leader of Mongols was the final blow that led to the decline of the Abbasid.*** He marched towards Bagdad and forced Al Wathiq the last Abbasid caliph to resign. His unconditional resignation meant the end of the Abbasid caliphate.

### ***Reference questions***

1. *To what extent did the Abbasid weakness pave way for the emergence of independent Muslim sub dynasties?*
2. *To what extent were the Abbasids responsible for their own down fall?*
3. *Account for the down the Abbasid dynasty.*

## **LIFE DURING THE ABBASID DYNASTY**

### ***Political life; Leadership:***

- ✓ At the top of the administration was the caliph who was the center of power. He could however delegate his civil authority to his ministers, judicial powers to judges but he remained in control of the religious affairs.
- ✓ The Abbasid caliphs combined both political and religious leadership and later on it become common to find a caliph to be horned with titles like “the shadow of God on earth”, “caliphatu-lah” (the successor of God)

- ✓ Succession to the caliphate to the caliphate was just like that of the Umayyad caliphate. It was not defined there for the reigning caliph would nominate a son or a number of sons whom he considered competent to serve in the office of the caliph.
- ✓ Attached to the caliph was the office of the chamberlain whose role was to introduce envoys and dignitaries to the caliph.
- ✓ Besides this, was the office of the executioner who had underground chambers from where he could torture the enemies of the state.
- ✓ Below the caliph was the chief minister (visir). He had the responsibility of appointing and dismissing governors and judges with the consent of the caliph. He also presided over councils of various heads of department in the state. E.g. The postal department, the board of grievances, the account office and the department of taxes.
- ✓ In the Abbasid caliphate, the dispensing of justice was religious duty entrusted to members of the theologian class.
- ✓ For one to be a judge, he had to be a male adult in full possession of his mental faculties, free citizen, a Muslim with sound character, good sight, good hearing abilities and above all he had to be well versed with the Islamic law.
- ✓ The non Muslims however were to judged by their own laws.
- ✓ The Abbasids had a regular army which was permanently active and was paid regularly. It also would act as the body guard of the caliph and besides the army was a volunteer force which was paid only when on duty. The army was comprised of the infantry and Calvary. The infantry was armed with spears, swords, and shields. The Calvary wore helmets, breast plates and were equipped with launchers and battle axes. They would also wear fire proof suits
- ✓ The composition of the army was different from that of the Umayyads which was predominantly Arab. It was made up of northern and southern Arabs Persians and Turks who originally had been slaves from central Asia.
- ✓ The state was divided into 24 provinces with each province under a governor. Most provinces were ruled independent from the capital, some provincial leadership was hereditary but in all situations the governors reported directly to the caliph in Bagdad. They were allowed to form independent armies, collect taxes part of which was sent to the capital.

### ***Economic life:***

- ✓ As far as the economic life was concerned, the abbasid society was divided into two distinct groups for instance the high income earners who included the aristocrats, learned men, crafts men and artisans. The low income earners were the majority included famers and traders.
- ✓ Trade was the major economic activity and because of the fame the empire had attained as regards civilization, international trade boomed. Earlier merchants included Christians and Zoroastrians but later the Arabs took the lead. Ports and towns like Alexandria, Bagdad, Basra, cairn and Damascus developed into major trading centers that show Muslim trader go as far as china in the east and morocco plus Spain in the west.
- ✓ Items of trade included silk, dates, woolen fabrics, steel products and glass ware.

- ✓ Industry was a major economic activity where mining took a central stage producing gold, lead, marble and iron.
- ✓ Agriculture was also highly practiced at the center of the caliphate since it occupied fertile alluvial plains. Canals were also dug from major rivers like Tigris to desert areas to boost irrigation in desert areas.
- ✓ Finances to run the state were derived from taxes charged on arable land, poll tax from non-Muslims and Zakat.

### **Social life:**

- ✓ During the reign of the Abbasids there was high levels of equality among people as such class division were generally discouraged.
- ✓ Women enjoyed a high status like the one they enjoyed during the reign of the Umayyads. They were part of the high class and had a lot of influence in the state. For example Al Mamun's wife would command the army in war.
- ✓ Drinking alcohol was common both in public and in private. This boom in drinking came as a result of the laxity of some caliphs who also enjoyed the vice like Al Hadi, Al amin, Al Mutasim and Al Wathiq.
- ✓ Sports were highly venerated especially indoor games like chess, the throwing of the dice, polo, and horse racing and hunting.

### **Religious life:**

- ✓ Many people in the land of the Abbasids were converted to Islam through a gradual and peaceful process.
- ✓ Besides there was freedom of worship therefore those that didn't want to convert were not forced to.
- ✓ Theology also developed as Muslim scholars tried to address problems in the Islamic state at the time. This field was dominated by the Arabs and it required one to have full knowledge of the Quran. This with time resulted into theological speculations which led to the rise of the Mutazirites and Mu'harirites as schools of thought.
- ✓ The science of Hadith also developed greatly during this time. Scholars undertook journeys throughout the caliphate in the quest for Hadith to the extent that if one lost his life in quest for knowledge, he would be compared to one who died in a Jihad. Imam Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Daud were the outstanding Muhaditheens of the time.
- ✓ The science of Islamic jurisprudence (Islamic law) also developed during this time. It was based on the Quran and the Sunnah of the prophet and later Qiyas (analogical deduction), Ijma (consensus of learned men) and Ra'y (personal judgment) developed.
- ✓ It was also during this time that the four Sunni schools of law developed. The first was the Hanafi school under Imam Abu Hanifah that developed in Iraq, followed by the Malakite in Medinah under Imam Malik, the Shafi school in Cairo under Imam Shafi and the Hambalite school under Imam Ahmed bin Hannibal.
- ✓ Notable during this time was the development of numerous sects for example, the Kharijites, Mutazirites, Sufis and Shias.

## Intellectual life:

- ✓ Medicine developed early enough as studies in eye disease were carried out and trial medicines were carried out on Apes.
- ✓ The Abbasids were the first to establish a pharmacy shop and several pharmacological treatments were composed by people like Jabir.
- ✓ Certificates were also given to quality scholars such as physicians.
- ✓ The first hospital was established in Bagdad by Sinan during the reign of Harun al Rashid after which several hospitals developed throughout the empire plus mobile clinics.
- ✓ The Abbasid reign experienced a period of intellectual awakening which led to the development of subjects like science, math, physics, botany, philosophy, literature and history.
- ✓ There was also the establishment of the hall of science which contained a library and department of translation where foreign scholarly woks were translated to Arabic.
- ✓ Works of Pluto and Aristotle were translated to Arabic by Abu Ishaq a renowned translator at the time.
- ✓ New developments and discoveries were made in the field of astronomy with Saad bin Ali and Yahaya bin Mansur as the greatest astronomers of the time.
- ✓ Observatories were also established in Baghdad and telescopes were introduced to boost astronomy and astrology.
- ✓ Mathematics also prospered during his reign with **Al Khwarzim** as the principal figure who composed the oldest work in geometry, arithmetic, and algebra.
- ✓ Other subjects that evolved greatly during this time included chemistry, zoology and mineralogy.
- ✓ In geography many advances were made. for example the desire to fix the Qibla at the time of prayer led to the invention of longitudes and latitudes.
- ✓ In history substantial contributions were made, in Kufah, for example Ibn Saad distinguished himself as a pre Islamic writer.
- ✓ It was around the same time that Bukhari immersed as the greatest collector and compiler of the prophet's traditions.
- ✓ In philosophy considerable developments were made to the extent that physicians were required to fast learn philosophy so as earn the title "**Al Hakim**". Al Razi and Al Khwarzim were the greatest philosophers of the time.
- ✓ Education of children started in homes with no specific curriculum
- ✓ Elementary schools were also developed with a curriculum that involved the recitation of the Quran, writing Arabic grammar, study of the prophet's Hadith .e.t.c.
- ✓ Private tutors were also used to teach the children of the rich

- ✓ Adult education was also attended to especially at the mosques guided by the Alim. A number of schools and colleges were put in place to educate the common man.
- ✓ Common writing materials like the papyrus were introduced to boost study before bringing in paper from China during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (AH)
- ✓ Arabic Literature also developed as non-Arabs tried to challenge the Arabs. Later on it turned into serious work. People like Al-Farabi produced poetry books.

### **Reference questions**

*Discuss the contributions of the Abbasids towards science.*

### ***Major changes that took place in Abbasid caliphate***

1. Whereas the Umayyad dynasty was predominantly Arab, the Abbasids dynasty had an international outlook in that way that it involved almost every one without any segregation
2. The non-Arabs Muslims had been marginalized during the reign of the Umayyads, were recognized by the Abbasids who even gave them key positions in government. The Abbasids dynasty there for placed all Muslims on the same footing.
3. The post of the executioner found its way into the caliphate for the first time. As a result many people lost their lives at the hands of the executioner.
4. Abbasid caliphs expressed themselves with new titles. They were no longer the successors of the prophet of God but simply the deputy of God as expressed in titles like **"the shadow of God on earth"**, **"caliphatu-lah"** (the successor of God)
5. Unlike the Umayyads who could easily be approached, the Abbasids became more bureaucratic and surrounded themselves with a group of officers and could only be approached through the chamberlain.
6. The Abbasids were stronger militarily than the Umayyads. They did not only depend on the Arabs like the Umayyads but also the support of the entire Muslim community.
7. For the very first time, the Muslim state was not under one ruler as the Abbasids failed to control a large force
8. During the time of Abbasids, a number of sects came up in the Islamic state like the Mutazirites, Khazirites, and Sufi.
9. There was also a lot of literacy development which saw Muslims pursuing subjects like astronomy, philosophy, geography .e.t.c
10. It was also during the reign that Islamic law developed with the study and compilation of Hadith. . The caliphs were both political as well as religious leaders
11. They mentioned the position of the caliph as the highest with all powers vested in him.
12. The caliphs led prayers in the state mosques emulating what was done by the orthodox caliphs. They created a position of chamberlain that was responsible for foreign duties.
13. They also introduced the post of the Visir (chief minister) who appointed and dismissed governors and judges with the consent of the caliph.

14.They also improved on state machinery when they introduced the office of post master, director of secret agent.

15.The army was looked very well in terms of welfare and salary. There was the emergence of the paper industry from china.

***However their acts did not differ from the Umayyads.***

16.Most were dictators who used excessive force that resulted into the death of a number of people.

17.Rebellions suffocated their administration from the Shias, kharijites, and Romans. Some lived luxurious life and loved concubines and wine.

18.Some caliphs like their Umayyad counterparts neglected Islam.

### **Reference questions**

1. *"The replacement of the Umayyads with Abbasids was a mere change of guards"*Discuss.
2. *To what extent was the Abbasid period of governance a new era?*

## **THE FATIMID DYNASTY**

It takes its name from Fatumah the daughter of the prophet from whom it claimed it's decent. It should be realized that after the death of the prophet, a number of groups came up to provide leadership to Muslim community which even included Ali and later Hassan and Hussein, from whom the Shias hail. The Shias were there for able to establish a dynasty in Egypt with its capital in Cairo.

### **FACTORS FOR THE RISE OF THE FATIMID DYNASTY**

- ♣ By the time the Fatimids rose to power, ***there existed conflicts between Arabs and non Arabs in Egypt.***This as a factor gave shias an opportunity to rise to power when they exploited the conflicts between Arabs and Turks.
- ♣ ***The shias also for a long time had ambitions of ruling the Islamic state and such ambitions started way back after the death of the prophet but the opportunity was never provided.*** During the Umayyad dynasty they still wanted to rule but they were over powered and when the Umayyads collapsed, they came up again but they were frustrated by the Abbasids. They there for got chance to rise to power when the Abbasids started weakening.
- ♣ As a result of their ambitiousness they were able to ***organize a strong army*** led by Abu Abdullah Al Hassan that was able to defeat the wake Abbasid army in Egypt.
- ♣ ***The shias also made earlier preparation to take to power.*** For example, they had constructed roads from Syria to Egypt for the time they were in Morocco, wells and rest houses were put in place by a Shia governor who operated in Arabia.

- ♣ ***The desire to revenge against the Abbasids also led to the rise of the shias in Egypt.*** They had supported the Abbasids in their bid to capture power only to be disappointed when the Abbasid took power. They forced them out of the corridors of power, fought them and even killed many of them. This harsh treatment forced them to seek for revenge against them leading to their rise to power.
- ♣ ***The shias also posted their officers in the Abbasid administration.*** This enabled them have access to Abbasid secrets, some which were indirectly used to fight the Abbasids.
- ♣ ***Shia propaganda also led to the rise of the shias.*** Led by the Abu Abdullah al Hassan, the shias presented themselves as rightful leaders of the Islamic state. This won them the support they needed to rise to power.
- ♣ ***The Abbasids were reluctant to rule over a large empire.*** As such they didn't take great care of a number of provinces including Egypt. This gave chance to the development of sub dynasties including the Fatimids in Egypt.
- ♣ ***The crusade movements from Europe especially during the 11<sup>th</sup> century also led to their rise to power.*** In these crusades, the Christians engaged the Abbasids in a series of battles weakening their defenses in the western part of the empire. This gave chance to the Fatimids to launch their campaign in Egypt that resulted into their rise to power.
- ♣ ***The expulsion of the shias in from morocco by Abdul Rahman III also led to their rise to power.*** In his bid to expand Umayyad rule in Spain, Abdul Rahman took over Morocco expelling the shias who had taken control of the area. After losing Morocco they decided to take control of Egypt.
- ♣ ***North Africa (Egypt) was distant from Baghdad*** the capital of the Abbasids there for, controlling this province was difficult. The shias used this to their advantage when they launched a full scale war against the Abbasids administration in Egypt.
- ♣ ***The weakness of the Abbasid leadership in Egypt*** also accounts for the rise of the Fatimids. The Fatimids found it easy to overthrow the weakened administration since it could not put up a significant resistance against the invaders.
- ♣ ***Before the arrival of the Fatimids, the Kharamathians had plundered North Africa thereby causing general weakness in the economy.*** In such a situation, there is no way the Egyptian administration could put up a formidable resistance against the shias.
- ♣ ***Calamities like famine and the plague*** had devastated the economy. This enabled the Fatimids rise to power since many people had vacated Egypt leaving behind a weak population that could not resist the enormous force of the shias.
- ♣ ***The Fatimids were highly united*** if compared to the inhabitants of Egypt who had been disunited by internal differences. With internal differences it became difficult for the Egyptians to fight off the invaders.
- ♣ ***The Berbers of North Africa also supported the Fatimids*** in their rise to power. The Berbers for a long time hated the Abbasids because of their oppressive rule and so when the shias rose up in North Africa, they received overwhelming support from the

Berbers hence their rise to power.

### ***Reference Questions.***

*To what extent was the shias long time had ambitions of ruling the Islamic state responsible for their rise to power*

## **Reign of Al Azizi (975-996CE)** ***(The golden age of the Fatimid rule in Egypt)***

His full names were Abdul Mansur Nazir al Azizi. He was the 5<sup>th</sup> caliph of the Fatimid and a son of al Muzzi. After ascending to power, Al Azizi proved to be peaceful and more tolerant if compared to other Fatimid caliphs.

### ***Al Azizi's reforms and contributions:***

- ✓ His name was praised during Friday prayers from the Atlantic coast to red sea, Mecca and Yemen which made the Fatimid's to be feared thus consolidating their rule.
- ✓ As an Egyptian caliph, he did not only become a rival to the Abbasids but also suppressed them; this made his caliphate popular in the Muslim world.
- ✓ He also built the 2000000 dinar place in Cairo which was to house his Abbasid rivals whom he hoped to capture after taking over Baghdad.
- ✓ He also tried to fight and conquer the Umayyads in Spain just like his predecessors had done though with no success.
- ✓ He paid his officials and servants high salaries to curb corruption especially among the judges. He improved and uplifted the welfare of his people in the empire.
- ✓ He encouraged education in the empire when transformed the al-Zahir mosque to university. He also made appointments of offices on merit.
- ✓ He also built a huge and strong army to suppress rebellions in the east staged by Affitikin and kharamtwa. He established a number of infrastructural monuments like mosques, canals, bridges, and elegant palaces.
- ✓ He was tolerant to the Christians with Christians who had a good relationship with the Muslim. For example his prime minister was a Christian.
- ✓ His reign was characterized with peace and freedom which consequently led economic development in the dynasty.
- ✓ He also enforced the observance of Islamic rituals like prayer and fasting of Ramadan.
- ✓ He also took great care of the state treasury and it's said that no single coin was spent without his signature. He also imported Turkish troops in Egypt to help in securing the state.
- ✓ He conquered vast areas from the Abbasids to expand the Fatimid Empire. For example Syria, Hijaz and Yemen



***However he had some short comings as a caliph.***

- ✓ By allowing his name to be praised every Friday across the empire, he was raised to the level of sainthood something that was against the teachings of Islam.
- ✓ In building a strong army, he imported foreign troops which caused conflicts that weaken the defenses of the dynasty.
- ✓ He was too tolerant to the Christians who later joined with the enemy of the state to fight against the Fatimids.
- ✓ He was luxurious and spent a lot of resources in building palaces.
- ✓ In conclusion, it can be said that al-Azizi contributed to the strengthening and prosperity of the Fatimids in Egypt however with his departure, the empire begun to collapse.

### ***Reference questions***

1. *Discuss the contributions of Azizullah towards the development of the Fatimid caliphate.*

### ***Reign of Al Hakim (996-1021CE)***

His full names were Al Hakim bin Amirillah. He was the sixth Fatimid caliph and a son to al Azizi. He was one of the youngest Fatimid caliphs who ascended to the throne at the age of eleven. He ruled for a period of 25 years and bellows are his contributions.

#### **Al Hakim's reforms and contributions:**

- ✓ He highly elevated the position of Islam making it supreme over other religions.
- ✓ He promoted science in the dynasty when he supported the activities of scientists like Ali al Hassan. He also built an obsevertory which was used in the study of bones.
- ✓ He also built a hall of science in 1005CE to encourage research and facilitated it with funds.
- ✓ He facilitated research in medicine, philosophy, optics and mathematics where books were compiled for further references and funds were provided annually from the budget.
- ✓ He also made improvements in infrastructure for example, he built magnificent palaces which were well decorated and mosques like the Al Hakim mosque.
- ✓ He built canals to control floods which resulted as a result of the over flow of the Nile.
- ✓ He tried to consolidate Fatimid rule in the East of the Medeternian when he edged the Abbasid leadership in a bid to control eastern Arabia and the Persian Gulf.
- ✓ He opened up "Dawa" mission centers like Cairo to help in preaching Islam.
- ✓ He made innovations in making of Adhan when he introduced the statement "**A salat hairu mina naum**" meaning prayer is better than sleep and fobbed the performance of the Tarweeh prayer in congregation saying that it was an innovation introduced by the Sunni Muslims.

- ✓ He mistreated the Christians when stopped them from celebrating Easter, prohibited the use of wine in carrying out religious rituals, ordered them to put on black robes, ride on donkeys, they were to put on big crosses in their necks and He also demolished a number of Christians churches including the holy sepulcher which is believed to be the burial place of Jesus.
- ✓ On the night of 12<sup>th</sup> February 1021 al hakim was murdered in a plot by his sister dyeing at the age of 36. He was succeeded by his son AL Azahir.

### Reference questions

*Examine Al Hakim's contributions towards the development of the Fatimid caliphate*

## FACTORS FOR THE DECLINE OF THE FATIMID DYNASTY

The Fatimid dynasty that was started by Said bin Hussein A.K.A Ubaidullah in 919 had collapsed by 1171 due to the following factors.

- ♣ ***The importation of foreign troops especially the Sudanese, Turks and Berbers led to its decline*** especially when they started conflicting due to national sentiments. These conflicts weakened the state leading to its decline.
- ♣ ***The mistreatment of non Muslims especially the Christians also brought the empire to its knees.*** Al Hakim for example destroyed their places of worship, forced them to ride on donkeys, wear black robes and put on big crosses. This instigated the Christians in and outside the state to rise up against the Fatimids leading to their decline.
- ♣ ***Most Fatimid caliphs lived a life of pomp*** as their palaces became centers of wine drinking and concubinage. This life depleted the state resources a factor that weakened the economy making the collapse of the Fatimids inevitable.
- ♣ ***The outbreak of famine and the plague*** worsened the already weak economy, as a way of trying to rejuvenate the economy; the caliphs imposed high taxes on mass. This led to the outbreak of riots that did not leave the empire standing.
- ♣ ***The havoc created by Hilal and Suleiman also left the empire led to the decline of the Fatimid.*** These were troublesome Arabs who 1052 moved into North Africa and carried out attacks on Tripoli and Tunisia. In the process they caused more chaos as they displaced many people. In such a situation it became difficult for the empire to survive.
- ♣ ***The outbreak of the crusade movements also led to the collapse of the Fatimids.*** For a long time, Christians had the desire to end the glory of Islam on grounds that it had dominated them for so long. Thus when they saw the Fatimids weakening, they sent their crusaders' who attacked and controlled part of the empire. In the long run the conflicts that result from the arrival of the crusaders led to the decline of the empire.
- ♣ ***The Fatimids were Shia Muslims who were operating from an area dominated by the Sunni Muslims.*** They were therefore hated by the Sunni as they tried to force them adopt Shia doctrines. In the long run the Sunni Muslims started working for their downfall in a bid to establish a Sunni dominated administration.
- ♣ ***Many of the caliphs in the Fatimid ranks became caliphs at a very young age*** some so young that could not guarantee the continued existence of the Fatimids. For instance, al

Hakim become caliph at the age of eleven and Al- zahir was only sixteen. Being young they could not ably handle the affairs of the state, take firm decisions and at times were misguided. In such a situation it become difficult for the empire to survive.

- ♣ ***Leadership struggle between the Vizir (prime minister) and the caliphs also led to the decline of the caliphate.*** It should be noted after 1094CE Fatimids rule was characterized with continues power struggle between Vizir (prime minister) and the caliphs and to make matters worse, the army took sides a factor that led to the down fall of the empire.
- ♣ ***The break a way of many provinces from the Fatimid state also accounts for its decline.*** During the reign of weak caliphs Fatimid rule was confined in Egypt alone giving chance to areas outside Egypt to break away from the mainstream Fatimid administration.
- ♣ ***Tribal prejudice within the army also led to the decline of the Fatimids.*** Due to the army being multiethnic, conflict arose among the Sudanese, Berbers and Turks which resulted into a number of mutinies. These mutinies weakened the army's ability to fight off invaders like Salahidin.
- ♣ ***The rise of Salahidin led the final decline of the Fatimids in Egypt.*** Salahidin was a Hasimaite who rose up to replace shiate rule with Sunni autonomy. In his campaign to overthrow the shias, he staged a fight against the Fatimids that led to the over through of the last Fatimid caliph.

### ***Reference questions***

1. *To what extent was Al hakim's mistreatment of the Christians led to the decline of the Fatimids in Egypt.*

## **LIFE DURING THE FATIMID DYNASTY**

### ***Political life;***

- ✓ The caliph was the head of state and below him was his prime minister(visir) who was helped by a number of ministers who were in charge of the army and the welfare of the state. Others acted as judges, inspectors and treasurers.
- ✓ The Fatimids administrative structure divided into 3 departments or ranks. The 1<sup>st</sup> department comprised of the highest officers, followed by the officers in the army and last department comprised of regiments.
- ✓ Succession to the caliphate was hereditary just like their predecessors had done.
- ✓ The caliph's name was supposed to be recited in the Friday sermon or after the prayers. This was done to create support and fear from the public.
- ✓ The office of the caliph was not to be challenged because his leadership was believed to be God given and according to them, being descendants of the prophet's daughter, they had divine protection.
- ✓ The office of the Chamberlin was also introduced to handle foreign affairs.
- ✓ They also introduced an officer in charge of the state treasury and banks. He also supervised the inspectors of markets to ensure proper weights and measurement

system.

### ***Economic life:***

- ✓ The Fatimids developed commerce and trade in cities like Cairo and Tunisia in which they constructed eight money exchange bureaus to ease business transactions.
- ✓ They boosted agriculture through the construction of canals help in irrigation of crops.
- ✓ They also encouraged international trade and also fixed the prices of goods and anyone caught cheating would be paraded on the streets.
- ✓ A special ministry in charge of weights and measurements was put in place to avoid economic oppression. The Fatimids also abolished forced labor and over taxation which was mainly enforced on the African workers

### ***Religious life:***

- ✓ Apart from a few Fatimid caliphs that were hostile to the Christians, most of them were tolerant and even appointed them to positions of responsibility.
- ✓ They also constructed several mosques especially in Cairo.
- ✓ Caliphs like Almu'izz and Al Azizi greatly contributed to the strict observance of Islamic rituals. Shia Islam was also introduced in Egypt to replace Sunni Islam.

### ***Social life;***

- ✓ The Fatimids were highly luxurious especially the last caliph for example they had over 30,000 servants in the palace.
- ✓ The society was divided into two social groups i.e. the caliph and his officials and the 2<sup>nd</sup> was that of the subjects.
- ✓ Like among the Umayyads and the Abbasids the women in the Fatimid caliphate enjoyed great freedoms. Intermarriage between the shias and the Berbers was common a factor that promoted social relations between them and the subjects.
- ✓ Some Fatimid caliphs enjoyed poetry and music. Al Mutasir for example would listen music in his leisure time.
- ✓ Fatimid caliphs wore caps made of gold and jewelry plus beautiful long garments depicting power and symbols that distinguished them from other people
- ✓ Arabic culture like the dress code, language, eating styles and architecture were part of Fatimid's administration.

### ***Intellectual life ;( education & science)***

- ✓ The Fatimids founded the hall of science. It was used in research, translation and also acted as a library.

- ✓ Developments were also made in astronomy especially during the reign of Al Hakim with Al Hassan as the greatest astronomer of the time.
- ✓ Mathematics and medicine also flourished. For instance several research works was done and books published in these fields.
- ✓ Several art pieces were produced together with beautiful designs which were put on buildings. Ceramics and metallic art were developed.
- ✓ In the field of architecture as various structures were put in place. For example the Al Azar mosque in Cairo
- ✓ The Fatimids also established the Al Azar University which is one of the oldest university In Islamic history. Fatimid caliphs supported education and science by providing funds to help in research

### ***Reference questions***

1. Asses the contributions of the Fatimid's contributions to Islamic civilization
2. Discuss the way of life of the Fatimids
3. How is it different from that of the Abbasids?

## **THE CRUSADE MOVEMENTS OF THE 11<sup>TH</sup> -13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES**

The term crusade literally means a struggle for the advancement of particular ideas or principals.

Technically however, the crusades refer to Christian wars in the Arab world that were intended to enable the Christian regain control of the holy lands of Palestine that they had lost to the Muslims.

### **FACTORS THAT LED TO THE LAUNCHING OF THE CRUSADE MOVEMENTS**

- ♣ ***The economic revival and struggle for markets by the Europeans.*** It should be noted that at the close of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, there was an economic revival in Europe that saw the Europeans produce a number of goods that required market most of which was in the middle and far east. Since the Muslims dominate the Mediterranean waters and the land route which were the gate way to the Far East, the Europeans had fight and displace the Muslims so as to have access to such markets.
- ♣ Also notable during the 11th century *was the advancement in military science by western European countries.* With the advancement in military hard ware, the Europeans thought fighting Muslims to test the performance of their new weaponry.
- ♣ ***Religious enthusiasm among Christians of the time is also another factor consider.*** It can be seen that religion at the time drove many Christians into war with the hope of spreading Christianity to the Muslims whom they looked at as non believers.
- ♣ ***There was also need to liberate Christine pilgrimage sites like the holy sepulcher*** (burial place of Christ) in Jerusalem. It can be seen that since these place were under the control of the Muslims the Christians had to fight and have control of these areas to enable them ease their pilgrimage activities.
- ♣ ***The wide spread belief among Christians that the world was coming to an end***

***also caused the crusades.*** This led to the crusades in a way that Christians believed that a great Christian leader would lead them to Jerusalem which at the time was in the control of Muslims. They therefore had to fight the Muslims to avoid any interference in their way to Jerusalem.

- ♣ ***Mistreatment of non Muslims by some Muslim leaders also caused the crusades.*** For instance Al Hakim destroyed the holy sepulcher and other places of worship, forced them to ride on donkeys, wear black robes and put on big crosses. This instigated the Christians to rise up against the Islamic state with aim of saving the Christian brothers and holy sites in what came to be known as the crusade movement.
- ♣ ***Some crusaders were in the Middle East due to adventure.*** It should be noted that since the movement were in series and covering the areas, those who were adventurous looked at them as an opportunity of touring the Middle East.
- ♣ ***The conditions in Europe at the time also took people into the crusades.*** With the very many social and economic problems in Europe, most crusaders looked at the movements in the Middle East as an opportunity to avoid the problems at home.
- ♣ ***Some of the crusade leaders had political motives.*** They had the desire to acquire principalities in the Middle East which they would control. Therefore under the guise of the crusade movement, crusaders like Desmond rushed to the Muslim world to acquire colonies like Antioch which he took control of.
- ♣ ***There was also a desire by criminals of Europeans to exercise self punishments.*** By the time the crusades occurred, criminals in Europe took part in them with the feeling that their crimes would be pardoned by God if they served in the crusades.
- ♣ ***The immediate cause of the crusade movements was the capture of Antioch in Syria in 1085AD by the Turks.*** With the capture of Antioch and other cities in Asia minor like Nicaea created fear in emperor of Byzantine the Muslims would overrun his capital in Constantinople. He therefore sought for help from the western European countries against the Muslims that came in form of the crusades.
- ♣ ***The appeal to pope Urban II to the Christians in Europe to save their Christian brothers and sites in the Middle East also caused the crusades.*** With the pending Muslim threat on Antioch plus the mistreatment of Christians and destruction of the holy sepulcher, pope Urban II called for a meeting of Christian leaders at Clermont in southern France urging the faithful to join hand and save the holy sepulcher and the Christians of the middle east. By spring of 1097AD 15000 men answered his call, met at Constantinople and launched the 1<sup>st</sup> crusade movements.
- ♣ ***The desire to avenge on the Muslims who had colonized Europe earlier also caused the crusades.*** It should be remembered that when Abdul Rahman III established the second Umayyad in Spain, they took control other European states like Sicily, Cyprus, Nicaea .e.t.c .the Europeans therefore launched attacks on the Muslims in revenge for the control of such areas.
- ♣ ***The merchants of Venice and Genoa joined the crusades with the hope of boosting their economic positions.*** Since the Middle East was the main link to the Far East trade they joined the crusade with the view that they would put them in poll position in the trade between Europe and the Far East.

- ♣ ***The need to re-establish Christianity in areas where it had been banned by Al Hakim also led to the occurrence of the crusades.*** It should be noted that besides spreading Islam to the Muslim the crusades were intended to spread Christianity to the former Christians that had converted to Islam in the Middle East.

## **RESULTS OF THE CRUSADE MOVEMENTS OF THE 11<sup>TH</sup> -13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES.**

- ✓ The crusade with no doubt the crusades led to a number of deaths given the fact that many untrained people were involved besides prisoners of war were often massacred and killed.
- ✓ The crusade quickened the growth of western powers for it brought in profits since Europeans were able to access the various markets.
- ✓ Further more interest in travel and exploration increased as men learnt to make better use of maps plus the growing interest of Europeans in conquering land in the Far East.
- ✓ The crusade deepened the enmity between the Christians and Muslims which lived to be experienced even up to today.
- ✓ The initial success of the crusades resulted into the success of and popularity of the pope.
- ✓ There was also increased the spread of Christianity in eastern countries as a result of the missionary activities sanctioned and financed by the pope.
- ✓ Many historical churches and mosques were demolished during the movements for example the dome of the rock was destroyed.
- ✓ The crusades helped in uniting the eastern and western churches.
- ✓ The crusades proved that conversion can't be forced as the Christians were unable to convert the Muslim to Christianity.
- ✓ Scholars came up to accept that wars can be used to remove an obstacle in a way of propagating one's mission.
- ✓ The movement enhanced western and European civilization as European powers adopted a number of ideas like the paper industry and better methods of farming.
- ✓ Moslems suffered great exploitation at the hands of the crusaders for example exported a number of resources to Europe and controlled the commercial areas.
- ✓ Moslems lost independence as crusaders controlled coastal areas of the Mediterranean initially controlled by the Muslims. For example the king of France ruled some areas.
- ✓ International trade developed between the Europeans and Arabs of the Middle East as a number of items were introduced.
- ✓ They immensely mistreated the Muslims; they were thus hated and forced the mobilization by the Muslim to courageously fight against them.
- ✓ They destructed the property of the Muslims.
- ✓ They led to the emergence of able leaders among Muslims like Salahidin who mobilized

them to fight the crusaders.

- ✓ Preaching of Islam stagnated due to the insecurity caused by the movements.
- ✓ Islam was spread by the movements as Muslims dispersed to European countries as a result of the insecurity caused by the movements.
- ✓ New crops were introduced by the crusaders in the Middle East like rice, carrots, lemons and melons which were used for domestic and commercial purposes.
- ✓ They improved in transport and communication systems like roads, bridges and ports which were later used by the Muslims.
- ✓ The Muslim army was weakened by the movements yet it had been a major weapon in the spread of Islam earlier on.
- ✓ As a result of the movements, the Muslim army acquired new tactics of war .i.e. siege tactics, use of explosives and gun powder which were later used by the Muslims.
- ✓ Besides the use Of cross bows, wearing of heavy military amour by nights, use of horses and use of cotton pads under amour were introduced by the crusaders.
- ✓ Crusaders introduced new architecture was introduced. For example military masonry, castles and churches
- ✓ It also led to intermarriages between the Europeans and Arabs that led to the birth of blue eyed breed of people.
- ✓ Later Christians in Europe supported nationalistic movements' in the Muslim world with the intentions of creating disunity within the Muslim world.

## **FACTORS THAT LED TO THE INITIAL SUCCESS OF THE CRUSADE MOVEMENTS OF THE 11<sup>TH</sup> -13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES**

- The role played by pope urban II who called for a meeting of Christian leaders at Clermont in southern
- France urging the faithful to join hand and save the holy sepulcher and the Christians.
- The strong will and determination to control the holy lands of Jerusalem also accounts for their initial success
- The Christian army was far superior to the Muslim's armies at the time. They therefore ably defeated them an established themselves in the Middle East.
- They built and also improved on the existing transport infrastructure which enabled them access different parts in the Muslim territory.
- They took part in international trade which provide them with the much needed resources to run their new territories.
- They came with modern technological aspects at almost won over the Arabs.
- They carried with them to the Middle East horses, dogs and harks which eased



movement, transfer of information and security.

- They employed native as work men and as farmers. These people also provided them with information on the activities of the locals.
- They also tried to assimilate with the local people which won them some support for example they discarded their European dress for a more comfortable native dress.
- Closely connected to the above was the introduction of new crops which attracted some Arabs to them.
- They also introduced the feudal system on land in which they displaced several Arab communities when they established themselves as land lords. It took time for the Arabs to reorganize and take back their land.

## **FACTORS THAT LED TO THE FAILURE OF THE CRUSADE MOVEMENTS OF THE 11<sup>TH</sup> -13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES**

- ✓ The crusades came with different objectives for example, some were just adventurous, and others were seeking for colonies .e.t.c which could not guarantee the success of the crusaders.
- ✓ As the crusaders arrived in the Arab world, they mistreated the Muslims which made them hate the crusaders, and forced the Muslims to organize for their downfall.
- ✓ The Muslims were many in number; therefore being few, the crusaders couldn't defeat the Muslims hence their defeat.
- ✓ The Muslims suffered gross economic exploitation which forced them to rise up against the crusaders.
- ✓ The crusaders never took strong measures to convert Muslims. As such the Muslims revolted against them since they considered them to be non Muslims.
- ✓ Their home being far from the Middle East, supplies could not reach in time yet they were vital if the movements were to succeed.
- ✓ The crusaders concentrated on coastal areas leaving out the interior. The Muslims in the interior reorganized themselves and chased away the crusaders.
- ✓ The rise of strong Muslim leaders like Salahidin, al Malik and al Zahir who courageously fought and defeated the crusaders also accounts for their decline.
- ✓ The crusaders fought in strange lands therefore, a majority of them lacked the knowledge of the area in which they were fighting.
- ✓ Language barrier was another challenge. Most of them could neither speak nor understand Arabic. This made their work difficult.
- ✓ The atrocities, killings and bad leadership exhibited by the crusaders made the population to resist them.
- ✓ The desert climate proved to be very hostile to the European invaders forcing many of them to either withdraw from Arabia or suffer from the harsh conditions.

- ✓ The rise of the Mongols in India led to their defeat since they ably fought and defeated them forcing them to with draw.
- ✓ After losing their independence the Muslims become determined to fight and defeat the invaders.
- ✓ The crusaders were disunited, for instance they ere coming from different countries like France, Papal States, Germany, Romania and Italy with different agendas making their defeat inevitable. With time their mighty.

