

**DADABHOY INSTITUTE OF HIGHER
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“PERIOD OF ABBASID CALIPHATE”

Introduction

Abbasid Caliphate, second of the two great dynasties of the Muslim empire of the caliphate. It overthrew the Umayyad caliphate in 750 CE and reigned as the Abbasid caliphate until it was destroyed by the Mongol invasion in 1258 CE. The reign of Banu Abbas lasted for about five hundred and eight years. Muslims saw many ups and downs during this period.

Background of the Islamic Era

The first Muslim leader was the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who ruled from 622 to 632 AD.

After that 1st Caliphate Hazrat Abu-Bakar (R.A) Stay in the Khilafah from 632 CE to 634 CE. While 2nd Caliphate Hazrat Umer (R.A) ruled from 634 to 644 CE. 3rd Caliphate Hazrat Usman (R.A) govern from 644 to 655 CE and the last Caliphate of Islam was Hazrat Ali (R.A) Rule from 655 to 660 CE. And the capital of the Muslims during this period was Medina. After that, the era of Khilafah ended and the era of monarchy began among the Muslims. In which the Umayyads ruled from 660 to 750 CE. Which lasted for about 90 years. Which was founded by Hazrat Amir Muawiyah and in this era, the total 12 rulers ruled.

Reign of Banu Abbas

The reign of Banu Abbas began in 750 CE and ended in 1258 CE. During the reign of Banu Abbas, the capital of the Muslims was shifted from Damascus to Iraq and the Baghdad became a Capital.

The Abbasid Caliphate had two major periods.

1. The first period lasted from 750-1258 CE. During this period, the Abbasids were strong leaders who controlled a vast territory and created a culture that is often referred as the Golden Age of Islam. In 1258 CE, however, the capital city of Baghdad was sacked by the Mongols causing the Abbasids to flee to Egypt.
2. The second period lasted from 1261-1517 CE. During this time the Abbasid Caliphate was located in Cairo, Egypt. While the Abbasids were still considered the religious leaders of the Islamic world, a different group called the Mamluks held the true political and military power.

Total ten rulers ruled during this period. The first ruler of this period was Abu al-Abbas which was also known as al-Saffah(السفاح) "the Blood-Shedder".

The name is derived from that of the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, al-‘Abbās (died c. 653) of the Hashemite clan of the Quraysh tribe in Mecca. From about 718, members of his family worked to gain control of the empire from the Umayyads and, by skillful propaganda, won much support, especially from Shi‘i Arabs and Persians in Khorāsān. Open revolt in 747, under the leadership of Abū Muslim, led to the defeat of Marwān II, the last Umayyad caliph, at the Battle of the Great Zab River (750) in Mesopotamia and to the proclamation of the first Abbasid caliph, Abū al-‘Abbās al-Saffāh.

Under the Abbasids the caliphate entered a new phase. Instead of focusing, as the Umayyads had done, on the West—on North Africa, the Mediterranean, and southern Europe—the caliphate now turned eastward. The capital was moved to the new city of Baghdad, and events in Persia and Transoxania were closely watched. For the first time, the caliphate was not coterminous with Islam. In Egypt, North Africa, Spain, and elsewhere, local dynasties claimed caliphal status. With the rise of the Abbasids, the base for influence in the empire became international, emphasizing membership in the community of believers rather than Arab nationality. Since much support for the Abbasids came from Persian converts, it was natural for the Abbasids to take over much of the Persian (Sasanian) tradition of government. Support by pious Muslims likewise led the Abbasids to acknowledge publicly the embryonic Islamic law and to profess to base their rule on the religion of Islam.

Between 750 and 833 the Abbasids raised the prestige and power of the empire, promoting commerce, industry, arts, and science, particularly during the reigns of al-Manṣūr, Hārūn al-Rashīd, and al-Ma’mūn.

Achievements of Abbasid Caliphate

1. Science

The reigns of Harun al-Rashid (786–809) and his successors fostered an age of great intellectual achievement. A number of medieval thinkers and scientists living under Islamic rule played a role in transmitting Islamic science to the Christian West. In addition, the period saw the recovery of much of the Alexandrian mathematical, geometric and astronomical knowledge, such as that of Euclid and Claudius Ptolemy. These recovered mathematical methods were later enhanced and developed by other Islamic scholars, notably by Persian scientists Al-Biruni and Abu Nasr Mansur.

Algebra was significantly developed by Persian scientist Muhammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī during this time in his landmark text, *Kitab al-Jabr wa-l-Muqabala*, from which the term *algebra* is derived. He is thus considered to be the father of algebra by some, although the Greek mathematician Diophantus has also been given this title. The terms algorism and algorithm are derived from the name of al-Khwarizmi, who was also

responsible for introducing the Arabic numerals and Hindu-Arabic numeral system beyond the Indian subcontinent.

2. Literature:

The best known fiction from the Islamic world is *The Book of One Thousand and One Nights*, a collection of fantastical folk tales, legends and parables compiled primarily during the Abbasid era. The collection is recorded as having originated from an Arabic translation of a Sassanian era Persian prototype, with likely origins in Indian literary traditions. Stories from Arabic, Persian, Mesopotamian, and Egyptian folklore and literature were later incorporated. The epic is believed to have taken shape in the 10th century and reached its final form by the 14th century; the number and type of tales have varied from one manuscript to another. All Arabian fantasy tales were often called "Arabian Nights" when translated into English, regardless of whether they appeared in *The Book of One Thousand and One Nights*. This epic has been influential in the West since it was translated in the 18th century, first by Antoine Galland. Many imitations were written, especially in France. Various characters from this epic have themselves become cultural icons in Western culture, such as Aladdin, Sinbad and Ali Baba.

A famous example of Islamic poetry on romance was *Layla and Majnun*, an originally Arabic story which was further developed by Iranian, Azerbaijani and other poets in the Persian, Azerbaijani, and Turkish languages. It is a tragic story of undying love much like the later *Romeo and Juliet*.

3. Philosophy

One of the common definitions for "Islamic philosophy" is "the style of philosophy produced within the framework of Islamic culture." Islamic philosophy, in this definition is neither necessarily concerned with religious issues, nor is exclusively produced by Muslims. Their works on Aristotle were a key step in the transmission of learning from ancient Greeks to the Islamic world and the West. They often corrected the philosopher, encouraging a lively debate in the spirit of *ijtihad*. They also wrote influential original philosophical works, and their thinking was incorporated into Christian philosophy during the Middle Ages, notably by Thomas Aquinas. Three speculative thinkers, al-Kindi, al-Farabi, and Avicenna, combined Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism with other ideas introduced through Islam, and Avicennism was later established as a result. Other influential Abbasid philosophers include al-Jahiz, and Ibn al-Haytham (Alhacen).

4. Architecture

As power shifted from the Umayyads to the Abbasids, the architectural styles changed also. The Christian styles evolved into a style based more on the Sasanian Empire, utilizing mud bricks and baked bricks with carved stucco. Another major development was the creation of vast

enlargement of cities as they were turned into the capital of the empire, beginning with the creation of Baghdad in 762, which was planned as a walled city with four gates, and a mosque and palace in the center. Al-Mansur, who was responsible for the creation of Baghdad, also planned the city of Raqqa, along the Euphrates. Finally, in 836, al-Mu'tasim moved the capital to a new site that he created along the Tigris, called Samarra. This city saw 60 years of work, with race-courses and game preserves to add to the atmosphere. Due to the dry remote nature of the environment, some of the palaces built in this era were isolated havens. Al-Ukhaidir Fortress is a fine example of this type of building, which has stables, living quarters, and a mosque, all surrounding inner courtyards.

5. Technology

In technology, the Abbasids adopted papermaking from China. The use of paper spread from China into the caliphate in the 8th century CE, arriving in al-Andalus (Islamic Spain) and then the rest of Europe in the 10th century. It was easier to manufacture than parchment, less likely to crack than papyrus, and could absorb ink, making it ideal for making records and copies of the Qur'an. "Islamic paper makers devised assembly-line methods of hand-copying manuscripts to turn out editions far larger than any available in Europe for centuries." It was from the Abbasids that the rest of the world learned to make paper from linen. The knowledge of gunpowder was also transmitted from China via the caliphate, where the formulas for pure potassium nitrate and an explosive gunpowder effect were first developed.

6. Status of women

In contrast to the earlier era, women in Abbasid society were absent from all arenas of the community's central affairs. While their Muslim forbears led men into battle, started rebellions, and played an active role in community life, as demonstrated in the Hadith literature, Abbasid women were ideally kept in seclusion. Conquests had brought enormous wealth and large numbers of slaves to the Muslim elite. The majority of the slaves were women and children, many of whom had been dependents or harem-members of the defeated Sassanian upper classes. In the wake of the conquests an elite man could potentially own a thousand slaves, and ordinary soldiers could have ten people serving them.

Interesting Facts about the Abbasid Caliphate

- ❖ The sacking of Baghdad in 1258 is considered to be the end of the Islamic Caliphate by many historians.
- ❖ The Mamluks were once the slave warriors of the Islamic Caliphate. However, they eventually gained power of their own and took control in Egypt.
- ❖ The Abbasids got their name from being descendents of Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib. Abbas was an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad and one of his companions.

- ❖ The first capital city of the Abbasids was Kufa. However, they founded and built the city of Baghdad as their new capital in 762 CE.
- ❖ Historians estimate that around 800,000 people were killed during the sacking of Baghdad by the Mongols. They killed the Caliph by wrapping him up in a carpet and trampling him with horses.

Characteristic of Abbasid Caliphate

- ❖ The Abbasid caliphate built a strong government bureaucracy to rule their empire.
- ❖ Muslim merchants expanded wealth by trading across Africa and Indian Ocean.
- ❖ They built centralized state- absolute power.
- ❖ Abbasids built a centralized state with Baghdad as Capital.
- ❖ The bureaucracy was under wazirs.
- ❖ There was a royal executioner.
- ❖ There are golden achievements worth mentioning in terms of Science, Mathematics, Medicine and Architecture etc.
- ❖ Some of important emperors are Khaleefa Haroon ur Rasheed, Khleefa Mamoon ur Rashid and Al-Mansoor.

Popular personalities of Abbasid Caliphate

- ❖ *Ibn e Seena* and *Ibn e Rushd* were two authoritative figures in Philosophy.
- ❖ *Al-Khawrizmi* – famous Mathematician and invented Algebra, Trigonometry, science of Algorithms and scientific methods.
- ❖ *Al-Bairuni* , famous physicist and Astronomer.
- ❖ Al-kinde a famous chemist.
- ❖ In social science, *Ibne Khuldoon* , a great historian and human behaviorist.

Decline of the Abbasid caliphate

- ❖ Due to the royal and lavish life style, Abbasid faced their downfall.
- ❖ Their decadent lifestyle and considering them above Islamic law made them vulnerable.
- ❖ Calips became remote from people.
- ❖ When Mongols attacked them, there were no-one who would go to perform Hajj. People were busy in their lavish life style.

THE END